

take a parting kiss, after which the living body is covered up, first with mats and tapa wrapped around the head, and then with sticks and earth, which are trodden down. When this has been done, all retire, and are tabooed, as will be stated in describing their ordinary funerals. The succeeding night, the son goes privately to the grave, and lays upon it a piece of ava-root, which is called the *vei-tala* or farewell.

Mr. Hunt, one of the missionaries, had been a witness of several of these acts. On one occasion, he was called upon by a young man, who desired that he would pray to his spirit for his mother, who was dead. Mr. Hunt was at first in hopes that this would afford him an opportunity of forwarding their great cause. On inquiry, the young man told him that his brothers and himself were just going to bury her. Mr. Hunt accompanied the young man, telling him he would follow in the procession, and do as he desired him, supposing, of course, the corpse would be brought along; but he now met the procession, when the young man said that this was the funeral, and pointed out his mother, who was walking along with them, as gay and lively as any of those present, and apparently as much pleased. Mr. Hunt expressed his surprise to the young man, and asked how he could deceive him so much by saying his mother was dead, when she was alive and well. He said, in reply, that they had made her death-feast, and were now going to bury her; that she was old; that his brother and himself had thought she had lived long enough, and it was time to bury her, to which she had willingly assented, and they were about it now. He had come to Mr. Hunt to ask his prayers, as they did those of the priest. He added, that it was from love for his mother that he had done so; that, in consequence of the same love, they were now going to bury her, and that none but themselves could or ought to do so sacred an office! Mr. Hunt did all in his power to prevent so diabolical an act; but the only reply he received was, that she was their mother, and they were her children, and they ought to put her to death. On reaching the grave, the mother sat down, when they all, including children, grandchildren, relations, and friends, took an affectionate leave of her; a rope, made of twisted tapa, was then passed twice around her neck by her sons, who took hold of it, and strangled her; after which she was put into her grave, with the usual ceremonies. They returned to feast and mourn, after which she was entirely forgotten as though she had not existed.

Mr. Hunt, after giving me this anecdote, surprised me by expressing his opinion that the Feejeeans were a kind and affectionate people to their parents, adding, that he was assured by many of them that