

they considered this custom as so great a proof of affection that none but children could be found to perform it. The same opinion was expressed by all the other white residents.

A short time before our arrival, an old man at Levuka did something to vex one of his grandchildren, who in consequence threw stones at him. The only action the old man took in the case was to walk away, saying that he had now lived long enough, when his grandchildren could stone him with impunity. He then requested his children and friends to bury him, to which they consented. A feast was made, he was dressed in his best tapa, and his face blackened. He was then placed sitting in his grave, with his head about two feet below the surface. Tapa and mats were thrown upon him, and the earth pressed down; during which he was heard to complain that they hurt him, and to beg that they would not press so hard.

Self-immolation is by no means rare, and they believe that as they leave this life, so will they remain ever after. This forms a powerful motive to escape from decrepitude, or from a crippled condition, by a voluntary death.

Wives are often strangled, or buried alive, at the funeral of their husbands, and generally at their own instance. Cases of this sort have frequently been witnessed by the white residents. On one occasion Whippy drove away the murderers, rescued the woman, and carried her to his own house, where she was resuscitated. So far, however, from feeling grateful for her preservation, she loaded him with abuse, and ever afterwards manifested the most deadly hatred towards him. That women should desire to accompany their husbands in death, is by no means strange, when it is considered that it is one of the articles of their belief, that in this way alone can they reach the realms of bliss, and she who meets her death with the greatest devotedness, will become the favourite wife in the abode of spirits.

The sacrifice is not, however, always voluntary; but, when a woman refuses to be strangled, her relations often compel her to submit. This they do from interested motives; for, by her death, her connexions become entitled to the property of her husband. Even a delay is made a matter of reproach. Thus, at the funeral of the late king, Ulivou, which was witnessed by Mr. Cargill, his five wives and a daughter were strangled. The principal wife delayed the ceremony, by taking leave of those around her; whereupon Tanoa, the present king, chid her. The victim was his own aunt, and he assisted in putting the rope around her neck, and strangling her, a service he is said to have rendered on a former occasion, to his own mother.

Not only do many of the natives desire their friends to put them to