

brought from such a distance as to be green from putrescence, and to have the flesh dropping from the bones, which were, notwithstanding, eaten with greediness and apparent pleasure.

War, however, does not furnish enough of this food to satisfy their appetite for it. Stratagem and violence are resorted to for obtaining it. While we were at Levuka, as a number of women belonging to the village were engaged in picking up shells and fishing, a canoe belonging to the Lasikaus, or fishermen, in passing by the reef, seized and carried off two of them, as it was believed, for cannibal purposes. When I heard the story I could not at first believe it; but it was confirmed by Tui Levuka, who said that the Lasikaus frequently stole women from the reefs for the purpose of eating them.

All doubt, however, was removed, when Mr. Eld, while stationed at the observatory, became an eye-witness of an attempt of the kind. The daughter of the Vi Tonga* chief, with some of her companions, was engaged in fishing on the reef in a small canoe. By some accident the canoe was swamped, which rendered them a prize to whoever should capture them. A canoe from Ambau had watched the poor creatures like a hawk, and, as soon as the accident happened, pounced upon them. The men in the canoe succeeded in capturing the chief's daughter, and forced her into the vessel. When near the shore, however, she contrived to make her escape by jumping overboard, and reached the shore before they could overtake her. Clubs and spears were thrown at her, with no other effect than a slight scratch under the arm, and a bruise on her shoulder. On the beach she was received by her friends, who stood ready to protect her, upon which the Ambau people gave up the pursuit.

The cannibal propensity is not limited to enemies or persons of a different tribe, but they will banquet on the flesh of their dearest friends, and it is even related, that in times of scarcity, families will make an exchange of children for this horrid purpose.

The flesh of women is preferred to that of men, and they consider the flesh of the arm above the elbow, and of the thigh, as the choicest parts. The women are not allowed to eat it openly, but it is said that the wives of chiefs do partake of it in private. It is also forbidden to the kai-si, or common people, unless there be a great quantity, but they have an opportunity of picking the bones.

As a further instance of these cannibal propensities, and to show that the sacrifice of human life to gratify their passions and appetites is of almost daily occurrence, a feast frequently takes place among

* Vi Tonga is a town immediately below the point on which the observatory was placed.