

same number of boys, from the ages of nine to sixteen, were taken and circumcised. For this ceremony long strips of white native cloth were prepared to catch the blood when the foreskin was cut. These strips, when sprinkled with blood, were tied to a stake, and stuck up in the market-place. Here the boys assembled to dance, for six or seven nights, a number of men being placed near the stakes, with a native horn (a conch-shell), which they blew, while the boys danced around the stake for two or three hours together. This dance consisted of walking, jumping, singing, shouting, yelling, &c., in the most savage and furious manner, throwing themselves into all manner of attitudes. The blowing of the conch was any thing but musical; but this is not always the case, for some of their performances have a kind of rude music in them, which the missionaries thought was not unlike in sound to that which is made in a Jewish synagogue, which certainly gives the best idea of the music of a Feejee dance-song.

After the circumcision of the boys, many of the female children had the first joint of their little fingers cut off. The ceremonies ended by the chiefs and people being assembled in the market-place to witness the institution of the circumcised boys to manhood. In doing this, a large leaf is taken, of which they make a water-vessel, which is placed in the branches of a tree. The boys are then blindfolded very closely, and armed with clubs or sticks; they are then led about until they have no recollection of the situation of the tree, after which they seek the vessel, and endeavour to strike it. The first who succeeds in knocking it down was to be considered as the future great warrior. Two or three managed to hit the vessel, amid shouts and applause of the concourse. The sticks were afterwards thrown on the graves of the wives of Katu Mbithi.

Katu Mbithi was considered the finest man in the group, and the favourite of his father, the old king, who in passing an eulogy upon him, ascribed to him all the beauty that a man could possess in the eyes of a Feejee man. He concluded by speaking of his daring spirit and consummate cruelty, and said that he would kill his own wives if they offended him, and would afterwards eat them!

On the 8th of August, 1839, seventeen of the wives of Mbithi were strangled, very near the houses of the missionaries, who heard their groans and saw the whole ceremony. They considered it a privilege to be strangled as the wives of the great chief.

The feast made on this occasion was said to have surpassed any thing that had before taken place in Somu-somu. Immense quantities of food were prepared for it; one hundred baked hogs were given to the people of one town alone; and it is said that after such occurrences