

ningham; for whom the king engaged to send messengers, and to give them up if they should be found. Afterwards an appropriate present was made to him, in return for his turtles, &c.

From this time the natives became reconciled, and much intercourse was had with them. It was found that the head queen was the principal adviser of Tui Muthuata, and that in all his difficulties her judgment rules the state. She seemed entirely devoted to him, bestowed much care and attention in the selection of his food, and in every way endeavoured to please him.

Near the landing there is a large turtle-pen, in which the king's turtles are kept, of which some weigh three hundred pounds. The pens* are three in number, each of which contains a dozen. Both kinds are caught, hawksbill and green turtle. The former is considered the most valuable on account of its shell, and they are indiscriminately used for eating. Both are caught in large quantities on the islands in the season, and form a principal part of the food of chiefs, but the lower class are not allowed to partake of them. It was said they were preparing for a large feast, to be given shortly.

The ship was again visited by a large number of the wives of the chief, nearly all of whom were in a state of nudity; yet they behaved themselves well and modestly. A feast was prepared for them, for if this were neglected, it would be considered an unpardonable oversight. They did not manage very well in sitting at table or using the knife and fork. Their attack on the eatables, and the quantity they devoured, showed not only appetite, but great capacity of stomach. The knife and fork was too slow a process for them, and their use was soon dispensed with for that of the fingers.

During their visit, a native was detected stealing a hatchet. This was the first theft committed on board the Peacock since being in the group. The king's son, who was on board at the time, wanted to club the thief on shore and roast him, but Captain Hudson thought it was better for him to settle the business himself, and accordingly punished him at the gangway, and gave orders that he should not be admitted on board again.

There are in Muthuata a greater number of light-coloured Feejee men than are elsewhere to be met with. They are generally half-caste, and this mixture has arisen from their intercourse with the Rotuma Islanders, of whom they are very fond.

Mr. Hale succeeded in getting permission to disinter some skeletons on the island of Muthuata, which lies immediately off the town. This

* The pens are shallow pits, within the flow of the tide, and surrounded with stakes.