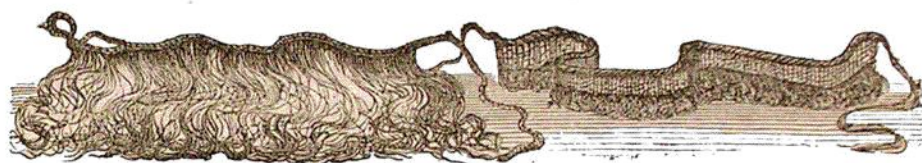


The mode of wearing the hair-pricker, or comb, is an indication of rank. None but the king wears it in front. Those next in rank wear it a little to one side, while the lower class carry it as clerks do their pens, behind the ear.

They have a very high opinion of their taste in dress, and in this their national pride may be said chiefly to consist.

The women are not allowed to wear tapa,\* and their dress is slight and scanty. It consists of no more than the liku, a kind of band, made, as has been stated, from the bark of the vau or hibiscus. Before marriage the liku is worn short, but after the birth of the first child, it is much lengthened.



LIKUS.

Tattooing is only performed on the women, and is chiefly confined to the parts which are covered by the liku. The women believe that to be tattooed is a passport to the other world, where it prevents them from being persecuted by their own sex, numbers of whom, by command of the gods, would meet them, if not tattooed, and, armed with sharp shells, would chase them continually through the lower regions. So strong is this superstition, that when girls have died before being tattooed, their friends have painted the semblance of it upon them, in order to deceive the priest, and thus escape the anger of the gods.

Besides the parts covered by the liku, the corners and sometimes the whole circuit of the mouth are tattooed, which is said to be done for the purpose of preventing wrinkles.

The Feejee word for tattooing is ngia. It is performed by women only, who use an instrument called bati ni ngia. This is dipped in a pigment formed by mixing the charcoal of the laudi-nut with oil, and is struck in by blows from a piece of sugar-cane. The common women are tattooed about the age of puberty (fourteen), but women of rank

\* This prohibition appears to arise from the jealousy of their own sex, who punish severely any who infringe upon this custom. As an instance of this, an old woman at Levuka was pointed out to me by Whippy, who once took it into her head to wear a small piece of tapa, with which she showed herself in the village, whereupon the other women fell upon her, and after beating her almost to death, bit off her nose, and left her a monument of her own vanity, and of the ferocity of the fair sex of Feejee.