

destroyed after birth. According to Wood, this custom does not prevail at Makin.

There are professed tattooers, who are held in great estimation, and receive very high prices; this confines the art to the wealthy and those of rank. The young men are not tattooed before the age of twenty, and slaves never. The tattooing is mostly in short oblique lines, about the eighth of an inch apart. These are arranged in perpendicular rows, of which there are four or five down the back on each side of the spine, with a similar marking in front, beginning just below the collar-bone. The legs also are marked.

The women are tattooed in the same manner, but not so much as the men. Owing to the lightness of the lines, and the distance between them, they do not show very conspicuously. The colouring matter used is charcoal, mixed with cocoanut-oil. The instrument employed is a piece of bone, cut like a fine-toothed comb, similar to that used at the Samoan Group. The tattooing is done at different times, to alleviate the pain which attends the operation.

Of all their customs, the funeral ceremonies are the most remarkable. When a man dies, his body is taken to the mariapa, washed, and laid out on a clean mat, where it remains for eight days, and every day at noon it is taken into the sun, washed, and oiled. During this time the friends are engaged in wailing and singing praises of the dead, and dancing; but they think it a great weakness to shed tears on such occasions. After this mourning, the body is sewed up in two mats, and sometimes buried in the house of the nearest relatives, the head being always turned towards the east. In other cases, it is stored away in the loft. When the flesh is nearly gone, the skull is taken off, carefully cleaned, oiled, and put away. The skulls of their ancestors are kept by chiefs as a kind of household deity, to which they frequently offer up prayers and entreaties, to have a regard and to keep watchful care over their descendants. The skulls are not unfrequently taken down, bound around with wreaths, anointed with oil, and have food set before them. In passing from one island to another, these skulls are always carried along, as if members of the family, and treated with every mark of reverence.

The funeral ceremonies on Makin, according to Wood, are still more extraordinary; but we have no good reason to doubt the facts, as they seem to be somewhat allied to those above related. After the first ceremonies of wailing, the body is washed and laid out upon a new mat, which is spread on a large oblong plate, made of several tortoise-shells sewed together. From two to six persons, according to the size of the corpse, seat themselves opposite to one another on