

the floor of the house, and hold this plate, with the body of their friend, on their knees. When tired, they are relieved by others, and in this way the service is kept up for a space of time varying from four months to two years, according to the rank of the deceased. All persons, whether freeborn or slaves, receive this treatment after death. During the continuance of this lying in state, a fire is kept constantly burning, both day and night, in the house, and its extinction would be regarded as a most unlucky omen.* At the end of the period, the remains are sometimes wrapped in mats, and stowed away in the loft of the house, but more commonly they are buried in a piece of ground set apart for the purpose. The grave is marked with three stones, one at the head, another at the foot, and one placed horizontally across these.

The skulls of the chiefs are preserved, and treated in the same way as at the other islands.

From diseases the natives appear to be tolerably free. Consumptions, and a kind of cholera morbus, are the most fatal. There were no cases of elephantiasis seen; but, as has been remarked in speaking of the islands separately, the kind of cutaneous disorder called by the natives *gune*, prevails extensively; this, at some stages of the disease, resembles the ringworm. It begins with this appearance, in a small circle, about an inch in diameter, covered with a scurf; the ring gradually increases in size, and when it becomes large, a smaller one forms within it; as this last increases, another forms within it, and in this way the affection continues to spread, unless arrested. Several circles often form on the body within a short distance of each other, the rings meet and become confluent, producing a variety of curved lines, and concentric circles. The whole body becomes at length covered with this scurf, which is always attended by painful itching. This finally passes off, and leaves the skin seamed with an infinity of circles and wavy lines of a livid hue, and produces a most disgusting appearance; in this stage it sometimes continues during the remainder of a person's life, without materially affecting his general health. At other times it assumes a more virulent character, in which case large excrescences like warts form, first on the face, or between the fingers and toes, and then in other parts. The softer portions of the face and body swell to double their natural size; the person becomes unable to walk, or to move his limbs, until death at length overtakes and releases

* When the truth of this account was questioned, in consequence of the time that would be employed by the natives, Wood readily answered, that "One half of them have nothing else to do."