

In the kingdom of Siam, the law permits the husband to beat his wife, to send her away, to sell her as a slave, or even, under some circumstances, to kill her!! When the children begin to grow up, if they revolt against her, insult or strike her, the father looks on with cold indifference. Human sacrifices are offered in nearly all the innumerable islands of New Holland. In some, as in the island of Timor, slaves are shut up alive in the tomb of their king, in order to serve him in the other world. In others, the prince who mounts the throne sacrifices a young maiden decked with flowers to the crocodiles of the shores of which he styles the son. Elsewhere, as in the island of Celebes, a maiden is immolated on the tomb of a chieftain, one month after his funeral. In almost all these islands, it is a constant usage for certain families to pay the tribute of a victim whenever any member of the royal race dies.

A chieftain of the Salomon islands punishes with death the audacious subject who should walk upon the shadow of his body. A chief of the Sandwich isles, grandfather of the present sovereign, used to put to death every man who should see him during the day, though it were only for an instant and by chance.

The degraded people of Botany Bay bury in the tomb of its mother the child which is still at her breast. Many tribes of the Malaysians frequently sell their sons. Nearly all the islanders of Polynesia are cannibals. With some the custom of eating human flesh is practised with circumstances which render it still more horrible. It is not rare to see the Celebeans and the Japanese feeding on the hearts of their enemies.

In the Mendana Archipelago, the savages not only eat their prisoners, but in time of scarcity they devour their aged parents, their own children, and their wives. In the great island of Sumatra, the natives not only eat human flesh through a religious motive, but they devour their victims alive. He who is condemned to be eaten, is tied to a tree with his arms extended. Then the chief, or, in case of guilt, the injured party, approaches, cuts the nostrils and ears, and the flesh within the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, which parts are esteemed the most delicate. After him the other assistants mutilate the unfortunate victim until he expires. Women are not exempt from this horrible treatment. Lately in the Andaman islands, and in many other parts of the same coast, when a father became old, his sons called together all their young acquaintances, and constrained the old man to climb to the top of a pole, which they then shook violently. If the miserable creature kept his hold, they conducted him back to his house, and permitted him to live a year longer; but if he fell, they attacked him with clubs, and after killing him, divided his palpitating members. The same excesses are in use among the savage herds of North and South America. Such is a faint sketch of the disorders, crimes, and abominations which take place in countries deprived of the benefits of the faith.

III.

BENEFITS FROM THE CATHOLIC MISSIONS.

Let those desolated countries then be visited by the Catholic religion with its pure morality, its consoling doctrines, and its divine authority.