

pared them for what they shortly afterwards had to witness. They now found that their servant was only partly informed, for, instead of two men, they soon observed eleven brought in, and knew that a feast was to take place. The missionaries, Messrs. Hunt and Lythe, went to the old king, to urge him to desist from so barbarous and horrid a repast, and warned him that the time would come when he would be punished for it. The king referred them to his son, but the savage propensities of the latter rendered it impossible to turn him from his barbarous purposes.

On the day of the feast the shutters of their houses were closed, in order to keep out the disgusting smell that would ensue, but Mr. Hunt took his station just within his fence, and witnessed the whole that followed. The victims were dragged along the ground with ropes around their necks by these merciless cannibals, and laid, as a present to the king, in the front of the missionaries' house, which is directly opposite the king's square, or public place of the town. The cause of the massacre was, that the people of Lauthala had killed a man belonging to the king's koro, who was doing some business for the king; and, notwithstanding the people of Lauthala are related to the king, it was considered an unpardonable offence, and an order was given to attack their town. The party that went for this purpose came upon the unsuspecting village when they were neither prepared for defence nor flight, or, as they described it to Mr. Hunt, "at the time the cock crows, they open their eyes and raise their heads from sleep, they rushed in upon them, and clubbed them to death," without any regard to rank, age, or sex. All shared the same fate, whether innocent or guilty. A large number were eaten on the spot. No report makes this less than thirty, but others speak of as many as three hundred. Of these it is not our intention to speak, but only of what was done with the eleven presented to the king and spirit.

The utmost order was preserved on this occasion, as at their other feasts, the people approaching the residence of the king with every mark of respect and reverence, at the beat of the drum. When human bodies are to be shared, the king himself makes a speech, as he did on this occasion. In it he presented the dead to his son, and intimated that the gods of Feejee should be propitiated, that they might have rain, etc. The son then rose and publicly accepted the gift,