

twenty yards in width, against which the waves dash with terrific violence; they burst against this rocky bulwark, curling their foamy crests over the top of the reef, and spread in harmless vengeance upon its surface. What an apt symbol is this coral belt of the ramparts of superstition and idolatry which encompassed these islands! The moral darkness of the people was so deep that the idea of the true God had almost disappeared from their minds, and also the conception of the brotherhood of man, which is so akin to that of the Fatherhood of God. These ferocious savages were constantly engaged in desolating wars, and their cannibalism was but the crown of a system of iniquity, the like of which has seldom been found elsewhere. Even the printed page would blush to present a true picture of their licentiousness before the rays of Christian light touched and transformed them. It is a shame even to speak of those things which were done of them in secret.

Women were barbarously treated. Their condition was very low. They were under the bondage of a Tabu system similar to that which prevailed in the Hawaiian Islands. They could not eat certain kinds of food, or live under the same roof with their tyrannical lords. Children were cruelly strung together by skewers, and old people pierced with javelins or beaten to death with clubs. There were among the people two captivities: one to the gods, and the other to the king's servants. The first rendered one liable to be offered up as a sacrifice; the other, to have his house entered, and to suffer the greatest depredations without even the right of remonstrance. Of course wars among such a people were very sanguinary. Female prisoners were generally put to death lest they should become mothers of warriors. Captive children, with spears passed through their ears, were borne in triumph to the temples, and the skulls of other conquered foes were beaten in and their brains spread on bread-fruit leaves as an offering to the gods.

The mission work, which extended through twenty-two years, was, as has been hinted, a triumphal progress.

The Mauruans, who formerly attributed every evil that befell them to the anger of "evil spirits," learned to worship the true God, and pointed to demolished Maracs and mutilated idols as proofs of the great change. In some cases the spears used in warfare were converted into balustrades for pulpit stairs, and no vestige of idolatry remained. Oro, the war god, and other grim-looking wooden idols were degraded into props for the roof of cooking houses or wood sheds. It was a common thing for the temples to be destroyed and the idols to be burned or surrendered to the missionaries as trophies. In Aitutaki not a single idolater remained, and a large chapel was built nearly two hundred feet in length. Recitations in the catechism, prayers to God, and grace at table displaced unsightly gestures and obscene songs. A people that eighteen months before had been the wildest Mr. Williams had ever seen had become mild, teachable, diligent, and kind.