

A Narrative of the Shipwreck, Captivity and Sufferings of Horace Holden and Benj. H. Nute, Who Were Cast Away in the American Ship Mentor, on the Pelew Islands, in the Year 1832; and For Two Years Afterwards were Subjected to Unheard of Sufferings Among the Barbarous Inhabitants of Lord North's Island. Fourth Edition. Boston: Russell Shattuck, and Co., 1836.

CHAPTER IX.

The natives compel the Mentor's people to be tattooed.—Description of that painful operation.—They also oblige them to pluck their beards, &c.—Another vessel passes by the island; and, afterwards, a third comes in sight and remains for three days; the Mentor's people are closely guarded at these times.—The melancholy fate of William Sedon; and the barbarous murder of Peter Andrews.—Attack on H. Holden, who is protected by one of the natives, and escapes.—B. Nute and others are protected by the female natives from the fury of the men.—Death of one of the Pelew chiefs.—Another of the Pelew people is detected in stealing, and is punished in their manner.—Death of Milton Hewlet and Charles C. Bouket; leaving now only B. Nute, H. Holden, and the other Pelew chief, named *Kobak*, who all remained in a feeble and helpless condition.—Filthy practices of the natives.—Friendship of the surviving Pelew chief.

A NEW trial now awaited us. The barbarous beings among whom our lot had been cast, deemed it important that we should be *tattooed*, and we were compelled to submit to the distressing operation. We expostulated against it—we entreated—we begged to be spared this additional affliction; but our entreaties were of no use. Those sa-

vages were not to be moved, and we were compelled to submit; and that the reader may form some idea of the painful process, I will here give a brief account of it.

We were in the first place securely bound down to the ground, and there held fast by our tormentors. They then proceeded to draw with a sharp stick the figures designed to be imprinted on the skin. This done, the skin was thickly punctured with a little instrument made of sharpened fish bones, and somewhat resembling a carpenter's adz in miniature, but having teeth, instead of a smooth, sharp edge. This instrument was held within an inch or two of the flesh, and struck into it rapidly with a piece of wood, applied to it in such a manner as to cause it to rebound at every stroke. In this way our breasts and arms were prepared; and subsequently the ink, which was made of a vegetable found on the island called by them the "*savvan*," was applied. The operation caused such an inflammation of our bodies, that only a portion could be done at one time; and as soon as

the inflammation abated another portion was done, as fast as we could bear it, till our bodies were covered. It was effectually done; for to this day the figures remain as distinct as they were when first imprinted, and the marks will be carried by us to the grave. They were exceedingly anxious to perform the operation upon our faces; but this we would not submit to, telling them that sooner than have it done we would die in resisting them. Among themselves, the oldest people had the greatest quantity of tattooing, and the younger class less.

Besides the operation of *tattooing*, they compelled us to pluck the hair from different parts of the body, and to pluck our beards about every ten days, which was extremely painful; and at every successive operation the beard grew out harder and stiffer.

About seventeen days after the captain and Rollins left, we saw a vessel to the windward; but the natives did not attempt to visit it. Five months afterwards another came in sight, and remained for three days near the island. At one time we could dis-

tinctly see the men on board; but we were kept on shore and closely guarded. Several canoes visited the ship, and brought back a few pieces of iron, fish-hooks, glass bottles, &c. We tried, but in vain, to escape. It seemed to us, that we were doomed to remain on that dreary spot, to wear out our remaining strength in hopeless bondage, and to submit to the control of brutal masters, whose tender mercies were cruelties. Death, in any form, would have been a relief, and often did we see moments when it would have been welcomed as the best of friends! To some of our companions it did come, though dreadful in the manner, yet as a not unwelcome alternative.

About a year after we first arrived at the island, William Sedon became so reduced as to deprive us of all hopes of his recovery. He looked like a skeleton; and, at last, was so entirely exhausted by hunger, as to be unable to walk, or even to rise from the ground. He continued, however, to crawl from place to place, until all his remaining strength was nearly gone, when the inhu-

man monsters placed him in an old canoe, and sent him adrift on the ocean! Gladly would his unhappy shipmates have extended to him the last sad offices of friendship; that poor consolation was denied both him and us! My heart bleeds at the recollection of our separation and his melancholy fate—when we saw him anxiously turn his languid eyes towards those who were doomed still to linger on the borders of the grave! Our sighs were breathed almost in silence, and our tears were shed in vain!

It may be observed here, that it is not their custom to deposit the bodies of any of their dead in the earth, except very young children. The bodies of grown people, after death, are laid in a canoe and committed to the ocean.

It was soon our lot to part with another of our companions, Peter Andrews. He was accused by the natives of some trifling offence, and put to death. The savages knocked him down with their clubs, and then despatched him in the most cruel and most shocking manner. I was at this time

at a distance from the place where he was killed. My master was absent; and upon my hearing a noise in the direction of the place where the foul business was transacted, and suspecting that all was not right, I started to see what was going on. I was near the beach when I saw a number of the savages coming towards the spot where I stood, dragging along the lifeless and mangled body of our comrade! One of them approached me behind, and knocked me down with his club. The body of Andrews was thrown into the sea, and it seemed to be their determination to destroy the whole of us. I warded off the blows aimed at me as well as I could, and recovering myself, ran towards the hut of my master. He had not yet returned; but, fortunately, an old man, who had previously shown some regard for me, and who was the particular friend of my master, happened at that moment to be passing; and seizing the man who had pursued me, held him fast. I escaped and ran into the hut, and crawled up
into the room, and then ran into the

chamber under the roof. I seized an old box and covered up the hole through which I had ascended; but this was not sufficient to detain, for any great length of time, the wretches who were thirsting for my blood. They soon succeeded in displacing the box, and one of them seized me, but just as he was pulling me from my place of refuge, my master returned with several of his friends, and rescued me from the clutches of my enemies.

In the mean time Nute and the rest of our companions were at the "*Tahboo*," a place of public resort where, for the only time, the females rendered our people any assistance. They concealed the men under some mats, and kept them there till the fury of the natives had in a measure subsided.

We were next called upon to part with one of the Pelew *chiefs* who had come with us. He died of absolute starvation, and, according to custom, was committed to the waves in an old canoe. In a short time after this, the Pelew private (who had also come with us) was detected in the crime of

taking a few cocoa-nuts without leave ; for which offence he had his hands tied behind him, and was put into a canoe and sent adrift ; which was their usual method of punishment for offences of different kinds.

About a year and seven months from the commencement of our captivity Milton Hewlet died, and, like the others, was, according to the custom of the natives, committed to the ocean. A short time afterwards Charles C. Bouket, having become so reduced by his sufferings as to be unable to help himself, was (horrible to relate !) placed in a canoe, while still alive, and committed to the mercy of the ocean. Thus did one after another of our companions sink under the weight of their sufferings, and perish without any alleviation of their wretchedness. Nute and myself, with our friend *Kobac*, the other Pelew chief, were all that remained ; and we were constantly expecting that the next hour would end our existence.

The idea of death, however, had now become familiar ; and often did we desire the release from suffering which that alone could

afford. Nothing, as it now appears to us, but the kind interposition of Providence, could have continued our lives, and have given us the power of endurance to hold out so long as we did. We were frequently so reduced as to be unable to walk, and were forced to drag ourselves on our hands and knees to some place where we could lie down under the shade of a bush, and take rest. But the small comfort to be obtained in this way was greatly lessened by the annoyance of musquetoës, which could attack us with impunity in our helpless and feeble condition. Besides this, our flesh had so fallen away, that on lying down, our bones would actually pierce through the skin, giving us the most severe pain. After we were tattooed, the parts operated upon were, for a long time, running sores; and when exposed to the sun, the pain was excruciating.

It has been already said, that the natives were indolent, filthy and degraded, but the half has not been told; and some things which we witnessed cannot be related. The intercourse of the sexes was unrestrained by

any law; and the decencies of life were almost entirely neglected. Instead of taking pains to keep clean, they seemed to be not unwilling to have their heads overrun with vermin; and however incredible it may seem, it is a disgusting truth, that they are accustomed to eat them; and particular care seems to be taken to keep those loathsome animals in the heads of the children. But I forbear any further particulars.

I have already said, that only two of the crew of the *Mentor*, namely, Nute and myself, remained alive, with the exception of captain Barnard and Rollins, who had fortunately escaped. The Pelew chief had become strongly attached to us, and we take pleasure in stating the fact, that his faithfulness and affection had greatly endeared him to us. He seemed more like a brother than a barbarian; and most gladly would we have saved him from those sufferings which, no doubt, before this time, have terminated his life. Alas! it was not in our power to administer to his relief; and when we last saw him he was but just alive.