

as placing a large earthen vessel on the fire, and indicating that they cut off parts of the body, place in the vessel, and afterwards eat them, our suspicions were aroused that they honour the memory of their friends and relations by eating them. At all events, they had no objection to sell human skulls, of which several were procured, and no sacrifice seemed too great for them if they could only get hold of that priceless material—iron hoop.

We have no record of any visit of Europeans to these islands since that of D'Entrecasteaux, in 1792, who did not land, and could not prevail on any of the natives to visit his vessel. But from the first we seemed to have established a good understanding, and our stay was sufficiently long to render us familiar with the faces of our daily visitors. Their conduct seemed always cheerful and friendly, and they had no objection to come on board, and submit to the processes of being photographed, weighed, and measured.

Thus a week passed. The bay, reefs, and islands were surveyed and named, and many a pleasant day's sport had on Pigeon Island, where there were numberless birds and pretty tropical scenery. The survey and magnetic experiments being completed, on the 10th March we steamed out of Nares Harbour, not without regret at leaving these interesting savages; and before sunset they and their beautiful islands had sunk below the horizon.