

The planters dress themselves in their best raiment and say
that as Ateas on earth they are imitating the Ateas in
heaven. The land is considered sacred from hence until the
sweet potato crops are taken up. No person presumes to go
upon them except such as are consecrated for the purpose
of weeding & inspecting them. The head of a New Zealander
being the seat of the Ateas is sacred, and is held in such
estimation as though the head could do without any other
part of the body. To the carved or graven head of a friend
or enemy after death the same ode is sung. The latter it
is true, is separated from the body but it is held in honor
as well as the former, altho it does not command an equal
effusion of tears. The language is "what a fine God is this."
These customs the description of which would be most painful
to the tender feelings, are consistent with the natives ideas
of the properties of the Supreme Being. They describe Him as
an invisible anthropophagus, and regard Him with a mixture
of fear and hatred. They see themselves, as I have before
told you, when He thinks good to afflict them or call any
of them away for having lost sight of Him so long, how can
they think of Him as a God of Love and Mercy.
The territorial possessions of the natives are hereditary