

The main island is exceedingly flat and low, its highest point being only 60 feet above sea level. It thus stretched itself before our view as a horizontal streak of green of uniform width, the width being due merely to the height of the vegetation; here and there at the water's edge, were seen small inlets and stretches of white sandy beaches, or low honey-combed and weathered clifflets of coral rock.

Above these, appeared a band of dark foliaged shrubs, and shrubby trees with shore-loving plants at their foot, growing in the sand; and as a background behind, rose a mass of coconut-trees of various heights, but densely packed together, and thus forming with their crowns a tolerably even line; no palms other than cocoanuts were to be seen in the mass.

On the small scattered islets which were near at hand, Screw-Pine trees were conspicuous, their stems surrounded with prop-like aerial roots, whilst on the main island these trees, which are numerous along the shore, were almost lost to view against the general backing of dark foliage.

As we steamed on, we could see beneath the coconut-trees on the shores, the villages of the islanders, composed of small houses of palm mats and grass thatch, and, as the news spread, we saw the villagers assemble on the beach in their conspicuous white or red clothing, to gaze at the ship.

In the harbour were several American whalers, waiting for the whales expected to come into the bay in a few days, and also a small German vessel¹ of the firm of Goddefroy Brothers, the famed collectors of South Sea Island productions.

Not until we had passed the most difficult twist in the passage into the harbour, did the pilot come out, in a small English-built boat manned by four sturdy Tongans.

These Tongans were naked, except that they had a cloth round the waist, and one of them a further girdle of green Screw-Pine leaves; they had all, however, linen shirts, which they put on as they got cool; and the coxswain, formerly a Mataboolo, or lord, but degraded for drunkenness, wore besides a pea jacket.

The boat was a whale-boat, belonging to the King. As is always the case, the men, being so little clothed, looked to us bigger than they really were. They were, however, remarkably finely made men, with all their muscles well developed, and all of them were extremely well nourished. The Tongans have large broad foreheads and faces, the lower jaws being wide at their articulation, the chins narrowing off rather abruptly from the face. The nose is flattened, but not very much; the eyebrows are straight, the lips not large or protuberant.

The colour of the Tongans is of a light brownish-yellow with