

which intoxicated him, and he became of a most joyous temperament and full of affection.

The way of catching fish practised here is quite amusing, and to it we owe the many specimens in that department of natural history which we obtained. The natives enjoy the sport amazingly, and both old and young are all in some way participators in it. Near the mouth of the lagoon are laid some coral stones, forming a rude and shallow pen, with a channel leading to it; several natives proceed about one-third of a mile up the beach of the lagoon, where they enter the water, ranging themselves in a row, the tallest in the deepest water. They then move along down towards the pen, quite noiselessly at first, driving the fish before them. As they approach, they begin to splash and make a noise; the clamour gradually increases, until it becomes one continued shout. They then contract themselves towards the pen, and the fish are seen jumping and dashing in all directions, as if very much alarmed, until they are forced to enter the pen, which is then closed with a few stones; afterwards the natives begin to spear them with great dexterity, and many were obtained. It was gratifying to witness the pleasure that both old and young appeared to take in this employment, and quite surprising that the fish do not escape over the low wall that surrounds them, only two or three inches above the water; but they appear bewildered. The natives regretted that their success was so small, and imputed it to the water being too high. Some fresh water may be obtained here. The spring or pond is on the west side of the entrance. What the natives had in their cocoa-nut shells was sweet. It is, however, in no great abundance.

Many specimens were here added to our collections. This was one of the islands in which I attempted to sound the lagoon. We began at the entrance, but found, within a very short distance, that the depth increased to thirty fathoms, the water being as blue as that of the ocean. So great a depth made it an undertaking far beyond what my time allowed. The sounding, in every case of any depth, was coral sand.

Towards sunset we all embarked, and my leave-taking with the old chief was amusing. He with all his household and retinue, began to cry and whine over me, so that I was glad to escape from the display of so much friendship and parental affection.

After reaching my ship, the Porpoise again joined us. She had been despatched early in the morning towards the eastern end of the island, to ascertain its extent, and fix its point in that direction; not being able to accomplish this, Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold returned for further orders. This night we lay-to under the lee of