

reefs of coral. Such objects are sufficient to form a beautiful landscape, and my disappointment probably arose in part from finding every thing more diminutive than I had been led to imagine from the highly-wrought descriptions I had been perusing only a few days before.

We were surrounded, even before we anchored, by canoes of all shapes and sizes, whose crews made a prodigious clamour. I at once interdicted any one who was not a chief from coming on board; but upon this being announced, every one claimed to be a chief of some description or other. Only the great chiefs, therefore, were admitted. These came off in whale-boats, which are now superseding the canoe, and brought with them trifling presents of fruit. It was soon found that their errand was not one of mere ceremony, but was intended to solicit the washing of our dirty linen, a business which is among the prerogatives of the queen and chiefs. I was informed that the queen, being *enceinte*, was residing on the opposite side of the island, which would prevent her from paying us a visit. I was, therefore, at liberty to choose a less distinguished laundress, and spared the pain of resisting her royal solicitations for soap, an article much needed and in great request at Tahiti.

I was glad when the night closed in, to be rid of our numerous visitors. The pilot, who goes by the name of "English Jim," was equally so, for he chose to be considered as the only privileged person, and, besides, was looking somewhat to his own profit in the line of clothes-washing, a business which the presence of the chiefs threatened to interfere with. Jim is quite a respectable-looking man, dresses in the European fashion, and speaks English, which he has acquired on board of whale-ships, tolerably well. Although a good pilot, so far as a knowledge of the shoals goes, he does not understand what to do with a vessel, in case of difficulty. He told me that he had been looking out for vessels for some days, for it had thundered.

Although the shape and extent of Tahiti are well known, I venture to give a map of it, which has been made as correct as our opportunities would permit. The two peninsulas, if they may be so termed, of which it is made up, are of very different characters. The smaller one, called Tairaboo, and usually spoken of as "the small island," is said to be the most fertile: it possesses some harbours, but they are little better known than they were half a century ago. Both peninsulas possess twenty-four harbours, including the good and bad. Tahiti proper contains the best, and therefore engrosses all the commerce. It has in consequence been for many years the seat of government.

The whole island is of volcanic formation, but there is no longer