

thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. From these two peaks, ridges diverge to all parts of the coast, throwing off spurs as they descend. These ridges are precipitous, and for the most part narrow. In many instances their summit is a mere edge, making walking upon them not only dangerous, but often impossible.

Soon after my arrival, I was visited by S. R. Blackler, Esq., our consul, who resides at Papieti, distant eight miles from Matavai. The resident missionaries, with Mr. Pritchard, Her Britannic Majesty's acting consul, and Mr. Morenhout, the French consul, also favoured me with a visit, as did several other persons, who all expressed their desire of being serviceable to us.

The governor of the district of Matavai, Taua, was the first acquaintance of any distinction that we made. He had already visited the Vincennes on her anchoring. He is a fine-looking man, of huge proportions, and has a large establishment near Point Venus, where he monopolized nearly all the washing, which was performed by his numerous dependants. By this business he derives some remuneration for the cost of feeding and clothing them, putting the gains of their labour into his own pocket. Such, at least, is his own account of the transaction.

Taua's usual dress was a striped cotton shirt, nankeen pantaloons that had once been yellow, and a round jacket of blue cloth. Both shirt and pantaloons were too tight, and he had neither suspenders nor stockings, although he wore shoes. In this guise he had an awkward look, which he probably would not have exhibited in a native costume.

He was profuse in offers of hospitality at his own house, and many of the officers were induced to accept his invitations. His entertainments appear to have been of the same general character with that to which I was treated, and which will, therefore, serve as a specimen of the mode in which such things are done by the "good society" of Tahiti.

We reached his dwelling in time to see the preparations for the feast. These were entrusted to his man of all work, Stephen, or as he called him, "Stiffin." This useful personage exhibited his dexterity, not only in cooking, but in killing the poultry. The bird selected was a cock, for the Tahitians well understand the difference in value between it and the hens; and Stephen exhibited much adroitness in the slaying, plucking, and dressing. While this was going on, the stones for the Tahitian oven, so often described by voyagers, were heating, and when they had acquired the proper temperature, the ashes were carefully swept off,—bread-fruit, taro, and plantains, wrapped in