

only three feet deep. Other fords of the same description occurred every few rods, until they at last reached one in which the water reached to their necks. This was of course dangerous to those who could not swim, but all crossed in safety. A young native, as if in derision of the difficulty which they appeared to experience, and of their effeminate bringing up, dashed into the flood, and was seen plunging down the rapids in sport, and evidently with great enjoyment, although frequently wholly immersed in the foam. Our gentlemen had now an opportunity of comparing their own awkwardness and want of ease in the new position in which they were placed, with the agility and freedom of motion exhibited by the natives.

The whole afternoon was thus spent in travelling about three miles, at the end of which they reached some huts, in which they passed the night comfortably. These huts they were informed had been erected by natives, who wished to enjoy a carouse of ava, far from the notice of the judges, and free from the intrusion of their spies. Here they were able to indulge in their old habits of debauchery, which not unfrequently ended in riot and bloodshed.

In the morning, after three hours' travelling, during which they frequently crossed the stream, they reached a place where a branch of it came in from the southwest. Some natives assured them that by taking this route they might reach the top of Pitohiti, and stated that this had been done during the last war by some natives, who occupied it as a place of refuge. In support of this statement, they mentioned that these refugees had found the birds so tame that they might be taken by hand. This circumstance, which, from its apparent incredibility, might seem to disprove the statement, is in fact almost positive evidence of its truth, when compared with what we had seen of the birds in uninhabited islands, where their habits would naturally correspond to those secluded in the mountain solitudes of Tahiti.

Here they learned that it would be impracticable to accomplish both objects of their mission within the time for which they were furnished with provisions. It was therefore resolved to divide the party into two detachments, one of which should proceed towards the lake, and the other endeavour to ascend the mountain.

It was in this place that the last battle was fought between the Christian and heathen parties. Paura, their guide, pointed out all the places where any remarkable incidents of the conflict had occurred. He seemed to take particular pleasure in drawing the attention of the party to two places. In one of these a captain had his head beaten to pieces, and the other was a precipice, several hundred feet in height, over which the defeated party had been driven and dashed to pieces.