

Apolima, on the most cursory examination, is evidently the crater of an extinct volcano. Perpendicular cliffs rise from the sea around its whole circuit, except at a single point on its northern side. Here the lip of the crater is broken down, and admits the water of the sea into a small bay, which affords a safe harbour for boats. The entrance to this is so narrow as to admit no more than one boat at a time, and is dangerous whenever there is any surf. It may, therefore, be easily defended. There is only one other point on the island where it is possible to effect a landing, namely, at a small height to the westward of the bay, and here it can only be done when the water is perfectly smooth. But an enemy landing here would have made no progress, for before the interior can be reached from this point, the steep and precipitous rocks remain to be climbed.

The highest point of Apolima is on its south side, where it is four hundred and seventy-two feet above the sea. The perpendicular cliffs which face the sea are of course bare of vegetation; but with this exception the whole surface is covered with cocoa, bread-fruit, and other trees, or with plantations of taro, yams, &c.

In the centre of the island is a village of about twenty houses, and the permanent population consists of no more than about seventy-five persons. The people are evidently jealous of the maiden reputation of their natural fortress, and showed much concern when we visited it, which the women even manifested by shedding tears.

It can be readily understood from this description of Apolima, that whatever party held it would be able to maintain possession of it against great odds, and thence to take advantage of any weakness or want of watchfulness on the part of their enemies.

While we were engaged at Tutuila and Upolu, the survey of the island of Savaii was performed by Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold, in the Porpoise. It has already been mentioned that this vessel had been detached for that purpose, and that Dr. Pickering, from the Vincennes, had gone in her. The brig first touched at Sapapale, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Hardie, who gave them a cordial welcome, although much surprised at so unusual an arrival.

Many of the natives collected to view the white men, of whom so many had never been seen together on the island. In their remarks, they, among other things, praised our people for their beauty.

Dr. Pickering and Lieutenant Maury were landed here, to remain upon the island while the brig was employed in surveying it; the former to examine its productions, the latter to observe the tides. Mr. Hardie kindly afforded them accommodations in a new house he had just been erecting.