

company. I had compiled a chart of the comparatively unknown sea we were about to traverse; but the weather was threatening, and from the specimen we had had in the morning of its dangers, I thought it would be prudent to haul off, which I did, at 2 P. M. At five, land was reported ahead, and on the lee bow; it proved to be the island of Totoia, which I now found was thirty miles out of the position assigned it by former navigators. I at once came to the determination of running into the group, feeling assured we should thus save much time, and probably find smoother water; the dangers we had to encounter in either way were about equal. It was now blowing a fresh gale, which obliged us to take three reefs in the topsails; it is by no means a pleasant business to be running over unknown ground, in a dark night, before a brisk gale, at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour. The sea was unusually phosphorescent, and the night was disagreeable with rain and mists. The Peacock and Flying-Fish followed us. The morning proved fine, and at daylight we were within a short distance of the Horse-shoe Reef, unknown to any of us but Tom, who thought we must be at least twenty miles from it. We found ourselves in the midst of a number of beautiful islands, viz.,\* Goro, Vanua-levu, and Somu-somu on our right; Nairai, Ambatiki, and Matuku, on the left; whilst Ovolau, Wakaia, and Mokungai, were in front; they were all girt by white encircling reefs. So beautiful was their aspect, that I could scarcely bring my mind to the realizing sense of the well-known fact, that they were the abode of a savage, ferocious, and treacherous race of cannibals.

Each island had its own peculiar beauty, but the eye as well as mind felt more satisfaction in resting upon Ovolau, which as we approached, had more of the appearance of civilization about it than the others; it is also the highest, most broken, and most picturesque. In consequence of light winds, we did not succeed in reaching the harbour of Levuka that evening, and passed the night under way, between Ovolau and Wakaia. At daylight on the 8th of May, we were off the port, and made all sail for it. At nine o'clock, being off the entrance, I took the precaution, as the breeze was light, to hoist the boats out (having to pass through a passage only eight hundred feet in width), and sent them ahead to tow. At first it is not a little alarming to approach these entrances with a light wind, and often with a strong current setting in or out; the ship rolling and tossing with the swell as she nears the reefs, the deep-blue water of the ocean curling into

\* In the orthography of the names of the Feejee Group, I have followed the pronunciation, and not the true construction of the language, which will be explained in a subsequent chapter.