

might be beneficial in case of any difficulty occurring during our stay ; I believed, moreover, that it would add greatly to the respect which the natives would hold us in.

The town of Levuka contains about forty houses ; it is situated on the east side of the island of Ovolau, in a quiet and peaceful valley, surrounded by a dense grove of cocoa-nut and bread-fruit trees, with a fine stream of fresh and pure water running through it to the beach ; high, broken volcanic peaks rise to the west, forming the background.

The frames of the houses are built of the bread-fruit tree, and are filled in with reeds, whilst the roof is covered with a thatch of the wild sugar-cane. They are usually oblong in shape, and from twenty to twenty-five feet in length by fifteen in breadth.

The most conspicuous and remarkable structure is the mbure, or spirit-house, which is built on a raised and walled mound : its proportions are exceedingly uncouth, being nearly twice as high as it is broad at its base, and forming a singular, sharp-peaked roof ; the piece of timber serving for the ridge-pole, projects three or four feet at each end, is covered with numbers of white shells (*Ovula cypræa*), and has two long poles or spears crossing it at right angles. A drawing of one of these mbure will be seen in the succeeding chapter. At the termination of the thatching, the roofs of all the houses are about a foot thick, and project eighteen inches or two feet, forming eaves, which secure them from the wet. For the most part they have two doors, and a fire-place in the centre, composed of a few stones. The furniture consists of a few boxes, mats, several large clay jars, and many drinking vessels, the manufacture of pottery being extensively carried on by them. The sleeping-place is generally screened off, and raised about a foot above the other part of the floor.

Having settled definitively the mode of operation I intended to pursue in surveying the group, I was desirous of fixing some of the main points in my own mind, as well as in that of the officers, and therefore ordered a large party from each ship to be prepared to accompany me on the following morning, to one of the high peaks of the island, called Andulong, taking with us the barometers, &c., for measuring its altitude. I likewise issued an order, directing officers who left the ship for any purpose, to be armed ; being well satisfied that every precaution ought to be taken, in order to prevent surprise in any shape ; I also impressed upon all the necessity of *circumspection*, and of keeping themselves on their guard, which, as I learned from the few incidents related to me by Whippy and others, was highly necessary ; orders were also given to prepare the boats of both ships for surveying duties.