

the slipperiness of the path frequently brought us in contact with sharp rocks. I have seldom witnessed a party so helpless as ours appeared, in comparison with the natives and white residents, who ran over the rocks like goats. Darkness overtook us before we reached the town; many of the natives, however, brought torches of dried cocoanut-leaves to light us on our way, and we reached our respective ships without accident, though much fatigued. Many new specimens were added to our collections, and I believe all felt gratified in having had an opportunity of viewing from so elevated a point this labyrinth of islands, reefs, and sunken shoals.

The island of Ovolau is eight miles in length, north and south, by seven in breadth, east and west; it is of volcanic formation, and its rocks are composed of a conglomerate or pudding-stone; it is high and rugged throughout. The valleys extend only a short distance into the interior, and leave but little level ground; they are, however, exceedingly fertile, with a deep and rich soil, and are well cultivated. Its harbours are all formed by the reefs, and were it not for these, there would be but few in the group; that of Levuka is safe, has good holding-ground, and is easy of access.

On the 10th, the Flying-Fish was still missing.

Feeling satisfied that Ovolau was the most suitable place for my purpose, I selected a site for my observatory on a projecting insulated point, about thirty feet above the beach, on which was sufficient room to accommodate our tents and houses. I also obtained a few acres of ground from the chief, for the purpose of planting a garden, which was well fenced in, and placed under the direction of our horticulturist, Mr. Brackenridge.

On the 11th, the instruments, tents, &c., were landed and put up. The surprise of the natives was extremely great to find a village or town as they called it, erected in a few hours, and every thing in order: the guards on post to prevent all intrusion most excited their curiosity.

All the necessary arrangements having been made, the launch and first cutter of the Vincennes, under Lieutenants Alden, Knox, Midshipman Henry, and Assistant-Surgeon Whittle, were despatched to survey the north shore of Viti-levu; the launch and first cutter of the Peacock, under Lieutenant Emmons, Passed Midshipman Blunt, and Mr. Dyes, to examine and survey the south shore, visiting Viwa, Ambau, and Rewa, the missionary posts: Chaplain Elliott was of the latter party, that he might be enabled to gather information from these establishments; pilots, who acted as interpreters, were sent with both. Orders, of which the following is an extract, were issued to the officers