

On the 8th, the Porpoise sailed from the Exploring Isles, and continued the surveys of Okimbo and Naitamba, with the surrounding reefs, both attached and separate. The former is made up of three small isles, enclosed in the same reef, four miles east and west, by three miles north and south, which are seven miles to the north of the north-west point of Vanua-valavo. The detached reefs are from one to four miles in length; they are awash and dangerous. Okimbo is desolate, and affords nothing but turtles in the season, and some biche de mar.

Naitamba is high and rugged; it is of a circular form, one mile and a half in diameter. The reef does not extend beyond half a mile from it, and has no openings. It has few inhabitants.

The time having now arrived for our meeting at Somu-somu, Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold bore up for that place, passing through Tasman's Straits, which lie between the islands of Kamia and Vuna. Both of these have many reefs projecting from their shores. This passage should not be attempted except in favourable weather, and the best time is during the morning hours, when the sun is to the eastward of the meridian. The currents are strong, and calms are very frequent under the highlands of Kamia and Lauthala. In passing through these straits, although they had a careful look-out at the mast-head, they were close to a coral knoll before it was seen, and passed within a few feet of it. It had no more than eight feet of water on it. At noon they rounded the north point of Vuna, entering the Straits of Somu-somu, and at two o'clock P. M. they reached the anchorage off the town of Somu-somu.

Having finished all my business at Somu-somu on the 10th of June, at ten o'clock at night, I determined, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, to get under way with the tender, in order that I might take up the survey of the south side of Vanua-levu, beginning at Tokanova Point, early the next morning. We accordingly weighed anchor, and stood out of the Straits of Somu-somu.

In rounding Goat Island we did not give it a sufficient berth, and grounded on a sunken patch of coral, an accident which hurt the feelings of Poor Tom the pilot more than it injured the tender. We remained on this shoal about an hour, and after getting off we drifted through the strait, and by daylight found ourselves in a position to begin the survey.

At an early hour, Lieutenant Case, Passed Midshipman Harrison, and myself, took our boats and entered the reef. Mr. Sinclair was left in the tender, with orders to follow the reef close aboard, and directions to enter Fawn Harbour; but having in our progress along the reef discovered an opening, I made signal for the tender to enter.