

enforcing the strict observance of orders, by which a loss of time incompatible with the service we were upon was often sustained.

The next day completed my observations and finished the survey of Nemena, or Direction Isle. In the afternoon we got under way, and stood over to the northward for Savu-savu on the island of Vanua-levu. The wind was quite light when we passed out of the reef, on the opposite side to that where we had entered it. I had previously sent two boats to examine the passage, and anchor in the deepest water. We approached the passage with a light air, having all sail set, but had very little headway. The water was perfectly clear, and the rocks, and fish, with the bottom and keel of the ship, were plainly visible. When we got in the passage, the officer in the boat told me that the keel looked as if it was in contact with the coral; the lead, however, gave three fathoms, one and a half feet to spare. It was a little exciting for twenty minutes, but we did not touch. If we had, the ship, in all probability, would have been a wreck; for, as the tide was falling, she would have hung on the coral shelf, and been but partly supported by it. This is the great danger attendant on the navigation of this group, as indeed of all coral islands.

We were becalmed during the whole night; and the next morning, finding the calm still continued, I took to my boat, directing Lieutenant Carr to steer in for the bay when he got a breeze, supposing it would set in at the ordinary time, eleven o'clock. I landed on a small islet, about six miles from the place where I left the ship, and near the mouth of the bay. To reach the islet we pulled in over the reef, which had on it about four feet of water. The islet was composed of scoriaceous lava, much worn, and about twelve feet above the coral shelf. Here I established myself, and was busy securing my observations, when I discovered that my boat was aground, and that the tide was still falling. The islet as well as the reef became dry. It was not long before we observed the shadow of natives projecting from a rock about fifty yards from us, who it now appeared were watching us closely; and not long after not less than fifty shadows were seen in different directions. I at once ordered all the arms and ammunition to be brought up on the top, and made our situation as defensible as possible, for I had little doubt if they saw that we were unprepared they would attack us. The firing of one or two guns, and the show that we were all on our guard, at once caused a change in their intentions towards us, which they manifested by bringing articles of trade.

The natives of this part of the group are considered by the rest as the most savage, and have seldom been visited by the whites. The afternoon came; and the ship not having made much progress, I