

After the natives had thus made a precipitate retreat, the boats were lowered, and a large party proceeded to land at the nearest point. The landing was effected on the coral shelf with some difficulty, and they found the natives, who had come alongside, ready to receive them, with every sign of friendship. They had apparently recovered from their alarm, and met the officers before they reached the beach, greeting them by rubbing noses and throwing their arms around their necks. Their excitement seemed to be so great that it was difficult for them to continue still for a moment, distracted by the numerous novel things around them. Some of them, however, were exceedingly shy, and would not suffer themselves to be approached; others had greater confidence, but at the same time showed a respectful fear; while a few put their arms round the officers' necks, and exhibited a boldness devoid of dread of any kind. The latter urged the party to accompany them to their village. These different states of feeling were associated with a peculiar mode of singing, which they would continue for some time, during which nothing could induce them to stop; this ended, their astonishment and excitement would again appear to find relief in vociferating with great volubility for several minutes, at the end of which they would break out in a hearty laugh, without the least apparent cause. These islanders are tattooed on the cheeks, breast, legs, and above the hips.

A part of these marks consisted of two rows of lines running from the tip of the ear across the cheek and nose, with small crosses between. There were others passed around the body below the chest; many marks resembling fish were on the arms, and a sort of triangle, together with figures of turtles, on the breast. On the legs were many concentric rings. The markings were distinct and peculiar.

Their village, to which our party went, was on the inner or lagoon side of the island, and contained about thirty houses, which were raised about a foot above the surrounding earth: they were of oblong shape, about fifteen feet high to the ridge-pole, sloping gradually, and of a convex form to within two or three feet of the ground; the roof was supported on high posts, whilst the lower part rested on short ones, three feet within the eaves, having a strong piece extending around, on which the rafters are tied; the gable-ends were overtopped by the roof, and seemed necessary to protect them from the weather. Below the eaves, the whole was open from the ground to the roof. The thatching, made of pandanus-leaves, was of great thickness, and put on loosely. The interior of the houses was very clean, but there was no furniture except a few gourds, and a reclining