

stool, cut from a solid block of wood, having two legs at one end, which inclined it at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees: to show the manner of lying in it, they imitated a careless and comfortable lounge, which they evidently considered a luxury. It was conjectured that they had removed their various household utensils to a secret place.

The most remarkable constructions of the islanders near the village, were three small quays, five or six feet wide, and two feet above the water, forming slips about ten feet wide: at the end of each of these was a small house, built of pandanus-leaves, partly on poles in the water. These appeared to be places for securing their canoes, and for the purpose of keeping their fishing implements. Three canoes were seen lying a short distance off in the lagoon, filled with the women and children. This was a precaution adopted to enable them to escape if it became necessary; yet they did not seem to apprehend any hostility. No kind of war implements was observed among them, and their bodies exhibited no marks of strife with each other.

There was an open space in the town, covered with coral-sand and pebbles, which they called *malæ*. When they were asked by Mr. Hale for their "*fale atua*," (house of God,) they pointed to a place at a distance, and evidently understood the meaning of the question.

There was no cultivation whatever, and their only food appeared to be the cocoa-nut and fish. There were no animals seen, no fowls, dogs, or hogs. Captain Hudson left there a few young pigs, of which the natives took charge, but they did not evince that surprise which was expected at the sight of an unknown animal.

They have no water on the island, and the supply is wholly obtained from excavations made in the body of the cocoa-nut trees, two feet from the ground. These trees are all dug out on the lee side, towards which all are more or less inclined. These excavations are capable of containing five or six gallons of water.

Our gentlemen were under the impression that they saw the whole population, and counted forty male adults, which, on the supposition that they were one-third, would make the population one hundred and twenty.

This island was discovered by Byron, in 1765, who reported it as destitute of inhabitants. The natives gave the name of their island as *Oatafu*, and acknowledged themselves the subjects of a chief who lived on a neighbouring island, called *Fakaafo*, pointing to a southerly direction. With this exception, they did not appear to possess the knowledge of any other islands but their own.