

men and women engaged in driving a school of fish into one of them, with long lines fringed with pandanus-leaves, used like a seine, somewhat resembling that before described at Savaii: these fishers took no notice whatever of our party.

When they had approached within one hundred yards of the beach, the natives came forward to meet them; and within a short distance from the beach they passed a small, old, and dilapidated house, built on piles, about eight feet above the water: this old fabric, as we afterwards found, was made use of for telegraphic signals, in case of desiring assistance from their neighbours.

The party were cordially received, both by the men and women, who did not hesitate to advance: all were uncovered, and the majority were women and children. Some of the women were the prettiest that had yet been seen in the South Sea islands; slender and gracefully formed. Their complexion was of a clear brown, with full bright eyes, thick and glossy black hair; and they appeared by no means unconscious of their charms.

The men became at once familiar and rude, seizing their arms and putting their own about the officers' necks, desiring to lead them onward, until they were obliged to use violence to keep them off.

They reached the beach near what the natives termed their "mariapa," or council-house, one of the large buildings that had been before spoken of as visible from the sea. This stands in front of the town, on a broad wharf, made of coral stones, built out from the beach; its dimensions, as measured, were one hundred and twenty feet long, by forty-five feet wide, and to the ridge-pole forty feet high. The ridge-pole was supported by five large posts, whence the roof sloped on each side and reached within three feet of the ground; the rafters descended to a wall-plate, which rested on large blocks of white coral, and were also supported by smaller posts, ten feet in length, near the sides. At the ends, the roof was perpendicular for eight or ten feet, and then they sloped off in the same manner as the sides. The roof was thatched with pandanus-leaves.

The crowd on the beach rapidly increased, pressing around, shouting, gesticulating, and catching hold of them, to express their joy at the visit: at the same time stealing the tobacco they had brought to barter, which operation was performed very dexterously.

No chiefs, however, came forward to receive them when they advanced towards the mariapa, and entered, by passing under the roof. Many natives were inside, who closed around them, and set up a clamour that was deafening. The heat also was oppressive, and with the rancid oil on their bodies, was almost stifling.