

An old man soon made his appearance, whose deportment, and that of the crowd, pointed him out as the chief. He had, apparently, little actual authority, for his presence seemed to have no effect in silencing the natives. He pointed to the palisade around the town, whither he invited them at once to go, and conducted them to his house. Very few of the natives followed. On entering the palisade of slender stakes, the village was found to be divided into lots, containing ten or twelve houses, and enclosed by fences. Each of these enclosures, it was supposed, belonged to a separate family.

The chief led the way to his house, and invited them to enter, which they did, and found its construction altogether different from any before seen in the South Seas. There was nothing remarkable in its exterior; it was of oblong shape, and about sixteen feet wide by twenty feet long. The interior consisted of two stories, of which the lower was not more than three feet high, under the floor of the upper story. It was entered by a square hole at one side. The apartment above was rather a loft or garret, which was high, and contained, apparently, all the valuables and goods of the occupant. The floor was made of small pieces of pandanus-boards, laid on slender beams of cocoanut-wood. It was afterwards understood that this arrangement of apartments was to guard against the inroad of the rats. The lower apartment is used for sleeping, while the upper is entirely for storing their goods and chattels. The wall-plates rest on four beams of cocoanut-wood, which are supported by four posts, one at each corner. These posts are round, and perfectly smooth, so that the rats cannot climb them. The rafters and cross-pieces are mere poles, only an inch or two thick; the thatch is of pandanus-leaf, doubled over a slender stick, and tied down with sennit.

After they were seated, cocoa-nuts, with treacle and water, were brought them to drink. They then requested the chief, whose name was Tama, to show them the fresh-water wells and taro-beds. Under his guidance, they passed through the village, which was situated on a narrow strip of the island, very close to the beach. Beyond it, towards the interior (if the term may be used of that which is but half a mile wide) of the island, was a cocoa-nut grove, extending to the sea. The tall cocoa-nut trees scattered about, with here and there small clumps of pandanus, gave it a cool and refreshing shade, and produced an agreeable impression. Paths wound in every direction, and were quite visible, in consequence of the absence of underbrush. The sandy soil offered only a scanty growth of dry grass (a *Sida*). Around the houses of the natives were found *Cordias*, *Hibiscus*, and *Ficus*; but they were all of small growth. The *Dracæna*, of which the Samoans