

The islanders knew nothing of any other land or people :—an ignorance not surprising, since the lagoons of the group have no good entrances, and a nation cannot be great in navigation or discovery without harbours. As a consequence, our presence was to them like an apparition. The simple inhabitants took us for gods from the sun, and, as we landed, came with abundant gifts of such things as they had, to propitiate their celestial visitors. They no doubt imagined that our strange ship had sailed off from the sun when it touched the water at sunrise, or sunset, and any child among them could see that this was a reasonable supposition. The king, after embracing Captain Hudson, as the latter states in his Journal (Wilkes's Narrative), rubbed noses, pointed to the sun, howled, moaned, hugged him again and again, put a mat around his waist, securing it with a cord of human hair, and repeated the rubbing of noses and the howling; and the moment the captain attempted to leave his side, he set up again a most piteous howl, and repeated in a tremulous tone, "Nofo ki lalo, mataku au," "Sit down, I am afraid." While thus in fear of us, they showed a great desire that their dreaded visitors should depart; some pointed to the sun, and asked by their gestures about our coming thence, or hinted to us to be off again.

But with all their reverence toward their mysterious guests, they became after a while quite familiar, and took advantage of every opportunity to steal from us. Our botanist gave his collecting-box to one of them to hold, and, the moment his back was turned, off the native ran, and a hard chase was required to recover it—a most undignified run on the part of the celestial.

While the men wore the maro, the equivalent of tight-fitting breeches six inches or less in length, the women were attired in a simple bloomer costume, consisting solely of a petticoat or apron, twelve to eighteen inches long, made of a large number of slit cocoanut leaves, and kept well oiled. Besides this they had on, as ornaments, necklaces of shell or bone. The girls and boys were dressed *au naturel*, after the