

and with a shout and distortion of countenance, made a pass at Mr. Couthouy, who at once dropped looking-glasses, trinkets, &c., at his feet, and quickly made for the boat. The savage took no notice of the relinquished offerings, but advanced to attack him with his spear. When he had reached the edge of the surf, the chief made another thrust at him, but fortunately without injury. This precipitate retreat gave them still more confidence; they now began throwing pieces of coral, numbers of which struck the men in my boat. I felt no disposition to do them harm, and yet I had no idea of letting them see and feel that they had driven us off without landing, well knowing, however, if a forcible landing took place, and they made resistance, that injury would befall one side, and probably both. I, therefore, thinking that they had no idea of fire-arms, ordered several blank cartridges to be fired; but they took no notice of them.* According to John Sac, they hooted at these arms, calling us cowards, and daring us to come on shore. I then fired a small charge of mustard-seed shot at their legs, which did not produce any effect. Then, Mr. Peale, who was near by me, was requested to draw his ball, and load with mustard-seed, which he did; and Lieutenant North likewise fired, which caused the chief and all the rest to retreat, rubbing their legs. The officers were now permitted to land, under strict injunctions, in order to avoid all contact with the natives, not to leave the beach. So much time had been lost before I could get the instruments safely on shore, that I found it too late to make the observations I desired.

The natives whom we saw, appeared a fine athletic race, much above the ordinary size. Their colour was darker than that of our Indians, but their features resembled them. No tattooing was observed on the men, and the women were not seen close enough to distinguish them. The hair of the former was long, black, and straight. The chiefs had theirs drawn back, and tied in a knot behind; the others had theirs hanging loose. They wore a small maro made of leaves, and the chiefs a pandanus-leaf around their necks, probably to distinguish their rank. The women wore a piece of tapa as a petticoat; they were not oiled, and the heads of some seemed filled with ashes or lime. They spoke and understood the Tahitian dialect. The only information obtained from them was, that vessels had before been there, but had gone away without landing.

Immediately on their being driven from the beach, a large column of smoke was seen, no doubt a signal to the other inhabitants of the

* I have since understood, however, that the poor natives have been fired upon by trading vessels engaged in the pearl-fishery, in mere wantonness, which will account for their hostile reception of us.