CHAPTER VI.

LAKEMBA AND SAVU-SAVU.

1840.

It has been stated tnat the Porpoise parted company with the Vincennes on the 8th May, off the island of Fulanga. From this time, until June 9th, when I met her at Somu-somu, Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold had been engaged in the survey of the eastern islands of the group; and it is now time that I should revert to the operations in which he had been engaged.

A heavy gale blowing from the southward and eastward for several hours, and which afterwards hauled to the northeast, was followed, after it moderated, by heavy rain. These prevented the surveys from being commenced as early as I had hoped. When it cleared off, the work was begun at the southeast island, called Ongea. There are, in fact, two islands enclosed in the same reef, called Ongea-levu and Ongea-riki. A good entrance was found on the northwest side of the reef, and a harbour, to which the name of Port Refuge was given; but there is little or no inducement to enter it, for the islands are barren, and no water is to be found. A few wretched inhabitants are on them. The position of these islands is given in the tables.

Three miles to the southward and eastward of Ongea is a dangerous reef and sand-bank, called Nugu Ongea.

Fulanga was the next examined. This is a fine island, surrounded by the usual coral reef, which has an entrance through it on the northeast side, (suitable for small vessels,) that expands into a large basin, with many islets and reefs, where large quantities of biche de mar have been gathered. The boats circumnavigated this island, and their crews were on shore all night, in consequence of having been obliged to return to the place where they first began their work,