

were allowed to come on board, I suppose there could not have been less than two hundred. It was the opinion of every one that it would have been difficult to have picked out an equal number from any other nation who would have given so little trouble. Everybody brought something for sale: shells were the main article of trade. The Tahitians now fully understand the value of money, and prefer it to old clothes or other articles. The various coins, however, of English and Spanish denomination puzzle them, and they never seemed to think the small silver quite secure until changed into dollars. Some of the chiefs have accumulated considerable sums of money. One chief, not long since, offered 800 dollars (about 160% sterling) for a small vessel; and frequently they purchase whale-boats and horses at the rate of from 50 to 100 dollars.

After breakfast I went on shore, and ascended the nearest slope to a height of between two and three thousand feet. The outer mountains are smooth and conical, but steep; and the old volcanic rocks, of which they are formed, have been cut through by many profound ravines, diverging from the central broken parts of the island to the coast. Having crossed the narrow low girt of inhabited and fertile land, I followed a smooth steep ridge between two of the deep ravines. The vegetation was singular, consisting almost exclusively of small dwarf ferns, mingled, higher up, with coarse grass; it was not very dissimilar from that on some of the Welsh hills, and this so close above the orchard of tropical plants on the coast was very surprising. At the highest point which I reached trees again appeared. Of the three zones of comparative luxuriance, the lower one owes its moisture, and therefore fertility, to its flatness; for, being scarcely raised above the level of the sea, the water from the higher land drains away slowly. The intermediate zone does not, like the upper one, reach into a damp and cloudy atmosphere, and therefore remains sterile. The woods in the upper zone are very pretty, tree-ferns replacing the coconuts on the coast. It must not, however, be supposed that