some primeval land. In our descent we followed the line
of ridges; these were exceedingly narrow, and for consider-
able lengths steep as a ladder; but all clothed with vegeta-
tion. The extreme care necessary in poising each step ren-
dered the walk fatiguing. I did not cease to wonder at these
ravines and precipices: when viewing the country from one
of the knife-edged ridges, the point of support was so small
that the effect was nearly the same as it must be from a bal-
loon. In this descent we had occasion to use the ropes only
once, at the point where we entered the main valley. We
slept under the same ledge of rock where we had dined the
day before: the night was fine, but, from the depth and
narrowness of the gorge, profoundly dark.

Before actually seeing this country, I found it difficult to
understand two facts mentioned by Ellis; namely, that after
the murderous battles of former times, the survivors on the
conquered side retired into the mountains, where a handful
of men could resist a multitude. Certainly half a dozen men,
at the spot where the Tahitian reared the old tree, could
easily have repulsed thousands. Secondly, that after the
introduction of Christianity, there were wild men who lived
in the mountains, and whose retreats were unknown to the
more civilized inhabitants.

November 20th.—In the morning we started early and
reached Matavai at noon. On the road we met a large party
of noble athletic men going for wild bananas. I found that
the ship, on account of the difficulty in watering, had moved
to the harbor of Papawa, to which place I immediately
walked. This is a very pretty spot. The cove is surrounded
by reefs, and the water as smooth as in a lake. The culti-
vated ground, with its beautiful productions, interspersed
with cottages, comes close down to the water's edge.

From the varying accounts which I had read before
reaching these islands, I was very anxious to form, from my
own observation, a judgment of their moral state—although
such judgment would necessarily be very imperfect. First
impressions at all times very much depend on one's pre-