

might be called a sea-rookery. The gannets, sitting on their rude nests, gaze at one with a stupid yet angry air. The noddies, as their name expresses, are silly little creatures. But there is one charming bird: it is a small snow-white tern which smoothly hovers at the distance of a few feet above one's head, its large black eye scanning, with quiet curiosity, your expression. Little imagination is required to fancy that so light and delicate a body must be tenanted by some wandering fairy spirit.

Sunday, April 3d.—After service I accompanied Captain Fitz Roy to the settlement, situated at the distance of some miles, on the point of an islet thickly covered with tall cocoanut trees. Captain Ross and Mr. Liesk live in a large barnlike house open at both ends, and lined with mats made of woven bark. The houses of the Malays are arranged along the shore of the lagoon. The whole place had rather a desolate aspect, for there were no gardens to show the signs of care and cultivation. The natives belong to different islands in the East Indian archipelago, but all speak the same language: we saw the inhabitants of Borneo, Celebes, Java, and Sumatra. In color they resemble the Tahitians, from whom they do not widely differ in features. Some of the women, however, show a good deal of the Chinese character. I liked both their general expressions and the sound of their voices. They appeared poor, and their houses were destitute of furniture; but it was evident, from the plumpness of the little children, that cocoanuts and turtle afford no bad sustenance.

On this island the wells are situated, from which ships obtain water. At first sight it appears not a little remarkable that the fresh water should regularly ebb and flow with the tides; and it has even been imagined that sand has the power of filtering the salt from the sea-water. These ebbing wells are common on some of the low islands in the West Indies. The compressed sand, or porous coral rock, is permeated like a sponge with the salt water; but the rain which falls on the surface must sink to the level of the surrounding