

out the islands, and is beaten out with a wooden mallet about a foot long and two or three inches thick. The bark is at first soaked for a couple of days in water, and is usually so prepared in strips of from 2 to 3 feet in length, and from 1 to 3 inches in width; it is then laid on a beam about 10 feet long, and about 1 foot in breadth and thickness, supported at each end, a few inches from the ground, on a couple of stones, so as to allow a certain amount of vibration. Two or three women generally sit at the same work: each places her strip of bark transversely on the beam, and while beating with her right hand, with her left she moves it to and fro, so that every part becomes alike. The grooved sides of the mallet are used first, the finishing touches being given with the smooth side. In the course of half an hour it is brought to a sufficient degree of thinness. Piece after piece is thus made, and eventually stuck together. Many I saw were from 40 to 50 yards long by 20 wide. It is then printed on with a dye obtained by scraping the soft bark of the cocoa-tree, or the tooi-tooi-tree, which gives, on being pressed, a reddish-brown liquid. The stamps used are made in various devices for ornamenting the native cloth. While they are at work, a very pleasing effect is produced, when the air is calm, by the beating of the tapa: some sound near at hand, others in the distance, but all with singular regularity, the whole producing a remarkable and agreeable sound.