

to be composed of loose stone and masses of coral rock; so after all we had to anchor in mid-channel in 40 fathoms. The canoes remained around us, and a lively trade soon sprang up between the ship's company and the savages. To one unfamiliar with the South Sea trade it was rather a surprising spectacle to see an armful of weapons, belts, necklaces, and earrings, the result of many days' patient labour, exchanged for a few pieces of rusty hoop-iron or a string of beads. Bartering thus went on all day; and when the natives saw some of the trade gear with which we were supplied, it was surprising how their cupidity was excited, and their evident willingness to part with anything and everything they possessed for small hatchets, knives, beads, or iron. The noise and scrambling alongside while this trading was going on baffles all description; for, besides the usual talking and shouting, they had a singular habit of directing attention to their finery by a loud, sharp-sounding *ss, ss!*—a kind of hissing sound equivalent to "Look at this!" In their bargaining they were generally very honest, passing up the articles selected on the end of their fishing-spear, receiving in exchange the pieces of hoop-iron, which seemed to be much prized by them; at the same time showing great eagerness to obtain the small hatchets and long knives, but seemingly attaching little value to calico or handkerchiefs, although a gaudy pattern or bright colour was sure to attract their attention.