

380 miles from Tahiti. Head winds and calms succeeded each other as we passed on through the Tropics.

At length, on the morning of the 18th September, we came in sight of Tahiti and the outlying island of Morea, and, as we neared, could be seen very plainly the singular zigzag outline, precipitous crags and crater-like depressions, of every shade of blue, grey, and purple, broken into every conceivable fantastic shape, with deep, dark, mysterious gorges, showing almost black by contrast with the surrounding brightness; while in the foreground, stretching away from the base to the shore, is a forest of tropical trees, with the huts and houses of the town peeping out between them.

Some hours were spent outside the reefs in sounding and dredging, in a depth of 1525 fathoms, but not much of interest obtained; it was near 4 P.M. before we entered the lovely harbour of Papeite, which is surrounded by coral reefs, forming a most safe and pleasant haven of rest after the thirty days at sea. Of all the innumerable islands of the vast Pacific, there is none which has at various periods attracted the attention of the civilised world in the same degree as that in whose harbour we are now at anchor. At first, it was from the pleasing description given by Captain Cook of his stay here; then the events connected with the mutiny of the *Bounty*; and still later, by occurrences of a political nature,