

there is always a heavy surf, which had a rise and fall when we were there against the precipitous wall of rock of from five to seven feet. The rock is in rough ledges, and landing has to be accomplished by a spring and a scramble when the boat is on the top of a wave. When we landed the sun was just setting behind the ship. There was not a cloud in the sky, and the sun went down into the sea a perfect disk, throwing wonderful tints of rose-color upon the fantastic rocks. As mentioned by Mr. Darwin, there are only two species of birds on the rocks, the "booby" (*Sula fusca*) and the "noddy" (*Sterna stolida*), both having a wide distribution on tropical islands and shores. On St. Paul's Rocks they are in enormous numbers, and can be seen flying round the peaks and sitting on the ledges from a great distance. We landed the first evening on the smaller rock which forms the northern portion of the ridge, and which is a breeding-place of the tern (Fig. 28). The birds were quite tame, allowing themselves to be knocked over with a stick, or even taken with the hand. They build simple nests on rocky ledges, of a conferva which grows abundantly at the water-edge mixed with feathers and matted together probably with some cement matter ejected from the bird's stomach. The nests seem to be used more than once, perhaps with a little repair from time to time; for many of them were large, consisting apparently of several layers of different dates, and were decomposed at the base into a yellowish earth. A single egg was found in some of the nests, and in others a young bird, but the breeding-season was evidently nearly over. The young bird is covered with fine black down, and looks like a little ball of black wool.

The captain's party laid a line across the mouth of the cove to make landing easier for their successors, and in the evening a boat went off with officers and men to fish. The fish were in great numbers, particularly a species of the genus *Caranx*, called, apparently in common with many other edible fishes in