

natives for cultivation. The ship steamed close in to the island, opposite a spot where a valley terminated towards the sea with a widened mouth, evidently containing a river. There was a stretch of flat land at the bottom of the valley on which were conspicuous amongst the other foliage some cocoanut trees and another species of palm.

As the vessel came near natives appeared on the shore, some hiding in the bushes, others running along at full speed, whilst some shouted a loud "hoa." One man stood on the shore and waved a green branch with untiring perseverance. These natives were said to be hostile and dangerous, a character which they have fully proved themselves worthy of since the visit of the Expedition, and therefore Captain Nares' boat, the first which landed, was armed. The returned labourers, however, acted as an introduction and

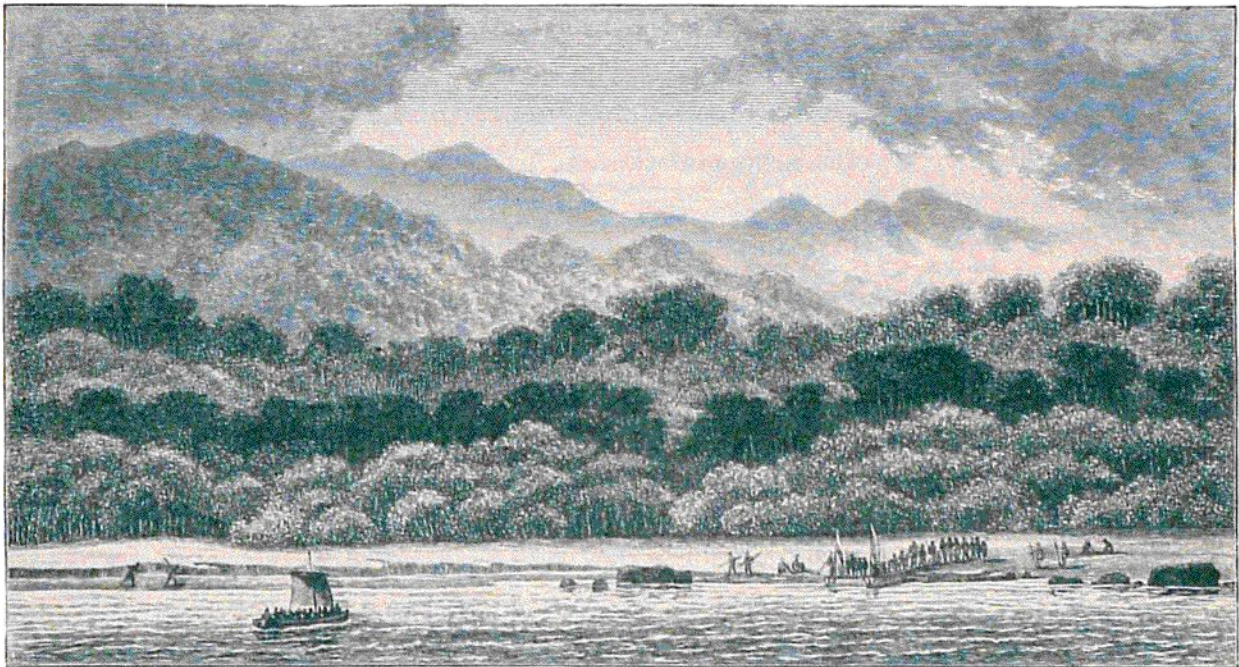


FIG. 189.—Landing of natives at Api, New Hebrides.

made matters smooth; still, as all the natives were armed, either with bows and poisoned arrows, clubs, or trade muskets, and as the inhabitants of these islands are noted for treachery, no one was allowed to leave the beach. Thus very little was seen of this island, which had certainly never been landed on before by any scientific man or naval officer.

The shore is formed of a banked-up beach, composed of small fragments of volcanic rock and volcanic sand, mingled with a large proportion of coral fragments, and is fringed by a narrow shore platform of coral, which, near the place of landing, was not much more than 100 yards wide. This shore reef is remarkable for its extreme flatness. Almost everywhere the living corals embedded in it are growing only laterally, the upper surfaces being dead from want of sufficient depth of water. In some small specimens of