

A sheer precipice led down from my feet to the surf and the sea driven into white crested waves by the trade wind, which was blowing with more than ordinary violence, so that it was difficult to stand on the edge of the cliff.

I found a chasm in the cliff where it was possible to descend. At about 200 feet from the bottom of the cliff, where the stratified volcanic rock was intersected in all directions by dikes, was a very small spring, from which issued perhaps a quarter of a pint of water in an hour. It was the only natural spring I saw in the islands, although a few others exist. There was green slimy matter round the spring composed of diatoms and other low algæ, and a small mass of vegetable mould, in which grew two plants which I had not met with elsewhere in the island, a yellow-flowered crucifer (*Sinapidendron Vogelli*) and *Samolus Valerandi*.

This miniature oasis was only about four feet in circumference, and absorbed the whole of the water yielded by the scanty spring. A number of wood-lice sheltered in it. I suppose the seeds of these two plants must have been carried to the spring by birds coming to drink.

On returning to the town down the leeward slopes, I passed the principal wells of the town; they are dug in a now dry stream bed, and are about 15 feet in diameter, and 25 to 30 feet in depth. There was plenty of water in them, but it was slightly brackish, and probably partly derived from the sea.

The trammel net was set nightly in the harbour by Mr. Cox, the boatswain, and yielded some fine fish; amongst these were some large flying gurnets, which evidently, from their being caught in the trammel, frequent the bottom a good deal like our wingless gurnets. One was caught with a line at the bottom. I hooked one, however, near the surface, when fishing with a rod and trout tackle for small mackerel and silver fish. This was quite a novel experience in fishing. The flying fish darted about like a trout and then took a good long fly in the air, and in an instant was down in the water again and out again into the air, and being beyond my skill in playing with such light tackle, soon shook itself loose and got free.

A species of *Balistes*, called the trigger-fish, because it has a stout trigger-like spine on the back and the belly, which can be erected as a defence, was caught in the net. The living fish when held in the hand makes a curious metallic clicking noise by grating its teeth; similarly *Diodon antennatus* makes a curious noise by the movement of its jaws, as noticed by Darwin.\* I have heard the sound in the case of a *Diodon hystrix* caught at St. Thomas; it is a sort of grunting sound.

\* Darwin, "Journal of Researches," p. 14.