

reef, which is about 16 miles in circumference. The highest peak is about 1,200 feet in height. I climbed to the top of this peak. From the summit the island was seen to consist of a single crater, the edge of which had been denuded and cut into a series of fantastic peaks, with intervening steep sided gullies. The ancient crater itself now forms the harbour, the inlet to which is through an opening in the girdling reef, at a spot where the border of the crater has been broken down. The surface of the irregular hills showed the peculiar sharp angled ridges so characteristic of volcanic cones denuded by pluvial action.

The windward side of the main peak was precipitous, and covered with thick vegetation, whilst the leeward side was open, covered only with grass and Pandanus trees. I was uncertain whether this condition was due to clearing by the natives or to the greater access of moisture from the trade wind on the windward side. Seemann describes such a condition produced by aspect, as common to all the Fiji Islands. There are however dense patches of wood here and there on the leeward side also of the crater in Matuku, and it may be that all the grass-covered area has been cleared at some time for cultivation, the island being too small and low to vary much in atmospheric conditions.

At all events the most prominent feature in the appearance of the vegetation of Matuku, is the contrast of the light green open grass slopes with the dark patches of wood. The grass is high and reedy, and very tiring to force one's way through, as are also the wooded tracts. Through these latter a road had to be cleared with the knife. In some places the grass had been fired by the natives, as a preliminary to cultivation.

The view from the summit of the island was most interesting as well as beautiful. We stood on what is now the highest point of the edge of the weathered crater. Beneath, on the one side, a steep slope led down to a narrow tract of flat land bordering the sea. This was partly open and swampy, covered with sedges and ferns, and with Pandanus trees dotted about over it, and partly covered with groves of cocoanut trees. On the other side, a vertical precipice, terminating in a similar steep slope, led down into the crater itself.

The cliff and internal slope of the crater were covered with thick and tangled wood, amongst which grew, even close to the summit, a few cocoanut palms, and one or two trees of the palm called "Niu Sawa" by the natives (*Kentia exorhiza*).

All round the island, except for a very short interval at the entrance to the harbour, was a circling zone of white breakers, marking the position of the barrier reef. The zone was