

in one of the ship's boats, called the barge, to the Island of Mbau, and the Wai Levu, with a party which was to join the ship again at Kandavu.

As there was little wind all day, we failed in reaching Mbau on the first day, but on arriving in its neighbourhood about dusk, we mistook a projecting headland of Viti Levu,* some miles north of Mbau, for the island of Viwa, and a small island lying off this headland for Mbau. It was impossible to distinguish in the gloom what were islands and what promontories, against the dark background of the Viti Levu coast.

All around Mbau, Viwa, and the neighbouring coast are extensive shallow coral and mud flats, the mud being brought down by one of the mouths of the River Wai Levu, which opens in the direction of Mbau. After making several attempts to reach the island which we supposed to be Mbau, and constantly grounding on the coral, we anchored for the night, in a deep channel between the coral flats. In the early morning we made out Mbau, conspicuous from the white house of the missionary upon its summit, and soon reached it.

Mbau is a very small island, not more than half a mile in circumference. It consists of a central hill, of about 50 feet elevation, with a flat area at its top, and bounded by steep grass-covered slopes, surrounded by a tract of flat ground. The central mass is composed of a friable stratified rock, of a greyish or reddish colour. An exactly similar rock composes the main land immediately opposite the island, and the strata there correspond in inclination with those of Mbau. The central mass of the island is thus a small detached fragment left standing by the denuding waves. The passage between the mainland and Mbau is so shallow as to be fordable at high water, and is nearly dry at low water.

The flat lower part of Mbau, which is raised only a few feet above the sea, consists of made ground, built up of blocks of coral, and mud and stones collected from the vicinity at low water, and secured all around against the action of the sea by means of large slabs of a sandstone (said to come from the main island), which has been brought in canoes a distance of several miles. These stone slabs are set up on end, so as to form a parapet, and keep the earth from washing down. The slabs project far above the level of the land surface, and thus form at the same time a sort of fence or wall. At intervals, openings are left in the parapet, where the water flows up short channels into the area of made ground, and allows canoes to put in at high water into small harbours as it were.

* Viti Levu (pronounced Veetee layvoo). Levu means "great." Settlers often clip the u, and talk of "Viti lib."