

flat land at the bottom of the valley on which some cocoanut palms and another species of palm were conspicuous amongst the other foliage. As we 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, and therefore the first party, the Captain's, which landed, was armed, but the returned labourers acted as an introduction and 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, and our stay lasted for only a few hours. Thus we saw very little of this island, which had certainly never been landed upon before by any scientific man or naval officer.

The shore is made up 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, in the place where I examined it, was not much more than 100 yards wide. The New Hebrides have no barrier reefs, but only narrow fringing reefs. Dana concludes that this is due to the fact that volcanic action has, in this group of islands, been very recent. There are still several active volcanoes in the group, and one was said by our returned labourers to exist in Api. (The word Api means in Malay, "fire"). Submarine ejections of carbonic acid and the falling of fine dust might render the growing of reef corals round an active volcanic island nearly impossible.

The Api 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 a massive Porites the consequent flattening of the top and expansion of the lateral dimensions was most excellently shown in pieces convenient for museum purposes.

The Corals, which were few in number of species, were finer grown towards the outer verge of the reef, as is always the case on shore platforms, the very opposite condition to that which holds in case of barrier reefs. In some places were deep holes in the coral platform, reminding one of glacier crevasses on a small scale, evidently arising from the loose nature of the sloping beach on which the coral structure here rests. On the reef rest weathered remains of a more ancient shore platform which are honey-combed and wave-worn. The rock composing them is, however, undoubtedly *in situ*, and proves elevation of