

remarked upon as one of the many evidences of the Polynesian affinity of the New Zealanders. We traversed the beautiful valley of Fataua, closed at its head to the view by the irregularly peaked outline of the mountain, termed by the French, from its form, the "Diadem."

The valley is barred across by a high cliff over which the stream pours, forming a very beautiful waterfall. In the cliff beneath the falling water is a wide hollow, overhung by the rock above, and in this Tropic Birds nest, and two or three were constantly to be seen, flying about the cliff and across the deep chasm of the valley, conspicuous against the dense green foliage and dark rocks. Very good strawberries were growing in a garden just above the fall. The plants were mostly in blossom, only a few fruits were ripe. The Mango trees in the island in the same way were mostly now in blossom, or with young green fruit. The orange season was just at its end.

The stream is full of small fish (*Dules malo*), one of the Perch family. The fish have adapted themselves entirely to a fresh-water life, and rise to a fly like trout. Captain Thomson and the others of us who were fishermen, got out our fly rods and whipped the stream, catching a few dozen. The stream falls over the rocks and stones in small runs and stickles, just like a trout stream, and the fish thrive in the rapid water. I carried my salmon and trout rods round the world with me, but the last place at which I should have looked forward to throwing a fly in, was Tahiti.

The first camp was made in the head of Fataua Valley, at a height of about 1,600 feet, amongst the "Fei," or wild Plantain, *Musa uranascopus*, a species which occurs also in Fiji and elsewhere in Polynesia according to Seemann, though I do not know whether the fruit of the wild plant is in other places equal in flavour to that of Tahiti. The plant is closely similar in appearance to an ordinary large Banana tree, but the large bunches of fruit, instead of hanging down, stand up erect from the summit of the stem.* They are bright yellow when ripe.

A fire is lighted, and a bunch of these wild bananas is thrown into it. The outer skin of the fruits becomes blackened and charred, but when it is peeled off with a pointed stick, a yellow floury interior is reached, which is most excellent eating and like a mealy potato. This is one of the very few plants which, growing spontaneously, and in abundance, affords a really good and sufficient source of food to man. Hardly any improvement could be wished for in the fruits by cultivation. It

* For an account of the Fei, see Bananier Téhi, sa forme asperme et sa forme séminifère par M. P. Sagot. Bull. de la Société botanique de France, T. xxxiii. 1886 p. 317.