

German vessel, belonging to the firm of Godeffroy Brothers, the famous collectors of South Sea Island productions, was also at anchor in the harbour.

The sky was dull, covered with grey clouds, and the air even somewhat chilly as the islands were approached, and they did not look bright and sunny, as might have been expected of the first South Sea Islands met with on the voyage. As the small island of Eooa was passed, the surf in places raised jets of spray at its base, looking from a distance like thin white smoke.

Tongatabu was seen 7 miles distant from Eooa, stretching along the horizon as a long narrow neutral tint band, with an indented upper margin; towards the northern end the band thinned out into isolated rows and groups of palm trees, which looked like dots on the watery horizon. As the vessel approached nearer, the forms of the cocoanut trees became more and more distinct. At length sail was shortened and the Challenger steamed through the reefs with a long stretch of palm-covered land on the one hand, and numerous islets on the other, some bearing many cocoanut palms, others few.

The main island is exceedingly flat and low, its highest point being only 60 feet above the sea level. It thus stretched itself before the view as a green horizontal streak of uniform width, the width being due merely to the height of the vegetation; here and there at the water's edge were seen small inlets and stretches of white sandy beach, or low honeycombed and weathered clifflets of coral rock. Above these appeared a band of dark foliaged shrubs, and shrubby trees with shore-loving plants growing in the sand at their feet; and as a background behind, rose a mass of cocoanut trees of various heights, but densely packed together, and thus forming with their crowns a tolerably even line; no palms other than cocoanuts were to be seen in the mass. On the small scattered islets which were near at hand, Screw Pines (*Pandanus*) were conspicuous, their stems surrounded with prop-like aerial roots, whilst on the main island these trees, which are numerous along the shore, were almost lost to view against the general background of dark foliage.

As the vessel steamed on, there came into view beneath the cocoanut trees on the shores, the villages of the islanders, composed of small houses of palm mats and grass thatch, and as the news spread, the villagers assembled on the beach in their conspicuous white or red clothing, to gaze at the ship. Not until the ship had passed the most difficult twist in the passage into the harbour, did the pilot come out, in a small English-built whale-boat belonging to the king, manned by four sturdy Tongans. These were naked, except that they had a cloth round the waist, and one of them a further girdle of green Screw Pine leaves; they had all, however, linen shirts with them, which they put on as they became cool; and the coxswain, formerly a Mataboolo, or lord amongst the Tongans, had on a pea jacket also. As is always the case, the men being so little clothed, appeared bigger than they really were. They were, however, remarkably finely made men, with all their muscles well developed, and all of them were extremely