

This was above the limit of the growth of the wild plantain in any abundance, so the shelter for the night was made of the fronds of the Birds-nest Fern (*Asplenium nidus*). These are tougher and more durable than the leaves of the plantain, and hence are used for permanent thatching, but from their smaller size require much more time in arrangement.

The members of the party had to put up with a very small hut, which sheltered their bodies as they lay down, but would not cover their legs, and they had to feel in the baggage in the pitch darkness for their food, and eat it by the help of the sense of touch alone. The unfortunate guides, who had constructed the hut first, could find scarcely any more fern leaves in the dark, and they squatted out the night together, sheltered from the rain by a small extinguisher-shaped erection, which looked as if one human body could not be forced into it, much less two. The temperature here at daybreak was 60° F., and the morning being cloudy, and the camp lying in a narrow gorge, it remained the same for an hour and a half after daybreak.

In the morning the party descended again several hundred feet, and sent back to the hut and procured two young men, supposed to be practised mountaineers, and, as was thought, certain to know the way about every pass within 4 or 5 miles of their dwelling. One of them, as a proof of his knowledge, brought with him what appeared to represent the most primitive form of a map. It was a thick stick of wood about a foot and a half long, with two short cross pieces on it at some distance from the ends, and on each of these cross pieces were set up three short uprights of wood. The uprights represented mountain peaks, and the spaces between, the valleys. The new guide held his map in his hand and took a long consultation with his brother, and then explained matters thoroughly to the original guides. He clutched the uprights one after another and dilated upon them, pointing out the peaks to which they corresponded. There seemed no doubt that the right man had been got hold of at last.

The guides now lashed the small baggage on their backs, instead of on poles as before, since this mode of carriage was no longer practicable, owing to the steepness of the ascent, and a start was made up the face of an extremely steep-sided ridge, a spur of Orofena, the highest mountain of Tahiti. At the lower part, each pulled himself up by means of the trailing Screw Pines. These covered the ground with a tangled mass of long serpentine stems so thickly, that in climbing the ground was a yard or more beneath.

Near the summit of the spur, the face of the ridge was almost perpendicular, and one of the men got up by the help of the bushes and let down a rope by which the crest was reached. In order to collect plants, a knotted handkerchief had to be held in the teeth and filled, as it was impossible to get at a vasculum. The crest of the ridge was nowhere more than a yard wide, often less, and there was an almost sheer fall on either hand; if grass and small bushes had not been growing at the edge on each side, it