

them. In this place they were compelled to pass the night, by a fog which enveloped them, through which the guides were unwilling to lead them, refusing to proceed further along the dangerous path until the clouds should clear away.

The next morning was clear, and they pursued their ascending route along the edge of a ridge not more than two or three feet in width, having on each side an abyss two thousand feet deep. Seen from this ridge, looking south, Mount Aorai seemed a conical peak, but as it was approached it proved to be a mountain wall, whose edge was turned towards them. The only ascent was by a similar narrow path between precipices, and surpassed in steepness those they had already passed. The width of the crest seldom exceeded two feet, and in some cases they sat upon it as if on horseback, or were compelled to creep along it upon their hands and knees, clinging to the bushes. At last they reached the summit, where they found barely room to turn around. The ridge continued for only a short distance beyond them, being then cut across by the Punaania Valley.

From the summit of Aorai they had a magnificent view; to the south, it was speedily bounded by the peaks of Orohena and Pitohiti, whose steep sides rose from the valley beneath them; to the east, they had the rapid succession of ridge and gorge which characterizes Tahitian scenery; to the west, over a similar series of jagged ridges, Eimeo and Tetuaroa stood out from the horizon of the sea in bold relief; to the north, they looked down upon the plain, studded with groves of cocoa-nut and orange, and upon the harbour with its shipping, and the encircling reefs of coral.

A short distance below the summit of Mount Aorai, a mass of turrets and pinnacles, which from its singular outline is called the crown, runs along the top of a narrow ledge.

Except the plain of the coast, no level land is in sight but the valley of Punaania; this is divided from that of Matavai by a ridge of the usual edge-like form, running upwards towards Orohena.

Very few of the natives who are now alive have been on the summit of Aorai; their paths in this direction, as in other places, do not lead beyond the limit of the groves of wild banana (*fahie*). Beyond the height at which these cease to grow, the ground is chiefly covered with a wiry grass (*Gleichenium*), which springs up in many places to the height of ten feet, and is every where almost impenetrable. When this was not too high, they broke it down by casting their bodies at full length upon it; and when of larger growth, they