

Upolu. It is seventeen miles long, and its greatest width is five miles. The total Native population of Tutuila is about 4,000. The land is generally mountainous, with steep, sharp-edged ridges, rising here and there into lofty peaks, the highest of which (that of Matafae) is 2,327 feet above the sea, and forms a prominent landmark for the excellent harbour of Pango Pango. As the existence of this harbour so greatly enhances the importance of the Navigators Islands, and as a description of it by a nautical man will be more valuable than any account of it I could give, I quote the following from a report by Captain Wakeman, an experienced master mariner, who was recently deputed by Mr. Webb to visit Tutuila, and ascertain whether this harbour would be a suitable place for a coaling station for his steamers:—

“At daylight I found myself in the most perfectly land-locked harbour that exists in the Pacific Ocean. In approaching this harbour from the South, either by night or day, the mariner has unmistakable landmarks to conduct him into port: one on the port hand, a high, peaked, conical mountain, 2,327 feet high, and on the starboard hand a flat-topped mountain 1,470 feet in height, which keep sentinel on either hand. These landmarks can never be mistaken by the mariner. The entrance to the harbour is three-quarters of a mile in width, between Tower Rock on the port side and Breaker Point on the starboard hand, with soundings of 36 fathoms. A little more than one mile from Breaker Point on the starboard hand, to Goat Island on the port hand, we open out the inner harbour, which extends one mile west at a breadth of 3,000 feet abreast of Goat Island, to 1,100 feet at the head of the bay, carrying soundings from 18 fathoms to 6 fathoms at the head of the bay. The reefs which skirt the shore are from 200 feet to 300 feet wide, almost awash at low sea. They have, at their edge, from 4 fathoms to 5, 6, and 8 fathoms, and deeper in the middle of the harbour. The hills rise abruptly around this bay from 800 to 1,000 feet in height. . . . There is nothing to prevent a steamer, night or day, from proceeding to her wharf. About half-way from Breaker Point to Goat Island, and near mid-channel, is Whale Rock, with 8 feet of water over it at low sea. It has a circumference of about 50 feet, and breaks frequently. A buoy renders this danger harmless. The services of a pilot can never be required by any one who has visited this port before, as the trade winds from E.S.E. carry a vessel from near Breaker Point with a free sheet in a N.N.W. course into the harbour. It follows that vessels under canvas will have to work out, which, in the ebb tide, with the trades, will generally be accomplished in a few tacks. The trouble is that a ship close into the reef goes in stays, and frequently the whirlwinds off the high land baffle her a few points and prevent her taking properly aback, whence a boat is kept ahead ready to tow her around upon the right tack. Mr. Powell, a missionary, has been a resident of this place twenty-two years, and says that he never knew of a longer detention than nine days to any ships in that time, and of but one gale, which came from the eastward, and unroofed a wing of his kitchen. Even the trades themselves are frequently liable to haul from E.S.E. to E.N.E., giving a ship a chance to get out with a leading wind. At the different quarters of the moon the tide rises $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet. . . . On the top of the little island of Annu'u, to the east of Tutuila, at an elevation of 600 feet, a site for a lighthouse has been secured, as it can be seen alike from the north or south, and is right in a line with the ship's course in passing. Being only seven miles from the entrance to Pango Pango Bay or Harbour, the ships could pick up the port lights, and go in immediately to the wharf, in the darkest night. There are several fine harbours for schooners on both sides of Tutuila.

Savaii and Upolu contain the largest extent of flat land,—fully two-thirds of their area, about 500,000 acres, are fit for cultivation. Tutuila is more mountainous than Savaii and Upolu: probably not more than one-third of its area, or about 50,000 acres would be fit for cultivation; but it has a great advantage over the neighbouring islands in the possession of the excellent harbour of Pango Pango, described above. The whole group is of volcanic origin. Craters of extinct volcanoes are seen at various points. Some of the small islands of the group are composed of a single large crater rising abruptly from the sea. The soil on all the islands is exceedingly rich, and is everywhere covered with dense vegetation, from the water's edge up to the tops of the mountains. The high mountain ridges, extending through the middle of the larger islands, attract the passing clouds, which furnish a copious and never-failing supply of moisture, and feed the numerous streams of beautiful clear water that abound in every direction.

The climate is mild and agreeable; the temperature generally ranges between 70° and 80°, but the heat is greatly subdued by the breezes that are constantly blowing. Mr. Williams, the British Consul, kept a meteorological register, for the Board of Trade, from 1860 to 1865, from which I made an abstract of the mean recorded temperature in every month in the year 1864. (Copy of this abstract is appended hereto.) The south-east trades blow steadily from April to October, being strongest in June and July. From November to March, westerly winds frequently blow, but not for any length of time together. A strong gale may generally be looked for some time in January, but frequently an entire year will pass without a severe gale. February, as a rule, is fine, with variable winds. March is usually the worst and most boisterous month in the year, the winds being still variable, and gales occurring from north to north-west. Copious rains fall from the beginning of December to March. June and July are the coolest, and September and October the hottest, months, although it will be seen, from the abstract above referred to, that there is very little variation in the temperature throughout the year. Hence the growth of vegetation goes on without check all the year round. Cotton and Indian corn yield three crops a year. I saw some of the latter gathered in the middle of January, which had been sown at the beginning of last October: thus it was planted and the crop gathered within four months. The taro also comes to maturity in four months, and is planted continuously all the year round. When the Natives take up the taro, they cut off the top, make a hole in the ground with a stick, into which the top is thrust without the ground being dug over or in any way prepared. A short time after it is planted they clean the ground, and mulch between the plants with grass and leaves, to keep down the weeds. Bananas yield ripe fruit nine months after planting,—some of the introduced varieties come to maturity in six months. This fruit attains a great size, especially the indigenous varieties, some of which I measured, and found to be eight inches long and nine inches in circumference.

Samoa is very rarely visited by the destructive hurricanes that so frequently sweep across most of