

island, as was found next morning. This island lay S.W. of Aurora, and at the nearest part was about three or four leagues from it. Several canoes were seen along its coasts, but none of the natives put off to the ships. Though no bottom could be found near the shore with fifty fathom, yet Bougainville resolved, if possible, to make a landing on it, in order to get wood and necessary refreshments. A party of men was accordingly sent off in three armed boats, and effected a landing without any opposition. Bougainville himself and some others went to join this party in the afternoon, and found it busily employed as directed, the natives lending considerable assistance by conveying wood, &c. to the boats. At first, indeed, they presented themselves in an armed posture, and seemed resolved to prevent any intrusion on their ground, but the prudent and conciliatory conduct of the officers effected a relinquishment of immediate hostility. This, it is thought, was but deceitful, and apparently intended to throw the party off its guard. Very probably, they meditated a serious attack, but were disconcerted by the party embarking sooner than they expected. In doing so, they exhibited what had continued to actuate them, for when the party put off in their boats, these people followed it, and showed their dexterity in throwing stones and arrows, from which they did not desist, till twice fired on by the crew. These savages are unfavourably described; they are said to have been ugly, of short stature, and ill proportioned; and as they were affected with a disease which Bougainville considered leprosy, this island got the name of Isle of Lepers. The few women that were seen, at best rivalled the men in disagreeable appearance, and were about as naked.

Bougainville now made sail to the S.W. for a long coast in sight, extending as far as the eye could reach, from S.W. to W.N.W., but as there was little or no wind during the 24th, both day and night, he was left to the mercy of the currents, which would scarcely allow him to get three leagues off the Isle of Lepers. He advanced somewhat better on the 25th, though the Etoile still lay becalmed, and at last found himself, as it were, shut up in a great gulph in the land, which lay to the west. Not knowing whether he was so or not, it became necessary to stand again towards that island, and in consequence the 25th was lost.