

# THE ISLANDS OF HAWAII!

Traditions, Facts and Charms of the Lovely Group, as Set Forth By Mrs. Cyrus E. Palmer, of Portland, for These Columns

Situated on the cross roads of the Pacific, in the course of vessels bound from San Francisco to China, Japan, New Zealand and Australia, lies the most important group of islands north of the Equator.

They were originally named the Sandwich Islands by Captain Cook in honor of the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty at the time of the discovery.

Now I have read a story that the Earl of Sandwich was so devoted to gambling that he could not leave the game long enough to eat and ordered his food to be brought to him in the shape of two pieces of bread with a piece of meat between them—hence the origin of the sandwich—but whether this be the same Earl or not, matters little now, since the name has passed into disuse and the musical native name Hawaiian has taken its place.

The habitable islands of this group are eight in number in order of size as follows: Hawaii, Maui, Oahu, Kauai, Molokai, Lanai, Nihoa and Kahoolawe. They are of volcanic origin and many of them are bordered, thought not surrounded by coral reefs and their combined area is less than that of the State of Massachusetts. Hawaii, the largest of the group, having an area of 4210 square miles, is very mountainous. The mighty domes striking the eye at once from the ocean, are named Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa (both over 13,000 feet high), and Hualalai over 8000 feet. The active volcano of Kilauea is located on the side of Mauna Loa and from time immemorial was believed by the natives to be the home of the most potent of all their deities, the Goddess Pele. Here she, with her attendant demons, revelled in flames and bathed in the fiery billows. She ordered the time and seasons of the eruptions and earthquakes. Animals, and often human beings, were cast into the crater to appease the wrath of the Goddess and even to this day superstition reigns in the hearts of the people.

Only a few years ago, a sister of King Kalakua, hearing that the fires of the crater had ceased (a phenomenon which usually precedes an overflow) and believing that by sacrificing her life she could save the lives of thousands, refused all nourishment and died.

The flow of 1856 came near destroying the town of Hilo. The villagers were in a state of great confusion and fear when the Rev. Mr. Coan (one of the fathers of the mission) prayed that the lava might stop and it obeyed—greatly to the confusion of the heathen and strengthening the faith of the Christians. Unfortunately this story has an epilogue which spoils it. In 1881 the flow also ran directly for Hilo and it seemed as if the village were doomed. The prayers of Father Coan proved inefficient but an ancient Hawaiian princess of heathen propensities and enormous proportions was equal to the emergency. She came with incantations and sacrifices and threw pigs (roast pigs are as dear to the Hawaiian as to Charles Lamb) into the molten lava and the flow ceased.

The second island in size, Maui, has an area of 760 square miles or one-sixth the size of Hawaii. This island is composed of two mountainous elevations, connected by an isthmus. Lohaina on its north coast is the ancient capital of the islands and is the site of the first seminary for teaching English, established by American missionaries nearly 80 years ago. It is still in a flourishing condition and is one of the best educational institutions in the free school system.

Oahu is the best known of all the islands and third in size, having an area of 600 square miles. It is the greatest of all the islands in agricultural products. Honolulu, the capital, is situated on this island and has the reputation of being as near Eden as any place on earth. Honolulu Harbor will never be a great harbor, as there is little room, and inadequate protection from storms. Pearl Harbor, a good dozen miles east of Honolulu, is destined to become the great commercial harbor of the island. The coral reef separating the inner harbor from the roadstead outside must be cut through first at an estimated cost of \$1,500,000. With the opening of Pearl Harbor and the completion of

the ocean cable from San Francisco, Pearl City will become the city of Hawaii, although it is probable the capital will remain at Honolulu.

Kauai is called the Garden Isle and is regarded as the oldest of the Hawaiian group.

Miihau is one of the smallest islands, containing only 70,000 acres of land, which all belongs to one firm of sheep raisers. The whole island is one extensive sheep ranch.

Molokai, 40 miles long and seven wide, is the first land sighted by vessels from San Francisco to Honolulu. A small peninsula on the north side, fenced off from the rest of the island by a lofty and almost vertical precipice is the leper settlement of 1200 persons. Five Catholic sisters minister to the wants of the lepers, some of these having been on the island since 1885. None of them are afflicted for they take care to be cleanly which is the best protection.

No divorce is necessary if either husband or wife has leprosy. When a man or woman is sent to Molokai, he or she is permitted to marry again without applying to the courts, so is the man or woman who is not afflicted. Priests perform the ceremonies in the leper colony and, strange to say, more children are born in proportion to the population, than in any other spot on the globe. Even stranger is the fact that not one in 500 of these children are born with leprosy. The girls who do not have the disease, are taken to an institute in Honolulu, where they are educated and cared for by the Catholic Sisters. No provision has been made for the boys and nearly all of them sooner or later, contract the disease. The methods adopted in Hawaii for the suppression of leprosy will doubtless eradicate the scourge from those islands within the next generation or two. A tribute must be paid to the memory of Father Damien, who freely sacrificed his life for the benefit of the lepers on Molokai. He was a moral hero such as the world rarely sees.

To go back to our islands—Lanai is ten by nineteen miles in extent, a little gem of an island, devoted until recently to sheep raising. But the sugar interest has extended there also.

Last on the list comes Kahoolawe six by fourteen miles and devoted principally to cattle raising.

The climate of the Hawaiian Islands is ideal. They may be called a summer resort or a winter resort, for the seasons vary so little that the changes are scarcely perceptible and this naturally leads up to the subject of products.

The business and resources of the islands are purely agricultural and the fertile valleys are covered with sugar, cotton and rice plantations. Oranges, lemons, grape fruit, bananas, pine-apples, guavas, mangoes, peaches the mammee apple, cassava, alligator pear, (which by the way is a great flesh producer), bread fruit and yack which resembles bread fruit but two or three times larger, also poha, whose berry makes excellent jelly and jam, sweet potatoes, yams which, I will remark for the benefit of the floriculturists, is a climbing plant cultivated in tropical climates for the sake of its large tubers or roots) all these grow on the islands, but there are two products native to the islands of such peculiar interest that I must tell you about them.

First is the papaya which has numerous uses—the fruit may be eaten raw with pepper and sugar, but is generally cooked with lemon juice and sugar. It is a fattening food for pigs and chickens. The juice is used as a cosmetic and will readily remove freckles. The leaves are used by the natives as a substitute for soap and a few drops of the juice mixed with water will in a few moments render meat tender.

But most interesting of all is the taro, a plant indigenous to these islands. The tubers contain more nutriment for a given weight than any other vegetable food. The young tops when cooked are hard to distinguish from spinach. The tubers must be cooked before they can be used as food, in order to dissipate a very acid principle that exists in both leaves and roots.

The Kanakai farming consists in the cultivation of this plant—other things may grow, but to the taro his

labor is devoted. Great skill is displayed in irrigating and preparing the soil; beds being made of rich, soft mud, each bed surrounded by a wall of earth impervious to water. The plant is propagated by setting out the tops of the ripe root; water is then let in on them and retained until the planting of the next crop. 40 square feet of taro will supply food for an average sized family for a year. The plant flourishes perennially in the islands and constitutes a chief article of diet to thousands of Chinese and Japanese laborers in addition to the majority of Kanaka natives. The latter are most fond of it when made into poe, a glutinous concoction at once nourishing and pleasing to the taste. However, taro can be eaten in various ways—boiled, baked or fried and it is said that all who eat the taro are never troubled with indigestion. In fact many foreigners have been cured of this ailment by the use of taro flour, which has been lately introduced from Honolulu.

The coffee crop will eventually rival sugar in amount and value. This product is the hope of the country and is eminently suited to a man with a large family, as the children make good pickers.

On account of the limited amount of wood on the islands, the question of rain has become a serious matter. Laws have been passed prohibiting cutting of trees except for fire wood. All lumber for building is imported from Oregon and Washington, but a fine building stone of lava rock is available.

Song birds are limited to a few species, but many varieties are adorned with the brilliant plumage of the tropics. One of the latter species has under each wing a small tuft of feathers of a golden yellow color about one inch in length from which the war cloak of the King was made. This cloak is four feet long with a spread of 11 1/2 feet at the bottom and so rare are the feathers composing it that its formation is said to have occupied nine successive reigns. Capt. Cook, being thought a God, was decorated with this priceless mantle.

The Hawaiians have many traditions of their origin and one point is always agreed upon—the Hawaiian came from the south far away. They were carried away by a storm while endeavoring to reach friendly people, self expatriated for opposing a native monarch and endeavoring to overthrow the government.

The leaders were of royal blood. They came in open boats made from great trees hollowed out. They were out many weeks and after eating all their food, ate their slaves. Millions of flying fish filling their boats, saved the others until the Hawaiian Islands were reached.

That the Hawaiian is of Polynesian origin there is little doubt. There is no authenticated history of the rulers previous to the ascension of Kamehameha I who wrested the power from the petty Kings one by one. Kamehameha I was the father of two Kings following his long and splendid reign, by Keapuolani, known as the queen who broke the abominable practice of denying sacred food, and the king's person and the abject slavery of women to custom.

Kamehameha III ascended the throne at the age of 19—March 17, 1833. He was an enlightened, just and good king as is evidenced by the fact that his birthday and ascension to the throne March 17th, has been declared a national holiday. With Kamehameha V ended the Kamehameha dynasty and the next king was elected by the nobles and representatives and crowned king in 1873. He reigned but one year, and nine days after his death Kala Kana was crowned king. He was 37 years old and an educated, liberal minded man, but like too many men suddenly an unexpectedly become great, he became selfish and grew autocratic and arbitrary. The missionaries who placed him in power were scandalized by his maintenance of a notorious harem, of the restoration of the hula hula and superstitious rites of various kinds. This finally resulted in a popular uprising in 1887, which wrested from the king a large portion of his power.

His death in San Francisco in 1891 was a decided relief to the political situation of Hawaii. Nine days after Kalakaua's death, his sister, Liliuokalani was crowned queen. Her brother had nominated her as his successor with the approval of the church party, always the dominant party in Hawaiian politics, as indeed they had a right to be, for it was American missionaries who went to those islands and from the most superstitious and immoral of people have given the world a self respecting, intelligent and excellent race.

(Concluded Tuesday).  
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