



The Hawaiian Archipelago: Six Months Among the Palm Groves, Coral Reefs, and Volcanoes of the Sandwich Islands

Isabella L. Bird

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"The natives are not savages, most decidedly not. They are on the whole a quiet, courteous, orderly, harmless, Christian community. The native population has declined from 400,000 as estimated by Captain Cook in 1778 to 49,000, according to the census of 1872. There are about 5,000 foreign residents, who live on very friendly terms with the natives, and are mostly subjects of Kalakaua, the king of the group.

"The islands have a thoroughly civilized polity, and the Hawaiians show a great aptitude for political organization. They constitute a limited monarchy, and have a constitutional and hereditary king, a parliament with an upper and lower house, a cabinet, a standing army, a police force, a Supreme Court of Judicature, a most efficient postal system, a Governor and Sheriff on each of the larger islands, court officials, and court etiquette, a common school system, custom houses, a civil list, taxes, a national debt, and most of the other amenities and appliances of civilization.

"There is no State Church. The majority of the foreigners, as well as of the natives, are Congregationalists. The missionaries translated the Bible and other books into Hawaiian, taught the natives to read and write, gave the princes and nobles a high class education, induced the king and chiefs to renounce their oppressive feudal rights, with legal advice framed a constitution which became the law of the land, and obtained the recognition of the little Polynesian kingdom as a member of the brotherhood of civilized nations.

"With these few remarks I leave the subject of the volume to develop itself in my letters. They have not had the advantage of revision by any one familiar with the Sandwich Islands, and mistakes and inaccuracies may consequently appear, on which, I hope that my Hawaiian friends will not be very severe. In correcting them, I have availed myself of the very valuable "History of the Hawaiian Islands," by Mr. Jackson Jarves, Ellis' "Tour Round Hawaii," Mr. Brigham's valuable monograph on "The Hawaiian Volcanoes," and sundry reports presented to the legislature during its present session. I have also to express my obligations to the Hon. E. Allen, Chief Justice and Chancellor of the Hawaiian kingdom, Mr. Manley Hopkins, author of "Hawaii," Dr. T. M. Coan, of New York, Professor W. Alexander, Daniel Smith, Esq., and other friends at Honolulu, for assistance most kindly rendered." -Isabella L. Bird

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