

Islands suggests merely some islands away off in the middle of the Pacific *somewhere*, to the best of his knowledge peopled with savages, whom missionaries are striving to civilize; for the grossest ignorance is extant regarding this little island kingdom. The reason for this is no doubt due to the fact that beyond an occasional meagre newspaper item, information published has been of such a nature as not to reach the general public. Hence, to start with, it may be best to give you a few facts and figures. There are twelve islands in the Hawaiian group, only seven of them being inhabited, the other five are more properly speaking rocky prominences. They lie near the intersection of the 20th parallel of N. lat. and the 160° of W. long., and are the most isolated portion of the inhabited globe. The nearest continental harbor is San Francisco, 2,100 miles away, and it is but little less to the nearest group of islands of any considerable size. These islands are of volcanic formation, having been built up by degrees in ages past from the very sea bottom; the line of progress being from the northwest islands, which are the oldest, towards Hawaii in the southeast, which is the largest island of the group, and where is to be seen the great volcano of Kilauea, the largest active volcano in the world—the greatest attraction in the kingdom. The most important island of the group, commercially and otherwise, is Oahu, upon which is situated the beautiful city of Honolulu, the seat of the government, with a population of 20,000. The total population of the islands is now estimated at 84,574, only a little over half of these being pure-born natives, one quarter Chinese, one-eighth Portuguese, about 4,000 English and American, the balance being made up of other foreigners.

The lava of which the islands are wholly made up, upon decomposition forms a rich and very fertile soil, and being favored with a most equable warm climate (the thermometer at Honolulu, for instance, ranging from about 75° to 85° on the average the year through), a most luxuriant vegeta-



ISLAND OF OAHU, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

tion results. All sorts of tropical fruits and the most beautiful of palms and shade trees, shrubs and flowers abound.

There are many large sugar plantations which give enormous yields—sugar, in fact, forming the most important export, 8,577 tons having been exported in 1885, with considerable increase each season since. Rice is also a very important crop, about 4,000 tons being shipped every year. Nearly \$60,000 worth of bananas are annually disposed of, while hides, wool, goat skins, molasses, coffee, etc., are largely exported. I was greatly surprised upon entering the lovely harbor of Honolulu to find such large shipping interests. It presented a busy scene with its numerous ships loading and unloading their cargoes; and except the odd-looking native fishing canoes here and there in the harbor, the natives on the wharf, and the tropical vegetation beyond, one sees little else to remind him he is in a port so foreign. The harbor is finely protected by a coral reef barrier, forming a natural breakwater.

Honolulu is a modern city in every sense of the word. Its public buildings, business blocks, and fine residences will compare favorably with those of the average American city of the same size. But its lovely avenues lined with the beautiful cigaroba trees with fern-like leaves, the monkey pod and acacia, the most charming of shade trees, and most magnificent of all, the stately royal palms, with trunks like perfectly carved granite columns, carrying above graceful pinnated leaves of enormous proportions; and many other tropical trees and palms far surpassing anything I had ever seen. The parks and private grounds are adorned with trees bearing luscious fruits, while date palms, banana palms, and coconut palms are as common as apple and pear trees with us; and elegant shrubs, plants, and ferns, which we have to cultivate with the utmost care in conservatories, are here to be seen growing out of doors in their fullest perfection and in bloom almost the year round.

The mountains of the islands are green to their very tops and are most beautiful to look upon. One who has taken the delightful drive from Honolulu



KING KALAKAUA I.

up to the Pali, through the beautiful Nuuanu Valley, will ever hold in vivid memory those lovely hillsides covered with verdure of the softest green shades; and the magnificent, sudden, burst of view from the summit of the plains and ocean beyond, from over the frightful precipice, to the edge of which the road leads. Here it was that Kamehameha I. won his crowning victory by driving his last opponents over its ledge to the rocks beneath. A steep and dangerous bridle path now winds down the side of the mountain and is the road by which

connection is had, on foot or horseback, with the other side of Oahu.

Previous to the time of Kamehameha I. the natives of the various islands of the group were divided into bands or tribes under the rule of separate chiefs, but one after the other he conquered and brought under subjection the several tribes of the various islands, until the final battle at the Pali gave him the acknowledged sovereignty of them all.

Some Englishmen claim the Hawaiian Islands to have been discovered by the great circumnavigator, Capt. Cook, who landed there on Jan. 18th, 1778, and who, it is supposed, was murdered there the following year; but, beyond a doubt, they were discovered by the Spaniards very much earlier. However this may be the islands remained independent, though Kamehameha I. was but a child at the time of Cook's visit. All power centered in the King up to 1840, when the power of the crown was restricted (reign of Kamehameha III.) and has successively been further restricted until now, since the revolution of last summer, it is a limited monarchy similar to that of Great Britain. A large and handsome statue of the first ruler, Kamehameha I., who is often styled the "Napoleon of the Pacific," has been erected in front of the fine government building.

The present King, Kalakaua I., with whom I had the pleasure of meeting and conversing, is a man of fine presence, and is very genial in his manner. He is very well educated, speaks English fluently, and is regarded as quite an orator in his own language. He has made the tour of the world and has considerable administrative ability. Had his advisers been faithful and disinterested men the revolution of last summer need not have taken place. It was indeed a wonderful revolution, for without the shedding of blood or so much as the firing of a gun, though there were very warlike preparations on both sides, the constitution of the kingdom was completely changed. Matters are quiet now and though there are, of course, many discontents, it is sincerely hoped and believed that peace is ensured.

King Kalakaua, like most of his countrymen, is fond, probably too fond, of amusement and inclined to take an easy life. Like the Prince of Wales he is the patron of boating, yachting, jockey clubs, and agricultural societies. Queen Kapiolani is spoken of by all as a lady of great amiability, and she has done much to comfort her afflicted subjects in the leprosy hospital. Iolani Palace, the royal residence, is a large handsome structure in the heart of the city and bears a striking contrast to the grass hut of their great predecessor, Kamehameha I. The palace is guarded by a very miniature army neatly uniformed and equipped.

[N. B. This Hawaiian letter will be completed in the next issue, when a description of the natives and native customs will be given, and several other beautiful illustrations published—two made directly from photographs taken by W. E. H. Massey, Esq.—Ed.]

