

In the dim, distant days to which only tradition journeys, canoes made their way from some where among the islands of the Southern Pacific, bringing groups of adventurous voyagers to make their homes on Hawaii. They brought with them the simple arts and industries to which their Malay race had attained and peopled in successive waves the different islands of the group. Through long centuries there was little intercourse between them and the then Pacific Islanders, and their language took on characteristics of its own, but there is still unmistakable evidence of its kinship with the tongues of New Zealand, Tahiti, Samoa, Java, Sumatra, New Guinea, the Caroline Islands and some parts of the Philippines. When they landed, vegetation was very sparse and the fauna almost non-existent. But with successive waves of immigration came plants and animals until now the land is rich in plant and animal life of all kinds. In the old days the food of the natives was very simple, consisting of the taro root, cooked and pounded into a pasty mass, called poi, and eaten mostly with raw fish. With the coming of animals, hogs and dogs were added to the menu and no feast was complete without one or more of these roasted in the hot sand and eagerly devoured.

With a temperature so equable and conditions of life so pleasant the Hawaiians fell into habits of easy going, light hearted indifference. When one member of a community caught some fish or made a batch of poi, all the others within reach depended on him till this was exhausted, when he, with the rest, moved on to the next who made provision. Houses were of the simplest kind, and the most elaborate costumes consisted of a breech cloth and a smile, the simpler ones dispensed with both.

But such Edenic conditions are never what they seem. With every bodily comfort and the most fascinating surroundings, the Hawaiian people were far from happy. Their religion was a degraded and brutal Polytheism and some of the gods preserved in the Bishop Museum at Honolulu make one shudder with their savage ugliness. To these, sacrifices were offered, sometimes even of human victims and their cruel influence was over every phase of life.

The system of tabu became more and more elaborate, until it had the whole of life in its grip. For a man and woman to eat