

was discovered by Captain Cook in 1778, and it was in one of the bays of Hawaii he lost his life. The people were then, and for forty years afterwards, a wild, barbarous race. They lived on the arum root called taro, so common in Polynesia; their huts were miserably small; they wore almost no clothes; dogs and pigs were their only animals. Possessing many noble qualities, they were subject to an iron rule by their chiefs, who could appropriate fields and persons at their will. Marriage laws were set at nought by both sexes, and infanticide was so common that before long the race must have become extinct. Drunkenness and violence filled the islands, fed by the rum and muskets with which the English and American whalers paid for the fruit and vegetables and fresh meat for which they visited their shores. One thing happened during the early years of the present century, which proved a preparation for better things, and the benefits of which they are enjoying to the present day. The tribes inhabiting these islands had formed petty independent kingdoms under several rulers. But Kamehameha I., an able warrior and wise king, having been attacked first by one chief and then another, in self-defence defeated them all, and by 1809 brought the entire group under his authority.

As in other Polynesian groups, the religion of the race consisted in honouring a few gods, who were believed to rule over the various affairs of their life. The images of some were carved of wood; those of others were adorned with the small scarlet feathers which throughout these groups were emblems of royalty, and which only the gods or princes were allowed to wear. The most prominent feature of their religion was the *tabu* (whence comes the English word first brought home by Captain Cook); this was a system of restrictions as to places, persons, and articles of food, which could not be broken through under pain of death. After the people began to know more of the world, they felt these restrictions press very heavily; they saw foreigners break through them without injury or punishment from the gods; many individuals, in eating with foreigners, also broke them with impunity, and doubts arose, and opinions were expressed so strongly against the *tabu*, that at last multitudes resolved to get rid of it altogether. Only an occasion was needed, and that was furnished by the death of Kamehameha in 1819. Then the widowed queen,