

JAMES JACKSON JARVES



KIANA

James Jackson Jarves

Kiana

A Tradition of Hawaii

Published by

MUSAICUM

Books

- Advanced Digital Solutions & High-Quality eBook
Formatting -

musaicumbooks@okpublishing.info

2021 OK Publishing

EAN 4064066382582

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PREFACE.

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Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as Fiction. Every emotion, thought, or action embodied into literature has been human experience at some time. We can imagine nothing within the laws of nature, but what has had or may have an actual existence. A novel, therefore, but personifies the Truth. In giving a local interest to its actors, it introduces them to the reader through the medium of sympathies and passions, common to his own heart, of reason intelligible to his own mind, or of moral sentiments that find an echo in his own soul. Its success depends upon the skill and feeling with which the author works out his characters into a consistent whole—creating a simple and effective unity out of his plot, locality, and motive. Still every reader likes to feel that the persons whose fates warm his interest in the pages of a romance, actually lived and were as tangibly human as himself, and his degree of interest is apt to be in ratio to his belief that they were real personages. I am glad, therefore, to be able to assure my readers of the following facts.

In my youth I spent several years in different parts of the Pacific Ocean, but chiefly at the Sandwich or Hawaiian Islands. While engaged in procuring materials for their history—first published in 1843—I was much struck with a tradition relating to their history by Europeans, two and a half centuries before Cook so accidentally stumbled upon them. Briefly it was this—

Eighteen generations of kings previous to Kamehameha I., during the reign of Kahoukapa, or Kiana, there arrived at Hawaii, a white priest, bringing with him an idol, which, by his persuasion, was enrolled in the calendar of the Hawaiian gods, and a temple erected for its service. The stranger priest acquired great influence, and left a reputation for goodness that was green in the memories of the people of Hawaii three centuries later. Another statement adds that a vessel was wrecked on the island, and the captain and his sister reached the shore, where they were kindly received and adopted into the families of the chiefs.

Without enlarging here upon the tradition, and the light my subsequent researches threw upon it, I will simply state that I became convinced that a Spanish priest, woman, and several men were rescued from a wreck, landed and lived in Hawaii, and acquired power and consideration from their superior knowledge, and for a while were even regarded as gods. Some of them intermarried with the aborigines, and their blood still exists (or did recently) among certain families, who pride themselves greatly upon their foreign origin.

Other traces of their existence are perceptible in the customs, ideas, and even the language of the natives, which last has a number of words strikingly analogous to the Spanish of the same meaning. Captain Cook found among them a remnant of a sword-blade and another bit of iron. They were not strangers to this metal, and as no ores exist in their soil, they could have derived their knowledge solely from foreign intercourse.

Soon after the conquest of Mexico, Cortez sent three vessels upon an exploring expedition to California. After sailing as far as 29° north, one was sent back to report progress. The other two held on and were never heard from. Why may not one of these be the vessel that was wrecked on Hawaii? The winds would naturally drive her in that direction, and the date of the expedition agrees, so far as can be made out from Hawaiian chronology, with the time of the first arrival of white men on that island. Indeed, at that period of maritime discovery, white men could come from no other quarter. For my part, I believe that a port of Mexico was the starting point of the wrecked party; a conjecture which derives some plausibility from the fact, that, when the natives offered the whites bananas and other tropical fruits, they were familiar with them, which would be the case, if they came from Tehuantepec, from whence Cortez fitted out his vessel.

To absolutely identify the white strangers of Hawaii with the missing ships of Cortez, is not now possible. But the interest in them, left thus isolated from civilization amid savages, upon an island in the centre of the then unknown ocean, is peculiar. Especially have I always been curious to trace the fate of the solitary white woman—a waif of refinement cast thus on a barbarous shore—and of the priest too—to learn how far their joint influence tempered the heathenism into which they were thrown, or whether they were finally overcome by paganism.

Twelve years ago, while amid the scenery described in this volume, and the customs and traditions of the natives were fresh in my mind, I began to pen their history; but

other objects prevented my going on, until the past winter, when leisure and the advice of friends, pleased with the subject, prompted its completion. The descriptions of the natural features of this remarkable island, of the religion, customs, government, and conditions of its aborigines, as well as the events in general, are as faithful transcripts, in words, of the actual, to my personal knowledge, as it is in my power to give.

In saying thus much for the facts, I am in duty bound to add a word for the ideas. Prefaces, some say, are never read. It may be so. But for myself, I like the good old custom, by which as author, or reader, I can talk or be talked directly to. It is the only way of familiar intercourse between two parties so essential to each other. I shall therefore speak on.

Every tale is based upon certain ideas, which are its life-blood. Of late, fiction has become the channel by which the topics most in the thought of the age, or which bear directly upon its welfare, reach most readily the popular mind. But few authors, however, can count upon many readers, and I am not one of them. Still what a man has to say to the public, should be his earnest thought frankly told. No one has a monopoly of wisdom. The most gifted author cannot fill the measure of the understanding. The humblest may give utterance to ideas, that, however plain to most thinkers, may through him be the means of first reaching some minds, or at least suggesting thoughts that shall leave them wiser and happier. If what he say, has in it no substance of truth, it will speedily come to naught. But on the contrary, if it contain simply the seeds of truth, they will

be sure to find a ripening soil somewhere in human hearts, and bud and blossom into peace and progress. With this motive I have spoken freely such views as have been prompted by my experience and reflections. They are not much to read, nor much to skip. Whichever the reader does, he carries with him my warmest wishes for his welfare, and the hope that if he find in the Story nothing to instruct, it may still be not without the power "to amuse."

Casa Dauphiné,
Piazza Maria Antonia,
Florence, 1857.

CHAPTER I.

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“They that sail on the sea tell of the danger thereof; and when we hear it with our ears, we marvel thereat.”—*Ecclesiasticus*, xliii. 24.

“The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.”
Ancient Mariner.

To be alone on the great ocean, to feel besides the ship that bears you, nothing human floats within your world's horizon, begets in a thoughtful mind a deep solemnity. The voyager is, as it were, at once brought before the material image of eternity. Sky and sea, each recedes without limit from his view; a circle above, a circle around, a circle underneath, no beginning, no ending, no repose for the sight, no boundary on which to fix the thought, but growing higher and higher, wider and wider, deeper and deeper, as the eye gazes and finds no resting point—both sea and sky suggest, with overpowering force, that condition of soul which, knowing neither time nor space, forever mounts Godward. In no mood does Nature speak louder to the heart than in her silence. When her thunders roll through the atmosphere and the hills tremble, the ocean surges and the wind wails; when she laughs through her thousand notes from bird or blossom, the heart either exults at the strife, or grows

tender with sympathy in the universal joy. But place man alone on the ocean, shrouded in silence, with no living thing beyond his own tiny, wooden world for companionship, he begins to realize in the mighty expanse which engulfs his vision his own physical insignificance. The very stars that look down upon him, with light twinkling and faint, from the rapidity with which they have sent their rays through distant firmaments to greet his vision and tell him there are countless worlds of greater beauty and higher perfection for his spirit to explore; even they deepen his feeling of littleness, till, finally, his soul recovers its dignity in the very magnitude of the scenery spread for its exploration. It knows that all this is but a portion of its heritage; that earth, air and water, the very planets that mock its curiosity, are ministering spirits, given with all their mysteries to be finally absorbed into its own all-penetrating nature.

Few, however, can so realize their own spirit-power, as to be calm in a calm. A motionless ship upon a silent ocean has a phantom look. The tall, tapering spars, the symmetrical tracery of ropes, the useless sails in white drooping folds, the black body in sharp relief in the white light, added to the ghost-ship—the twin of the one in the air—in dimly-shadowed companionship, hull uppermost and her masts pointing downwards in the blue water, make up a spectral picture. As day after day passes, overhead a hot burning sun whose rays blind without rejoicing, no ripple upon the water, no life, because neither fish nor bird can bear the heat; the very garbage thrown overboard floating untouched, as if destruction rejected her own; the night mantling all in darkness, making silence still more

oppressive—for even the blocks refuse their wonted creaking;—all this consumes the body like rust slowly eating into iron. Nature faints and man sinks into her lassitude. He feels deserted of his own mother. She that bore him mocks him. Perchance a cold grey sky, pregnant with gloom, shuts down all around him, reflecting itself in the ocean which looks even greyer and colder. The atmosphere grows barren of light. No wind comes. Silent, motionless, and despairing, the vessel lies upon the waters; not slumbering, for every nerve within is quickened to unnatural keenness to catch a sign of change. It comes not. The seamen's hearts, too worn to pray or curse, daily sink deeper within them, like masses of lead slowly finding their way through the fathomless depths of the ocean. A sail, a floating spar, a shark or devil fish, anything that were of man or beast, a shrub, the tiniest sea-snail or wildest bird, would be welcomed as Columbus hailed the floating signs that told to his mutinous crew a coming shore.

But none come. Weeks go by thus. Is man a god that his soul cannot fail within him! Must he not sympathize with the surrounding inanition! Welcome battle, welcome storm, welcome all that excites his energies, though it consume blood and muscle; be the mind racked and the body tortured; still man marches triumphantly on to his object. But take away opposition, reduce him to nothingness, convince him that action begets no result, that will is powerless, and he is no longer man. Not to act is conscious annihilation. But Nature never wholly deserts. She leaves hope to cheer humanity with promises that sooner or later must be fulfilled. There is, however, no condition so

destitute of all that makes man *Man* as helpless solitude, when mind and body alike without action, stagnate and forget their origin.

Such was the condition of the crew of a vessel about the year 1530, lying motionless on the waters of the Pacific, not far from 25° north latitude and 140° west longitude. The bark was of that frail class, called caravel, scarcely fitted to navigate a small lake, much less to explore unknown seas. Yet, in those days European navigators did not hesitate to trust their lives and fortunes, on voyages of years' duration, to craft which would now be condemned even for river navigation. The one of which we speak was of about seventy tons burden, with a high poop, which gave a comfortable cabin, a half deck and a forecastle, raised like the poop, sufficient to give partial shelter to the numerous crew. One mast with a large lateen sail rose from the centre of the vessel, but her progress was aided as much by oars as by canvas. At the masthead was a castle-shaped box, in which the seamen could comfortably remain, either as lookouts, or for defence. This gave to the spar a clumsy, top-heavy look, wholly inconsistent with our modern ideas of nautical symmetry.

It was plain that the caravel had been long from port, and had suffered much from stress of weather. Her sides were rusty grey; barnacles clung so thickly below and above the water line, as to greatly interfere with her sailing qualities; the seams were open, and as the hot sun poured upon them, pitch oozed out. A tattered and threadbare sail hung loosely from the long yard which swayed from the masthead. The cordage appeared strained and worn to its

last tension. Iron rust had eaten through and stained the wood in all parts of the hull. If paint had ever existed, the elements had long since eaten it up. Everything indicated long and hard usage. Yet amid all there were signs of seamanship and discipline; for bad and shattered as were rope, spar, and sail, everything was in its place and in the best order its condition permitted.

Within the cabin was a weather-beaten young man, well made, of a strong and active frame, features bronzed by long exposure to varied climates, and fine soft hair, somewhat light in color, which even now would have curled gracefully, had it been properly cared for. He lay ill and panting on the transom, with his face close to the open port, gasping for air; not that he was seriously reduced, for it was readily seen that fatigue, anxiety and scanty fare had more to do with his weak condition than actual disease. Near him was a rude chart of the coasts of Mexico and adjacent sea, which he had long and carefully, and, to all appearance, fruitlessly studied. It was covered with a labyrinth of pencil marks, indicating a confused idea both of navigation and his present position. He had been recently poring over it, and at last had thrown it aside as utterly worthless, or at all events as affording him no clue by which to extricate himself from his present situation in a sea wholly unknown to the navigators of his day.

Near him sat a priest, whose thoughtful, benevolent face was far from expressing despair even under their present circumstances. He talked to the young man of the necessity of trusting themselves to the guidance of Providence, and

sought to cheer him by his own hopeful serenity and untiring action.

Around the deck and under such shelter from the heat as they could contrive, the crew reclined in mournful groups; some with faces hardened into despair, and others careless or indifferent. A few only manifested a spirit of pious resignation. The strongest seldom spoke. Their looks were as sullen as their tempers were fierce, and if they opened their mouths, it was to mutter or curse, daring Nature to do her worst. Nothing but their physical debility prevented frequent violent explosions of the pent-up irritability arising from their helpless state. Disease and starvation were rapidly adding fresh horrors to their situation. One seaman lay on the hard deck with a broken thigh, in which mortification had already begun, groaning and piteously asking for water. In his thirst he would have drunk more in one hour than was allowanced to the entire crew for a day's consumption. Several others, whose fevered tongues rattled from dryness, were also tossing and moaning on the rough planks, too weak or hopeless to join in the fruitless appeal of their dying comrade. Such water as they had was clotted with slime, and impregnated with foul odors. Their meat was all gone, and the little bread left, musty and worm-eaten.

All wore the look of having long struggled with adverse fortune. They were men whose element was made up of hardship and adventure; men, who, forgetting in one hour's better fortune all that had brought them to their present condition, would not hesitate to embark again on a similar errand. Here they were, bowed in spirit, haggard in features, their hardy limbs lying torpidly about, indifferent to death

itself, but worn to worse than death by drifting for weeks about under a pitiless sun on an unknown sea, which the oldest of them had never heard of, and which seemed to them as if they had arrived within the confines of stagnant matter, where they were doomed to rot in body and decay in mind, confined in their vessel, whose slow destruction kept even pace with their own.

Five of their number had already died and been cast overboard. Gladly would they have seen sharks gorge themselves on their late shipmates, as that would have shown them that the water still contained life. But no carrion fishes came near them. With faces upturned and glassy eyes fixed upon the caravel, those corpses floated about them so long that the crew were at last afraid to look over the bulwarks for fear of seeing what they desired so much to forget.

But humanity had not altogether abandoned them. The frailest in body among that vessel's company proved the strongest in faith and action. A woman was of their number. Consuming even less of their provisions than the others, she reserved herself, and in great measure her allowance of food, for those whose necessity she considered as greater than her own. At all hours was she to be seen moving quietly about, speaking hope and courage to one, giving to eat or drink to another, or fanning the hot brow of a half delirious sufferer, while she talked to him of a home into which no suffering could enter, if the heart once were right. Especially was she devoted to the young man in the cabin. He evidently relied even more upon her than upon the priest, and imbibed fresh strength and hope from her voice

and example. The priest was equally unwearied with his bodily aid and spiritual counsel to the crew. Thus it was that amid the most trying of the experiences of ocean-life, despair did not altogether quench hope.

Yet what situation could be more cheerless! One altogether similar in the history of navigation had never occurred before, and by the hurried course of discovery and civilization, would not again occur. They were literally alone, drifting on an unknown, motionless sea. No winds stirred its surface; no birds flew by; no fishes came up from beneath their keel; there was no change except from the burning day to the feverish night, which brought with it no cooling dew, nor any sign to excite a sailor's hope. Although they could not know the fact, not a vessel beside theirs for thousands of miles east or west, north or south, floated on that ocean. Driven thither against their wills, they were the first to explore its solitude. It was true that continents and archipelagoes thickly peopled were around them, but for all they knew, they were being carried by an irresistible fate to the boundary of nature, whence they would drop into a fathomless void. They were therefore literally alone.

CHAPTER II.

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“Suddaine they see from midst of all the maine,
The surging waters like a Mountain rise,
And the great Sea, puft up with proud Disdaine,
To swell above the measure of his guise,
Threatening to devoure all that his Powre despise.”
Spenser.

The caravel in question was more than ordinarily frail, having been hastily equipped with two others from the port of Tehuantepec in Mexico, at the order of Cortez for the exploration of the continent about and above the gulf of California. It is true, an experienced seaman named Grijalva had been put in command, and he had been so far successful as to have reached the twenty-ninth degree of north latitude. Thence one vessel had been sent back with an account of his progress. The other two continued their explorations northward, with the hope of arriving at that kingdom so rich in precious metals, of which they had heard so many rumors from the recently conquered Mexicans. Creeping coastwise slowly upward, many fine bays with shores rich in verdure met their view, but of gold they found no traces, and of inhabitants, with the exception of an occasional glimpse of a naked savage, who ran terrified away, they were equally unsuccessful. Yet they were navigating waters, the tributary streams of which were literally bedded in gold. But neither the time nor people to

which this treasure was to be disclosed had arrived. Consequently, Grijalva, with his eyes blinded to what was constantly within his reach, saw nothing but a vast wilderness, which promised neither wealth nor honor as the reward of further exploration. Reluctantly, therefore, he turned his course southward. That night a severe gale came on, and both caravels were driven far from their course towards the southwest. It was in vain with such unseaworthy vessels that Grijalva sought to regain the coast. The wind blew him still farther into unknown seas, which daily became more tempestuous, until his storm-shattered vessel sank in sight of her scarcely better conditioned consort, engulfing all on board.

This sight for the moment chilled the hearts of the surviving crew, and paralyzed their exertions. But Spanish seamen and the soldiers of Cortez were too accustomed to death in every form, to long despair. They redoubled their efforts, and by bailing and cautious steering, keeping the vessel directly before the wind, weathered the gale, which the next day was succeeded by the fatal calm, already described.

There were on board some twenty persons, veterans in the hardships and conflicts of the new world. Their commander was the young man that lay exhausted in the cabin. He spoke to the woman who now sat with his head on her lap, while she gave him such meagre refreshment as their famished bark afforded. His name was Juan Alvarez. Hers was Beatriz. They were brother and sister. He had been a volunteer with Narvaez, and after his defeat enlisted under Cortez, and was present at the siege of Mexico, and

all the subsequent expeditions of his commander, to whom he was greatly attached. This attachment was founded in a congeniality of temperament, which led him to emulate the heroic daring and unflinching perseverance of Cortez, while his more powerful intellect was equally an object of his profound admiration. With the same thirst for adventure, the same chivalric courage, the same devotion to the Catholic worship, the same contempt for the rights, feelings or sufferings of others so that his own desire was gained, devout and loyal, with deep affections, easily moved to anger or kindness, childlike in his impulses, yet strong in action, Alvirez in most points, except judgment, might be considered a Cortez on a small scale. Indeed, his intimacy with him, begun when Alvirez was not twenty years of age, had, by strengthening the natural traits of character so similar to his own, quite merged him into his commander. His individuality was shown chiefly in executing what Cortez ordered, and in blind though gallant acts of devotion, upon the spur of emergency, in which prudence or generalship were not often considered.

Alvirez was frank and social. These qualities joined to his tried bravery made him the favorite of all. Even the Mexicans who had so often suffered from his arm, learned to distinguish and admire in him that generous fearlessness to all danger, which pitiless to them, was self-devoted to his own cause, and stooping to no artifice in action, went direct to its mark, like the swoop of a hawk upon its quarry. With them he was known as Tonatiuh, 'the child of the sun,' from his burning glance and stroke as quick as light. His thirst for adventure keeping him in continual action, he gladly

volunteered to command the soldiery in the expeditions which Cortez sent to explore and subdue the unknown regions to the north of Mexico.

Not yet in the prime of life, we find this Spanish cavalier, faint from exertions which had wearied out all on board, lying half helpless, grieving over the fate of the brave seamen who had so long and skilfully kept the little squadron afloat.

His sister Beatriz shared many of these traits with her brother. She was as brave, self-devoted, ardent, and impulsive as he, but true womanhood and a benevolence of heart which instinctively led her to seek the happiness of those with whom she was, made her in conduct an altogether different being. Deeply imbued with the Roman Catholic faith, while she sedulously conformed to the demands of its ritual, its principles tempered by her own native goodness and purity, reflected through her peace and good will towards all men. Juan was all energy and action. His will flowed from desire like a torrent, rending asunder its natural barriers, and spreading mingled ruin and fertility in its course. Her will was deep, calm, and sure, without noise, with no sudden movement, but like the quiet uprising of an ocean-tide, it steadily rose, floating all things safely higher and still higher on its bosom, until they attained its own level. All about her felt its movement, wondered at the effect, and welcomed the cause.

Her influence over rude men was not the result of charms that most attract the common eye. The oval of her head was faultless. Her hair was of ethereal softness, and seemed to take its hue and character from her mind rather than

from nature's pigments. Considering her race, her complexion was rare, being blonde. Warmth, firmness, decision, and much heart-suffering, were denoted by her mouth. Her eyes spoke at will the language of her soul, or kept its emotions as a sealed book. Yet they were not beautiful in the strictly physical sense, being in repose somewhat lifeless in color, but when they talked, an illumination as if from another sphere overspread her countenance, and surrounded her entire person with an atmosphere radiant with spirit emotion. So gentle, yet so penetrating was her speech, that it seemed as though she breathed her language. To the listener it was as if some delicious strain of music had passed through him, harmonizing his whole nature. This, no doubt, was owing rather to her purity and earnestness, as they found language and a responsive echo and all that was true and good in others, than to any wonderful endowment of voice. Her vital organization being acute and generous, she was extremely susceptible to all life emotions, yet so well-balanced was her character, which was the result of a varied experience, garnered into wisdom, that came more from intuition than out of the cold processes of reason, that rarely was she otherwise than the same quiet high-toned woman, as persuasive to good by her presence, as faithful to it by her example. None, therefore, asked her age, debated her beauty, or questioned her motives. All, even the mercenary soldier, the profane seamen, and the untutored Indian, felt themselves better, happier and safer, for having her among them. Her sad, sympathizing face, her winning speech, generous action, and noiseless, graceful carriage, were to

them more of the Madonna than of the earth-woman. Yet she was strictly human, differing from others of her sex only in being a larger type of God's handiwork, with fuller capacities both to receive and give, whether of suffering or joy. The key to her character was her invariably following her own noble instincts, sanctioned and aided as they were by the principles of her faith. In this respect, she was fortunate in possessing for her confessor the priest who was with them. He was a Dominican monk, Olmedo by name, and although attached by education to his theology, was of enlarged and humane mind, and felt that love rather than force was the only sure principle of conversion of the heathen to Christianity.

Olmedo had come from Spain with the father of Alvarez, who held a post of trust in Cuba. Thence he followed Cortez to Mexico, and on repeated occasions had done much to soften his fanaticism, and inspire him with a more humane policy towards the unhappy Indians. When Alvarez set out on the present expedition, his sister and Olmedo determined to accompany him; the former from her love for Juan, and the latter from attachment to both, and the hope that he might find a field for missionary labor, in which the principles that animated him and Beatriz might have free scope, unneutralized by the brutality and excesses of the miscalled soldiers of the Cross.

The other members of the caravel's company need just now no special mention, except that although bred in the Cortez school of blood and rapine, they were, almost unconsciously to themselves, influenced much not only by the high toned courage and unflinching perseverance of

their commander, but still more by the purer examples and earnest faith of Beatriz and Olmedo; each of whom, as opportunity offered, sought to deepen this impression, and to persuade them that there was truer treasure on earth than even the gold for which they lavished their blood, and better enjoyment to be found than in the brutal indulgence of base passions. There was, in consequence, in most of them a devotion to their leader and confessor, loftier and more sincere than the force of discipline, or the ordinary inspiration of their religion, because founded on an appeal to their hearts. For Beatriz the rudest one among them would willingly have shed all his blood to save a drop of hers.

“May the Holy Mother receive their souls,” somewhat abruptly exclaimed Juan, who had been musing upon the fate of Grijalva. His sister did not reply, except by a deep sigh, feeling that silence best expressed her sympathy with her brother’s ejaculation.

Juan and those of the crew who now remained alive, exhausted by their sufferings and labors, soon sunk into a sound sleep. Olmedo and Beatriz were alone left awake, and avoiding by a common instinct the past, they talked only of their present situation and probable future. There was nothing in their external conditions to authorize hope for maiden or priest; yet a reliance on divine care so completely filled their hearts, that although no light penetrated their ocean-horizon, each felt and spoke words of encouragement to the other.

While they talked, light breezes began in variable puffs to stir the sails. As the wind increased, it grew contrary to the