



THE LEGENDS AND
MYTHS OF HAWAII

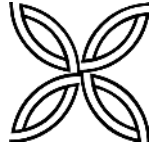
DAVID KALAKAUA



THE LEGENDS AND
MYTHS OF HAWAII

DAVID KALAKAUA

David Kalakaua



THE LEGENDS AND MYTHS OF
HAWAII

UUID: 49eebc40-8081-439a-b6a8-617bc6d0d77c

This ebook was created with StreetLib Write
<http://write.streetlib.com>

-->

Table of contents

MAP of the HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

The Legends and Myths of Hawaii.

HAWAIIAN LEGENDS: INTRODUCTION.

Hina, the Helen of Hawaii.

HINA, THE HELEN OF HAWAII.

The Royal Hunchback.

THE ROYAL HUNCHBACK.

The Triple Marriage of Laa-mai-kahiki.

THE TRIPLE MARRIAGE OF LAA-MAI-KAHIKI.

The Apotheosis of Pele.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF PELE.

Hua, King of Hana.

HUA, KING OF HANA.

The Iron Knife.

THE IRON KNIFE.

The Sacred Spear-Point.

THE SACRED SPEAR-POINT.

Kelea, the Surf-Rider of Maui.

KELEA, THE SURF-RIDER OF MAUI.

Umi, the Peasant Prince of Hawaii.

UMI, THE PEASANT PRINCE OF HAWAII.

Lono and Kaikilani.

LONO AND KAIKILANI.

The Adventures of Iwikauikaua.

THE ADVENTURES OF IWIKAUIKAUA.

The Prophecies of Keaulumoku.

THE PROPHECIES OF KEAULUMOKU.

The Cannibals of Halemanu.

THE CANNIBALS OF HALEMANU.

Kaiana, the Last of the Hawaiian Knights.

KAIANA, THE LAST OF THE HAWAIIAN KNIGHTS.

Kaala, the Flower of Lanai.

KAALA, THE FLOWER OF LANAI.

The Destruction of the Temples.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLES.

The Tomb of Puupehe.

THE TOMB OF PUUPEHE.

The Story of Laieikawai.

THE STORY OF LAIEIKAWAI.

Lohiau, the Lover of a Goddess.

LOHIAU, THE LOVER OF A GODDESS.

Kahavari, Chief of Puna.

KAHAVARI, CHIEF OF PUNA.

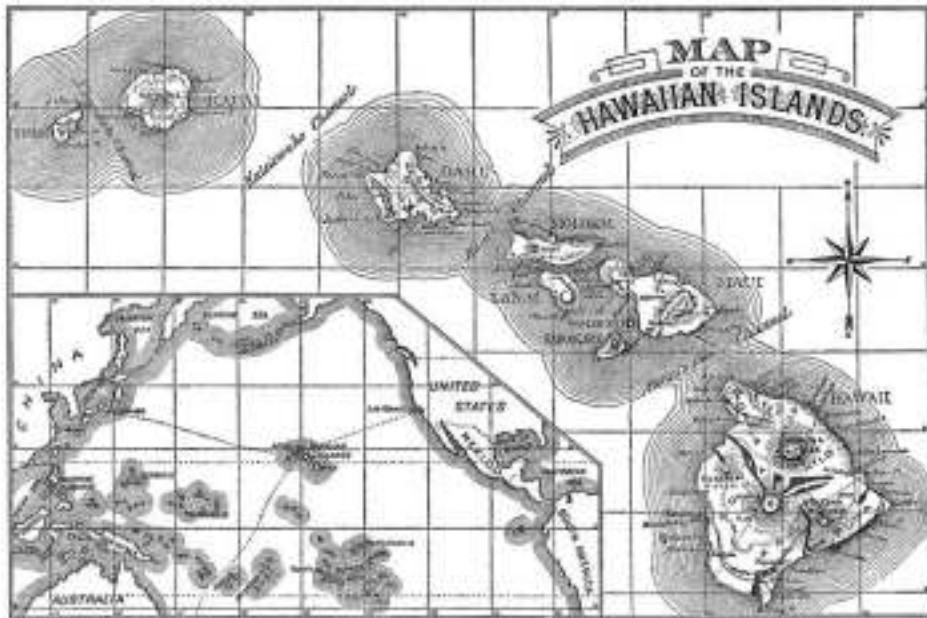
Kahalaopuna, the Princess of Manoa.

KAHALAOPUNA, THE PRINCESS OF MANOA.

HAWAIIAN LEGENDS: GLOSSARY.

COLOPHON

MAP OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS



THE LEGENDS AND
MYTHS OF HAWAII.

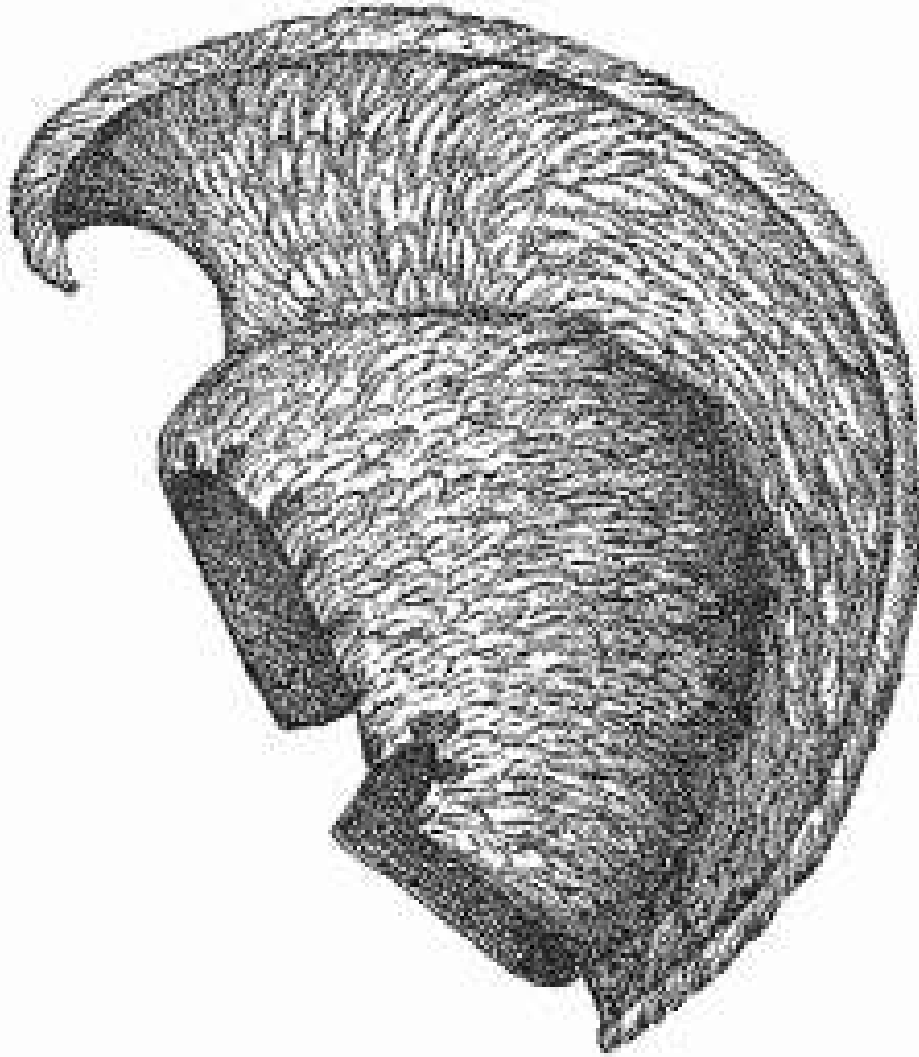
HAWAIIAN LEGENDS: INTRODUCTION.

Physical Characteristics of the Hawaiian Islands—
Historic Outlines—The Tabu—Ancient Religion—
Ancient Government—Ancient Arts, Habits and Customs
—The Hawaii of To-day.

GENERAL RETROSPECT.

The legends following are of a group of sunny islands lying almost midway between Asia and America—a cluster of volcanic craters and coral-reefs, where the mountains are mantled in perpetual green and look down upon valleys of eternal spring; where for two-thirds of the year the trade-winds, sweeping down from the northwest coast of America and softened in their passage southward, dally with the stately cocoas and spreading palms, and mingle their cooling breath with

the ever-living fragrance of fruit and blossom. Deeply embosomed in the silent wastes of the broad Pacific, with no habitable land nearer than two thousand miles, these islands greet the eye of the approaching mariner like a shadowy paradise, suddenly lifted from the blue depths by the malicious spirits of the world of waters, either to lure him to his destruction or disappear as he drops his anchor by the enchanted shore.



Mahiole, or Feathered War-Helmet.

The legends are of a little archipelago which was unknown to the civilized world until the closing years of the last century, and of a people who for many centuries exchanged no word or product with the rest of mankind; who had lost all knowledge, save the little retained by the dreamiest of legends, of the great world beyond their island home; whose origin may be traced to the ancient Cushites of Arabia, and whose legends repeat the story of the Jewish genesis; who developed and passed through an age of chivalry somewhat more barbarous, perhaps, but scarcely less affluent in deeds of enterprise and valor than that which characterized the contemporaneous races of the continental world; whose chiefs and priests claimed kinship with the gods, and step by step told back their lineage not only to him who rode the floods, but to the sinning pair whose re-entrance to the forfeited joys of Paradise was prevented by the large, white bird of *Kane* ; who fought without shields and went to their death without fear; whose implements of war and industry were of wood, stone and bone, yet who erected great temples to their gods, and constructed barges and canoes which they navigated by the stars; who peopled the elements with spirits, revered the priesthood, bowed to the revelations of their prophets, and submitted without complaint to the oppressions of the *tabu* ; who

observed the rite of circumcision, built places of refuge after the manner of the ancient Israelites, and held sacred the religious legends of the priests and chronological *meles* of the chiefs.

As the mind reverts to the past of the Hawaiian group, and dwells for a moment upon the shadowy history of its people, mighty forms rise and disappear—men of the stature of eight or nine feet, crowned with helmets of feathers and bearing spears thirty feet in length. Such men were Kiha, and Liloa, and Umi, and Lono, all kings of Hawaii during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; and little less in bulk and none the less in valor was the great Kamehameha, who conquered and consolidated the several islands under one government, and died as late as 1819. And beside Umi, whose life was a romance, stands his humble friend Maukaleoleo, who, with his feet upon the ground, could reach the cocoanuts of standing trees; and back of him in the past is seen Kana, the son of Hina, whose height was measured by paces.

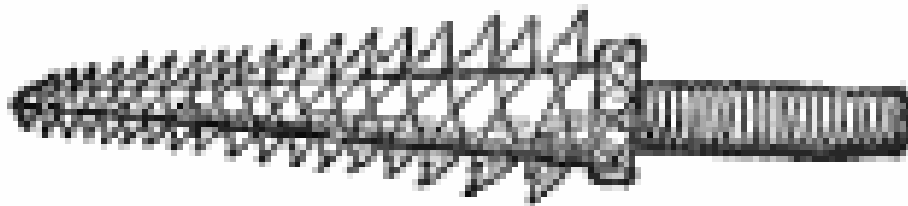
GROUP OF ANCIENT WEAPONS.



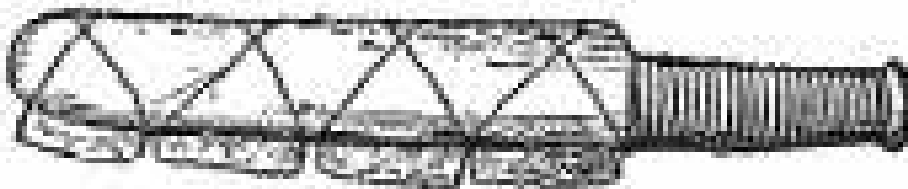
War-Club.



Pahoa, or Wooden Dagger.



Shark's-Teeth Knife.



Flint-edged Knife.



Stone Battle-Axe.



Stone Battle-Axe.



Ihe, or Javelin, 6 to 8 feet long.



Spear, 16 to 20 feet long.

And, glancing still farther backward through the centuries, we behold adventurous chiefs, in barges and double canoes a hundred feet in length, making the journey between the Hawaiian and more southern groups, guided only by the sun and stars. Later we see battles, with dusky thousands in line. The warriors are naked to the loins, and are armed with spears, slings, clubs, battle-axes, javelins and knives of wood or ivory. They have neither bows nor shields. They either catch with their hands or ward with their own the weapons that

are thrown. Their chiefs, towering above them in stature, have thrown off their gaudy feather cloaks and helmets, and, with spear and stone halberd, are at the front of battle. The opposing forces are so disposed as to present a right and left wing and centre, the king or principal chief commanding the latter in person. In the rear of each hostile line are a large number of women with calabashes of food and water with which to refresh their battling fathers, husbands and brothers. While the battle rages their wails, cries and prayers are incessant, and when defeat menaces their friends they here and there take part in the combat. The augurs have been consulted, sacrifices and promises to the gods have been made, and, as the warring lines approach, the war-gods of the opposing chiefs, newly decorated and attended by long-haired priests, are borne to the front. War-cries and shouts of defiance follow. The priests retire, and the slingers open the battle. Spears are thrown, and soon the struggle is hand-to-hand all over the field. They fight in groups and squads around their chiefs and leaders, who range the field in search of enemies worthy of their weapons. No quarter is given or expected. The first prisoners taken are reserved as offerings to the gods, and are regarded as the most precious of sacrifices. Finally the leading chief of one of the opposing armies falls. A desperate struggle over his body ensues, and his dispirited followers begin to give ground and are soon in

retreat. Some escape to a stronghold in the neighboring mountains, and a few, perhaps, to a temple of refuge; but the most of them are overtaken and slain. The prisoners who are spared become the slaves of their captors, and the victory is celebrated with feasting and bountiful sacrifices to the gods.

This is a representative battle of the past, either for the supremacy of rival chiefs or in repelling invasion from a neighboring island. But here and there we catch glimpses of actual conflicts indicative of the warlike spirit and chivalry of the early Hawaiians. Far back in the past we see the beautiful Hina abducted from her Hawaiian husband by a prince of Molokai, and kept a prisoner in the fortress of Haupu until her sons grow to manhood, when she is rescued at the end of an assault which leaves the last of her defenders dead. Later we see the eight hundred helmeted chiefs of the king of Hawaii, all of noble blood, hurling themselves to destruction against the spears of the armies of Maui on the plains of Wailuku. And then, less than a generation after, Kamehameha is seen in the last battle of the conquest, when, at the head of sixteen thousand warriors, he sweeps the Oahuan army over the precipice of Nuuanu and becomes the master of the archipelago. Finally we behold Kekuaokalani, the last defender in arms of the Hawaiian gods and temples, trampling upon the edict of the king against the worship of his fathers, and dying,

with his faithful wife Manono, on the field of Kuamoo. In the midst of these scenes of blood the eye rests with relief upon numerous episodes of love, friendship and self-sacrifice touching with a softening color the ruddy canvas of the past. We see Kanipahu, the exiled king of Hawaii, delving like a common laborer on a neighboring island, and refusing to accept anew the sceptre in his old age because his back had become crooked with toil and he could no longer look over the heads of his subjects as became a Hawaiian king. We see Umi, a rustic youth of royal mien and mighty proportions, boldly leap the palace-walls of the great Liloa, push aside the spears of the guards, enter the royal mansion, seat himself in the lap of the king, and through the exhibition of a forgotten token of love receive instant recognition as his son. And now Lono, the royal great-grandson of Umi, rises before us, and we see him lured from self-exile by the voice of his queen, reaching him in secret from without the walls of the sovereign court of Oahu, to return to Hawaii and triumph over his enemies. These and many other romantic incidents present themselves in connection with the early Hawaiian kings and princes, and are offered in the succeeding pages with every detail of interest afforded by available tradition.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

A few general remarks concerning the physical characteristics of the Hawaiian Islands would seem to be appropriate in presenting a collection of legends dealing alike with the history and folk-lore of their people. The islands occupy a place in a great waste of the Pacific between the nineteenth and twenty-third degrees of north latitude, and the one hundred and fifty-fourth and one hundred and sixty-first degrees of longitude west from Greenwich. They are two thousand one hundred miles southwest from San Francisco, and about the same distance from Tahiti.

The group consists of ten islands, including two that are little more than barren rocks. The farthest are about three hundred miles from each other, measuring from their extreme boundaries, and their aggregate area is a little more than six thousand one hundred square miles. Of the eight principal islands all are habitable, although the small islands of Niihau and Kahoolawe are used almost exclusively as cattle-ranges.

The most of the shores of the several islands are fringed with coral, but their origin seems to be indisputably shown in the numerous craters of extinct volcanoes scattered throughout the group, and in the mighty fires still blazing from the mountain-heights of Hawaii.

By far the larger part of the area of the islands is mountainous; but from the interior elevations, some of

them reaching altitudes of from ten to fourteen thousand feet, flow many small streams of sweet water, widening into fertile valleys as they reach the coast, while here and there between them alluvial plateaus have been left by the upland wash.

With rare exceptions the mountain-sides are covered with vegetation, some of sturdy growth, capable of being wrought into building materials and canoes, while lower down the *ohia*, the palm, the banana, and the bread-fruit stand clothed in perpetual green, with groves of stately cocoas between them and the sea.

Once the fragrant sandal-wood was abundant in the mountains, but it became an article of commerce with the natives in their early intercourse with the white races, and is now rarely seen. Once the valleys and plateaus were covered with growing *taro* and potatoes; now the cane and rice of the foreigner have usurped the places of both, and in the few shaded spots that have been left him the forgiving and revengeless Hawaiian sadly chants his wild songs of the past.

Neither within the memory of men nor the reach of their legends, which extend back more than a thousand years, has there been an active volcano in the group beyond the large island of Hawaii, which embraces two-thirds of the solid area of the archipelago. The mighty crater of Haleakala, more than thirty miles in circumference, on the island of Maui, has slept in peace among the clouds

for ages, and hundreds of lesser and lower craters, many of them covered with vegetation, are found scattered among the mountains and foot-hills of the group; but their fires have long been extinct, and the scoria and ashes buried at their bases tell the story of their activity far back in the past.

It must have been a sight too grand for human eyes to witness when all these dead volcanic peaks, aglow with sulphurous flames, lit up the moonless midnights of the eight Hawaiian seas with their combined bombardment of the heavens!

On the island of Hawaii alone have the fires of nature remained unextinguished. At intervals during the past thousand years or more have Mauna Kea, Mauna Hualalai and Mauna Loa sent their devastating streams of lava to the sea, and to-day the awful, restless and ever-burning caldron of Kilauea, nearly a mile in circumference, is the grandest conflagration that lights up the earth. Within its lurid depths, in fiery grottoes and chambers of burning crystal, dwell *Pele* and her companions, and offerings are still thrown to them by superstitious natives. Do they yet believe in these deities after more than sixty years of Christian teaching? after their temples have been leveled and their gods have been destroyed? after their *tabus* have been broken and their priesthood has been dethroned and dishonored? The only answer is, "The offerings are still made."

Although the channel and ocean coasts of the islands are generally bold, rocky and precipitous, there are numerous bays and indentations partially sheltered by reefs and headlands, and many stretches of smooth and yellow beach, where the waves, touched by the *kona* , or the trade-wind's breath, chase each other high up among the cocoa's roots and branches of the humble *hau* -tree clinging to the sands. The harbor of Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, is the only one, however, where passengers and freights of ocean crafts may be received or landed without the aid of lighters.

The most of the useful and ornamental growths of the tropics now flourish on the islands. The indigenous plants, however, are confined to the banana, plantain, cocoanut, breadfruit, *ohia* , sugar-cane, arrow-root, yam, sweet potato, *taro* , strawberry, raspberry and *ohelo* . The lime, orange, mango, tamarind, papaia, guava, and every other edible product, aside from those named as indigenous, are importations of the past century.

The only domestic animals of the ancient Hawaiians were dogs, swine and fowls, and the most formidable four-legged creatures found in their fields and forests were mice and lizards. Wild geese, including a species peculiar to the islands, ducks, snipe and plover were abundant in their seasons, but seem to have been sparingly eaten; and owls, bats, and a few varieties of birds of simple song and not over-brilliant plumage made up

about the sum total of animal life on the islands a hundred years ago. But the native could well afford to be content with this limited provision, since it did not include snakes, mosquitoes, centipedes, tarantulas, or scorpions.

To what processes of creation or isolation do the Hawaiian Islands owe their existence? Were they raised from the depths of the ocean by volcanic action, as plainly suggested by their formation? or are they a part of a great sunken continent which speculation, sustained by misty tradition, claims once occupied the Polynesian seas? Hawaiian *meles* mention islands no longer to be found, and the facility with which communication was maintained between the Hawaiian and more southern groups previous to the twelfth century renders plausible the assumption that this intercourse was abruptly terminated six or seven centuries ago by the disappearance of a number of intervening atolls or islands which had served as guides to early Polynesian navigators. The gigantic ruins of temples and other structures found on Easter and one or two other islands of the equatorial Pacific are almost unanswerable arguments in favor of the theory of a sunken Polynesian continent; but the question will probably never be removed beyond the field of surmise.

HISTORIC OUTLINES.

The source and early history of the Hawaiian people, and, in fact, of the Polynesian race, of which they are a part, are involved in doubt. They have generally been regarded as an offshoot of the great Malayan family; but more recent as well as more thorough investigation, particularly by Judge Fornander, the learned and conscientious historian, with reasonable conclusiveness shows the Polynesian and Malayan races to be of distinct and widely different origin.

Accepting this conclusion, we trace the strictly Polynesian tribes to an Aryan beginning, somewhere in Asia Minor or Arabia. There, in the remote past, it is assumed, they were brought in close contact with early Cushite and Chaldeo-Arabian civilizations. Subsequently drifting into India, they to some extent amalgamated with the Dravidian races, and, following the channels of the great Chaldean commerce of that period, at length found a home in the Asiatic archipelago from Sumatra to Luzon and Timor.

The exact time of their settlement on the large coast islands of southern Asia cannot be definitely determined, but their legends and genealogies leave little room to doubt that it was contemporaneous with the Malay and Hindoo invasions of Sumatra, Java, and other islands of the archipelago, during the first and second centuries of

the Christian era, that the Polynesians were pushed out—not at once in a body, but by families and communities covering a period of years—to the smaller and more remote islands of the Pacific.

Their first general rendezvous was in the Fiji group, where they left their impress upon the native Papuans. Expelled from, or voluntarily leaving, the Fijis, after a sojourn there of several generations, the Polynesians scattered over the Pacific, occupying by stages the several groups of islands where they are now found. Moving by the way of the Samoan and Society Islands, the migratory wave did not reach the Hawaiian group until about the middle of the sixth century.

Nanaula, a distinguished chief, was the first to arrive from the southern islands. It is not known whether he discovered the group by being blown northward by adverse winds, or in deliberately adventuring far out upon the ocean in search of new lands. In either event, he brought with him his gods, priests, prophets and astrologers, and a considerable body of followers and retainers. He was also provided with dogs, swine and fowls, and the seeds and germs of useful plants for propagation. It is probable that he found the group without human inhabitants.

During that period—probably during the life of Nanaula—other chiefs of less importance arrived with their families and followers either from Tahiti or Samoa. They

came in barges and large double canoes capable of accommodating from fifty to one hundred persons each. They brought with them not only their priests and gods, but the earliest of Polynesian traditions. It is thought that none of the pioneers of the time of Nanaula ever returned to the southern islands, nor did others immediately follow the first migratory wave that peopled the Hawaiian group.

For thirteen or fourteen generations the first occupants of the Hawaiian Islands lived sequestered from the rest of the world, multiplying and spreading throughout the group. They erected temples to their gods, maintained their ancient religion, and yielded obedience to their chiefs. The traditions of the period are so meagre as to leave the impression that it was one of uninterrupted peace, little having been preserved beyond the genealogies of the governing chiefs.

But late in the tenth or early in the beginning of the eleventh century the Hawaiians were aroused from their dream of more than four centuries by the arrival of a party of adventurers from the southern islands, probably from the Society group. It was under the leadership of Nanamaoa. He was a warlike chief, and succeeded in establishing his family in power on Hawaii, Maui and Oahu. But stronger leaders were soon to follow from the south. Among the first was the high-priest Paa'o, from Samoa. He arrived during the reign of Kapawa, the

grandson of Nanamaoa, or immediately after his death. The people were in an unsettled condition politically, and Paoa, grasping the situation, either sent or returned in person to Samoa for Pili, a distinguished chief of that island. Arriving with a large following, Pili assumed the sovereignty of the island of Hawaii and founded a new dynasty. Paoa became his high-priest, and somewhat disturbed the religious practices of the people by the introduction of new rites and two or three new gods. However, his religion did not seem to differ greatly from that of the native priests, and from him the last of the priesthood, seven hundred years after, claimed lineage and right of place.

The intercourse thus established between the Hawaiian and southern groups by Nanamaoa, Paoa and Pili continued for about one hundred and fifty years, or until the middle or close of the twelfth century. During that period several other warlike families from the south established themselves in the partial or complete sovereignty of Oahu, Maui and Kauai, and expeditions were frequent between the group and other distant islands of Polynesia. It was a season of unusual activity, and the legends of the time are filled with stories of love, conquest and perilous voyages to and from the southern islands.

In that age, when distant voyages were frequent, the Polynesians were bold and intelligent navigators. In

addition to large double canoes capable of withstanding the severest weather, they possessed capacious barges, with planks corded and calked upon strong frames. They were decked over and carried ample sail. Their navigators had some knowledge of the stars; knew the prominent planets and gave them names; were acquainted with the limits of the ecliptic and situation of the equator. With these helps, and keenly watchful of the winds and currents, of ocean drifts and flights of birds, they seldom failed to reach their destination, however distant.

Near the close of the twelfth century all communication between the Hawaiian and southern groups suddenly ceased. Tradition offers no explanation of the cause, and conjecture can find no better reason for it than the possible disappearance at that time of a number of island landmarks which had theretofore served as guides to the mariner. The beginning of this period of isolation found the entire group, with the exception, perhaps, of Molokai and a portion of Oahu, in the possession of the southern chiefs or their descendants.

It has been observed that the first discovery and occupation of the islands by Polynesians from the Society and Samoan groups occurred in the sixth century, and that more than four hundred years later a second migratory tide from the same and possibly other southern islands reached the coasts of Hawaii, continuing

for more than a century and a half, and completely changing the political, and to some extent the social, condition of the people. Although nearly five centuries elapsed between the first and second migratory influxes from the south, during which the inhabitants of the group held no communication with the rest of the world, it is a curious fact that the Pili, Paumakua, and other chiefly families of the second influx traced back their lineage to the ancestors of the chiefs of the first migration, and made good their claim to the relationship by the recital of legends and genealogies common to both.