

# THE POLYNESIAN.

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### COMMUNICATED.

**The Navigator's or Samoa Islands.** Their Manners, Customs, and Superstitions. By T. Heath, Manono.

#### MANNERS, &c.

The Navigator's Islands are situated between 169° and 172° west Long., and not far from 14° south latitude. The native name of the group is Samoa. The principal islands are five, namely: Manua, the most eastward, Tutuila, perhaps eighty miles to the westward of Manua, Upolu, forty miles west of Tutuila, Manono and Savaii. Near Manua, are the two small islands Orosega and Ofu; near Tutuila is Anu-u, near Upolu, Nuutele, and near Manono, its fortress, the almost inaccessible island, Aporima. The population of the whole group is between fifty and sixty thousand.

As a Christian mission is now formed there, in connection with the London Missionary Society, and the group is attracting some measure of public attention, a brief account of the islands, and the manners and customs of the people, will not be uninteresting to your readers.

#### SCENERY, NATURAL HISTORY, &c.

The Samoa Islands present many features in common with other Polynesian groups. They present to the view splendid forests of evergreen, stretching from the beach to the very summit of the mountains, and which contain thousands of the finest timber. In the vicinity of

forest to the summit of the mountain. Its resident population is about 1,000, but its political importance is far greater than that of the larger islands. This is partly owing to its having been the residence of two successive chiefs, father and son, called *Tamafaiga*, who united in their persons attributes and powers both of kings and gods; and partly to its strong fortress, which is the small island of

Aporima, only a few miles distant; it is accessible only at a single narrow point, which may easily be defended against large numbers.

Savaii is the largest of the group, and its mountains are the highest. No measurement has yet been made of their height. They appear to be from six thousand to seven thousand feet. Savaii has much more barren and useless land in proportion, than the other islands, but has nevertheless, several beautiful and fertile districts. It has reefs only here and there, and for short distances; so that it is more difficult to navigate with canoes than the island of Upolu. There are two small bays to the westward, in which vessels of small size may anchor, except when westerly winds prevail.

It has been stated that the surface of this group is almost entirely volcanic, so that the Geologist will not find much variety. At Tutuila, however, is found the hard stone, (Trap,) of which the Polynesian adzes and other tools were made previously to the introduction of iron. At the other islands the stone is almost uni-

### LAW PROHIBITING THEFT.

[Translation.]

We hereby prohibit all stealing, and felonious seizure, and violent plundering, and taking secretly the property of others. Whosoever does any of these things with a real thievish intent, is obnoxious to this law, and shall be punished as follows:—

Whosoever shall steal, or take secretly with a thievish design the property of another, and whosoever shall lyingly carry away and secrete in a thievish manner the property of another, shall be punished thus:—

1. If the stolen property be less than two dollars, then he shall be fined four times the amount of the property which he stole. If one dollar be stolen, four dollars shall be the fine, which with the original sum makes five dollars, two to the government, and two to the owner of the stolen property, together with the original sum, which makes three dollars. If two dollars be stolen, then the fine shall be eight dollars; four to the government, and four to the owner of the stolen property. If he fail to pay these, he shall be put to hard labor, which he shall perform of a value equal to the fine, a portion of the labor for the government, and a portion for the owner of the property.

2. If the amount of property stolen be more than two dollars, but less than a hundred, the thief shall then be fined according to the first section of this law, and shall, moreover, be put to hard labor

8. Should this law be proclaimed in any village by a crier, then the day of its proclamation shall be the day that it takes effect. But if not proclaimed, then the first day of December, 1840, shall be the day that it takes effect, and by this act all former laws respecting theft are repealed.

This act is passed by the government of these Sandwich Islands, on this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord 1840, at Lahaina, Maui.

Signed, KAMEHAMEHA III.  
KEKAULUOHI.

### LAW PROHIBITING BURGLARY.

We hereby prohibit the breaking open of houses, and the secret entering of windows, and also the forcing of doors and windows. If any man does either of these things to the house of another, he is obnoxious to this law.

1. If any man secretly break open a substantial house of another in the night, and enter, and steal property, little or much, the crime is similar, and he shall be punished according to the requirement of the third section of the law prohibiting theft.

2. If any man secretly break open a substantial house of another in the night, and enter with felonious intent, though nothing be taken away by him, he shall, nevertheless, be punished by transportation to another land for the term of three years.

3. If any man secretly break open a substantial house of another in the night, with a felonious intent, and while some

SEPTEMBER

PHARMACIES, &c.  
Saparilla—Extract  
Salts—Calcined  
Doc—Oil Spruce  
lic and Maccaboy  
Elixir.

PROVISIONS.  
—Ship Bread—  
—Tea—Sugar—  
—Pickles—Salad  
w Root—Corn—

FURNITURE.  
Kid Hair Cloth Sofa  
—1 Bureau—1 Doz  
—2 Single Wash  
le—6 Doz. Wood

DRUGGIES.  
Vaggon and Harness  
Bathing Copper—  
8 M. Am. Shingles  
Boards and Joists—  
paigne—10 Cases  
Doz. Lemon Syrup  
ton's Elixir—6 C  
Oil—Chrome—  
Brushes—Indelible  
Sherry Wine—  
Viol, Violin and  
Watches—Gold  
Icons—Signal  
n's and Boy's Bl  
Set Heavy  
Bags—Twine—  
ornia Soap—Letter  
ank Books—Tobacco

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Russia.  
7 28, 1840.

groups. They present to the view splendid forests of evergreen, stretching from the beach to the very summit of the mountains, and which contain thousands of the finest timber. In the vicinity of the settlements, groves of cocoa nut and bread fruit trees combine to give the mingled impression of beauty and of plenty. So far as yet examined the formation of the whole group appears to be volcanic; the whole surface, at least, is covered with volcanic matter. As to the greater portion, however, the manifest age of many of the trees, and the depth of the soil, show that a long period must have elapsed since any volcano has been in action. But some spots are exceptions to this remark, and on Savaii, especially, the largest of the group, there are tracts of almost bare lava, one of them of several miles across. The latter is properly enough called the *Mu*—"the Burnt."

Tutuila is very mountainous and craggy, and has but little flat land; but it has a very fine deep harbor, one of the best in the Polynesian islands, where ample supplies of water and wood may be obtained. Since it became a missionary station many vessels have anchored there.

Upolu is the most picturesque of the islands, and there are few in the South Pacific that surpass it in beauty. As you sail round it, you are at every turn presented with some new features in the scenery. The secret of the charm is the variety in the mountains, both in form and position; on every side, "hills peep o'er hills." Here and there also is a waterfall, or the mouth of a river. It has reefs with generally good entrances, to the extent of above half its coasts, and a great deal of land capable of cultivation; and, on these accounts, has a larger population than any other island in the group. It has several harbors; the best of which, so far as yet tried is Apia on the north side.

The small island of Manono is within the same reef with Upolu, from which it is but four miles distant. It is only five miles in circumference, but is a complete

city. At Tutuila, however, is found the hard stone, (*Trap*), of which the Polynesian adzes and other tools were made previously to the introduction of iron. At the other islands the stone is almost uniformly porous, of a dull black color; often a mixture of iron stone occurs, and, in some places, a species of red ochre, which the natives use in painting, or rather printing, their cloth.

The islands are very rich in timber, and present an interesting, though not extensive field to the Botanist. All the timber and other trees, specified by Mr. Ellis, in his Polynesian Researches, as found in the Society Islands, abound also in Samoa; but the latter group contain a great many more species, and some of them are most valuable to the builder and the carpenter.

As to Zoology, the pig, the dog and the rat are the only quadrupeds known; but birds, the smaller reptiles, including the snake, and fish, are extremely abundant. Living, as the missionaries and other foreigners generally do, on the coast, little is known by them of the birds; but the people of the inland villages hunt them in the mountains, and partly live upon them, as the others do on fish. Their children are early trained to scale the mountain sides, hunt and kill their feathery prey. Many species, including some of large size, are eaten and considered excellent food.

The climate is in general salubrious, yet the habits of the natives subject them to frequent cutaneous, rheumatic and pulmonary disorders. The thermometer ranges, in the shade, from 76° to 86°. The tides, unlike those of Tahiti, observe the usual laws.

From April to October, the trade winds generally prevail, though with many interruptions. During the other months they are very changeable, and generally about Christmas, but sometimes later, there are strong westerly and n. w. winds for two or three weeks together.

To be continued.

2. If the amount of property stolen be more than two dollars, but less than a hundred, the thief shall then be fined according to the first section of this law, and shall, moreover, be put to hard labor for a term of from four to eight months, as the judges shall determine from the character of the theft.

3. If the property stolen amount to more than a hundred dollars, then the stolen property shall all be restored, and [the thief,] shall pay all the loss sustained by the owner of the property. When all this is paid, then the thief shall be transported to another land, there to remain for a term of from five to ten years, according to the aggravation of the theft, as decided by the judges.

4. If a man be punished according to the above requisitions, and afterwards steal again, either little or much, it shall then be proper to transport him to another land, at the discretion of the judges, according to the degree of his incorrigibility, or the greatness of his crime.

5. If the thief be unknown or is not seized by the owner of the property, and he does not know who stole it, then whosoever brings it to light shall receive one fourth of the fine, and the owner of the property one fourth, together with the original amount.

6. If a man steal property and be detected by the owner, and they shall agree together as to the settlement, they may do it, and that agreement of theirs shall stand. But if it become public after their settlement, then the thief shall pay the government portion of the fine according to law, but shall pay nothing more to the owner of the property.

7. If any one be condemned to reside in another land, according to the requirement of this law, and he prefer to pay a fine in money, this is the amount he shall pay, two hundred dollars for each year for which he is sentenced by the judges. Whoever pays a fine thus, shall be freed from transportation, though at the discretion of the judges.

whereless, be punished by transportation to another land for the term of three years.

3. If any man secretly break open a substantial house of another in the night, with a felonious intent, and while some person is resident in the house, said burglar having weapons of death in his possession, that is a great crime, and the man committing it shall be condemned to reside on another land till death.

4. If the house broken open be one of thatch, or not a substantial house, or if there be some other thing which shall materially mitigate the crime, then it shall be in the power of the judges to diminish the punishment or change it, and not adhere rigorously to the above specifications. The judges are to look at the nature and magnitude of the offence.

5. Should this law be proclaimed by a crier in any village, then the day of its proclamation shall be the day of its taking effect in that place. But if not proclaimed, then the first day of December, 1840, shall be the day of its taking effect, and by this act all former laws relative to burglary are repealed.

This act is passed by the government of these Sandwich Islands, this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord, 1840, at Lahaina, Maui.

Signed, KAMEHAMEHA III.  
KEKAULUOHI.

The above laws were sent to the Polynesian, with a request for publication. Having complied with it, we shall venture a few remarks upon the principles evolved in their construction, and their probable influence. They are said to be the sole work of the government, and as such, they reflect credit upon the authors, and give encouragement to hope for a tolerable code of laws at some future period. The principle of different degrees of guilt in burglary, and distinguishing between the young and hardened offender appears to be fully recognized. Still there are some inherent defects, which we shall briefly notice, not for the mere purpose of criticism, but to point out the abuses which they are liable to.