

CONGRESSMAN BEN HUMPHREYS' TRIBUTE TO THE MISSIONARY

Famous Mississippi Orator Tells in Eloquent Address What He Saw for Himself in Hawaii.

The following was the recent toast delivered by Congressman Ben G. Humphreys at the Brotherhood of St. Andrew's banquet given at Greenwood, Mississippi, in response to the toast: "The Work of Our Missionaries in Hawaii." Mr. Humphreys was in the Islands, it will be remembered, with the last congressional party. He said:

"Kipling says: 'East is east and west is west, and never the twain shall meet, but in the Territory of Hawaii the course of human events has refused to follow the poet's prophecy. There east has met west and together they are working out the problems of a twentieth century civilization. Twentieth century in all its elements, political, social, religious. A Territory of the United States, and whether or not it be destined some day to place its star upon the flag, it is today the brightest jewel in Columbia's diadem. No American I believe can ever visit those islands without feeling an intense satisfaction that his flag floats over them. Honolulu is the beauty spot of this earth and the gentle hospitality of its people is in keeping and full fellowship with its genial climate and its rainbow skies. It is as thoroughly American in sentiment as Greenwood, but there is nevertheless a faint though unmistakable touch of the East, an odor of the Orient which permeates their whole social atmosphere. Not that East which lies some 'ere east of Suez where the best is like the worst, and there aren't no ten commandments, and a man can raise a thirst. By no means that. I believe the standards of life are as high there as elsewhere, but the flavor of the cherry blossom has nevertheless followed the kimono and the songs of the kamaka will tempt color to cheeks which might otherwise be sickled over with the pale east of thought.

"This is Hawaii today: a land where every prospect pleases and not even man is vile, but I am not to talk of that. I understand that I was invited here to tell of the work of the missionaries as it impressed me in the very short while which I spent in that Territory during the past summer.

"These islands were peopled by the Polynesian race which inhabits all the islands of the Pacific. They were naked savages, though not perhaps cannibals. Each island was a separate kingdom, and on the large island of Hawaii, from which the Territory takes its name, there were several kings. In 1775 Captain Cook discovered the Islands and a few years later Vancouver landed there. There was a young chief on the island of Hawaii who had the wisdom to see that these strangers were of a civilization far beyond his own and he determined to make use of it. He first made the conquest of his own island and brought all the petty kings there beneath his rule. He then enlisted the services of a few white men who had been sailors on some of the wandering vessels, purchased some cannon and built ships to carry them and then equipped an army of invasion and set out upon the ambitious enterprise of subduing the Archipelago. With his superior equipment, and with his superior genius also, for though a savage he was a man of intellectual force as well as physical prowess, he soon brought all the islands under his dominion and founded the monarchy which existed down to the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani in 1892. This king, who is to the kamaka what Washington is to us, is known in their history as Kamehameha the Great, and his name and his statues can be found in every part of every island.

"He founded a strong government and administered it with an iron hand for a quarter of a century and his dynasty held undisputed sway for nearly a hundred years. Kamehameha was a savage and an idol worshiper, but Vancouver had not only brought cattle and horses, he had told the people of the true religion and had counseled the king against the perilous tabu. This was the means whereby the most cruel tyrannies were prevented. Acting by authority of his wooden gods a tabu would be pronounced to suit the fancy of the king. If fish were tabu then no one save the king could eat fish for fear of the wrath to come. Women and men could never eat together because of a perpetual tabu. The family estate would be invaded and rights of the most sacred would be violated all under the authority of tabu.

"In the course of time a number of young natives were brought to Boston and educated and returned to the Islands to tell the story of the Cross. This was the first work of the American Missionary Society in the Islands, and it bore fruit rapidly. So rapidly, in fact, that when Kamehameha died, faith in his idols and idolatrous priests had been so undermined that the whole system of tabu crumbled and disappeared within a year.

"In 1820 the missionaries came. They sailed from Boston and were seen in number—two ministers and five laymen. They at once began teaching, and in 1824, four years after their arrival, there were two thousand natives who could read and write. Before the army of darkness approached and the path of darkness spread with almost incredible speed.

"How much more difficult would have been the task of the missionaries had these islands remained such under the rule of its own native princes and their idols. Kamehameha died, faith in his idols and idolatrous priests had been so undermined that the whole system of tabu crumbled and disappeared within a year.

both easier and straight. Yet on his deathbed he called his successor to him and counseled him to hold fast to the faith of their pagan fathers. Once more it was manifest that 'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,

Rough how them how we may.' 'In all ages of the world, men, when put to the test, have proved that they are indeed made in the image of God. Fear of death and dread of death are born in the heart of man when he is born, and yet, in all the years, men have sacrificed life, faced death, and even courted death, rather than surrender their convictions of right. And so it came to pass in Hawaii. Kapihoni, a daughter of a chief, reared in the faith of her pagan fathers, was taught to read by the missionaries and through them also she learned of Israel and the prophets of Israel. She renounced her pagan faith and denounced the false gods under whose sanction and in whose names the people were so sorely persecuted. One of the most popular legends in their mythology was the story of Pele, the patron goddess of the Volcano Kilanea. This volcano is one of the scenic wonders of the world. The trade winds blow steadily from the northeast so that you may stand on the very edge of its active crater upon its windward side and watch the boiling cauldron at close range. The molten lake is perhaps a thousand feet across and its fiery surface rises from eight hundred feet to within two hundred feet of the top of its lava banks. It boils and splutters and lashes its sides in waves of red and melted rock, dashing into a thousand drops and even into spray, just as the breakers do upon the sea shore. It is the most magnificent, the most awe-inspiring, as it is the most frightful spectacle I have ever witnessed here, and I hope most earnestly never to witness its like hereafter. This young princess, Kapihoni, over the protest of her father and in violation of the tabu of the gods, descended five hundred feet to the black ledge inside the crater and there she defied the terrible Pele, ate the sacred berries and hurled rocks into the crater calling upon the God of Israel the while as did the prophets of old.

"Jehovah is my God. He kindled these fires. I fear not Pele. If I perish by her anger then you may fear Pele but if I trust in Jehovah and He preserves me when breaking her tabus then you must fear and serve Him alone.

"These were her words to the astonished and terrified natives who stood transfixed throughout the ordeal. Her name is enshrined in the literature of her people and I believe they are justified in their claim that this is 'one of the greatest acts of moral courage ever performed.'

"With such an impetus to their cause the missionaries succeeded beyond their hopes and within a few years the beliefs of the pagan gods had been converted into temples of Christian worship, and Pele and the kindred deities took their places in the folk lore of the people as did Woden and Athene who had gone that way before them on the other side of the world.

"What they spoke was nothing more than an unadorned dialect of Polynesian and the missionaries began at once to reduce it to a written language. Having accomplished this they induced the king to require the chiefs and principal personages throughout the kingdom to learn to read and write and then to teach their tenants. In a few years schools were established in every part of the kingdom and within twenty years from this good beginning education was made compulsory. How many of you may be surprised by the statement I can only conjecture, but it was to me almost unbelievable. I could not associate the South Sea savage and the idea of compulsory education. So well did these pious emissaries do their work, so firm did they lay their foundations that in 1841 the legistature passed a law forbidding any person, male or female, to marry who could not read and write. I can not say which fact surprised me most, that the law was passed, or that there was a legislature to pass any law.

"Inspired by their successes they continued efforts to elevate and Christianize these people, and with the active cooperation of the various kings and queens of the Kamehameha dynasty they at last founded the Lahainaluna College on the Island of Maui and later the Punahoa School on Oahu College at Honolulu. Incredible as it may seem, it is none the less true that in the early days of California, before it became a State and before the great transcontinental railroads brought it in touch with our eastern seminaries, our own people out there used to send their children to these Hawaiian colleges to be educated.

"I am not familiar with the work of our missionaries in other lands. This is the only visit I ever made to a field of their activities but surely here their work was crowned with success. Under the providence of God these Islands have at last come under the stars and stripes. The missionary no longer has to risk his life, endure privation and suffer the hardships which his fathers knew, but the field is still open for the reaper. Out of a population of 75,000 souls, some are Catholics, Baptists, Methodists and followers of a variety of missions and are scattered throughout the Islands, and the school teacher is beating the torch and leading the feet of the children into the ways of right. I witnessed many sermons in their schools, all having one common object. One in particular impressed me. Every morning at nine o'clock all the children in every school in the Territory—Japs, Chinese, Koreans and the rest—were marched into the yard for the flag raising. As the flag goes up they repeat a mission: 'I give my head and my heart to

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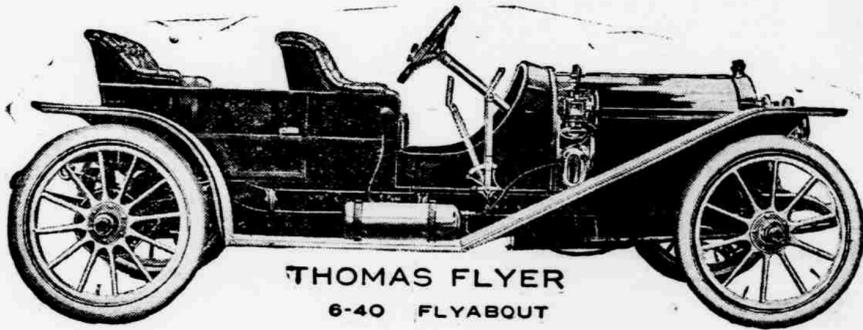
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