

Sights and Impressions ... of the Hawaiian Isles

Miss Jennie Z. Smith, the writer of the following article, returned about six weeks ago from a five month's sojourn in the Hawaiian islands, where she went to visit her brother, Mr. Jared G. Smith, who is in charge of the United States experiment stations in the islands. She had unusually good opportunities to see places of interest and study the conditions there. The accompanying illustrations are from photographs selected from the fine collection secured by Miss Smith. She resides at 1308 South Sixteenth street. Her article, prepared expressly for the Courier, follows:

"The occasion of my recent trip to Hawaii, was to visit my brother Jared G. Smith and family. Mr. Smith, a former Lincoln boy, is now special agent in charge of the Hawaii experiment station. The ground set apart for experimental purposes is near the city of Honolulu, extending some two miles up on the mountain and very poorly located for the purposes for which it has been reserved.

"Mr. Smith, as the pioneer in this work, had much to discourage him in his efforts to carry out his instructions from the department of agriculture. The political parties of the islands did not take kindly to the federal officials, but as the work of the station has progressed, the sentiment seems to have changed, and his work has been gradually becoming more pleasant.

"Mr. Smith is director of work in all of the islands, though the residence and station proper are on the island of Oahu near Honolulu.

"There are eight islands in the group. The four largest in order of their size are Hawaii, Maui, Oahu, Kauai. Oahu is forty-six miles long and twenty-five miles wide. Hawaii is ninety miles long and seventy miles wide.

"The islands are of volcanic formation, and the heat has progressed from northwest to southeast, the active volcano of Kilauea now being in the southeast portion of the southeast island—the island of Hawaii. In Puna district in the southeast corner of the island there is a hot spring within a mile of the ocean. On the island of Maui is Haleakala, the largest extinct crater in the world.

"I am indebted to Mr. Smith for the following remarks on the labor situation in the islands:

"With a population of over 153,000, the white population of Hawaii amounts to less than twenty per cent of the total, and over half of this number are Portuguese. About seven per cent of the people of Hawaii, i. e., the American, English and German contingent, own and control the sugar plantations, the business, and the professions of the islands. There are about 30,000 Hawaiians, 25,000 Chinese,

60,000 Japanese and the balance consist of part-Hawaiians, Porto Ricans, negroes, South Sea islanders, and various other races and mixtures. The vast majority of the population has been brought in by the sugar planters to supply labor on the plantations.

"The planters and the business men of the islands, the leaders of trade and captains of industry, are as wide-awake and enterprising and in every way as up-to-date as any similar body of men in any part of the United States or the world. But we must not forget that although in power, wealth, and influence this handful of men dominate the islands they are nevertheless in numbers a very small minority. The conditions in Hawaii to some extent resemble those of portions of the south. Probably not to exceed two-fifths of the alien laboring class, imported by the planters to work on the plantations, really work there now.

"The Chinese and Japanese have invaded every field of business. They are merchants, tailors, mechanics, blacksmiths, painters, carpenters, gardeners, cooks, yard and house servants, laundry-men, hack drivers, in a word they leave the severe manual tasks in the cane field and mill, whenever they can make a living at anything else. They have displaced the white mechanic and laborer, and to a large extent the native Hawaiian. Chinese are the rice and taro growers, they raise most of the poultry and all of the vegetables of the islands. The Japanese have ousted the Hawaiians from the fishing business. In every way the labor situation is an anomalous one for an American territory."

"A visit to the island of Hawaii and the volcano, was the termination of a most delightful five months spent in the islands. The trip from Honolulu to Hilo is made by steamer in about thirty hours, and is known as the roughest voyage about the islands.

"Before Oahu had disappeared we were sailing along the coast of Mokuai, the home of the leper colony. Then came the islands of Lanai, Maui and Kahoolau, and when at five the following morning we found our boat anchored off the first port on the island of Hawaii, we had seen six of the eight islands of the territory of Hawaii.

"The scenery from the deck of the steamer that day was grand, beautiful. Our first view revealed the three mountains of the island. Hulalal about 8,000 feet high, looking quite insignificant as compared with the twin sisters, Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. Mauna Kea's snow capped summit is 13,805 feet above the sea, while Mauna Loa, 13,675 feet high is the volcano from which the largest flows of lava have all come.

"After rounding the northern point of the island we started down the windward coast. This coast is very precipitous, the banks often rising in a high wall many hundred feet above the sea, so the steamer anchors some distance from the shore at all ports, and landings are made by means of row boats. Waterfalls by the score came tumbling over these precipices, the banks often broken by deep gulches, their walls covered with ferns and a wealth of tropical foliage that was quickly lost to view.

"For a distance of perhaps fifty miles before reaching Hilo, the country from the edge of the cliff to timber line is virtually one sugar plantation, with its numerous mills, clusters of houses, and beautiful fields of cane. The distance from Hilo to the volcano house

measuring two or three feet in diameter. Underneath were the shorter and younger ferns so covering the ground with their dense green mat, we almost felt we could walk over the jungle, stepping from trunk to trunk, and leaf to leaf, of the ferns. Through and above them rose the weird and oft-times beautiful trees, many of them with bare weather beaten trunks, suggesting dead timber with their clinging vines and mosses, but bursting into foliage at the very top to tell us life was there. The seeds of the trees usually germinate in the tops of the tree ferns, so that the lower part of the tree, instead of being a solid trunk, is a great mass of roots grown together—which gives a ragged appearance to the tree. Roses grew wild by the roadside, not our prairie rose, but



The above, reproduced from a photograph, shows a fine specimen of the lava tree, many of which are to be seen in the Hawaii Isles, and are supposed to be centuries old. The explanation of these curious formations is that as the molten lava surrounded the trees, there was sufficient moisture in each tree to cool the lava to quite a density and the rest disintegrated and eroded, leaving the lava trees standing. So long a time has elapsed since the eruption which caused this phenomena that soil has gathered on top of the trees and produced small forests of ferns and other vegetation.

is thirty-one miles. The railroad is completed to Mountain View, a distance of seventeen miles. From there the trip is made by stage. The railroad runs through Olaa plantation, comprising some over twenty thousand acres of land and one of the newest and largest on the island.

"At Mountain View we left the train and entered the stage, an immense lumbering vehicle drawn by a four horse team, that was very suggestive of pioneer days in our own country. The road from there passed through the timber lying at the foot hills of the mountains and was a rocky road to travel, but so lost were we in admiration of the weird and beautiful forest, that thoughts of our discomfort were quickly dispelled.

"Along the road side were irregular rocky walls covered with a variety of dainty ferns, moss, and small clinging vines, jutting over caverns or pools of water, and forming a barrier to the impenetrable forest beyond. I always thought of tropical jungles as dangerous because of the poisonous reptiles and ferocious animals that abound in them—but not so in Hawaii! Not a snake of any kind is to be found in the islands, and there are no large and dangerous animals. This is the home of the tree fern, and the roads are a perfect labyrinth of them. Many were seen grown to a height of twenty or more feet, with immense spreading fern leaves at the top, and trunks

a double variety introduced in early days by foreigners, very beautiful to see, but not as fragrant as our wild rose.

"When we left the heavy timber we came to a region of scrubby lehua, with its bright red blossoms, ohelo, having a reddish berry resembling the cranberry, a fruit that was tabu (forbidden by religious ordinance) among the Hawaiians of old, new and smaller ferns and surface rock covered with lichens.

The sign boards by the roadside told us we were approaching our destination, and soon the gray walls of the crater of Kilauea burst into view and we arrived at the volcano house, almost on its very edge.

"In four and one-half hours we had come from sea level in the tropics to an elevation of 4,000 feet, a distance of thirty-one miles.

"The crater or volcano of Kilauea lies at the base of Mauna Loa, and to the visitor would seem to be quite distinct from that mountain. 'Tis probable Mauna Loa is undermined and honeycombed by a molten sea, which breaks out on frequent occasions, sometimes flowing in streams of lava almost to the sea, from craters high up on the mountain side, and devastating immense sections of country, and again emptying its overflow into the basin of Kilauea.

"As we neared the crater fumes of
(Continued on page 8.)



Peering into crater of Hawaiian volcano.