

Further Impressions of Honolulu

By DAVID E. STITT

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It is axiomatic that the first bid for our interest is made by a disquisition of things peculiar to our everyday environment rather than by one dealing with inconspicuous subjects. Hence it follows that every red-blooded individual should possess a certain measure of pride, of interest in matters vital to the welfare of his community. This is applicable to Honoluluans and residents in the Territory.

Honolulu is growing rapidly. The events of the past twelve months have given free to Hawaii a publicity greater than any which a monetary agent could have produced. We have been visited by more celebrities than has New York City in a similar period; and we have seen them at closer range than would have been permitted by the bombastic restrictions of Gotham's "finest." Because of our insularity we are uniquely conspicuous before the watching eyes of the two hemispheres. Therefore, in order to measure up properly to the world's expectations, it is necessary that the people of the Territory be ever cognizant of the continuous development around them, so that the opportunities which rise therefrom shall not pass unused.

It is true that the people of a community know best the eccentricities of and the solutions for their local problems; but experience has revealed that in the assiduous application of daily tasks insufficient time has been afforded us to step back from the canvas and review our handiwork for its effect from a position beyond the scope of local observation. Circumstantial restrictions have cramped our perspective to a distortion incapable of registering truly the picture as others see it.

Malicious Views Valuable

A clearer impression, one more accurately drawn, may sometimes be given by a new-comer, who has lived but a few months in the Territory, whose pre-occupancy of mainland affairs has not been entirely displaced by matters of local significance. Such an impression, when impartially drawn and seasoned with intended constructive criticism, will stimulate thought with its resultant discordance and acclaim; and if it evokes nothing better than public disapprobation it will have accomplished some good by reason of its debatable proclivity.

In a previous article I set forth a Gothamite's initial impression of Honolulu from a material, physical viewpoint. It is the scenic beauties of this entrancing spot which first stimulate one's expression, but with the passing of time my attention was drawn to more relevant things, namely, the psychology of the city's heterogeneous people, their idiosyncracies and their environment—all which have regulated conditions with their resultant problems.

One of these "secondary" impressions—if they may so be called—is the cognizance of a great cosmopolitan noticeably effective in many phases. Whether this be attributed to climatic influences or not is a matter for speculation. The city's growth, its achievement during the past decade is a seeming refutation to this statement; nevertheless, this apathy prevails. A certain laxity of purpose it may be called. Perhaps the following impressions could be classed as component elements of one main impression of a lassitude which the various conditions are resultant therefrom.

Causes Are Sought

Consider an analysis of what, perhaps, is the prime cause.

Several classes of people comprise Honolulu's population. They may be divided into three groups: the resident, moneyed group; the transients, and the resident working class.

The first group, the sugar and pineapple factors, are the most potent. It is they who control the business of the Territory and who by their efforts have made Hawaii a commercial center of prominence—a distinction rivaled only by that effected by the physical characteristics and natural charm of the Islands. But their responsibility should not end with the making of Hawaii. They should not be reluctant to assume their portion of civic and territorial responsibility in the guidance and management of the institution they have established.

The second group, the transients, include the tourists and technical and skilled artisans brought from the mainland and from Britain and the continent, chiefly from the latter two. The former come to see the sights and then depart; the second group to make, save and take away as much money as possible. These people are here only for a short while. They take little or no interest in native problems. Generally they are a negligible contribution to the city's ethical betterment.

To the third group belong the native Hawaiians and the Orientals. They are the mediums through which the projects of the moneyed group are materialized. Other than this they have no function. It is right here that one manifestation of apathy is asserted: lack of civic pride, a distinctness in civic affairs. A significant danger lies therein.

Issues Clearly Defined

True that the present body politic is chiefly Hawaiian; but do not statistics reveal that the Hawaiian race is dying? This is a tragic truth. Also, have not the Orientals—that major element, the Japanese—proven by their arrogant and antagonistic attitude towards American principles that they are not to be entrusted with administrative responsibility? Yet the future augurs an Oriental voting majority in the next twenty years. Time will eventually withdraw the Hawaiians from the second group and leave only the first group and the Orientals as potent factors in the cementation of territorial affairs. So the issue is clearly defined. It is vitally important that the major responsibility should be incumbent on the moneyed factors whose sole attention, it seems, is centered wholly upon the grinding, the crystallization and marketing of sugar.

Civilization is man's birthright, attained in his upward struggle from things primordial. Little more than half a century has passed since Hawaii's acceptance of her heritage. Yet in that brief time her development has been prodigious when compared with

the time expended in the Caucasian evolution. A few days ago Dr. Brigham, before a meeting of his conferees, said that "the Hawaiians have lost their grip on life." Considering their rapid progress and their ready assimilation of modern teachings it must not be conceded that they be wholly blamed for their insouciance.

These amiable, generous, open-hearted people have been the victims of their own magnanimity. Children of a languorous clime, embryos of a newly acquired culture, they have given way before the strenuous methods of the white man, whose inherent aggressiveness has been wrought by his struggle for existence and supremacy down through the ages in the colder latitudes.

Urges Technical Training

It is no small wonder that the Hawaiians, particularly the younger generation, lapse into mediocre complacency, lose their interest in things when they are thrust into obscurity with the allocation of petty and insignificant positions. The city's schools of the higher standard, its preparatory institutions, have every facility for equipping young men for life's business. In spite of this one of the largest manufacturing concerns of Honolulu deems it a better investment, for reasons more in sympathy with their plans for future class monopoly of their specific industry, to import skilled men from Britain and the continent. Encourage young Hawaiian men with the opportunity to develop, by practical application, a technical and mechanical proficiency that will not necessitate the introduction of foreign mediums.

Noticeable also are the resources touched in these God-endowed islands. These flashing tropic seas so teem with fish as to refute any skepticism concerning the success of, say, half a dozen fish canneries. Yet the prices demanded at Honolulu's fish markets are such that the computations of conscience rob our Friday dinner of its zest when we calculate each mouthful equivalent to a fractional portion of a dollar, of no mean denomination.

Delicacies Unknown To New York

Then the coming of native fruits: A few concerns put up small quantities of jam and jelly for home consumption. What possibilities lie in an extension of this business! New Yorkers have never tasted guava jam. The average easterner does not know whether a papaya is a fruit or an anthropophagous creature. Hawaiian pineapples are a household word throughout the world. Why not guava, mango, papaya jams and jellies?

Then again, what becomes of the coconuts which, season after season, dangle in desuetude from the neighboring trees? Why are there no coconut estates similar to those in the West Indies? It is needless to say that the derivatives from the coconut, as a food product, rank foremost among the essential commodities on the world's markets.

One is surprised to find that the Territory of Hawaii is not self-supporting. Garden truck could be raised profitably and abundantly without encroaching upon the lands given to sugar and pineapple cultivation. It was vegetables from Hawaii that kept alive the early Californian settlers who faced starvation on the western front of civilization. Now it is Californian produce that is shipped to Hawaii and sold at prices far in excess of the intrinsic worth.

Out at Waikiki there is a beauty spot, a colorful picture of tropical herbage, and green mountain overlooking a silver stretch of beach vivid against an azure sea. But were it not for the enlisted men stationed here, who enjoy the warm surf, one could count upon his ten fingers the bathers. In Waikiki beach with all its physical advantages were transferred to the Atlantic seaboard it would necessitate the reorganization and extension of a dozen different rail systems to handle the crowds that would flock to the resort.

Old Days Not Different

"It was different in the old days, before prohibition," says someone. "Plenty of people were here then."

That is a fallacy. Liquor was never so powerful as to lure people thousands of miles from their own corner saloon. The present dearth of tourists is attributed to two reasons. First, many tourists have set their faces towards seeing devastated France and the old battlefields of the Great War. Secondly, Hawaii is the victim of the reaction resultant from a distorted publicity. With proper development the beach at Waikiki could be made a resort testament to any of its kind and truly worthy of that far-fung renown created by the flippant fulminations of hair-brained publicists and the deceptive cartographic glamorings of the tourist's brochure.

A sanatorium, as proposed, is a splendid idea. Why not, also, a pavilion or two with a refreshment center in place of the dilapidated Outrigger Club structure? It is detrimental to the beach as well as a deplorable inconvenience that (save for the Outrigger Club commissary for members only) there is no restaurant or buffet so that one could enjoy a full day at the beach, without having to journey into town for something to eat.

Hawaii has all the natural facilities to make it the world's playground: The volcano, the bathing, the cloud rapt mountains, with their picturesque valleys all contribute to the masterpiece of the Divine Artist; but man is mortal and his desires for pleasure are not wholly satiated by aesthetic transcendence. Moving pictures become monotonous. Surely there is sufficient intellectuality among the resident population to appreciate the spoken drama. Honolulu can well afford to support a stock company—not a second rate affair, but a company of skilled artists whose repertoire would include successful offerings of the current season.

Tourists Attend Theaters

The tourist comes here to spend his money and when he has seen the most important sights he looks towards the Orient to spend the rest. Keep him here as long as possible; his money is just as good to the Territory as to another place. Despite the many things to absorb the interest of the visitor there is always some interval during

his sojourn when the traveler's thoughts turned towards the things back home. After a week of strenuous sight-seeing he sits alone in his hotel, physically tired but with a mental activity intensified rather than mitigated by reminiscences of recent experiences and novel sights. It is in such a mood that danger of reaction lurks, when, if aggravated, is formed the nucleus of biased opinion because of some shortcoming, some disappointment in his surroundings. But this mood would be dissipated if he could lose himself in the gripping movement of a Belasco masterpiece or in the absurdities of a hilarious farce. If this were possible no longer would the stately Moana stand in desuetude; nor would there arise the wailings of a marooned playwright at Waikiki, yearning for the flickering lights of the Bialto.

Let the people of the Territory, of Honolulu, shake off this cosmopolitan and awake to the great possibilities which, if utilized, will give to Hawaii a fame far greater than that which the imaginative artifices of Broadway have ever given to these green islands of the great Pacific.

Because she was a dancer they snubbed her. The Colonel openly insulted her. But she won them to her side. How? See the amazing Nazimova in "Stronger Than Death," at the Bijou Theater, and feel the thrill of her great art. One week commencing Thursday night, September 9th, at 7:40 p. m.—Adv.

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