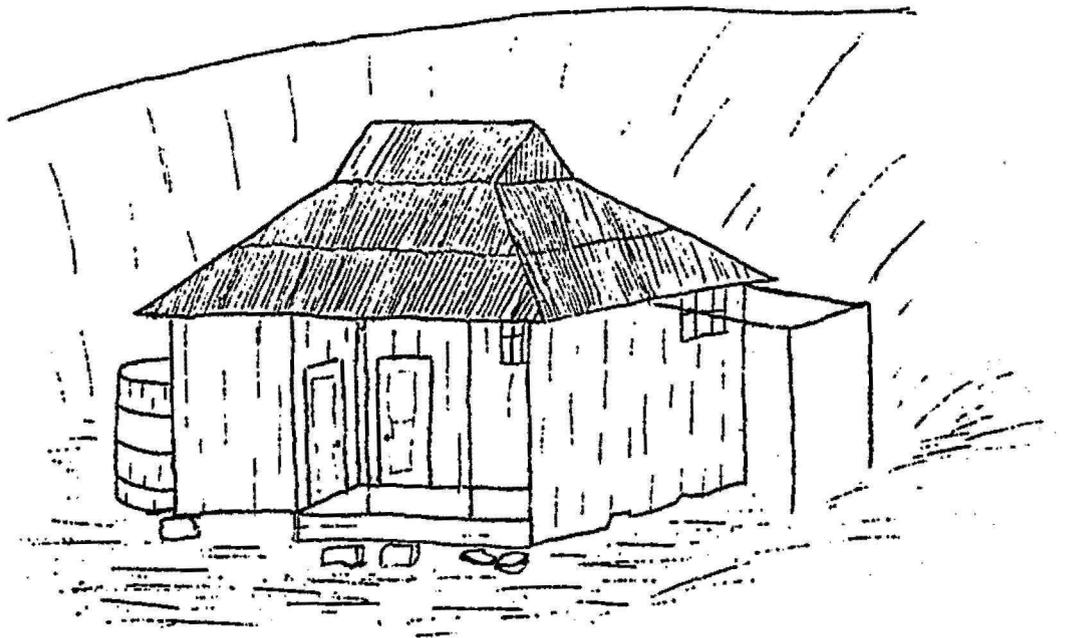


NATURE NOTES

HAWAII NATIONAL PARK



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E. P. Leavitt, Superintendent John E. Doerr, jr, Park Naturalist

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Tragedy of Aloalca

by The Editor page 44

Mark Twain's Strange Dream

by Mark Twain, from Volcano House
Records page 45

How Polo Became Apotheosized

by Ranger E. Brumaghin page 47

The Cover

by The Editor page 48

The Crator of Kilauea

by Ranger E. Brumaghin pages 49and50

THE TRAGEDY OF ALEALEA

The title may suggest to some that this might be a mystery story. No, this is a story (true) of the courage, patience and endurance of men and beast. The men in the story are Rangers Fordyce, Christ, and Eaton; the beast is a large "billy" goat which was given the name, "The White Goat" because the color of his hair was individual among the herd of which he was leader. The scene of the story or tragedy is Alealea Crater in Hawaii National Park, a steep-walled pit crater some 400 feet deep which has long been famous as the home of wild goats.

There have been times when rangers in the park have been called upon to rescue people from the depths of the craters but never before has it been necessary to risk one's life in attempting to rescue a goat.

A short time ago visitors at the Kilauea Military Camp stood at the lookout at Alealea Crater and noticed a large white goat high up on the far wall of the crater. On succeeding days other observers noticed the goat in the same position. Realizing that goats are excellent climbers and that other goats were climbing on the ledges near the conspicuous white "billy", it seemed almost impossible that this particular goat, whose age indicated that he had had much climbing experience, could have reached a ledge from which he could not return.

A careful examination of the goat's position showed that he had gone down from the crater rim to the particular ledge on which he had been for almost a week, and that he could neither climb out from the crater nor descend to the crater floor. One can only speculate as to the thoughts of the goat occupying the narrow ledge during those days and nights; thirty feet above him was the rim of the crater and the wide world; four hundred feet below, the floor of the crater over which he had roamed undisturbed with his companions. Certainly he thought of food for he had cleaned the ledge of its growth of young ferns, ohelo bushes and chia trees.

On the fifth day of the goat's lonely vigil, Ranger Fordyce summoned the aid of Rangers Christ and Eaton to rescue the animal. Getting the location on the rim directly above "billy", Ranger Fordyce was then lowered on a rope down the wall of the crater. As Ranger Fordyce approached the ledge occupied by the goat, "billy" gained courage to make leaps to lower ledges, leaps which he had evidently contemplated during his stay on the cliff. Seeing the goat leap from one ledge to another, twelve to fifteen feet below, certainly aroused one's admiration for "billy's" courage and ability.

With 100 feet of rope out it was impossible for Ranger Fordyce to descend farther. His presence on the wall as well as the small avalanches of rock which fell beneath him were sufficient to encourage the goat to continue his leaps from ledge to ledge. Hugging close to the sides of the cliff, "billy" was able to dodge the avalanches of stones and yet the stones whizzing by stimulated him to make some most spectacular leaps. Even in his precarious position on narrow ledges the goat exemplified a spirit of nonchalance by eating the foliage of the vegetation growing in the crevices in the wall.

For a time it seemed as though "billy" would reach the lower slopes safely, there to continue his life in the peaceful environment of Alealea Crater. Arriving at the end of a ledge, "billy" did not

in the great plain that skirts the Halemaumau. I stood in a sort of twilight that softened the tone of surrounding objects, and still left them tolerably distinct. A gaunt muffled figure stepped out from the shadow of a rough column of lava, and moved away with a slow and measured step, beckoning me to follow, I did so. I marched down, down, hundreds of feet, upon a narrow path which wound its torturous course through piles and pyramids of seamed and blackened lava, and under over-hanging masses of sulphur formed by the art hand of nature into an infinitude of fanciful shapes.

"The thought crept my mind that possibly my phantom guide might lead me down among the bowels of the earth, and then disappear, and leave me to grope my way through its mazes, and work out my deliverance as best I might, and so, with an eye to such a contingency, I picked up a stone and "blazed" my course by breaking off a projecting corner occasionally, from lava walls, and finally we turned into a cleft in the craters wall, and picked our way through its intricate windings for many a fathom toward the home of the subterranean fires, our course was lighted all the way by the ruddy glow which filtered up through innumerable cracks and crevices, and which afforded occasional glimpses of the flood of molten lava boiling and hissing in the profound depths below us. The heat was intense, and the sulphurous atmosphere suffocating, but I toiled on in the foot-steps of my stately guide and made no complaint. At last we came to a rugged chamber whose sombre and blistered walls spoke with mute eloquence of some fiery tempest that had spent its fury here ages ago. The spectre pointed to a boulder at the farther extremity - stood and pointed silent and motionless, for a few fleeting moments and then disappeared.

"The Grave of the Great Kamehameaha!"

The words swept mournfully by, from unknown source and died away in the distant corridors of my prison; and I was alone in the bowels of the earth, in the house of desolation, in the presence of death!

"My frightened impulse was to fly, but a stronger impulse arrested me and impelled me to approach the massive boulder the spectre had pointed at. With hesitating step I went forward and stood beside it - nothing there; I grew bolder and walked around and about it, peering shrewdly into the shadowy half-light that surrounded it - still nothing. I paused to consider. While I stood irresolute I chanced to brush the ponderous stone with my elbow, and lo! it vibrated to my touch! I would as soon have thought of starting a kiln of bricks with my feeble hand. My curiosity was excited, I bore against the boulder with my whole strength, and it toppled from its foundation with a crash that sent the echoes thndoring down the avonic passages of the dismal cavern.

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hesitate to leap to a very narrow ledge about six feet below. He landed safely, there was a split second pause and suddenly the rocks gave way under his weight, hurling his white form through space to death on the jagged rocks 150 feet below.

"The White Goat's" last leap resulted in a distinct loss to the park. Being the only white goat inhabiting Alealea Crater, its white hair made it easily discernible to the many visitors stopping at the crater lookout to see the goats.

Inspired by the courage of three Park Rangers and "The White Goat of Alealea".

"MARK TWAIN'S" STRANGE DREAM

Continued from the October Nature Notes

"- and from that day to this the resting-place of the lion-king's bones is an unsolved mystery. But years afterwards, when the grim prophetess Wiahowakawaka lay on her death-bed, the Goddess Pele appeared to her in a vision and told her that eventually the secret would be revealed, and in a remarkable manner, but not until the great Kauhuhu the Shark God, should desert the sacred cavern Ana Puhī, in the island of Molokai, and the waters of the sea should no more enter it and its floors should become dry.

"Ever since that time, the simple confiding natives have watched for two signs. And now after many and many a summer has come and gone, and they who were in the flower of youth then have waxed old and died, the day is at hand! The great Shark God has deserted the Ana Puhī. A month ago, for the first time within the records of the ancient legends, the sea has ceased to flow into the cavern, and its stony pavement has become dry! As you may easily believe, the news of this great event spread like wild-fire through the islands, and now the natives are looking every hour for the miracle, which is to unveil the mystery, and reveal the secret grave of the dead hero.

"After I had gone to bed, I got to thinking of the volcanic magnificence we had witnessed and could not get to sleep. I hunted up a book and concluded I would pass the time in reading. The first chapter I came upon related several instances of remarkable revelations, made to man through the agency of dreams, of roads and houses, trees, fences and all manner of land-marks showed in visions and recognized afterward in waking and which served to point the way to some dark mystery or other. At length I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was abroad.

in the great plain that skirts the Halomaumau. I stood in a sort of twilight that softened the tone of surrounding objects, and still left them tolerably distinct. A gaunt muffled figure stepped out from the shadow of a rough column of lava, and moved away with a slow and measured step, beckoning me to follow, I did so. I marched down, down, hundreds of feet, upon a narrow path which wound its torturous course through piles and pyramids of seamed and blackened lava, and under over-hanging masses of sulphur formed by the art hand of nature into an infinitude of fanciful shapes.

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And there, in a shallow excavation over which it had rested, lay the crumbling skeleton of King Kameahameaha the Great, thus sepulchred in long years, by supernatural hands! The bones could be none other, for with them lay the rare and priceless crown of pulamalama coronet sacred to royalty, and tabu to all else besides.

"A hollow groan issued out of the - I woke up. How glad I was to know it was all a dream! This comes of listening to the legend of the noble lord - of reading those lying dream revelations - of allowing myself to be carried away by the wild beauty of Kilauea at midnight - of gorging too much pork and beans for supper. And so I turned over and fell asleep again - and dreamed the same dream precisely as before; followed the same phantom guide - blazed the same course - arrived at the grim chamber - heard the sad spirit voice - overturned the massive stone - beheld the regal crown and the decaying bones of the Great Kameahameaha!

"I woke up and reflected long on this curious and singularly vivid dream, and finally muttered to myself, 'This is becoming serious!' I fell asleep again, and again I dreamed the same dream, without a single variation. I slept no more but tossed restlessly in bed and longed for daylight. And when it came I wandered forth, and descended to the wide plain in the crater. I said to myself, 'I am not superstitious but if there is anything in that dying woman's prophecy I am the instrument appointed to unravel this ancient mystery.'

To be continued.

The Editor

HOW PELE BECAME APOTHEOSIZED

Pele, with her many brothers and sisters settled in the region of Kilauea's crater. The reports of Pele's character and many fine qualities spread through the islands. Kamapuaa, a rough, stalwart man with black, bristly hair, heard of this famous lady and decided to visit her. Arriving at Kilauea, Kamapuaa made advances to Pele to become her suitor. She rejected all of Kamapuaa's proposals, calling him a "son of a hog". This vile name aroused Kamapuaa to the point of fighting. Pele with her family and eighteen other women and children fled into the darkness of a lava tube, closing the entrance behind them.

Kamapuaa, discovering their hiding-place, started to bore a hole from the surface through to the tube. Just as Kamapuaa was about to reach the tube in which Pele was hiding, a flow of lava poured out of the nearby crater, driving the besiegers away. Kamapuaa believed that Pele and her followers had been destroyed. Because the lava eruption coming just when it did, the people believed that Pele had the power of calling up fire hence they glorified her as Pele, The Goddess of Volcanoes.

by Renger E. Brumaghim

THE COVER

On the cover of this issue is a sketch, drawn with cold fingers, of the Rest House on the Mauna Loa Trail. In some localities this "wrinkle-tin" roofed house would pass for nothing more than a much weather-beaten "shack", but in its location nestled in the small crater of the red cinder cone known as Puu Ulaula or Red Hill, it is a house, a house which has meant shelter food and sleep for those who have travelled the Mauna Loa Trail.

The exterior of its board walls have experienced the heat of the sun burning through the thin air of an elevation of 10,000 feet; strong winds whirling inside the crater have hurled particles of volcanic ash and pumice against its walls; snow and ice too are not unknown to the exterior walls of the Rest House in Puu Ulaula. Inside, its smoked stained walls tell of over-heated oil stoves; the floor, pitted by dragging hobnail boots, is stained by spots of grease from skillets with hand-burning handles. A hole in the floor tells the story of a mountain-traveling mouse which came up from below in a bale of hay or a sack of oats. On the shelf above the table are pots, pans and tinware cleaned by the last visitors sheltered by the Rest House. Corn beef in cans are evidence of a desire to lighten ones load on the down journey and some Rest House guest's good faith that other visitors will leave something for someone who by chance has run short of food.

Arriving at Puu Ulaula one has no time for noticing the lack of luxury in the house. Around the house are other cinder cones of various sizes and shapes, countless numbers of spatter cones built up by lava fountains which have played along a great crack are there to be examined; if one should tire of exploring the caves lined with many-colored, jagged stalactites, there are the more distant views of nature to impress and inspire one. To the north beyond the fog-filled valley is Mauna Kea, whose rugged volcanic peaks change color as they catch the last rays of the sun setting in the Pacific to the west and the first rays of the sun rising from the Pacific to the east.

Six thousand feet below and to the east is Kilauea whose gentle slopes are partially buried by the lava flows from Mauna Loa. To the west and south rise the higher slopes of Mauna Loa up which the visitor at the Rest House has or will travel.

by the Park Naturalist

CRATER OF KILAUEA

On the opposite page is a copy of an ancient map of the Crater of Kilauea as it was known to old Hawaiians. The original map is in notes by King David Kalakaua who ruled as King of the Islands from January 29, 1874 until his death on January 20, 1891.

Legend

A - A steam crack on the north rim of the crater. Near this crack the ancient Hale Hoomaha stood. (Nature Notes, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 21) This steam crack furnished heat for cooking the food of the people who came to worship the Goddess Pele at her temple, Halemaumau.

B - The location of Lord George Anson Byron's hut stood. The hut was destroyed by a lava flow in 1832. To-day the location is known as Byron's Ledge.

C.- Image of Kamohoalii, brother of the Goddess Pele. Legend tells us that his body is buried on this cliff and that when erosion uncovers his bones Pele comes with lava and volcanic ashes and covers them again. The image of Kamohoalii can be seen to-day on this pali.

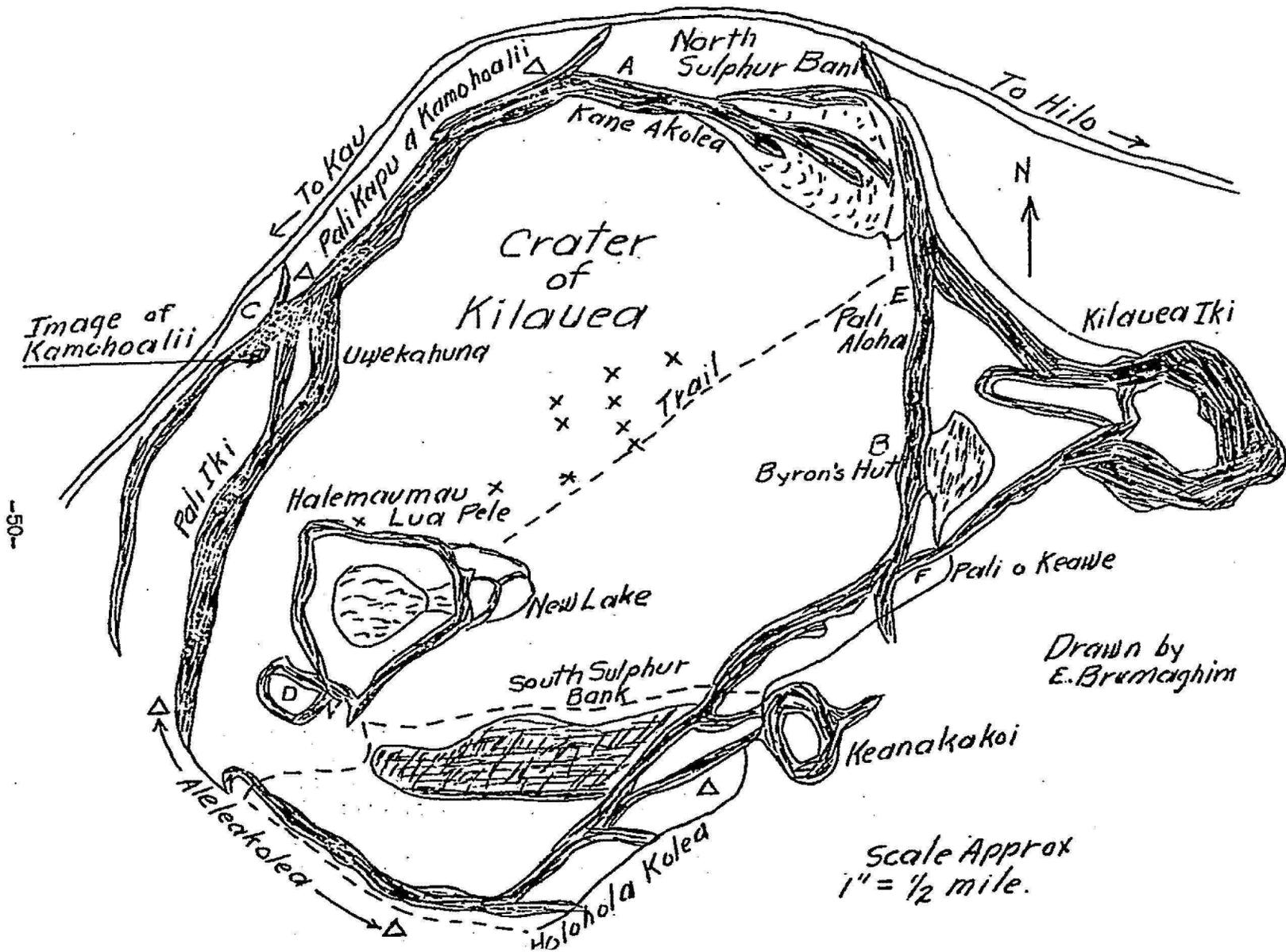
D - A crater in which Aeaumau ferns grew. This crater does not exist now.

E - Marks the spot where Pele met and fell in love with Lohiau.

F - Where Princess Kapiolani had her camp.

x - Spatter cones on the floor of the crater. Only Little Bogger remains to-day.

by Ranger E. Brumaghin



-50-

Scale Approx
1" = 1/2 mile.

Drawn by
E. Bremaghim