The Wizard Stones of Kapaemahu at Waikiki

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THESE mid-Pacific isles have many legends attached to various localities; mountains, rivers, lakes and other places have their goblin and other stories of by-gone ages.

In Hawai'i are many places which give ocular proof of the supernatural tales of mythical beings who are credited with a personality equal in lore to the celebrities of ancient Greek mythology, and the doings of the dreaded gods of Hawaii have been recounted among the Hawaiian people for successive generations. The doings of four sorcerers, who have prestige among the mele singers and recanters of ancient Hawaiian lore, were revived a few years ago by the unearthing of long concealed monuments on the Waikiki beach premises of Princess Ka'iulani. These discovered relics of ancient days have brought out the tradition of their existence, to the following effect:

From the land of Mo'aulanuikea (Tahiti), there came to Hawaii long before the reign of Kakuhiwena, four soothsayers from the court of the Tahitian king. Their names were: Kapaemahu, Kahaloa, Kapuni and Kinohi. They were received as became their station, and their tall stature, courteous ways and kindly manners made them soon loved by the Hawaiian people. The attractiveness of their fine physique and gentle demeanor was overshadowed by their low, soft speech which endeared them to all with whom they came in contact. They were unsexed by nature, and their habits coincided with their feminine appearance, although manly in stature and general bearing. After a long tour of the islands this quartette of favorites of the gods settled at Ulukou, Waikiki, near the site of the present Moana Hotel.

The wizards or soothsayers proved to be adepts in the science of healing, and many wonderful cures by the laying on of sands are reported to have been effected by them, so that their fame spread all over this island of O'ahu, as the ancients say, "from headland to headland." And their wisdom and skill was shown by many acts which gave them prestige among the people.

In course of time, knowing that their days among their Hawaiian friends were drawing to a close, they caused their desire for recognition for past services to be remembered in some tangible form, or manner, so that those who might come after, could see the appreciation of those who had been succored and relieved of pain and suffering by their ministrations during their sojourn among them. As an enduring reminder, the wizards agreed among themselves that the people should be asked to erect four monumental tablets, two to be placed on the ground of the habitation, and two at their usual bathing place in the sea. Kapaemahu, chief of the wizards, had his stone so named, and transferred his witchcraft powers thereto with incantations and ceremonies, including a sacrificial offering, said to have been that of a lovely, virtuous young chiefess, and her body placed beneath the stone. Idols indicating the unsexed nature of the wizards were also placed under each stone and tradition tells that the incantations, prayers and fastings lasted one full moon. Tradition further states, as is related in the old-time meles of that period, that, after the ceremonies, by each of the wizards transferred all his powers to his stone, they vanished, and were seen no more. But the rocks having lately been discovered they have been exhumed from their bed of sand and placed in position in the locality found, as tangible evidence of a Hawaiian tale.

NOTE

This story is from Thrum's More Hawaiian Folk Tales (261-264).