

K A A H U M A N U

By Mrs. Edmund Kea.

Kaahumanu, the favorite Queen of the Conqueror, Kamehameha I, was the daughter of Namahanaikaleleokalani and Keeaumokupapaiaheaha, who were both of royal lineage, the former a daughter of Kekaulike, King of Maui, and Haalou, a high chiefess of Hawaii. The latter a son of Kumaaku, a high chiefess of Maui and Keawepoepoe, a son of the kapu Princess Kalanikauleleieiwi of Hawaii.

The couple having incurred the wrath of Kahekili, King of Maui, who was so incensed over the marriage of his half-sister Namahana with Keeaumoku that a battle ensued. Namahana and Keeaumoku were obliged to retire to Hana, Maui, which was at that time a district of Hawaii; having been conquered by Kalaniopuu.

Tradition says, that during these turbulent days, Kaahumanu was born at Mapuana at the famous fort of Kauiki, where her parents lived in retirement. There she was reared with special care for they were both strict and firm. Kaahumanu naturally developed her strong and firm character, which befitted her future position in life, for she had been betrothed to Kamehameha I at her birth. The childhood days of Kaahumanu were passed in seclusion owing to the unsettled condition at that time. When a child it is said Kaahumanu's face and body were overspread with charcoal to preserve her beautiful skin.

At the age of fourteen, Kamehameha I claimed her as his Queen. She proved to be able and ever ready to give him encouragement and help when needed. Kamehameha made her next in power to himself.

Although she had no children she took those of her sister, and some from the nobility and had them reared in her own household with kindness and respect, which greatly endeared her to the different families. She also took

the children of foreign and Hawaiian parentage who as they grew up became very loyal to her.

It is said that Keeaumoku on his death bed was approached by Kamehameha on the subject of losing him. Kamehameha was afraid the chiefs would rise up in revolt against him, Keeaumoku replied that there were none who had influence enough, or who dared commit treason. The only one who could accomplish such an act would be Kaahumanu, his own wife, for she had gained great love and respect of the chiefs through relationship and kind hospitality to their children who were therefore so attached to the Queen, that they were ready to do as she commanded. But as long as Kamehameha had the confidence, affection and respect of Kaahumanu, there would be no adversary.

Kaahumanu was firm in her decrees and woe to those who spoke disparagingly of the King whom she loved and respected until his death.

He was succeeded by his son Liholiho who together with Kaahumanu administered the Kingdom along the lines laid down by the late King.

She was ever alert for the good of her people; chiefs and commoners alike. When the missionaries arrived Kaahumanu was at first reticent towards them, but in later days when converted to Christianity, she became their staunch friend and benefactress, having such complete faith in the new form of worship she proselitized among the chiefs and people and converted them wherever she appeared.

In 1824 Liholiho visited England and his whole suite was taken ill with measles. Both the King and his Queen, Kamamalu, died in London.

Kaahumanu continued to act as regent to the young King Kawiikaouli or Kamehameha III, who was a minor, until her death which occurred June 5th, 1832, at her home, Kahoiwai, in the beautiful valley of Manoa.

We of today may well do homage to the memory of the good and noble Queen Kaahumanu.