

Abraham Fornander and The Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine

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The ascension to the throne of Kamehameha IV was the great event of the 1850's for the Hawaiian Kingdom. Unfortunately, the rickety old press of the *New Era and Argus* was silent during that January of 1855—this time, because there would be no paper until the next ship arrived from California. Consequently, it was not until the following month that its editor and publisher, Abraham Fornander, could express his enthusiastic hopes:

A new King has ascended the throne of the Kamehamehas; a new Star has risen on the Hawaiian horizon. The era of transition from barbarism to civilisation, the era of antagonism and compromises between old and new ideas, "the day of little things" is about to close, and then will young Hawaii, in the strength of God, and in confidence in itself, assume its proper place as "the Heart of the Pacific."¹

Six months later the newspaper was dead, a victim of hard times and lack of opposition. And six months after that a new Fornander recreation greeted the boisterous little town of Honolulu—the *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine*.

Abraham Fornander was tough, resilient, and combative, the survivor of a decade and half of the harshest and most perilous life the sea could offer—that of a whaleman. He was also an intellectual and a scholar, a man of ideas, in a community which felt little need for those qualities—and one who showed an unerring gift for choosing the unpopular side or minority view.

When such a man became a journalist in a place like Honolulu of the 1850's and 1860's, he had need of all the toughness, resiliency—and buoyancy—he could muster. For almost three years Fornander

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used them in operating an opposition newspaper; now he was launching a journal that would express the spirit of the new and better times ahead.

And so, in January, 1856, the first issue of the *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine* reached its readers.

Fornander's previous journalistic career had been a rocky one. Though he had done some newspaper writing as early as 1849,² it really began with the arrival in Honolulu of twenty-two year old Mathew K. Smith in mid-1851.³

The following January the first issue of the *Weekly Argus* appeared, with Smith as editor and sole proprietor. Only a confirmed optimist could have chosen such a time to start a newspaper, for the previous year had been one of most serious economic depression. But young Smith was not a business man, but a crusader—or was persuaded to become one by the forty-one year old Fornander. The purpose of the paper was to provide an opposition voice to the government-subsidized *Polynesian*, edited since May of 1849 by Edwin O. Hall, printer and assistant secular agent in Honolulu for the Sandwich Islands Mission. The *Argus* distinguished between the king on the one hand, and on the other the members of his government and their motivating force, the so-called "missionary" interests, whose voice was the *Polynesian*. In contrast, the new journal hoped to fill the need for "a liberal paper, through which the views of a large portion of our population could find expression."⁴

At first letters over the pseudonyms "Alpha" and "Halifax" filled column after column of the *Argus* with political comment. They were actually written by Fornander,⁵ and it was not long before his views became official newspaper policy. By March of 1852 he had taken over its editorship, and by January 19th of the next year Smith's name had disappeared from the masthead.

The *Argus* was an aggressive little journal which campaigned vigorously on many fronts. Its most deadly and unceasing fire was against such targets as the selling of lands by the government to former missionaries for what he considered a pittance; the involvement of members of the clergy in government, and any efforts on their part to affect the voting of their congregations; the work of the Rev. Richard Armstrong as Minister of Education; and most of all, Dr. Gerrit Judd's administration of the Ministry of Finance. Against these his shots were constant and painful, and earned Fornander the permanent enmity of most of those who were or had been part of the Sandwich Islands Mission.

After Judd's dismissal from the government in September, 1853,

the paper changed its name in celebration to the *New Era and Argus*.⁶ Now, one of its principal targets was gone. Another was lost when the king's genial, urbane appointee, the Englishman Charles Gordon Hopkins, replaced the vituperative Hall as editor of the *Polynesian* early in 1855. Soon after this, the Department of Education was reorganized along lines advocated by Fornander. As these major battles were won the paper lost momentum, so when hard times forced it to cease publication the editor did not seem too depressed. The closing was intended only as a temporary expedient, "for a month or two until business revives by the return of the shipping."⁷ But the issue of June 28, 1855, proved to be the last.

During the 1852 to 1855 period, both the Fornander newspaper and the *Polynesian* provided lively reading, for there was no such thing as unbiased writing or unslanted news in the journalism of that time in Hawaii. Hall's attacks on Fornander were often venomous, and much more crude than the latter's stinging darts. Strangely enough, Hall, who had lived in Honolulu since 1835, claimed he had "not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mr. F."⁸ For the latter had been a naturalized citizen since January, 1847—at that time one of only about four hundred adult foreigners living more or less permanently in the little town of some 10,000 inhabitants.

Perhaps the fact that Fornander was a former whaler married to "a native woman" automatically placed him in the category of those to be ignored by that segment of Honolulu's polite society to which Hall belonged. (The "native woman" was an alii, daughter of a famous medical kahuna and former governor of Molokai, and she was connected with the ranking families of Maui, Hawaii, and Oahu through descent from their early *mois*, kings). Such condescension as Hall's was not true of more sophisticated elements of the community, for among Fornander's earliest and lifelong friends were the Rev. Samuel S. Damon, Chaplain of the American Seamen's Friend Society and editor of *The Friend*, and the worldly Dr. Thomas C. B. Rooke, physician, and intimate of Hawaiian royalty. It was his love of books and reading that formed the original bond; through these two men, Fornander had access to the Seamen's Chapel library and to one of the finest private collections in Honolulu.

For this former harpooner's background was not precisely that of the usual rough whaleman. Degrees from leading universities of Sweden, Finland, and Germany were common among both his immediate and more distant forebears, whether clergymen or prosperous merchants and shipowners. Many had held government offices in Sweden on a city or provincial level, or, like his father,

served in the Riksdag, or national parliament. Some captained their own or family ships in the merchant trade.

The young Fornander grew up in an atmosphere of research—his clergyman father was also an avid church historian; the cousin who served as schoolmaster-guardian to Abraham and his older brother during some of their parent's absences in the Riksdag was both then and later a noted scholar and writer on local antiquities and botany. Fornander, like many of his relatives, attended the famous old Kalmar Gymnasium, already at that time in operation for two hundred years and still conducting all instruction in Latin. Though he did not graduate from either, he received a classical education at the world-renowned Swedish universities of Uppsala and Lund, attending classes in jurisprudence as well. As a result, he had a wide knowledge of and a prodigious curiosity about literature, languages, history, and science.

Writing was apparently an absolutely essential activity to Fornander throughout his long life. On this occasion, the *New Era and Argus* had no sooner ceased publication than his thoughts turned to another journalistic enterprise: a magazine, to be devoted largely to articles of local literary, historical and scientific interest.

Honolulu's only comparable venture had been the short-lived *Hawaiian Spectator*, a periodical "Conducted by an Association of Gentlemen," which survived for two years and eight quarterly issues during 1838 and 1839. Though most of its contributors were connected in one way or another with the Sandwich Islands Mission, there were a number of others who wrote for it, and many of the articles were on other than church-related subjects. They dealt with all the islands of the Pacific, but particularly Hawaii—their history, description, climate, languages, social problems, their harbors and shipping. At first the list of local contributors was long and varied. But they became fewer and fewer, at last ceasing entirely, and the readable and attractive little periodical expired.

But now the energetic and buoyant Fornander felt that the community again needed a magazine. He and his unknown backers had very definite ideas of what it should include. Though there would be some discussion of the great questions of the day—scientific, literary or theological—the periodical was to be devoted principally to matters of local interest. It would concern itself with the history and traditions of the Sandwich Islands, their scenery, geology and natural history, their trade, commerce and agriculture. Such sensitive subjects as religion and politics would not be avoided. Foreign missionary enterprise, and its effect on "the social state of the native

population" would be treated thoughtfully and candidly, but "without bigotry, and certainly without reserve, equally free from Cant or Sectarian jealousy." Men and affairs of government would receive attention, avoiding personalities, but nevertheless viewing "public men as public property," exposing shortcomings and pointing out true courses and policies to be pursued. Above all, the magazine was to be "thoroughly independent in its tone," and "free from all extraneous influence."⁹

It seemed to Fornander that the times were right for such a publication. During the long reign of Kamehameha III the little Kingdom had been threatened again and again, but now its independence seemed assured by negotiations with France, Great Britain and the United States, completed a week before the former king's death. Perhaps the less anxious days ahead would encourage interest in intellectual concerns.

The new king seemed to Fornander the symbol of a new and brighter day, a happy blending of the old and the new. It could well be that his interests and attitudes would have a broadening effect on the community.

For the young Kamehameha IV had an excellent mind. His missionary teachers had given him a limited but thorough basic education, supplemented by a year of travel in Europe and America. He had a fine command of both Hawaiian and English, plus some knowledge of French and Spanish. He was cultured and elegant, with a strong belief in his aristocratic right to govern and direct his people, and pride in his heritage and country. He had taken over his new duties with a confidence based on three years as a member of the Privy Council, and experience in other active and influential governmental roles.

Kamehameha IV was definitely out of sympathy with the Calvinistic New Englanders who dominated the Hawaii of his boyhood. His puritanical mentors firmly over-trained him in the New England virtues to the point of active revolt, particularly in the matter of humbleness before God's earthly representatives in the Sandwich Islands Mission. He included some Americans among his closest friends and advisors, but they were not of this group.

Not only at court but in the community the influence of the mission church was steadily eroded as the number of foreigners in the Kingdom grew. For though an increasingly large number of them were Americans, their interest was not in evangelism, but in money or pleasure.

Even in polite society, people enthusiastically attended the theater.

They danced at private parties and royal balls, and served alcoholic drinks. Though Honolulu was the only place where it could be sold legally, and then not to the native Hawaiians, there was a brisk and profitable trade in illegal liquors throughout the islands, and newspapers fought the battle for and against prohibition. Brothels and amateur prostitution had long flourished, in spite of the missionaries' best efforts, but now the absolutely appalling spread of venereal disease was no longer regarded simply as God's just punishment; instead, control by inspection and licensing was seriously discussed.

Not only the evils of this world threatened Calvinistic New England Protestantism. The handsome Roman Catholic Cathedral on Fort Street, more than a decade old, attested to the success of the priests who had struggled for a foothold against the determined enmity of the Sandwich Islands Mission—on Christmas Day of 1853, Alexander Liholiho himself, heir to the throne, had attended High Mass!¹⁰ The Mormons had arrived to give battle to both; the Methodists had a foothold; and even occasional Episcopal services had been held. Honolulu was no longer a Calvinistic enclave.

But, was its cosmopolitan English-reading population large enough, and sophisticated enough, to support a magazine of the intellectual appeal that Fornander had in mind? Economically, the town was still dependent upon whaling ships which came spring and fall for repairs and supplies, and to transship their oil and whalebone. The catastrophic low of 90 visiting ships in 1851 had jumped to 226 in 1852, but had steadily decreased each year since¹¹—would 1856 be better, or would the *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine* be another victim of hard times like the *New Era and Argus*? And a third question—what about writers? For Fornander expected to depend for contributors on people in the community, "who are actively engaged in various professional and commercial pursuits, whose education well qualifies, but whose leisure leaves them only at liberty to devote a small portion of their valuable time to the objects set before us."¹²

Probably these questions caused more anxiety to his unknown backers than to the always confident and energetic Fornander. Whatever the case, in January, 1856, the first issue of the *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine* made its appearance.

The new magazine was "printed and published by A. Fornander at the *New Era and Argus* office," which had moved in November, 1854, to "Nuuanu Street, head of Merchant, on the premises of J. J. Carnave, with entrance on Marine Street."¹³ The magazine was small—five-and-a-half by nine inches—and sold for fifty cents. Each

issue contained slightly more than thirty pages. The first contained no advertising, but later the last two pages consisted of advertisements from "S. C. Hillman's general agency of Newspapers, magazines and reviews," and from "Henry M. Whitney, publisher and importer of American and English books and periodicals." Both offered real competition for the attention of readers—the former listed seventy-two American and European newspapers and magazines, selected from "some of the series always on hand."

The January number was prototype of succeeding issues, except for the "Prefatory," which outlined the purposes and plans of the little periodical. As always, it began with an excerpt from young Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," published just fourteen years earlier:

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

* * * * *

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

There were two articles, two poems, a short story, three "Extracts" or quotations that emphasized the editor's point of view, and several pages of "Monthly Chit Chat." The latter were sprightly or acid comments by Fornander on current affairs, headed by a quotation from Bacon's "Essay on Discourse":

It is good in Discourse, and speech of Conversation to vary, and intermingle
Speech of the present Occasion with Arguments; Tales with Reasons; Asking of
Questions, with Telling of Opinions; and Jest with Earnest. For it is a dull thing
to Tire, and as we say now, to Jade, anything too far.

Succeeding issues added a "Monthly Summary of Shipping Intelligence," listing the arrivals and departures of ships. Sometimes there were summaries of government reports, with editorial comment and criticism.

In this first issue none of the contributions are signed except by an initial or two, if that. "H." appears several times as author, not only of the long "Prefatory," but also of a sentimental short story, "The Story of a Waltz," and of a poem about whaling, "The Fall Season," neither of any particular literary value.

Another January contributor was "G.," writing on "The Polynesian Race, and the Lost Islands of the Pacific." Based on opinions

stated by Darwin in his *Naturalist's voyage on the Beagle*, of 1839, and by James Dwight Dana, mineralogist and geologist with the U. S. Exploring Expedition of 1838-42, it speculates on "the first peopling of these little Isles of the Pacific." It conjectures that the islands of Polynesia were once part of a large archipelago, whose people traveled by purposeful navigation from one island to another. The group first inhabited by them was the Samoan Islands. But, by using as stepping stones islands which have long since subsided into the ocean, the Polynesians spread as far as New Zealand on one side, and through the Society Islands and the Marquesas to Hawaii on the other. These conclusions are reached by a comparative study of languages—a method used long after by Fornander in his monumental work.¹⁴ This article so delighted Chaplain Damon that he asked permission to reproduce it in its entirety in *The Friend: a Monthly Journal Devoted to Temperance, Seamen, Marine and General Intelligence*, and did so in the March issue.

Fornander himself contributed the second article, "Civilisation, a Thought," an article of particular importance because it contains the essence of his attitudes towards the Hawaiians. He points out to those who would boast of superiority that no people or race can take credit to themselves for having originated their own civilisation, that "what the 'naked and painted' Britons were in Caesar's day, such were the naked and painted Hawaiians of Cook's day. Civilisation looks back through sixty generations on the one occurrence, while here the advent and tragical fate of 'Lono' is still in the recollection of 'the oldest inhabitant.'" He pleads for gentler treatment, more forbearance, more kindness, more charity, from those who claim that the Hawaiian race is doomed to extinction. He points out the traumatic effects of the introduction of western civilisation, that "in its earnest, unceasing, often violent endeavor to work out its purpose, has like repeated shocks from a galvanic battery, completely stunned the recipient who is only now slowly awakening from the stupor." He emphasizes the grave responsibility of the foreign element in the kingdom, who call themselves civilised men, and points out that "whatever shape or feature civilisation may assume in the Hawaiian Islands, we, as its parents, will be held responsible. This people cannot die physically, unless we are dead morally." He promises that unless some other pen assumes the task, that, in later issues, "we will endeavor to show what civilisation—in the most potential sense of the work—has done in the performance of its duty toward these Islands and their inhabitants, and also wherein it has erred; grievously, seriously and perhaps, irretrievably erred."¹⁵

Fornander expressed the social philosophy contained in this article again and again, throughout his long life in the Sandwich Islands. Often his terms were bitter and biting, and made enemies for him on every level of society. For there were few in his day, whether drunken whalers, carousing on Nuuanu, merchants busily seeking their fortunes, missionaries intent on saving souls, or diplomats maneuvering for privilege and power, who saw the Hawaiian and his culture as worthy of respect and preservation, who escaped the prevailing winds of condescension, pity or exploitation.

This time the "Extracts" quote from Milton's "Areopagitica," on the power of truth in free and open encounter, from Lady Mary Montagu on the pleasures of reading, and from Sherlock on the foolishness of intemperance. (Fornander had long been an advocate of true temperance, by free and independent choice, uncoerced by legal prohibition or by community pressures for teetotalism).

This first month's "Chit Chat" is deceptively mild and innocuous. Fornander discusses Dr. William Hillebrand's "Report of Labour and Population," from the first *Transactions of the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society*, which proposes domestic remedies for the decrease in population; the condition of the past business season; the recent appearance of Lee and Marshall's National Circus, and Long and Raphael's Great Western Circus; his hope that the manager of the Royal Hawaiian Theatre "will avoid five act plays with the thermometer at ninety degrees, and in a room twenty feet by thirty;" the loss of the steamer *Kalama* at Koloa, Kauai; and the January seventh election of Representatives to the Legislature.

The Honolulu appearance of the Great Western Circus was not the end of its story—a later "Chit Chat" reports the sequel:

Some weeks ago the ladies of Lahaina sent in a petition to the Legislature, that no Circus be permitted in that virtuous village because it "kept their husbands out at nights." What a sorry picture of domestic life that petition exhibited: What curtain lectures a la Mrs. Caudle—what scolding, what despair—what a con-cat-enation of cat-astrophes, from broken vows up to broken heads—what a cloud of divorce bills in the judicial perspective! What cruel, brutal and *benighted* husbands! What perfect Sultans them! Who would have thought, a few months ago, when the Great Western Circus went up to Lahaina during the shipping season, to amuse the conflux of strangers there, and to subserve the morals of the place by diverting dissipation from the usual pursuits of licentiousness and drunkenness—who would have thought that it should have fallen like a bomb in a powder mill, like a bull in a china shop, like a comet in a horsepond, and that blighted hopes, shivered affections and—this petition—would have been its legitimate results? But so it is. A number of strong minded women of Lahaina

have attested their rights and their monopoly of their husbands' time. Their petition did "a tale unfold." We have but a word to add to this singular document. It was duly read before the House of Nobles; but the majority of that body, being widowers, with a self denial truly praiseworthy, referred the petition to the Executive department. As His Majesty's Government is composed two to one, of bachelors, there is yet some hope that the Ladies of Lahaina may receive that attention which the Legislature and their husbands refused.¹⁶

This first issue of the *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine* was very well received by both the *Friend* and the *Polynesian*. Mr. Hopkins editorialized that, "when our readers have learned that it is conducted by Mr. Abraham Fornander, they will need no farther guarantee of its honesty of purpose and kindness of tone," and referred to "that gentleman's long established reputation as a writer whose style is marked by a happy combination of the scholastic and playful." He praised "The Polynesian Race," and "Civilisation, a Thought," but disapproved of the use of the author's signature, even if only by use of an initial. He felt that:

. . . it argues a want of contributors to see the same initials recurring frequently in the space of only a few pages . . . readers are apt to tire of a writer who meets them too frequently . . . an amateur author, is often a little cramped by the consciousness of being obliged to father his bantling. . . . We would say, let the articles go before the world as common stock; the authors of those approved by the public will always be in time to step in and claim the honor due them.¹⁷

When his suggestion was ignored, and the use of initials continued, Hopkins categorically refused to review any signed contributions, because he disliked to give umbrage to anybody who could write the English language, and put the stops where they belonged. But when he accused a writer, who signed himself "IOTA," of shielding himself from praise or blame by using a signature, and begged "to ask whether he holds our notices in contempt or dread,"¹⁸ Hopkins went too far. He got a sharp reply from "IOTA," who appears to have been Fornander himself. After explaining his reasons for using a signature, the latter continues:

While I respect your criticisms, I do not think an article or book ought to be helplessly dependent on the review of any public journal; I should like better to see every reader his own critic first.

Coleridge and others have gone so far as to pronounce the recent influx of reviews the greatest bane of the age. . . .¹⁹

The result was no review at all in the next issue of the *Polynesian*.

And who were these secretive contributors? Those whose offerings are without any signature at all will probably never be known, though style or point of view often suggest Fornander himself. Some can be surmised with more or less certainty from a fortunate happenstance—in his personal file of the magazine, the editor would pencil in a letter, or add a further one, occasionally an entire surname.²⁰

The initials that appear most frequently are those of “H. R.” His contributions are always “literary,” poems or essays of about the same calibre as those which appear in the January issue. One of the latter, however, “Our Verandah,”²¹ has such an amusingly graphic description of the condition and traffic of Honolulu’s streets that one wishes he had written more about the local scene, and jewer sonnets and sermons. As to his identity, one guesses, by the process of elimination, that H. R. may perhaps be Henry Rhodes, brother of Godfrey, the latter a frequent letter writer to the Fornander newspapers. As is the case with almost all of the possibly identifiable contributors to the *Sandwich Islands’ Monthly*, Henry was an Englishman. He had first arrived in the Sandwich Islands in 1836, on his way to British Columbia to take a position with the Hudson’s Bay Company. But in 1856 he was living in Honolulu, perhaps working for the same employers, though a few years later when the company’s local agency closed he returned to Victoria, this time to work for Janion, Green and Company—of which more later.

Another “literary” contributor whose identity is difficult to guess accurately is “Brown,” whose two poems in the February and April issues are unsigned except for Fornander’s pencilling of the surname. Could this be Henry Rhodes’ brother-in-law, Thomas Brown, one-time landscape gardener for Queen Victoria? He came to Honolulu on the same ship as Henry in 1846, became the owner of a stately prefabricated English home, carried across two oceans, and a thousand-acre estate on Kauai, but in 1856 was more prosaically employed in the Bureau of Conveyances.

Fornander’s pencilled “G. Kenway,” at the end of an “Ode on the Marriage of Kamehameha IV,” in the June issue, indicates George Seymour Kenway as the poet. This close personal friend of the young king was another of the editor’s English associates—a retail merchant, owner of a schooner, and appointed to the Circuit Court bench in Hilo in May of 1864, just at the time when Fornander, too, received his first judgeship.

Unfortunately, the “literary” type of contribution is the most amateurish and least interesting of any in the various issues of the magazine. This is true not only of several additional poems with no

clues to authorship, but also of several prose attempts by Fornander himself of a vaguely philosophical turn, full of ponderous metaphor and archaic turns of phrase.

A more pragmatic writer was "W.," who in the February issue presents "Island Steam Navigation and Island Ports," the need for improved harbors and landing places on all of the islands, and useable roads in connection with them. Fornander identifies him as "Webster," no doubt young William Webster, a Scotsman who had come to Hawaii in 1849 or 1850. He was a well qualified and successful civil engineer and surveyor, agent for crown lands and later secretary to Kamehameha IV, and in the days of the *Monthly* already a member of the Legislature. Webster was known as one of the best and most sympathetic friends of the Hawaiians, and like Fornander spoke their language fluently. Much was hoped of him in contributions to the political life of the kingdom, but, unfortunately, he lived only a few months longer than the young king.

It was in popular science that the little magazine offered real stimulus to its readers, after an excellent start with "G.'s" article on "The Polynesian Race" in the January number. Fornander penciled in before the initial the letters W. L., which makes the authorship easy to guess. William Lowthian Green, still another of Fornander's English friends, had come to the islands in the early 1850's. Unlike Fornander, he achieved great success both in business and in government, at the same time remaining a trusted and sympathetic friend of the Hawaiian monarchy. At the time of the *Sandwich Islands' Monthly*, Green was already managing the British mercantile company he had gone to work for on his arrival in Honolulu; by 1859 when Henry Rhodes went to Victoria to represent it, he was managing partner, and the name had become Janion, Green and Company, predecessor of Theo. H. Davies, Ltd.

Green's great love was geology, which he studied and wrote of throughout his life. More than likely the unsigned "Geological Notices on the Sandwich Islands," which appear in the April, May and June issues, came from his pen—and disturbing they must have been to orthodox readers who followed their Bibles literally. They were based on La Place's nebular hypothesis, which although sixty years old at the time was still no doubt new and shocking to many, and on Humboldt's more recent writings on calculating the age of plant and animal remains found in sedimentary deposits. They go on to discuss at some length J. D. Dana's views on the origin and geological development of the Sandwich Islands, and then to summarize his observations first on the polyps and coral formations and

finally on the geological history and location of Oahu's various lava and tufa craters.

When one studies their inter-relationships, one wonders—could some grouping of these British friends of Fornander, perhaps with the addition of Godfrey Rhodes who also had a fluent pen, have been the unidentified backers of his magazine?

Only one contributor is allowed his full name—Dominic Frick, "L. L. D., Member of the Imperial Academical Society of Sciences, and of the Geographical Society of Paris."²² Frick was a conchologist, chemist, and geographer, who had fought under Napoleon, been exiled during the Restoration, and returned to favor under the Republic of 1848. He had come, with his wife and eight children, to join the French consulate in 1851. Frick had met Alexander Liholiho in Paris the year before his arrival in the Sandwich Islands, and all of his sympathies were with the Hawaiian government in its constant difficulties with the contentious French consul, Louis Perrin. So it was not long until the latter managed to have him ousted, and even the costs of repatriation denied him. It was not until 1859, after the death of his wife, that the unfortunate Frick was able to leave Honolulu for California, where, during his few remaining years of life, his witty and facile pen was busily at work editing and writing for the French language press.

Meanwhile, the learned and eccentric Dr. Frick worked as a "practicing chemist" and added to his large collection of land shells. In the May *Monthly*, under the pedestrian title of "Notes on Terrestrial Conchology," he writes in graceful, informal, non-scientific language of his collecting experiences in the islands, the new species he discovered, how and where the shells are to be found, and the danger of their annihilation by wild cattle. It is a delightful and all too short article—a real stimulus for readers to go and do likewise.

Fornander himself found the natural history and ethnology of the islands of absorbing interest—later he would receive a medal from the Royal Swedish Academy for some of his own collecting. His introduction to the excitements of science came early, for he grew up on Öland, "fair land of summer, island of wind and sun," a narrow, windswept island off the southeast coast of Sweden, a treasure trove for botanists, ornithologists, geologists, archaeologists, and antiquarians. More formal guidance probably came from his cousin, the Rev. Abraham Ahlqvist, Kalmar Gymnasium's first natural history teacher, who in Fornander's schooldays scandalized the school authorities by proposing to take his students out of the

classroom and artificial herbarium, on field trips into the real out-of-doors.

Fornander tried again and again to interest his fellow Honoluluans in the wealth of material of scientific interest around them, in studying, preserving and exhibiting it. In the March "Chit Chat" he writes of the need for a Public Library and a Museum of Antiquities, perhaps in conjunction with one another. In "A Museum for Honolulu,"²³ (unsigned, but probably by Fornander), he develops the theme further, suggesting that the Legislature finance a collection and library illustrating the natural history of the islands—the zoology of its ocean and seashore, its insects, geology, ethnology and antiquities, even a meteorological register of weather, tides, earthquakes and eruptions. Almost twenty years later his dream achieved a limited reality, in Aliiolani Hale's government museum and library, but its life was short and feeble, and its books and collections soon absorbed by other institutions.

Ecology was not a term one encountered in Fornander's day, but his understanding of the science and its implications was very clear indeed. He had long advocated the planting of trees—along the streets, in private gardens and orchards, on the bare plains, and on the slopes and mountains—not only for comfort and beauty, but because of the relationship between the lack of trees, and moisture and the productivity of the soil. An unsigned article in the February *Monthly*, "The Influence of Cattle on the Climate of Waimea and Kawaihae, Hawaii," discusses the changes there both in rainfall, and in the frequency and violence of hurricanes, which the author attributes to the destruction by wild cattle of the original heavy stands of trees. The changes in climate occurring both there and in Honolulu he calls "a cabinet specimen, as it were, of the mutual action and reaction on each other, of earth, sea, man, animals and plants"—as modern a definition of ecology as one could ask.

The major theme that recurs again and again is Fornander's concern for the present status and future condition of the Hawaiian people. His plea for respect for the native culture, and for social development based upon integrating the ways of western civilization into it, rather than by destroying one to make way for the other, takes many forms. His views on the subject were diffused throughout by a strong sense of history—like Emerson, he felt that "no people without a past at its back can ever go forward."

Fornander felt that it was their lack of historical perspective, rather than any corrupt or selfish motives, that caused the missionaries to make their original errors. In developing this theme in the

two-part "Civilisation, a Fact," in the February and March issues, he defines civilization in Guizot's terms, as consisting on the one hand of society's political and social development, and on the other of man's internal and moral advancement. Tracing the Polynesian race from its beginnings in the "Islands of Malasia" to the framing of the second Hawaiian Constitution, he claims, that by the time it came into contact with Europeans for the first time in the eighteenth century, the race had descended from whatever degree of civilization had existed at its starting point to a state of terrible despotism and superstitious terror. To this was added the destructive social and religious effects that resulted from the arrival and death of Captain Cook. Fornander was convinced that social and moral development were quite possible without what he called "Christianisation," and in proof outlines Kamehameha I's tremendous accomplishment in providing in one short generation a central power which ended royal anarchy, and brought "peace in the land, security to life, a reward to industry and toleration of opinion, all this before Christianity had entered the islands."

Then came the breaking of the tabus in 1819, followed by the arrival of the missionaries. Through "great ignorance and gross misconceptions of the country, the people, their former intellectual and social habits, and the civilising causes already scattered over the land and actually at work," they made their first error. Fornander felt that, by ignoring the fact that Christianity did not spring from and was not compatible with the stage of social development then existing among the Hawaiians, they pushed too fast. They tried to introduce the new religion and its alien morality "by force of royal proclamations, imposing fines and penalties on heathen practices," until a nominal Christianity had been enforced. The next step was political reform. Eventually, the gradual decay of the powers of the chiefs, the voluntary resignation by the king of many of his ancient prerogatives, and the advancements in the social condition of the people, made a new Constitution necessary. It was then that the civilizers committed a second grave error—an error for which the missionaries were largely responsible, because of the great political influence they exercised during most of Kamehameha III's minority and reign:

... (the) civilisers went to work with the Constitutions of the most civilised countries before them, instead of consulting the past and present of this. . . . They never asked themselves if the Hawaiians were thus capable of self-government. . . . They indulged in political abstractions that had no archetypes in the past, no

bearing upon the present of the people. They made garments of snow for the burning south and have been obliged to patch them ever since.²⁴

Fornander in these two articles gives the missionaries great credit for their true accomplishments, in security, emancipation, education. But he pleads that:

. . . those who lead and are looked up to as the representatives of civilisation, will divest themselves of their own local prejudices and consider that the spirit of civilisation is cosmopolitan, but its form sectional, depending more or less on the extent of country, variations of climate, density of population, characteristics of race, associations of the past and other social incidents which to ignore is culpable in a statesman, which to co-erce in uncongenial channels is folly or fanaticism.²⁵

Hopkins in his *Polynesian* review of the March issue complimented Fornander on his efforts to be fair, and on his courage in stating his conclusions, but predicted they would not be happily received. "Many people will entirely disagree with them, for he touches some tender nerves in laying his subject open, but even they will hardly fail to admire the elegance of his language and the justness of those remarks which do not immediately affect themselves."²⁶

Fornander is even more pointed in his remarks on civiliziers in the June issue, in his introduction to a speech by Prince Lot Kamehameha to the Hawaiian Agricultural Society delivered on May nineteenth, 1856. This was a group formed with the hope that it would do for the native Hawaiian farmers what the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society was doing for the largely foreign planters. Once again he asks for more understanding from those introducing civilization to Hawaii, by whom he means *all* westerners, and not missionaries alone:

In their pride of place, too many too often forget the meanness of their own origin, that the most civilised people of today is but the slow and painful development of the most barbarous, that this development has required a period of nineteen hundred years, and that, after all its past struggle and present boasting, its luminous disk contains many black spots which neither time nor any future lustre can efface.

There are men also of the present day who do not scruple to assume that the only destiny of a barbarous people is to occupy the land, until a more enlightened race, shall stand ready to ease them of it; with whom extinction is mercy, and a Christian "ticket of leave" the highest stretch of philanthropy. . . . They look with eager and self-satisfied attention over the statistical accounts of the nation's decrease; they calculate to the month the time when not a Hawaiian shall remain

to reflect back the warm tint of his native sun, and they cannot understand the necessity of studying the predilections, prejudices, characteristics and capabilities of those whom a few years will see beneath the sod. They have not studied civilisation in their own lands, and have no conception of its workings here. . . .²⁷

One of Fornander's most deeply held beliefs was that "the foundation of every Nation's independence, greatness and prosperity, lies in the intellectual culture of its people."²⁸ He gave the missionaries credit for their accomplishments in educating the Hawaiians, but felt that one of their more serious mistakes lay in the decision, made decades earlier, to conduct schools in the Hawaiian language. Because of their efforts to bring masses of students as quickly as possible to a low level of literacy, the quality of education suffered. The people were thirty years behind where they might have been in their efforts to adapt and compete in an English-speaking and English-reading world. From the most unlikely starting places he ends up with earnest appeals to the Legislature, for funds to increase the number of English-language schools for natives, to hire better teachers. He suggests other means to more quickly and adequately prepare the Hawaiians to administer their own government and compete with the ever-increasing number of foreigners or Hawaii-born whites into whose hands business, land, and power flowed at an ever increasing rate.

Fornander uses a review of the Board of Education's annual report to introduce a recommendation that "a certain number of poor scholars of the native race" be given free government grants to attend the newly established Oahu College.²⁹

When a dredging machine is completed and launched, he uses it as the opportunity for another suggestion:

Our attention is next directed to the construction of a steamtug to cooperate with the Dredging Machine and to tow vessels in and out of the harbor. And when a Steam boat is added for inter-island-communication, we hope that ignorance and indolence will have looked their last on Hawaii. . . . But now that the institutions actually are here, how does the Government intend to provide for their perpetuation and expansion? . . . Until the Government adopts some means to educate, from amongst our own people, a respectable corps of engineers, we shall always be dependant on the skill and honesty of the stranger. . . . Hitherto the height and ambition of a Hawaiian education, seems to have been to qualify the student for quoting the Bible *a tort et a travers*, for making prayers by the yard, for entering "holy orders" or unholy law, but a practical education to improve and develop the country has hitherto been a blank. We propose then that the Government appropriate certain yearly stipendiums to enable the most promising of young students to travel and study in foreign lands, and thus prepare themselves to

support and propagate, through indigenous materials that civilisation and those arts for which we are beholden to the cupidity or philanthropy of the stranger.³⁰

A decade later Fornander would find himself in the position of Inspector-General of the nation's schools, faced with the awkward problem of putting into effect the ideas he had expressed so emphatically over so long a time—probably the stormiest years of all he spent in the Sandwich Islands!

His critics applied many epithets to Fornander, particularly in relation to his supposed religious views, covering the spectrum from "atheist" to "Roman Catholic." Actually, he was a deist, whose reverence for a Supreme Being, hope of immortality, belief in the perfectability of human nature, and altruism towards his fellow men, are best summed up in the principles of Free Masonry and the Order of Odd Fellows. He had joined both in 1853, and was a true and earnest believer in their tenets all of his life. He also believed firmly in religious tolerance—any quarrel with the "missionary" group was not with their religious faith, but with their attitudes and temporal activities. He was a good friend of Chaplain Damon, respected Bishop Maigret, attended Episcopalian services when they were available, and felt at home in the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Perhaps their symbolism and services reminded him of his father's beautiful little church on Öland, in use since the early Middle Ages, or of the impressive seventeenth century Kalmar Cathedral that he attended as a schoolboy. But he apparently joined no congregation, and never severed his ties with the Lutheran State Church of Sweden, except by his naturalization as a Hawaiian citizen.

Actually, Fornander had a deep respect for the clergy, but purely in its spiritual role. He does devote some "Chit Chat" in the February issue to advocating that parents spend Sunday outdoors with their children, instead of "turning it into a pack-bullock for your weekly sins." However, if one must go to church, bear with the preacher, remembering that after all, he is human. "If he expounds to you the word of God in a spirit of love, without introducing his own conceits or bowing to the moral sinuosities of a majority of you, do not mar his usefulness by carpings and criticism, but be to him true spiritual children, avoiding that sin of the fallen angels—intellectual pride."³¹

He sympathizes with the pastor who is dependent on the whims of his congregation, who must preach for popularity, or starve. How much better those preachers who are free to become spiritual guides and expounders of the most solemn problems of life:

. . . who refuse to deal in the small wares of contested dogmas or misunderstood morality, or adorn their sermons with the religious claptrap of any majority. They pray for the sinner, but they do not scourge him through the world to please the sickly taste of their audiences. They do not assume to be religious Titans and "take the kingdom of heaven by storm." They know that no human being is so thoroughly fallen, but that some one string in his heart will vibrate to the touch of the Eternal's love, and, if supported and nourished instead of crushed and torn, will set other strings in motion, until the whole heart shall sound, an Aeolian harp to the glory of God, in notes subdued and lovely and rather to be felt than heard.³²

Unfortunately, his last verbal encounter with the clergy did not end on this poetic note. It had long been the privilege of the Sandwich Islands Mission to pay only half-price for their copies of the *Polynesian*, until Hopkins suddenly withdrew it. With unusual acidity, which one cannot blame the Mission members for resenting, Fornander comments:

They could stand much; they could bear to have their measures condemned, their opinions ridiculed, their candor called in question, but could not stand this. Political influence and personal consistency may be sacrificed in these hard and degenerate times, but the dollar—never. . . . And forthwith some forty of their number shook the dust off their feet and withdrew their subscriptions from the *Polynesian*.³³

Perhaps the sharpness of Fornander's reaction was the result of some bitterness over the reception of his magazine. The quarrel between the Mission and the *Polynesian* certainly does appear to be the immediate reason for the founding of a new paper, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, at this particular time. For, almost immediately after this episode, Henry C. Whitney, son of a pioneer missionary and one of the *Monthly's* only two advertisers, resigned his position as business manager of the *Polynesian* to start the new project. A few years later, when Fornander in his turn took over the editorship of the latter, the *Advertiser* would prove a most formidable competitor.

Journalistic birth and death followed close upon each other. The *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine* had begun so well that after the March issue appeared Hopkins wrote:

Nothing could better illustrate the facility with which a craving for intellectual food can be provoked, than the eagerness that has already three times been exhibited to see the *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine* on its several appearances. People who apparently cared but little for magazines, and not much more for the Sandwich Islands, take an interest in the work. . . .³⁴

But, as the months went by, Fornander encountered more and more difficulty in persuading people to write for him; for example, almost two-thirds of the May issue appears to be from his pen. Now, after six short months, the time had come when he could continue no longer. With a few exceptions, his own writing had been the most stimulating and readable of any, with considerably more humor than this account reveals. But the intensity of his feelings was apparently too offensively clear, his pen too sharp, his tongue too caustic. He alienated too great a proportion of the small group of Honoluluans, well enough educated and of sufficiently intellectual turn of mind, to be interested in a magazine of the kind he had intended. With a greater variety of contributors the effect might have been diluted to a suitable blandness, or if their talent had been of high enough general calibre the level of excellence might have offset the sharpness. As it was, the flavor apparently became too acid for the taste of many. With the June issue the magazine closed its first volume, and the enterprise with it. Wrote the editor in his last "Monthly Chit Chat":

The proprietors and conductor never disguised to themselves the obstacles they might encounter in publishing a Magazine like this. They were willing to sacrifice their time and their money to ascertain, by a mental test, what progress toward consolidation of opinions and habits had been effected in this community; how far national and religious oddities and 'isms had been softened and modified by the friction of physical, social and political changes; how far the literary taste of the community was ripe to support a Magazine, or rather the germ of a Magazine, a homesprung plant, until it should be able to repay the support by the lustre it conferred.

It was a bright idea, a kind idea, was the Magazine. The contributed articles were passable, but the editor's *Chit chat* was unbearable. It set aside the sage advice of Pope:

"Laugh at your friends, and if your friends are sore,
So much the better, you may laugh the more.
To vice and folly to confine the just,
Sets half the world, God knows, against the rest."

. . . the arm and object of the Magazine was not to fan the flame, the bitterness of creeds, the rancour of deferred hopes; but to compose the strife, to reform the hopelessly separated atoms and, if possible, furnish a mental pabulum, around which "all good men and true" could join. . . .³⁵

His last entry is the reaction of a Swede abroad, the rueful, half-bitter, half-amused recognition that his country's proud history and ancient culture could be so little known, and so little regarded. He quotes from a Hawaiian language newspaper, *Hae Hawaii*, edited by

one J. Fuller and the official voice of the Department of Education: "The American Bible Society intends to print the Gospel of John and the Acts in the Spanish language, for the schools on St. Domingo. And reprint the New Testament in the Chinese language, and the whole Bible in the Swedish language." Fornander comments:

Poor Sweden! A country that gave Linnaius to science, Tegner to poetry, Geir to history, Oxenstiern to politics, and Fredrika Bremer to romance; a country, whose universities are second to none; a country, where a Man's oath is not taken in a court of law unless he has been confirmed by a clergyman, and where he is not confirmed, until he knows Luther's greater Catechism by heart, and can give proper answers and explanations thereto. A country where Christianity was established A.D. 980, where the Bible was translated and printed in the vernacular about 1530. . . .

"How the mighty have fallen!" This country, once so glorious for the valour, the learning, the piety and probity of its people, is now by a Hawaiian editor placed on a par with St. Domingo and China.³⁶

In 1856, Abraham Fornander had been a naturalized citizen of the Hawaiian Kingdom for almost ten years. He had not seen the country of his birth for a quarter of a century, and though he would live for more than thirty years longer he would never see it again. But to the end he never lost pride in the land of his origin. In spite of his accomplishments and participation in the life of his second country—perhaps because of the very fact of his cosmopolitanism—he seems always a little more European than most other adopted citizens, always in one way or another a minority.

The Hawaiians, also, were even then a minority in influence, wealth and power in their own kingdom. Even then their rulers were at the beginning of a last, hopeless struggle to regain their prerogatives, a struggle that would go on long after Kamehameha IV's untimely death. Abraham Fornander, too, knew the bitter taste to a proud man of condescension and disregard. Perhaps from these sources came his deep sympathy for the people of his adopted country, and his unceasing efforts throughout his long writing career to help their culture and history achieve the recognition and respect he felt they deserved.³⁷

NOTES

¹ *New Era and Argus* (hereafter referred to as NEA), Feb. 8, 1855, unpagged.

² *Honolulu Times* (hereafter referred to as HT), Dec. 13, 1849, unpagged.

- ³ P, Feb. 21, 1852, p. 162.
- ⁴ *Weekly Argus* (hereafter referred to as WA), Jan. 28, 1852, unpagged.
- ⁵ WA, Feb. 25, 1852, unpagged.
- ⁶ NEA, Oct. 22, 1853, unpagged.
- ⁷ NEA, June 21, 1855, unpagged.
- ⁸ P, Feb. 28, 1852, p. 166.
- ⁹ "Prefatory," *Sandwich Islands' Monthly Magazine* (hereafter referred to as SIMM) Jan. 1856, pp. 1-4.
- ¹⁰ WA, Dec. 29, 1853, unpagged.
- ¹¹ R. S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, 1778-1854* (Honolulu, 1957), p. 307.
- ¹² SIMM, Jan. 1856, p. 3.
- ¹³ NEA, Nov. 30, 1854, unpagged.
- ¹⁴ A. Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race, Its Origin and Migrations*, I (London, 1878), III (London, 1885).
- ¹⁵ SIMM, Jan. 1856, pp. 20-22.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, May 1856, p. 155.
- ¹⁷ P, Feb. 2, 1856, p. 156.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 19, 1856, p. 199.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, April 26, 1856, p. 202.
- ²⁰ Fornander's personal copies are preserved in a bound volume in HHS.
- ²¹ SIMM, June 1856, pp. 169-72.
- ²² *Ibid.*, May 1856, p. 137.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, May 1856, pp. 140-42.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, March 1856, p. 82.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁶ P, March 29, 1856, p. 186.
- ²⁷ SIMM, June 1856, p. 176.
- ²⁸ NEA, Feb. 8, 1855, unpagged.
- ²⁹ SIMM, April 1856, p. 119.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, May 1856, p. 157.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, Feb. 1856, p. 58.
- ³² *Ibid.*, March 1856, p. 90.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, May 1856, p. 158.
- ³⁴ P, March 29, 1856, p. 186.
- ³⁵ SIMM, June 1856, p. 185.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, June 1856, p. 188.
- ³⁷ Sources used for Fornander's background and life consist of many books, letters, genealogies, and other Swedish, American, and Hawaiian documents collected by the author for use in preparation of Fornander biography still in progress.