

gard to my ability to fill the position of book-keeper and manager of the plantation store. I did not feel capable of undertaking it. I also stated that I had only a theoretical knowledge of book-keeping; and not having had occasion so far to bring it into practice, I could not tell how much I then knew. I further said that, personally, I would prefer to be out in the ministry next term, as I was just far enough advanced in the native language to be enabled to travel alone, and another term of six months would make me more fluent in using it. I desired, however, at least to try, and do what those in authority thought best for me. Soon afterwards, when President J. F. Smith and Brother Davis had returned to Laie, I received a letter from the president of the mission calling me to Laie, and at the general conference I was regularly appointed bookkeeper and manager of the store. I found the store in a rather disordered condition and had quite a task to get the goods arranged in something like "departments." I also found, as I feared, that my theoretical knowledge of bookkeeping was not sufficient to save me from considerable trouble in understanding some of the more complicated transactions; but by the blessing of the Lord, coupled with perseverance, I was enabled to overcome all obstacles and fill the post to the satisfaction of all here. Although I would have preferred again to have gone out and labor in the ministry, I have been continued in the same position until now; this being my fourth term of six months each.

Soon after I took charge of the store I made the remark to some of the brethren that I had sold a certain amount of goods that eve. One of them remarked: "That is nothing to your credit, as it only increases the indebtedness of the natives. The less you can sell them the better." I have, however, been enabled to make a decided change in that regard during the past two years, and now nine-tenths of the natives working for us are out of debt, and at the end of each month, when I settle with them, they receive orders on the store for the balances due to them. When the manner of our doing business, the number of employees (from 80 to 100), and the impunity with which most of the Hawaiians disregard their obligations are taken into consideration, it will be seen that it was no easy task. Our employees get from 50c. to 75c. a day. They only work in fine weather, and then only five days in the week. We pay them 50c. or \$1 a week cash. They are, however, allowed to draw or purchase from the store, on account, what they need during the month. I incurred the displeasure of some of the natives at first by checking them from obtaining more than was their due, and for striving to get them to leave some of their wages to pay off their old indebtedness; but by praising those who came out of debt, and showing the others how much better their condition would be if they were free from that bondage, I have changed their idea in that regard,

and they now have a wholesome dread of going in debt. If they do not have a balance coming to them at the end of the month, they will say, "Ua makehewa ka hana, ke puka ole," meaning, it is useless to work unless they come out of debt. We have this month 89 employees, and have issued to them 79 orders for amounts due to them when their accounts were balanced. The total value of the orders issued this month was \$375.85.

During my first year in the store the cash receipts and profits were more than doubled, although we sold goods at more reasonable prices. Our inventory of stock was only about \$800; yet by purchasing saleable goods, and having quick returns, the profits that year amounted to nearly \$1700. This year it will not be much less, notwithstanding there has not been so much work. But we have had others to come and trade with us who used formerly to go elsewhere to the stores kept by Chinamen, who are the principal storekeepers outside of Honolulu; and even there they do a large share of the business. We had one Chinaman keeping a store here at Laie, but he had to sell out by auction and has gone back to China. I occasionally have a thirty-two-mile ride to Honolulu to purchase goods for the store, and instead of refusing to sell the natives what they need, we now keep the store well supplied. Every time I go into Honolulu I have many special orders from the natives for articles we do not regularly keep in stock. The natives now seem to appreciate my efforts, and feel proud to be out of debt. Many of them have not been in this position since, years ago, they came here to live; and when I mention to them my probable return, they tell me that they will not consent to it, and that "I must remain here until they are all gathered to Utah." I feel, therefore, that the Lord has blessed me in my labors; and although I may not have benefited the natives much in a spiritual capacity, I feel that I have improved them temporally, and bettered the financial condition of the mission as well.

Although remaining here at the plantation, we have ministerial duties. As you are perhaps aware, from articles sent to the News, I am president of one half of the Island of Hawaii, also counsellor to the president of this the headquarters of the mission, branch clerk, chairman of programme committee in the Hui Opio Y. M. & Y. L. M. I. A., and teacher of a theological class in the Sabbath school; but what gives me more pleasure than all else is my preceptor class, which I formed some months ago. I have now twelve young Hawaiians in this class. They call themselves the "Ka Papa class or Tuorum Unukumamaluco of Elihu," and we meet at 6:30 p. m. on Mondays. I allow each speaker fifteen minutes, but so well do they post themselves on their subjects that most of them can scarcely tell all that they have to say in that time. The progress they have made in speaking, and the knowledge they have obtained of the doctrines

of the Gospel, have been very gratifying to me, to themselves, and the older members of our community, and to our President, and the natives "mahalo nui nae" (thank or praise greatly) me for my labors among their young men.

As the mill was not running last term I was enabled to make a short visit to my conference on Hawaii, and while there I visited that great phenomenon of nature—the volcano. I felt well repaid for my journey. You have, of course, read attempted descriptions of the volcano; I will not, therefore, weary you with a similar impossible effort. This term I shall not be enabled to visit my conference, but will have to rely on the three native missionaries who have been called to labor there. When they return I shall have to straighten out their accounts and prepare the reports. We have now, through a lack of missionaries from Utah, to leave the burden of traveling and proselytizing with the native Elders, who are, as a rule, very successful in making converts on the island of Hawaii. Last term there were nearly 200 baptisms, and only recently a native Elder made over 30 baptisms in one week in only one district of Honolulu. He has had many other converts there during this term. We find that the native missionaries, with very few exceptions, are liable to err on points of doctrine, and in their ambition to make converts they are sometimes not particular whom they baptize. They often overstep their instructions and authority. They seem to make converts more by persuasion and by getting the best of their opponents in argument than by convincing the sinner of the error of his ways and teaching him the true plan of salvation, so that he might through his faith and true repentance come into the fold of Christ. The consequence is, that while the baptisms each term are many (last term there were 372), there is no perceptible increase in the Church membership. The seed sown in shallow soil does not long endure. Quite a number, however, who joined the Church when President Geo. Q. Cannon first came here are still alive and faithful members of the Church today. The race seems to have greatly degenerated since then, both physically and morally, and it is seemingly only a matter of a few years before the Hawaiians will cease to exist as a nation. Their death-rate is large and their increase very small.

I shall, if the present intention be carried out, get a release to return home at our April Conference, and will take the first steamer sailing from here after that, in all probability arriving in Salt Lake on the 24th of April. Brother J. F. Gates and family, Brother F. Beasley and family, and Brother M. Noall and family are expecting to be released at the same time. Quite a number of natives contemplate emigrating to Utah when we return there.

E. B.

LAIE, Oahu, Hawaiian Islands,
Feb. 23, 1889.