

DIANE BARNET

Honolulu 1870

IN 1870 PATRICK O'LEARY sailed from Sydney, Australia to San Francisco with his wife, Lizzie, and three-year-old daughter Mary, whom Patrick referred to as "Baby." They traveled steerage class on the *Adelia Carlton*, a bark that carried coal as well as 65 passengers. A highlight of the four-month voyage was stopping at Honolulu, where they went ashore on March 14, 1870.

Patrick O'Leary was a schoolteacher. He kept a journal during the voyage and his impressions of Honolulu are vividly recorded here. O'Leary's father had emigrated from Ireland to Australia and Patrick himself had taught school in the mining town of Inglewood, north of Melbourne in the state of Victoria. But a run-in with school authorities on the subject of Irish independence led to his decision to leave for America at the age of 29.

Three weeks after visiting Honolulu, the O'Leary family landed in San Francisco, where they faced hard times until Patrick found work teaching. He later became a journalist and founded a newspaper, *The Journal of Commerce*, which was in publication for more than 30 years. Patrick and Lizzie had several more children, who were born in San Francisco, and their descendants still live in California.

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HONOLULU 1870

Saturday, March 12, 1870

I got up very early to see Mauna Loa. Most of it was hidden in mist but it still looked sufficiently majestic, a perfect monarch of mountains. It has nearly occupied the whole eastern horizon, being at least sixty miles in length. It seems to rise, a majestic blue peak, nearly perpendicularly from the sea and its massive shoulders run out in every direction scores of miles like Atlas as described by Virgil. About 8:30 P.M. it cleared sufficiently to show us the gigantic form of the mighty mountain and we could see patches of snow resting on its summit. Mauna Loa's distance from us is twenty miles.

Sunday, March 13, 1870

Another island with a high peak towards the east is visible this morning; we have come pretty near it. I see a little boat close to the shore. The country on view is treeless and barren. It reminds me of the bare hills and plains of Victoria, Australia. I was wrong as to the name of the above island; it was merely the continuation of Maui. About 11:00 A.M. we saw Oahu on the right bow, another high, mountainous island. As we drew near we saw that the coast was a succession of high, rocky mountains about 3,000 feet high with clouds resting on their summits. There was a heavy fall of rain after dinner.

Much of the island is formed by masses of volcanic rocks, denuded of vegetation. Two of them, one called Diamond Head, the head of the long bay on which is situated Honolulu, are craters of extinct volcanoes, resembling nothing so much as vast, hollow decayed teeth or trees that have been cut off near the rocks and had hollows formed in them by the decay of the wood. I saw to the extreme right of the island several detached rocks and, on a distant part of the island, three peaks rising to the clouds, apparently as sharp as needles.

Proceeding along, we could see several native villages along the shore, some of them embowered in cocoa-nut groves. In one of them we saw a church. Next came in view a forest of masts and, shortly after, the town itself at the foot of mountains whose summits are hidden in the clouds. An immense rack of white wool clouds seems to rest eternally on them. The town from the ship looked like an immense, tree-

embowered village. Looking through a good opera-glass we could see the time in the clock of the church tower. It was 4:15 P.M. We dropped anchor at half-past four about two miles outside of the coral reef which forms the harbor. Harbor there really is none, but about half a mile from the beach runs a reef of coral on which the waves are always breaking.

There is one opening in this with six fathoms' depth at low tide and inside a ship is perfectly safe from the greatest waves of the Pacific. Immediately on the ship anchoring we were surrounded by a number of boats with native crew. These natives resemble the New Zealanders but are not so athletic. They, however, in this respect bear a favorable comparison with Europeans. Their complexion is olive, their hair black and curly, beard rather scanty, features somewhat resembling those of white people (that is to say, the grownup men, for the children bear a decided resemblance to Chinese children in all save the oblique eye.)

The police came on board. I forgot to say that before we approached Diamond Head we saw a flagstaff for signaling ships on the above head. The charge for going ashore in the pilot boat was one dollar, in the other boats a half-dollar, and comparatively few of the cabin passengers availed themselves of the privilege at that time. I went through a number of old papers, including *Bennet's Own*, which were eagerly devoured by an attentive circle of readers. It was a small, single sheet and a curious compound of liberality and bigotry. In one paper I saw a leader deprecating the action of a Protestant minister writing to the captain of an Austrian man-of-war then in the bay, remonstrating with him on his having the ship's band march before the sailors and marines to mass playing sacred music, on the grounds that it was an act of Sabbath desecration. In another it extracts the remarks of some bigoted Protestant traveler on the ceremonies of Holy Week in Chile.

There are two political parties here, one calling themselves Liberals. The other party advocates the use of Coolie labor. A fortnight before we came here there was an election in which two Liberals and two "illiberals", as I suppose I must say, were elected. Two of the members were natives and two Europeans (Yankees). The Yankees seem for the most part to be at the head of all the departments of government. The island is under the protection of England and the United

States and the flag is a compound of both. The press is represented by four European and two native journals. The former are the *Commercial Advertiser*, the *Friend*, the *Gazette* and *Bennet's Own*, with also a comic journal, the *Punchbowl*. A fellow passenger bought a copy of the *Alta California*, which did not give any encouraging news to the passengers as regards the prospect of labor in that state. It was, however, interesting to me as it gave items of home news.

We walked for a good while on the forecastle contemplating the beauty of the evening scene, the brilliant heavens, the moon walking in brightness, the mountainous island with its giant shadows cast far over the deep, the few lights at the foot of the hill which dimly shadowed forth the existence of the city, the placid sea shining as if formed of silver and the deep repose of the tropic night, unbroken save by the hoarse roar of the surf, which broke in a line of snowy whiteness over the bank of coral and which in the daytime is wholly inaudible, being drowned by the hustle and noise and active life of restless, busy man.

Monday, March 14, 1870

Very uncertain this morning as to whether I shall go on shore owing to the high rates charged and a dread of diminishing my little stock of money. But I have my two letters to post. (I was anxious that they should get there before me.) They would go by the steamer *Idaho* on Thursday, the steamer only taking from eight to ten days to San Francisco. The fare to go ashore being reduced to a quarter-dollar, I resolved to go. Having breakfasted on some apple tart we all got ready and started, together with Pat Larkin and Stephen Brannicks in a boat called the *Brandywine*. The natives here affect English, or rather, Yankee names in their boat nomenclature. The boat we were in belonged to a Kanaka who seemed to own a great number of others. Lizzie was rather frightened but Baby was in high glee. The previous evening she talked of nothing but the subject of "going ashore."

The morning was beautiful and we all enjoyed the row over. On coming near the reef, we saw a number of native women bathing and turning somersaults in the water and a number of men fishing from canoes. These latter are narrow and generally suited for the accommodation of only one person. To balance them they are furnished with an outrigger. This is composed of two curved poles fastened to

two straight transverse ones; one side of it rests on the canoe and the other on the water. The whole is propelled by a paddle which resembles an immense spoon, having the head flattened out.

After having passed the reef, we got into water so shallow that I could see the bottom easily and the town began to hove nearer. I forgot to say that this harbor faces north. On the left we saw a wooden building painted blue, which we were informed was the hospital for invalid seamen. There was another hospital at the other end of town. As we came near the wharves I counted fourteen foreign vessels, most of them large ones. Conspicuous among them were the *Idaho*, a beautiful steamer, and the Austrian man-of-war which was undergoing repairs and seemed sadly to want them. The sailors seemed to be slight, weak men. We landed at a very awkward place without steps or anything. I tendered half a crown and could get no change, they concluding that amount to be equivalent to half a dollar.

Looking around me in this new city I observed a few stores built of stone but everything else was wooden. On we walked rather aimlessly up the street at the foot of which we had landed. The street was filled with a motley throng of Yankees and Hawaiian men and women, the latter being very fat and big, all barefooted, with wide, loose dresses. Some of them were very stylish but all were barefooted save me. The shops were mostly kept by Europeans but a great number by Chinese and a few by Hawaiians. The lower part of the town is no way very different from that of a third-rate Australian town. The streets are unpaved but there are footpaths formed. The wholesale places are nearly all kept by whites but most of the retail by Chinese who are drapers, bakers, boarding house keepers, etc. The laborers are Kanaka. We walked up the street about a mile, seeing throngs, and across the street the funeral of one of the sailors of the man-of-war. We spoke to several natives, asked questions, but found no-one to understand us. I asked one woman if the king lived at a respectable looking house we came to; she answered something in Kanaka.

I suppose that she could not understand me. I then mentioned the king's name, Kamehameha, and pointed to the place, when she answered something in which I could distinguish the word "Emma." I afterwards found that the ex-queen lives there. The king's palace, a decent looking mansion, was pointed out to me by one of the boatmen on coming ashore but I did not get any nearer view of it. As we

got up out of the business part of the town we were much pleased at the comfort of the private dwellings. Every one of them was furnished with verandahs with Venetian blinds or screens to shut out the heat of the sun and draw a current of air and were surrounded with an abundance of shade trees, mostly fruit trees. The most frequent was the cocoa-nut tree, a tree with a slightly curving skin furnished with leafy, cone-like joints and a crown of large, wide-spreading leaves. The fruit grows in clusters at the base of the leaves.

Turning round the corner of a street we came upon two churches, outside the door of one of which we saw Mr. Watts. He said he thought it was a Catholic church, and on going in it proved to be so. It contained a lot of beautiful pictures and the words 'neath the stations of the cross were in the native tongue. Some hymn books, too, that I took up were also in that language. The floor was beautifully carpeted and the grand altar splendidly furnished. There were side altars dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. A Kanaka woman was going round the stations of the cross and several men were at the door. We said our prayers and then looked round a bit. The church was very large and extremely cool, had a vaulted roof and a wide door at the side besides that at the back.

There is a division between the white people and the natives. The church will hold about two thousand persons and I hear that it is crowded every Sunday. There does not appear to be many white Catholics or Irishmen in the place. We next visited the boys' school, where we saw about fifty children. Two of them were lads of seventeen or eighteen whom the teacher said were acquainted with Algebra, but I could not get much out of them because they knew but little English. At the other side of the church was the girls' school, which we did not visit.

We were going down the street searching for the bank when an Irishman standing at the door of a saddler's shop invited us in. His name was Kelly. He knew we were strangers and we passed half an hour very pleasantly conversing with him. He said he was five months over from San Francisco, that the owner of the shop was named Adderley, and that he had a sugar plantation and was mostly resident there. I read a number of the *Alta California* and two *Monitors* there and found some interesting news. From there I went to Bennet's to get the *New York Herald* and tendered him half a sovereign in payment,

but as he would only give me two and a quarter dollars for it I postponed purchasing the paper until by and by I went and changed my sovereign for American money at Bishop's Bank. I got \$4.75 for a sovereign.

I then went out to post my letters but was, as I think, near being done in by the clerk. He gave me the change but was putting the letters by till I made him stamp them and then when I demanded the letters again I found there was only 10-cent instead of 15-cent stamps on them. I then went to the French Consulate and found that 15 cents was the right stamp but I could by no means understand the proceedings of the clerk.

We had dinner at a Chinese restaurant, a first class one, everything excellently clean and a table to ourselves. We had mangoes and taro root by way of dessert. We paid 75 cents. Hearing that everyone should be on board by four o'clock, we started at once and got on board with some difficulty as it was rather rough and Lizzie was frightened and sticking to me by which means she could do no good for herself but only endanger both of us by preventing me making any effort. In the evening the police were climbing up every part of the ship looking for a man who had killed his wife and for whom a reward of fifty pounds was offered. They thought he might attempt to get away to 'Frisco.

