

RHODA E. A. HACKLER

“My Dear Friend”: Letters of Queen Victoria and Queen Emma

INTRODUCTION

FOR TWO DECADES, from 1862 to 1882, Queen Victoria and Queen Emma exchanged letters which were formal yet personal. This correspondence certainly did not change the course of history, but in it we sense Victoria, Queen-Empress and ruler of half the world (fig. 1), reaching out for human warmth and affection and receiving it from Emma, Queen and Dowager Queen of the minute Hawaiian Kingdom in the middle of the North Pacific (fig. 2).

The two queens were unlike in more than the size of their realms. Victoria, born in 1819, was almost a generation older than Emma, who was born in 1836. Victoria ascended to the British throne, in 1837, at the age of 18 and reigned until her death, in 1901; Emma became Queen of the Hawaiian Kingdom through her marriage to King Alexander Liholiho, in 1856, and relinquished that role on his death, in 1863. Victoria had nine children, the last one born in 1857, a year before Emma's one and only child, the Prince of Hawai'i. Victoria was 82 years of age when she died in 1901; Emma was 49 years old when she died in 1885.

Rhoda E. A. Hackler, historical researcher, is a frequent contributor to The Hawaiian Journal of History. She is currently working on a history of the R. W. Meyer Sugar Mill on Moloka'i.

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What can have drawn these two women together? Several biographers of Queen Victoria emphasize the fact that after the death of her beloved husband Albert, the Prince Consort, in December of 1861, the Queen showed a marked sympathy for others, especially those whose distress resembled her own.¹ The correspondence between the two queens began in September of 1862, with Queen Emma's announcement of the death of the Prince of Hawai'i, her son and Queen Victoria's godson. And the following year the British Queen learned of the death of the King of Hawai'i. Queen Emma's double tragedy, occurring so soon after Queen Victoria's own loss of her husband, seems to have touched the heart of the older woman.

As for Queen Emma's motives, all her life she expressed a special affection for England. Her grandfather was an Englishman, John Young, who came ashore in Hawai'i in 1790 and remained for the rest of his life in the service of Kamehameha I. However, she probably owed her regard for Britain more to her upbringing in the home of her English stepfather, Dr. Thomas C. B. Rooke, and her early schooling from an English governess, Mrs. Sarah Rhodes von Phister.²

Once their correspondence was established, by the exchange of letters in 1862 and 1863, it might have languished had Queen Emma not travelled to England in 1865. There she was not only received in audience by Queen Victoria but, on a separate occasion, accorded the rare honor of being invited to spend a night with the British royal family at Windsor Castle. For the next 20 years, until Queen Emma's death, the two Queens wrote each other from time to time, sharing news of family events, happy and tragic. They exchanged photographs and small gifts and inquired about each other's health and that of their families. The interchange seems to have been a comfort to both of the royal writers. It sheds a ray of light on Queen Victoria's concern for others and her need for friendship, personal understanding, and sympathy, while it also reveals Queen Emma's warm, responsive nature.

In addition to Queen Emma's personal connections with Great Britain, there is a long history of relations between Great Britain and the Kingdom of Hawai'i, dating back to the arrival of Captain

James Cook, R.N. and his exploring expedition, in 1778–1779, and the visits of Captain George Vancouver in 1792 through 1794. It was a Scot, however, Robert Crichton Wyllie who, serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Kingdom of Hawai‘i from 1845 until his death in 1865, guided Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma towards a close alliance with England.

EARLY LETTERS

The correspondence between the two Queens actually was initiated by Queen Emma’s husband, King Kamehameha IV of Hawai‘i, when, on June 28, 1858, he wrote Queen Victoria of England thanking her for her congratulations on the birth of the Prince of Hawai‘i and asking her to be Godmother to their infant son, who was to be named Albert Edward Kauikeaouli Leiopapa a Kamehameha.

In his letter to the British Queen, Kamehameha IV wrote:

. . . it is the warmest wish of my heart, that my son destined, in God’s good providence to succeed me, should be taught from his earliest years to hold Your Majesty’s name in especial regard, and that by bearing the name of one of Your Majesty’s illustrious family, by constantly looking to the quarter from which he derived it, he might be induced to imitate those private and public virtues, to which the whole world tries in vain to do honor.

It is with earnestness and diffidence united that I pray of Your Majesty another boon. If Your Majesty would condescend to be Sponsor by Proxy . . . to the future Ruler of this Country, it would be such an honor as would gladden the hearts of all this people and make those who gave him birth believe that a life commenced under such auspices must be actuated throughout by a high sense of self respect, and be conducive to the happiness of a people.³

The original of this letter does not appear among the papers in the British Royal Archives. Therefore, it is not certain that it was sent by Kamehameha IV in the above form, but the content was conveyed to Queen Victoria, for she agreed to be Godmother to

the young Prince of Hawai'i. The Queen gave to William W. F. Synge, the newly appointed British Commissioner and Consul General to Hawai'i, who was then leaving England for his new post in Honolulu, a present for the Prince, a lavishly decorated silver christening cup in the neorococo style then popular in London.

Synge arrived in Honolulu on August 22, 1862, to be greeted with the news that the Prince was gravely ill. The boy's christening could not be delayed, even though the Anglican Bishop who was supposed to perform the ceremony had not yet arrived from England. The day after Synge and his wife landed in Honolulu they participated in the baptismal service, she as proxy for the Queen of England and he for Queen Victoria's son, the Prince of Wales. Less than a week later, on August 27th, the young Prince died.⁴

In spite of their grief, just two weeks later both the King and Queen Emma drafted letters of appreciation to Queen Victoria. Kamehameha IV advised the Queen of his son's death, then thanked her for agreeing to be the Prince's Godmother and explained that Commissioner Synge had served as Godfather in place of the Prince of Wales. Kamehameha IV also expressed his appreciation for the baptismal gift and vowed: "We will cause it to be preserved as a perpetual memorial of Your Majesty's friendship towards us and our people."⁵ The christening cup is now displayed at Queen Emma's Summer Palace in Honolulu.

At the same time, Queen Emma wrote her first letter to Queen Victoria.

FIG. 1 (*left*). Queen Victoria, 1868, by W. D. Downey, Newcastle on Tyne, England. (Bishop Museum photo.)

FIG. 2 (*right*). Queen Emma, 1865, by John and Charles Watkins, London, England. (Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, England photo, by gracious permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.)



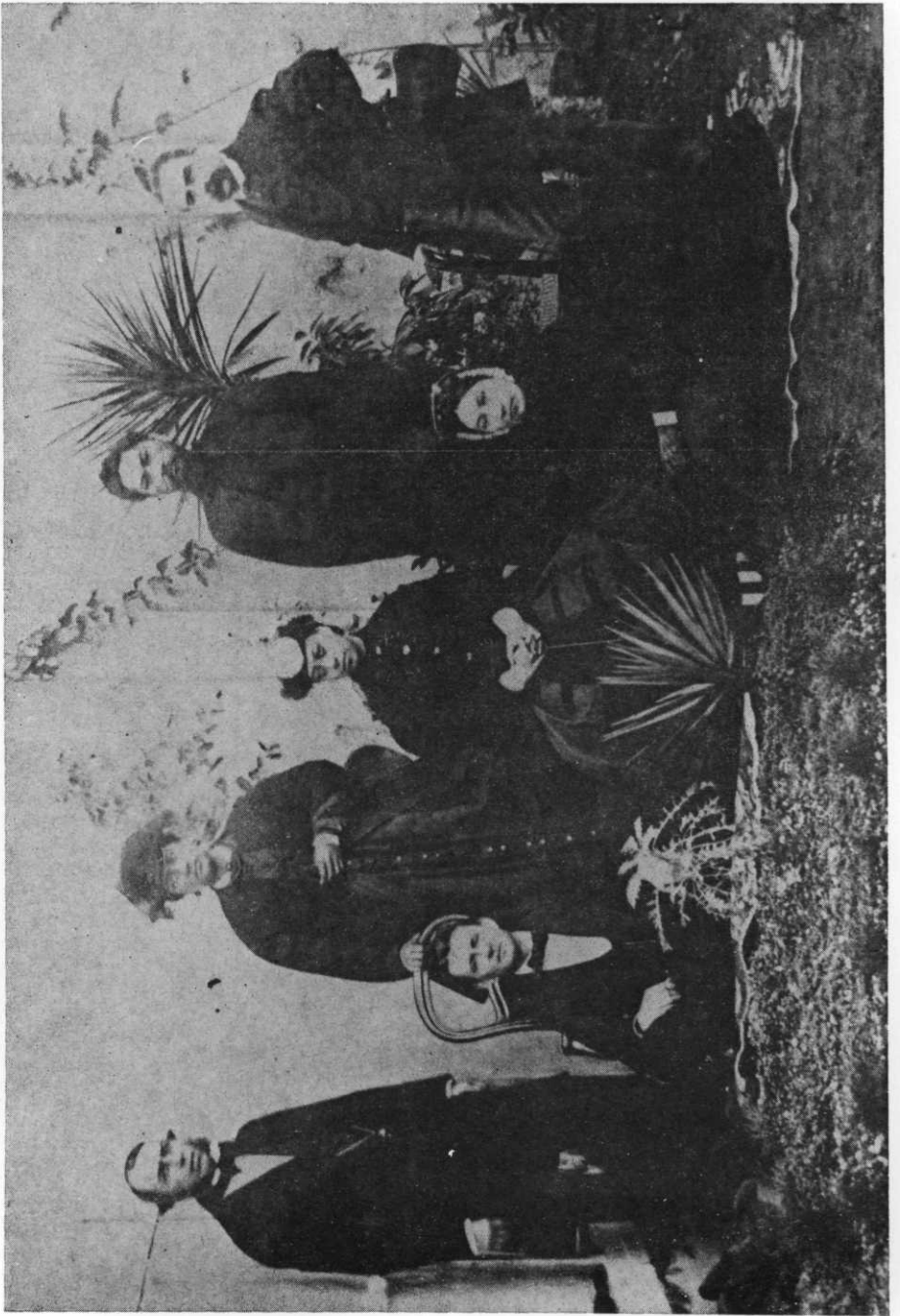
Queen Emma.



Victoria
1865

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W & D DOWNY



Palace of Honolulu
10th September 1862

Madam,

As a wife and fond mother, my heart overflows with gratitude to your Majesty, for the honour which you have been so graciously pleased to render to the King, my husband, and to our only son, in condescending to become his sponsor, at his baptism.

It was the cherished ambition of the King and myself, ever since the birth of our child, to obtain for him the enviable honour conferred on him by Your Majesty, and that he should bear the name of Albert.

But, alas! Your Majesty's spiritual relation to my beloved child has been of short duration, for it pleased Almighty God, in his inscrutable Providence, to call him away from this world, on the 17th August, only a few days after his baptism.

While our hearts are melted by this deep bereavement, his father and I find comfort in the thought that the departed has gone to Heaven, to mingle with the blessed; while as your Godson, and under a name dear to Your Majesty, his memory will ever be cherished by us and by our People.

The splendid gift which Your Majesty has been pleased to send in token of regard to the late Prince of Hawaii, will be preserved as a precious relic, to be venerated by the latest member of our Dynasty.

With that depth of feeling which is fully known to the heart of none but a mother, I pray Your Majesty to accept my thanks for Your Royal benevolence towards me and mine; and may God grant you his Grace, through life, and at the last a Crown of Immortal Glory.

Your Good & Grateful friend

Emma⁶

FIG. 3. Queen Emma and party in France: left to right standing, Italian Courier, High Chiefess Kiliwehi Hoapili, Reverend W. Hoapili, and Charles Gordon Hopkins; left to right seated, the Queen's Canadian manservant John Welsh, Queen Emma, and the Queen's Swiss maid Chevalier. (Bishop Museum photo.)

Queen Victoria replied on her personal notepaper. The paper had a three-quarter inch black border, and the envelope had a half inch border of black and was sealed with black sealing wax. The Queen was in deep mourning for years after the death of her husband in December of 1861.

Windsor Castle
February 14, 1863

Madam,

I thank you for your kind letter, and for the expressions of gratitude which it contains for my having accepted the Office of Godmother to the young Prince, your son.

As a Mother you will understand how fully I am able to appreciate the depth of your grief, at the sad loss which so soon succeeded to the Holy Ceremony.

As a wife I can sincerely hope that you may be spared the heavier blow which has plunged me into life long sorrow,—but which makes my heart tenderly alive to all the sorrows of others.

May that God, to whose promises we can alone look for consolation, soften the blow that has fallen upon you, and give you comfort in the knowledge of your beloved Child's present happiness and in the blessed prospect of an everlasting reunion with him hereafter.

I remain

Your Majesty's
sincere friend

Victoria R.⁷

It is the custom among heads of state to send to each other a formal announcement of the death of a ruler, but Queen Emma's letter to Queen Victoria, upon the death of Kamehameha IV, on November 30, 1863, was obviously not dictated solely by protocol. It was a dignified but no less agonized cry of pain at her bereavement, to which the British monarch replied in a warm and sympathetic personal vein.

Iolani Palace
February 14, 1864

Madam,

My heart is very, very heavy while I make known to Your Majesty that God has visited me with that great trouble which in your kind and consoling letter you said you hoped I might be spared. On the 30th. November my Husband, of whose danger I had never entertained one thought, expired suddenly, almost while in the act of speaking to me, and it was a long while before they could make me believe that what I saw was death and that he had really left me alone for the remainder of my life. This blow has been very hard on me. It seems truly as yesterday that we lost our beautiful boy Albert, Your Majesty's Godson, of whom I am afraid we were too fond and proud, and from whom we looked for such great things, flattering ourselves that his very name gave an assurance of his becoming as he grew up, every thing that is good and true and Prince-like. Madam, I know you will feel for me, for you have undergone this terrible ordeal, but you have children to remind you of their illustrious Father and in their talents and virtues you must seem to have some thing of him left to you still. While thinking of your grief, long before this grief came upon me, I have often thanked God that you have that alleviation. It is not so with me, I am desolate altogether, with nothing left but the hope of a meeting hereafter.

The Bishop who with Your Majesty's sanction was consecrated by the late Archbishop of Canterbury and arrived here in the Autumn of 1862 added greatly to the late Kings comfort and peace of mind during his last few months on earth, and had it not been for his ministrations and the consolations and hope which he has set before me since my widowhood commenced, I hardly think I could have lived through it all. The late King himself translated the Liturgy into our native Hawaiian language, for there was no one else [who] could do it so well and he took pleasure in all that related to the Church. He also wrote an Explanatory Preface which as his last literary effort I value more than I can tell, and of which I requested Mr. Synge to send Your Majesty a translation.

The preface to the *Book of Common Prayer*, was written by King Kamehameha IV in June of 1863. No copy of it has been found in the Royal Archives in England. The letter continued:

To Mr. and Mrs. Synge, I owe much under my double bereavement. They have been unremitting in their kindness to me, and have done everything possible to comfort me. She, as your Proxy at the baptism of my little Albert and Mr. Synge, as Proxy for Your Royal Son the Prince of Wales, will ever be regarded by me with that preeminence of respect, which, in gratitude to Your Majesty is due to them, on that account, and for their personal merits.

It was the purpose of my husband to visit with me England, and several portions of the Continent during the summer of this year, when we hoped to have had an opportunity to thank Your Majesty in person for all the kindness and sympathy you have extended to us—but that was not to be.

I have written Your Majesty a long letter, having been led on, to do so by a certain sense of relief and peace of mind which came of the act itself, and in anticipation of that sympathy for which our poor crushed hearts are always craving. I pray Your Majesty may not take it amiss.

I remain
Your Majesty's
afflicted but grateful friend
Emma^s

Queen Victoria's reply was prompt and heartfelt.

Windsor Castle
June 17, 1864

My dear Friend,

Your kind letter has deeply affected me & I thank you much for the volume which accompanied it!

My bleeding heart can truly sympathize with you in your terrible desolation! A dear & promising only child & a beloved Husband have both been taken from you within two years! Time does not heal the really stricken heart! The only consolation I have found in a sorrow which seems only to increase is in living

on in spirit with the beloved ones whom God took in love to a better World & in the certainty of an everlasting Union hereafter!

Till then we can but bear & submit & strive to fit our selves for that blessed future by following the example of our beloved ones.

May God give you strength to bear up under your heavy affliction.

I remain

Your Majesty's affectionate & unhappy friend

Victoria R.⁹

The phrase “unhappy friend” was often used by Queen Victoria after the death of Prince Albert, as can be seen in many published collections of her letters.

QUEEN EMMA'S VISIT TO ENGLAND

The following year, in 1865, Queen Emma decided to travel to Europe. She was interested in visiting the Continent but was especially anxious to meet Queen Victoria and to gather support in England for the work of the Anglican Church in Hawai'i. Foreign Minister Wyllie was not enthusiastic about the venture, but on the Queen's insistence he wrote to his British counterpart, Lord John Russell, on behalf of Kamehameha V, who became King in 1863, broaching the subject of the Dowager Queen's proposed visit. He suggested that William W. F. Synge, then British High Commissioner in Hawai'i, would be a suitable escort for Her Majesty and asked if the royal party could be met in Panama by a British man-of-war for the final leg of the journey to England.¹⁰

The British government, after reminding the Hawaiian Foreign Minister of the harsh British climate which might be injurious to Queen Emma's health, agreed to her visit and to Synge's accompanying her¹¹ and even sent a British warship, the *Clio*, for her voyage from Hawai'i to Panama. Queen Emma left Honolulu on May 6, 1865.¹² When she had crossed the Isthmus by train, another British vessel, the *Tasmanian*, met her for the Atlantic crossing.

In addition to British Commissioner Syngé, the party included the Reverend and Mrs. W. Hoapili, and Charles Gordon Hopkins, the younger brother of Manley Hopkins, the Hawaiian Consul General in London (fig. 3). Charles Hopkins had been appointed by Kamehameha V as the Queen's Secretary and Aide-de-camp. Also making the journey to England was a Canadian manservant, John Welsh.

The Hawaiian group reached Southhampton on July 13, 1865, and immediately travelled to London where Queen Emma began her stay in England with Lady Franklin at her home, Upper Gore Lodge, Kensington. Lady Franklin, the widow of British Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin, had visited Hawai'i in 1861, where she was a guest in the home of Robert C. Wyllie and came to know all the members of the royal family and officials in the Hawaiian government.

In *Victorian Visitors*, Alfons L. Korn gives a fascinating description of the Queen's visit to England and France, her work in England on behalf of the Anglican Church in Hawai'i, personality conflicts, and the Queen's restiveness while living under Lady Franklin's roof.¹³ At the end of October, Queen Emma moved from Lady Franklin's home to royal apartments reserved for her by the British government at Claridge's Hotel on Brook Street, in the fashionable Mayfair district of London.¹⁴

She was not able immediately to call upon Queen Victoria, initially because the British Monarch was resting at her favorite home, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, when Queen Emma arrived. Queen Victoria had refused a visit from the Queen of the Netherlands and could not now accept one from the Dowager Queen of Hawai'i. Following her vacation, Queen Victoria made a trip to Saxe-Coburg on the Continent to unveil a memorial to the late Prince Consort, her beloved husband. Finally, on September 9th, the two Queens met. The British Queen noted in her Journal:

September 9 . . . After luncheon I received Queen Emma, the widowed Queen of the Sandwich Islands of Hawaii. Met her in the Corridor & nothing could be nicer or more dignified than her

manner. She is dark, but not more so than an Indian, with fine features & splendid soft eyes. She was dressed in just the same widow's weeds as I wear. I took her into the White Drawingroom, where I asked her to sit down next to me on the sofa. She was much moved when I spoke of her great misfortune in losing her husband and only child. She was very discreet and would only remain a few minutes. She presented her lady, [Mrs. Hoapili] whose husband is her Chaplain, both being Hawaiians. . . .¹⁵

Later that day, Queen Emma wrote to her brother-in-law, Kamehameha V: “I have this moment returned from Windsor Castle where the Queen received me most affectionately, most sisterly.”¹⁶

More than two months later, upon Queen Victoria's return from Balmoral Castle, Queen Emma was accorded a singular honor. She was invited to spend a night at Windsor Castle. Apparently, at this more protracted meeting, the two Queens formed a firm friendship, which led to their life-long correspondence. Queen Victoria wrote of this visit in her Journal:

November 27 . . . Went with Vicky & Fritz [Vicky was Queen Victoria's eldest child, Victoria, and Fritz was her husband, the Crown Prince of Prussia] to see Queen Emma, who has come for the night. She is not looking well, & coughs poor thing, for which reason she is ordered to go to the south of France, to Hyeres. She, her lady, Mrs. Hoopile [Hoapili], Lady Waterpark & Lord Methuen dined. The Queen sat between Vicky and me. She was amiable, clever, & nice in all she said, speaking of her own country, which she said had originally been very mountainous. There were no animals, but small dogs and pigs, and these only since they had been imported and introduced in the time of Van Couvers [sic]—the same with flowers. The people were now always dressed like Europeans & were all nominally Christians, but not very fervently so. . . . Took the Queen to her room remaining a little with her.

November 28 . . . Directly after breakfast, we went to wish good Queen Emma goodbye & I gave her a bracelet with my miniature and hair. She thanked me much for my kindness, & for consenting to be godmother to her poor little child.¹⁷

Queen Emma listed a number of presents given her during the month prior to her departure for France. Her notation for November 28, 1865, reads:

from Her Majesty's, Queen Victoria's own hand, a bracelet of gold and onix [sic] with her portrait & hair in it and a writing of 'Victoria R. Nov. 27, 1865,' & also from her by Princess Helena a roll of pictures of herself & Prince [Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg Gotha, Prince Consort] & a small one of him, & autographs of the Queen, the Princess & Prince of Prussia & Princesses Helena, Louise & Beatrice [Queen Victoria's fifth, sixth, and ninth children].¹⁸

Years later, the bracelet was described in a Honolulu newspaper:

fine English gold, very heavy and broad, with the inscription inside: Victoria R—27 November 1865. The top stone is a very large onyx covering a locket in which is a medallion miniature of Victoria. The flat portion below the onyx stone encloses in glass a lock of Victoria's hair, which is a dark golden brown color. The medallion shows Victoria in widow's weeds. . . . She sits in a pensive attitude at a table leaning on her chin upon one hand.¹⁹

Queen Emma left her property after her death to Colonel Cresswell Rooke of Broomhill, Colchester, Essex, England, a nephew of her stepfather, Dr. T. C. B. Rooke, and to Queen's Hospital. Col. Rooke visited Hawai'i in 1903 to settle the estate. When the property was divided, the Colonel waived back rents due him, which had been given to Queen's Hospital, in exchange for several keepsakes, including the bracelet from Queen Victoria and another bracelet given Queen Emma by the Duke of Edinburgh. In 1956, the former bracelet was returned to Hawai'i by the Rooke family. It is now displayed at the Queen Emma Summer Palace.²⁰

QUEEN EMMA IN FRANCE, ITALY AND GERMANY

Shortly after Queen Emma's visit to Windsor Castle and just before she left for the South of France, she wrote Kamehameha V,

remarking that “the kindness & most marked attention of the Government (English) the Queen and Royal family personally, and the Ministers personally also, have been most unlooked for.”²¹

At Hyères, on the French Riviera, Queen Emma and her party settled into rooms at the Hotel du Parc, and she resumed her correspondence with Queen Victoria.

Hotel du Parc
Hyère[s], France
December 12th, 1865

Your Majesty

When I was last at Windsor you most kindly made me promise to write and tell you of my journey and safe arrival to this place. . . . I reached Hyere on Saturday last after five days traveling from London. The journey through France was very pleasant and every thing was new and interesting. At Boulogne through the courtesy of Earl Russell I was met by Your Majesty’s consul with every offer of assistance and mark of attention. Lyon, Avignon, Marselle [sic], all were new to me and my attention was constantly occupied. This appears to be a warm snug little place although the residents are complaining of its being unusually cold at present. . . .

In a letter to Commissioner W. W. F. Synge from Hyères, Queen Emma expanded on the kind attention she had received from British officials on the trip to the South of France and expressed her gratitude to the Queen and the British government for their attention to her. At Folkestone, where she had boarded the Channel steamer, she had been met by officials of the railroad and steamship companies and, on her arrival in France, the British Consul had escorted her and her party ashore and entertained them until it was time to proceed with their journey south.²² Queen Emma continued in her letter to Queen Victoria:

On Sunday afternoon we met with a carriage accident which might have been very serious had there not been two servants on the coachman’s box, one of whom being thrown off, the other secured the reins, and a handsome new carriage was the greatest sufferer. We behaved very well, neither I nor Mrs. Hoapili so

much as indulged in one little scream even. There is a little English Chapel here which we attended on Sunday morning and where the service is very well performed.

I have ordered that a photograph of myself by Mr. Watkins, who I think has been the most successful of the Artists to whom I have given sittings, be sent to Your Majesty in accordance with the promise I made upon your so kindly expressing a desire to have one. Please to accept it and with it the expressions of my heartfelt regard and esteem.

There is a photograph of Queen Emma in the Royal Archives, but it is a small *carte de visite* size photograph by John and Charles Watkins, Court Photographers, and is probably one of those ordered by the British Queen on December 19, 1865. Bills from the Watkins note that Queen Victoria received three album portraits of Queen Emma at a cost of 7 shillings and 6 pence on the 19th of that month. There is an additional notation on the photographers' bill that "the profits" are to be "devoted to the Hawaiian Mission." The photograph given Queen Victoria by Queen Emma was undoubtedly a larger one, for Manley Hopkins, Hawaiian Consul General at London, wrote Queen Emma on December 12, 1865, that a picture frame for the Queen's photograph was being prepared with "elegant kou leaves surrounding the portrait & the crown on top."²³

I trust that Their Royal Highnesses your daughters continue to enjoy perfect health and I pray to God that their career may be free from those vicissitudes and life long trials which too often shadow those to whom in early life the world would seem to have nothing left to give.

Allow me to say with how much gratitude and affection I shall always cherish the remembrance of you and yours and with what pleasure I feel that I may subscribe myself My dear Madam

Your very sincere and faithful friend

Emma²⁴

Concerned about her young friend's carriage mishap, Queen Victoria promptly sent her reply to France:

Osborne

December 27, 1865

My dear Friend—

Your kind letter of the 12 have me much pleasure & I thank you most sincerely for it. I was shocked to see you had met with an accident & it is most fortunate that it was no worse. I trust that you will have better horses for the future.

I hope that you are feeling better & stronger & losing your cough? . . .

Since I saw you two events have taken place which have affected me much. The one is the engagement of our dear 3d daughter Helena & the other is the loss of my beloved Uncle, the King of the Belgians, who had ever been a father to me.

Princess Helena was engaged to Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. After the marriage, they settled in England. Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was the brother of Queen Victoria's mother. In 1816, he had married Princess Charlotte, daughter of the Prince Regent of England (later King George IV). She died the following year in childbirth. In 1831, Leopold was crowned King of the Belgians. The English Queen continued:

. . . & now I feel still more alone & crushed & have lost the last of my relations to whom I could look for help & advice. But we must submit in patience, & trust in God's love & in the blessed certainty that our dear Ones are safe in His keeping & that we shall meet with them again never to part. I write this to one who, like me has drunk deeply of the Cup of sorrow, & bears it with true Christian meekness & submission.

Our daughters are most grateful for your kind remembrance, & I remain ever Your Affectionate
unhappy friend

Victoria R.

I hope you will write to me from time to time to let me hear how you are.²⁵

Queen Emma replied:

Hotel du Parc
Hyère[s], France
Jan 19, 1866

My dear Madam.

It gave me very great pleasure to receive your letter dated the 27th December. But I have felt very much for you on account of your having lost another relation so dear to you since your childhood as the late King of the Belgians. These blows are very severe trials, and make us what we are. I need hardly assure your Majesty that you have my unbounded sympathy in every bereavement!

It must however, afford you some relief from your more serious thoughts to see your children, one after the other growing up and marrying so happily. I am delighted to think that the last engagement is so satisfactory to you and I trust that young pair may very long be happy in their union.

The work box made of Hawaiian woods of which I once spoke to you will reach you with this note, as I have desired our Consul in London Mr. Manley Hopkins to have the two forwarded together. You will not find much in the box to recommend it to your notice but as it is a gift especially designed and intended by my late Sovereign and husband for Your Majesty I take great pleasure in carrying out, though alone, the wish of giving it you, of one whom I am sure you would have admired had you seen.

In a letter to Queen Emma, Manley Hopkins refers to the carving of a work table for Queen Victoria which was to be completed in ten days. As the table given the Queen by Queen Emma was of Hawaiian woods, they were apparently brought to England, together with the King's drawing of the projected design, and assembled in London. The table, measuring approximately 30 inches in height, has an octagonal top, 16 inches in diameter. In 1970, it was on display at the Swiss Chalet in the grounds of Osborne House, Isle of Wight.²⁶ Queen Emma added:

I sincerely hope that you and yours continue to enjoy good health as indeed from what I see in the newspapers I infer you do.

My cough has left me altogether, and now I am beginning to feel almost myself again.

Wishing Your Majesty long life and a brighter future I remain

Your Grateful friend

Emma²⁷

RETURN TO LONDON

Queen Emma left France in the Spring of 1866 to travel in Italy and Southern Germany. She also made a stop in Paris before returning to London in late June. On June 19, 1866, the Prince of Wales wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury asking to be advised when he had definite information about the arrival of Queen Emma in England as “both the Princess & myself are most anxious to make the acquaintance of Queen Emma.”²⁸

By June 22, 1866, Queen Emma was back in London, staying once again with Lady Franklin at Upper Gore Lodge, when she wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury that she was sorry to have missed his visit to her but “Your Grace will much oblige me by conveying to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales my thanks for his very kind inquiries and the desire expressed by himself and the Princess to meet me. You will I am sure help me about making arrangements for that interview.”²⁹ The Archbishop apparently played his part for, on July 2nd, Queen Emma lunched with the Prince and Princess at their London home, Marlborough House. The Queen was not impressed by the royal couple. She recorded in her diary that “they seemed nothing more than a big boy & girl, no conversation.”³⁰

Queen Emma did not plan to linger long in England, and presumably she advised Queen Victoria that she would be leaving by the end of July. But no correspondence on this subject has been turned up, and the protocol surrounding Queen Emma’s departure, on July 25, 1866, may have been handled entirely by the Hawaiian Consul General and the British Foreign Office. The next letter in the royal correspondence, however, clearly shows that the British sovereign was aware of Queen Emma’s departure.

Balmoral
Sept. 8, 1866

My dear Queen,

I had fondly hoped to have seen you before your departure from England which I was not aware was so near at hand without time to have expressed my warmest thanks for the excellent likeness of yourself and for the pretty table which your lamented husband so kindly designed & intended for me. Pray accept now by letter the somewhat tardy but not less sincere thanks for these interesting presents which I shall ever value.

I hope that you will have borne your journey home well & that you have entirely recovered your health?

I have now the satisfaction of having my dear daughter Helena back with her kind & good Husband & of feeling that they will not leave me, which is a great satisfaction & comfort.

You will easily understand how much anxiety the late War has caused me. I hope now for some quiet & rest—which my health & nerves greatly require.

With every earnest wish for your welfare & happiness (at least as much as you can still enjoy in this weary World) believe me always,

Your affectionate & unhappy friend

Victoria R.³¹

The war Queen Victoria referred to was Bismark's "Seven Weeks War" which lasted from June to August of 1866 and involved France, Prussia, Austria, Italy, and a number of small principalities. It was ended by the Treaty of Prague, August 23, 1866, which formed the North German Confederation.

In the same mail, Princess Helena wrote Queen Emma thanking her for a feather wreath and telling her that she and her husband had recently returned from Switzerland.³²

The visit of Queen Emma to England cannot be considered a purely personal tour. Her frequent appearances at gatherings throughout Great Britain strengthened the friendly relations which had long existed between England and Hawai'i and stirred the interest of the English in the welfare of the Hawaiian people and

the work of the Anglican Mission in the Islands. According to one contemporary British writer on church matters, “During her stay in England this amiable and excellent lady has endeared herself to all those who have become acquainted with her; and, as a widowed queen, she received the sympathy and recognition of Her Majesty, whom she visited at Windsor.” Another observer stated that the many meetings which were “held in consequence of Queen Emma’s visit [to England], have already produced between 3000 l [£] and 400 l [£] for the purposes of the mission; besides which, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has increased its annual grant for the diocese of Honolulu, from 300 l [£] to 600 l [£].”³³

LATER ROYAL CORRESPONDENCE

During the next few years, 1866 to 1869, Queen Victoria emerged from her long period of mourning for the Prince Consort. Although for the five years succeeding the death of her husband she had continued to confer with her ministers and carry on her duties as Queen, in February of 1866, she appeared in public for the first time since her widowhood when she opened parliament. From then on she began to travel abroad, and she accepted an increasing number of public functions. She had much to occupy both her public and private life.

Queen Emma, upon her return from Europe, settled quietly in Hawai‘i, travelling occasionally to the other islands but making her principal residence in Honolulu. There is a gap in the correspondence during the next few years. Then Queen Emma received another letter from Queen Victoria.

Buckingham Palace
Apr. 8, 1869

Dear Queen Emma,

I cannot let the Bishop of Honolulu [The Rev. Thomas Nettleship Staley, Anglican Bishop of Honolulu, 1861–1870] depart without giving him a few lines for you to express my sincere friendship for you & my earnest hope that you are well & strong & feel the better

for your voyage. I always take a warm interest in all that concerns your welfare & think with pleasure of your visits to Windsor. It is a long time since I heard of you & trust that I shall ere long have good accounts of you from our son Alfred [Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh] who is shortly to visit Honolulu.

Our Children & numerous grand Children who now number 15—are well. The Prince & Princess of Wales are still abroad—having been up the Nile. Their 4 Children are with me. My daughter/Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein/had a 2d son on the 26t of Feb:—who was christened Albert after her dear father on the 31st ult.

With the kind regards of our children, believe me always, Your Majesty's affectionate friend.

Victoria R.

I enclose a new photograph of myself & one of the Prince & Princess of Wales and their Children as well as one of Louise, Arthur & Leopold.³⁴

The photograph of Queen Victoria is autographed and dated 1868. The others are of: one, the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII of England, Princess Louise and Princes Arthur, Duke of Connaught, and Leopold, Duke of Albany; and two, the Prince of Wales and his wife Princess Alexandra of Denmark, Princess of Wales, and their sons Albert, Victor and George, later George V of England. The three photographs were *carte de visite* size and were taken by W. & D. Downey, Newcastle on Tyne, England.

The Duke of Edinburgh, commanding HBMS *Galatea*, arrived in Honolulu from New Zealand on July 21, 1869. On the following day, the Duke came ashore to take up residence in the home of the late M. Kekuanaoa on Queen Street, which King Kamehameha V had had “fitted expressly for his occupancy.” At noon of the 22nd the Duke called on the King at ‘Iolani Palace. During the next week, the Duke was entertained by the King and the British community, received *ho’oku’u* (ceremonial gift giving) from the Hawaiian people at his temporary residence on Queen Street, and returned the hospitality of the people of Honolulu by entertaining both ashore and aboard the *Galatea*.

There was no time for Queen Emma to entertain the Duke in her own home, but she met him on several occasions, particularly at a *lū'au* (feast) given by the King at Waikīkī, which, according to an unsympathetic local newspaper, was an “exclusively native party” where “the disgraceful Hula-dance was a part of the programme. . . .” The Duke left the Islands on August 2, 1869.³⁵

There is another three year gap in the correspondence between the two Queens, from 1869 to 1872. During that time Queen Victoria was preoccupied with affairs of state and of her family. The Franco-German War in 1870–1871 was of particular concern to her and her countrymen. Early in 1872, upon learning of the serious illness of the Prince of Wales, Queen Emma renewed the correspondence.

Honolulu
Jan 23rd 1872

My dear dear Madam

You will I know forgive me for addressing Your Majesty thus but the sudden sad news of the Prince of Wales's dangerous illness [typhoid fever] filled me with very great sorrow and my heart yearned to express its loving sympathy with the Princess of Wales in her troubles, it went out in prayer for your Majesty, and the Prince to spare him to his family and people. Those who have known deep grief can feel keenly for those who are in trouble. Our regular mails coming only once a month from England leaves a long pause between before another one arrives. Therefore Your Majesty can somewhat understand the state of anxiety and suspense we were in during that long time scarcely daring to enquire what the latest tidings may bring and thankful indeed at last to receive the good report of recovery. Is it not a very strange truth that often affliction is the only way by which the promises of our God are endeared to us? but so it is.

I have availed myself of Col. Hon. Wm. Fielding's very kind offer to take a letter for me to England and entrust this to his care.

Trusting sincerely that Your Majesty's health is quite restored and the Prince again himself I remain with much love

Yours very sincerely

Emma³⁶

It is not clear exactly what was wrong with Queen Victoria, but we do know that about this time she had an operation on her arm. On May 1, 1872, she complained in a letter to Augusta, the Queen of Prussia, "my nerves are run down and in a weak state, although outwardly I look well, which is really a misfortune for no one will believe that I am so frequently out of sorts."³⁷ Queen Victoria, however, was able to reply to Queen Emma's letter of solicitude and concern.

Balmoral
Nov. 20, 1872

My dear Queen Emma,

Long ago ought I to have thanked you for your very kind & sympathizing letter brought me by Col. Fielding in [which] you speak so feelingly of the dreadful illness of my dear son the Prince of Wales. Thank God he was spared tho' he was one may truly say as near death as almost any body could be to recover—It was surely sent in mercy for our good & may we all never forget it. It came when I was barely recovered from my long illness & this autumn has alas! brought me a great & deep sorrow in the irreparable loss of my dearly beloved only & most admirable Sister Princess Hohenlohe [Feodora, daughter of Victoria Mary Louise, Princess of Saxe-Coburg and Prince Ernest Charles of Leiningen, died September 23, 1872]. She was 12 years older than me, being the daughter of my dear Mother by her 1st marriage & I looked up to her for comfort & sympathy in all things & we were most devotedly attached to each other. One can only submit & look patiently & hopefully to that future World where we shall be reunited, never to part.—

I return to Windsor on the 23d leaving the dear Highlands where I have been staying since the 17t of August with much regret.

With every good wish for your health & happiness
believe me always
your Majesty's
affectionate friend

Victoria R.

T.O. [Turn Over] I hope you will kindly accept the accompanying Photograph of me.³⁸

Queen Emma upon hearing of still another loss, that of Princess Alice, Queen Victoria's third child, the Grand Duchess of Hesse, who died of diptheria on December 14, 1878, wrote from Hanaiakamalama, the Summer Palace:

Hanaiakamalama
Honolulu
Feb 17th 1879

My dear Friend

The sad news of your present sorrow . . . fills me with grief. . . . Alas the expressing of sympathy does often fall short of the depth of ones feelings, but your own ready heart for the trouble of others will accept my poor attempts to say how much my heart has been drawn towards you and yours and followed with prayers the widowed husband [Prince Louis of Hesse, later Grand Duke Louis IV] who now treads the painful path which Your Majesty and I walk in. God only can lighten his burden and comfort the motherless children.

The beautiful character of your dear daughter is indeed verily a silver lining shedding rays of comfort through this dark cloud of mourning to you which must always remain as in life a bright example to copy.

I must here thank you so much for your very kind inquiries of me through Mr. Henry Carter [Henry A. P. Carter, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain, who returned to Honolulu on June 18, 1878] the late Hawaiian Minister Extraordinary to your Court. My long silence was not from want of appreciation of that remembrance . . . but only from consideration of Your Majesty's time which was then much taken up with the Continental agitations necessarily affecting England.

I am glad to know you keep in good health. My own is strong and I seldom know what sickness is.

Wishing you every happiness here, so much as this lone world can give and a reuniting with all most dear in the far future.

I remain ever your sincerely attached friend

Emma³⁹

The “Continental agitations” referred to by Queen Emma were the result of a war between Russia and Turkey which threatened

to draw all of Europe into the conflict. In June and July of 1878, an effort was made by European leaders at the Berlin Congress to establish peace throughout Europe and Asia Minor.

Queen Victoria wrote:

Windsor Castle
July 9, 1879

My dear Friend

I am I fear very late in acknowledging your kind letter of the 17 Feb. in which you express yourself so kindly & feelingly on my grievous loss—on the very anniversary of my first great bereavement [death of Prince Albert on 14 December 1878].

I was just going abroad then, & alas a new sorrow greeted my arrival at Paris; my eldest daughter, the Crown Princess of Germany lost her 3d & very favourite son [Prince Waldemar]—11 years old, of the very same dreadful illness—dyptheria, which carried off my beloved daughter & her little girl!—[Princess Marie of Hesse-Darmstadt died in November of 1879.]

I send you, thinking you may like to possess them, prints of the greater part of my family & of myself—taken within the last few years.

A new & most terribly distressing event has just taken place in the death of the very charming & promising young Prince Imperial of France who was killed on a reconaissance by the Zulus! He was his poor exiled Mother, the Empress Eugenie's only Child! Her grief and loneliness you can well imagine.

You are, I trust, quite well & think sometimes of England.

As life goes now, it has not become easier or one's trials fewer, but rather the reverse! It is only in the blessed assurance of that future life when there will be no sorrow, no tears, no partings, that we can bear up against the many losses & sorrows which are sent us!

Again repeating my thanks for your very kind & feeling letter, believe me always, my dear friend,

Your very affectionate
friend

Victoria R. I.⁴⁰

On May 1, 1876, Queen Victoria had received the additional title of Empress of India. From then on she signed herself R. I., to indicate her new role.

The Prince Imperial referred to in the preceding letter was the son of Emperor Napoleon III and Empress Eugenie of France. After the defeat of the French by the Germans at Sedan, in September of 1870, the Emperor was deposed and eventually the Imperial family sought exile in England. Later, the Prince served with the British Army and joined the English forces fighting in Zululand.⁴¹

In 1879, according to Honolulu newspaper reports Queen Victoria sent to Queen Emma 12 steel engravings, likenesses of the members of the British Royal Family. The portraits were presented to Queen Emma by the British Commissioner to Hawai‘i, Major James H. Wodehouse. When Queen Emma wrote to express her appreciation for the gift, she knew that Queen Victoria had returned to England from a trip to Italy, a place that she had enjoyed during her own visit to Europe in 1865–1866.

Hanaiakamalama
Honolulu
Oct 27th 1879

Your Majesty and dear friend

Your letter of July 9th came two months ago and it was happiness to know through it of your continued good health. The beautiful prints of yourself and family you so kindly sent arrived a fortnight since and I do not know how to thank Your Majesty enough for them and the many constant kind remembrances you have ever extended your humble friend. They are very precious to me and the fact of being included a friend is a prized comfort I can never fully hope to say how much but which I shall keep unchanged in my heart. The portraits too will always be happily remembered for their individual sakes as well as being parts of yourself. They have been a great treat to our people who were very desirous to see them. Often very often I live over my delightful visit to England of years ago & think of the hours spent with Your Majesty with pleasure. I hope you enjoyed the trip to Italy. Is it

not a beautiful land and where you were must have been excessively pretty.

Oh! could heart be pierced more sorely than the poor Empress Eugenie's, her poignant sorrow called all hearts to her side to lighten the terrible load if that were possible by suing our God's great love for the poor mother's crushed heart. The Prince Napoleon was such a good and noble son, the rod which smote we cling to in time with love, as being the path to the loved ones gone before.

We have had a very unhealthy autumn this year. Tyfoid feaver [sic] prevails. Many deaths have happened all amongst the young and strong. I have had it very lightly and thank God am quite well again.

Repeating again my greatest thanks and wishes for your happiness that is such as this bleak life can give, I remain ever your affectionate friend

Emma⁴²

During the next few years the royal correspondence appears to have lapsed once again and, as on similar occasions in 1869 and 1879, it was news of tragedy or near tragedy in the British royal family which spurred Queen Emma to write to Queen Victoria once again. This time it was newspaper reports of an assassination attempt. On March 2, 1882, Roderick Maclean, a deranged man, shot at Queen Victoria as she was leaving the station at Windsor for her castle nearby. This was the fifth attempt on the Queen's life, and each time the deed was done by a lunatic, not, as happened to other royal personages on the Continent, by men who were politically motivated. It was cause for alarm, however. The Queen, although not hurt, was visibly shaken but, as on previous occasions, behaved with courage. News of the attempt was flashed around the world, and expressions of sympathy reached Queen Victoria from concerned people everywhere, including Queen Emma.

Hanaiakamalama
Apr 9th 1882

Your Majesty & dear friend

How shall I express my horror and grief over the narrow escape Your Majestys' valuable life had met at the hands of an insane person. The news gave me such a shock—but that great love upon which you have so often taught me to rely was even then as ever protecting Your Majesty and I thank God fervently in common with the rest of mankind for this signal kindness placing undoubting trust in that care which may never fail over your safety & happiness to add many more years of usefulness good reign over your people. I need hardly say that this news was felt almost as a personal calamity by every native Hawaiian so much have they learnt to respect yourself.

I must at this opportunity thank Your Majesty so very very much for the kind message and enquiries made after me which His Majesty The King Kalakaua delivered immediately on his return from England giving the constant proofs of condescending remembrances for myself which I value more than I can say. The King enjoyed his visit to your country greatly and was so pleased with Your Majesty's kind reception of himself.

With repeated earnest prayers that no harm in the future may befall yourself.

I remain your sincere and grateful friend

Emma⁴³

King Kalākaua had visited England in 1881 on his world tour. Of his audience with Queen Victoria, on July 11, 1881, the British Queen recorded in her journal, “King Kalakaua is tall, darker than Queen Emma, but with the same cast of features. . . .”⁴⁴ William N. Armstrong, writing of his trip around the world with the King, remembered that Queen Victoria asked for news of Queen Emma and told King Kalakaua: “She is a charming young woman; I was very fond of her.”⁴⁵

The last letter between Queen Victoria and Queen Emma known to this writer was the British Queen's answer to Queen Emma's April 9, 1882, letter of sympathy. It is undated but presumably was written some time during that same year.

My dear Friend,

You wrote me a most kind letter on the occasion of the attempt on my life, for which I meant to thank you long ago and which I now do, hoping you will forgive the long delay in my answer. We are on the point of starting for Scotland, my constant companion my dear daughter Beatrice [the Queen's youngest child, Princess Henry of Battenberg] and her little child accompany me. . . . We are now engaged in a war which I hope will be of short duration; my dear son Arthur is with the Army. [Arthur, Duke of Connaught, served at Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt with the British Army of Sir Garnet Wolseley.] We were pleased to make the acquaintance of King Kalakaua and I would ask you to remember me to him.

With renewed expressions of friendship and esteem, Your majesty's affectionate friend,

Victoria R.I.⁴⁶

Queen Emma died on April 25, 1885; Queen Victoria on January 20, 1901.

NOTES

Material from the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, England, used with the gracious permission of H. M. Queen Elizabeth II.

¹ Sidney Lee, *Queen Victoria, A Biography* (New York: Macmillan, 1903) 321.

² Alfons L. Korn, *The Victorian Visitors* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1938) 298-99.

³ Kamehameha IV, letter to Queen Victoria, 28 June 1858, unfinished and unsigned, in handwriting of R. C. Wyllie, Kalaniana'ole Collection, Bishop Museum; hereafter referred to as KC/BM.

⁴ Lord Russell, letter to R. C. Wyllie, 12 May 1862, FO & EX, AH; Lord Russell, letters to William W. F. Syngé, 30 Apr. and 12 May, 1862, and William W. F. Syngé, letters 3 and 6 to Lord Russell, 10 Sept. 1862. British Public Records Office, FO 58/9; hereafter referred to as BPRO.

⁵ Kamehameha IV, draft of letter to Queen Victoria, 10 Sept. 1862, KC/BM.

⁶ Queen Emma, draft of letter to Queen Victoria, KC/BM.

⁷ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, 14 Feb. 1863, Henriques Collection; hereafter referred to as HC/BM.

⁸ Queen Emma, draft of letter to Queen Victoria, Paul Markham Kahn Collection.

- ⁹ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, HC/BM: a draft of this letter, dated 16 June 1864, with a few changes in wording, is in the Royal Archives, RA Q10/7.
- ¹⁰ R. C. Wyllie—Lord Russell and Lord Russell—William W. F. Syngé correspondence, BPRO, FO 58/103.
- ¹¹ Lord Russell, letter to R. C. Wyllie, 22 July 1864, BPRO, FO 58/103.
- ¹² R. C. Wyllie, letter to Queen Emma, 4 May 1865, HC/BM.
- ¹³ Korn, *Victorian Visitors* 202–78; F 1 June 1866.
- ¹⁴ *London Evening Mail*, n.d., rpt. in *HG* 25 Nov. 1865.
- ¹⁵ Queen Victoria, Journal, ms. Royal Archives.
- ¹⁶ Queen Emma, draft of letter to Kamehameha V, 9 Sept. 1865, Emma Collection, M-45, AH; hereafter referred to as EC.
- ¹⁷ Queen Victoria, Journal.
- ¹⁸ EC.
- ¹⁹ *PCA* 26 Mar. 1904.
- ²⁰ *PCA*, 26 Mar. 1904; Minutes of Daughters of Hawai‘i, 14 Sept. and 14 Dec. 1956, Archives, Queen Emma Summer Palace.
- ²¹ Queen Emma, letter to Kamehameha V, 4 Dec. 1865, EC.
- ²² Queen Emma, letter to W. W. F. Syngé, 20 Dec. 1865, EC.
- ²³ Queen Emma, photograph, in Royal Archives photographic collection, vol. 50: 30; photographers’ bills, Royal Archives, PP2/100/9716; Manley Hopkins, letter to Queen Emma, 12 Dec. 1865, EC.
- ²⁴ Queen Emma, letter to Queen Victoria, 12 Dec. 1865, Royal Archives, RA 2105/46, and draft in HC/BM.
- ²⁵ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, 27 Dec. 1865, and copy on Queen Emma’s stationery in HC/BM.
- ²⁶ Manley Hopkins, letter to Queen Emma, 12 Dec. 1865, EC; notes on table in Curator’s office, ‘Iolani Palace.
- ²⁷ Queen Emma, letter to Queen Victoria, 19 Jan. 1866, Royal Archives, RA 2105/45, and draft in HC/BM.
- ²⁸ Prince of Wales, letter to Archbishop of Canterbury, 19 June 1866, HC/BM.
- ²⁹ Queen Emma, letter to Archbishop of Canterbury, 22 June, 1866 Royal Archives, RA T4/103.
- ³⁰ Queen Emma, Diary, 1 Jan.—3 Aug. 1866, Bishop Museum.
- ³¹ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, 8 Sept. 1866, HC/BM.
- ³² Princess Helena, letter to Queen Emma, 9 Sept. 1866, HC/BM.
- ³³ G. F. Angas, *Polynesia* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1866) 215; and M. A. Donne, *The Sandwich Islands and Their People* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1866).
- ³⁴ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, 8 Apr. 1869, HC/BM.
- ³⁵ *PCA* 24 and 31 July and 7 Aug. 1869.
- ³⁶ Queen Emma, letter to Queen Victoria, 23 Jan. 1872, Royal Archives, RA 2105/68, and draft in HC/BM.

- ³⁷ Hector Bolitho, ed., *Letters of Queen Victoria from the Archives of the House of Brandenburg-Prussia* (New Haven: Yale U P, 1938) 186.
- ³⁸ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, 20 Nov. 1872, HC/BM, and copy of part of this letter in EC. No photograph is in that file.
- ³⁹ Queen Emma, letter to Queen Victoria, 17 Feb. 1879, Royal Archives, RA 2105/128, and unfinished draft in HC/BM.
- ⁴⁰ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, 9 July 1879, HC/BM.
- ⁴¹ Bolitho, *Letters of Queen Victoria* 233.
- ⁴² Queen Emma, letter to Queen Victoria, 27 Oct. 1879, Royal Archives, RA 2105/131, and draft in HC/BM.
- ⁴³ Queen Emma, letter to Queen Victoria, 9 Apr. 1882, Royal Archives, RA 2105/131, and draft in HC/BM: Lee, *Queen Victoria* 459.
- ⁴⁴ Queen Victoria, Journal.
- ⁴⁵ William N. Armstrong, *Around the World With A King* (1903; Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1977) 225.
- ⁴⁶ Queen Victoria, letter to Queen Emma, n.d., in possession of Col. Creswell Rooke, and copy in Archives, Queen Emma Summer Palace.