

## The Hawaiian Islands and their New Attorney-General.

A writer in the *Boston Advertiser* alludes as follows to the past history of the Hawaiian Islands, and the recent appointment of Hon. STEPHEN H. PHILLIPS, of Salem, formerly Attorney-General of Massachusetts, to a similar position under the Hawaiian Government:

"It is well known that the Hawaiian Islands are indebted to the American missionaries for the introduction of Christianity and civilization. The King and his chiefs, accustomed to look to their heathen priests for political as well as spiritual guidance, in accepting the faith, also gradually adopted the Democratic views of their new teachers, and relaxed their iron rule over the people. With a magnanimity rarely exhibited by more enlightened sovereigns, KAMEHAMEHA III. relinquished his absolute power over his subjects, and in 1819 granted to them a Constitution which limited his prerogatives and defined the rights of chiefs and people. In 1852 a more perfect Constitution was adopted, which was drawn up by the late Chief-Justice Wm. L. LEE, the great benefactor of the Hawaiian race, who was a graduate of Cambridge Law School and classmate of Mr. PHILLIPS. It was modeled after that of the United States, and embodied the axiom that all men were born free and equal, granted to the people universal suffrage, the right of separate representation and the control of the public money. It was opposed by some of the English advisers of the King on account of its liberal concessions and its democratic features, but gave general satisfaction. Owing to various causes, chief among which were the death of KAMEHAMEHA III., in 1855, and of Judge LEE, in 1857, and the neglect of our Government to foster its relations with the group, American influence in the Government rapidly declined. The young sovereign, dazzled by the splendors of royalty which he had witnessed in European courts, began to chafe under the constitutional limitations of his prerogative, and, turning from the American Mission to whom he and his people owed so much, was readily induced to request the aid of the Queen of England in the establishment of a mission of the Church of England in his dominions. The Southern rebellion was eagerly seized upon by his English advisers as a proof of the weakness of republican institutions, and the King naturally adopted the views of leading British statesmen, that "the bubble of Democracy had burst." On the King's death, in 1863, his brother, the present sovereign, abrogated the Constitution of 1852, and gave to his people a substitute, in the formation of which they had no voice, and which took from them the rights of universal suffrage and control over the treasury, and increased the power of the sovereign.

The people, taken by surprise at this *coup d'état*, have outwardly acquiesced in the new order of things, but great dissatisfaction exists in the infringement of their liberties, and a strong hope is expressed that the old Constitution, or the rights which it guaranteed to them, will yet be restored. The political future of the group is involved in uncertainty. The old line of Hawaiian chiefs is nearly extinct. The present King is the last of his family, the succession being cut off by the recent death of his sister, the Princess VICTORIA, the heiress to the throne. He is an intelligent and well-educated sovereign, and cannot fail to recognize that the United States, to whom the kingdom owes its Christianity, its civilization, and even the preservation of its nationality, have paramount interests in the group, and are his natural protectors and allies. The recent triumphant vindication of the strength of our democratic institutions, and the consequent change in European sentiment toward us, have not been without effect upon the Hawaiian Government. The selection of a staunch Republican, like Mr. PHILLIPS, for so important a position in its Cabinet is a significant evidence of the fact.

Mr. PHILLIPS possesses admirable qualifications for the duties which he has undertaken, and the Hawaiian Government is to be congratulated in having secured his services. Firm in his convictions, but conciliatory in his deportment, he will strive to harmonize differences while maintaining the honor and dignity of the State. While he will faithfully endeavor to promote the best interests of the Government he serves, he will always be loyal to the cause of human liberty, and to those great republican principles in which he was brought up.

Enjoying to a large degree the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens, his acceptance of office under so distant and feeble a nationality was a matter of surprise to many of his friends, who were anticipating for him a brilliant career of usefulness and honor at home. But those acquainted with the state of affairs at the Islands, the uncertainty of their political future, the importance of their geographical position, and the continual efforts of France and England for their possession or control, feel that Mr. PHILLIPS has a position of great influence and responsibility, in which he will be able to render eminent service both to the Hawaiian Nation and to American interests in that archipelago."