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Remarks on New Zealand: in February 1846

Robert Fitzroy

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REMARKS
ON
NEW ZEALAND,
IN FEBRUARY 1846.
BY ROBERT FITZ-ROY.
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CHAPTER I: REMARKS ON NEW ZEALAND IN 1846

REMARKS ON NEW ZEALAND

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IN 1846.

CHAPTER I.

The following brief remarks may be useful to persons interested in New Zealand, for whose service they are intended.

In order to comprehend more readily the present state and prospects of the local government, the colonists, and the aboriginal natives of New Zealand, it may be advisable to commence by noticing the geographical features, and the climate of the country; both of which have been considerably misrepresented by some persons.

Extending in two long, but rather narrow principal islands, (with a few smaller ones adjacent,) New Zealand lies between the parallels of 34 deg. and 48 deg. south latitude, and between the 166th and 179th meridians of east longitude. It contains about 62,000,000 acres, and is bounded by nearly 3,000 miles of coast line. The country is generally hilly; in many parts mountainous. Forests, thick woods, impervious jungle, or high fern, cover the greater part of the surface, which is extremely broken, and intersected by numerous ravines. Swamps abound, and rivers or streams are numerous; but scarcely any are navigable except for large boats.

¹ In only a few localities is there any considerable extent of level land, – and in those alone is natural grass pasturage found. But the soil is generally fertile – in some districts exceedingly so, – and the climate is extremely favorable for vegetation, ² The general character of the soil – except in the wooded vallies, or in the swamps – is a light sandy loam, near the surface; but rather clayey below. ³ Deep ploughing and

fallowing are found to improve even the worst soils ⁴ much beyond former expectation; but the valley lands are so rich as to require little or no labour beyond clearing and surface ploughing. ⁵

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The climate is very healthy, and, in fine weather, particularly agreeable: – but there is so much violent wind, and such frequent as well as heavy rain, that substantial houses and warm clothing are required at least as much as during a mild winter in England; although the temperature is remarkably equable. These frequent and heavy rains wash away quantities of the loose friable soil, and cause much additional trouble with respect to roads, fences, and gardens. But these remarks apply principally to the sea coasts. In the interior, on the eastern slopes of mountains rising to ten or twelve thousand feet above the sea, whose summits are covered with perpetual snow, much colder and drier weather is found: but on their western flanks, – especially along the west coast of the large southern, (or middle island,) there are dreary mountainous regions clothed with almost impenetrable forests, and covered by clouds carried with the prevailing westerly winds. The worst climate is towards the south west extremity of these islands; the finest in the eastern and northern districts. The northern region, being in a lower latitude, is proportionally warmer. Notwithstanding the prevalence of rain and wind, the country and the climate are eminently favorable to animal and vegetable life; but they require the most active bodily exertion, and some outlay of capital, in order to reduce the wilderness to a profitable condition.

The principal events connected with New Zealand are now so generally known, that I would not here refer to any that occurred previous to 1844, were it not indispensable to mention those few which are more particularly connected with any explanation of the present state of affairs.

At the beginning of this century the state of the country and the aboriginal population of New Zealand must have corresponded nearly to the descriptions previously given by Cook; but the older natives agree in saying that the numbers of their countrymen have greatly diminished during their own remembrance, and that this diminution appears to have been caused by epidemic diseases, by warfare between tribes,

on account of disputed territorial boundaries, and by the infanticide of female or weakly children. As soon as the neighbouring colony of New South Wales began to flourish, small vessels thence sometimes visited New Zealand; a precarious trade was thus opened; and by degrees – notwithstanding many atrocities, (not committed by the barbarous cannibals alone) – some advances were made towards intercourse, and a few natives ventured to Sydney. With two of these ⁶ the Rev. Mr. Marsden visited the Bay of Islands, in 1815, and laid a foundation for subsequent improvement.

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It is worth noticing, that while Mr. Marsden was trying to win the confidence of these native chiefs, and, through their influence to obtain a friendly reception for the first missionaries, there were persons at Sydney striving to counteract his efforts, and assuring these islanders that, if they complied with his advice, their country would soon be overrun by the English, and they themselves would be treated like the aborigines of New South Wales. Plausible arguments were then ⁷ used in Sydney, and were soon repeated at the Bay of Islands, similar to those employed lately in many parts of New Zealand; but Mr. Marsden at last succeeded; and a few daring Englishmen, supported by the Church Missionary Society, were permanently located among some of the most warlike and independent tribes. One of the missionaries ⁸ who encountered the trials of those early days, told me that the first two or three years he spent in New Zealand, could only be described as a living martyrdom, – so frequently was he apparently about to be sacrificed by the then savage and blood-thirsty natives.

After the Church of England Missionaries had made some progress, the Wesleyans arrived, and began their useful labors; selecting Hokianga as their first station: and about this time an irregular traffic with Sydney was increasing, which for several years, tended rather to strengthen and encourage the missionaries, whose knowledge of the native language induced frequent appeals to them by all parties, as interpreters and mediators, if not as judges. During about fifteen years previous to 1840, many British subjects, some Americans, and a few Frenchmen purchased land, and became actual settlers: but during the two or three years immediately preceding 1840, such a rage for buying land in New Zealand prevailed –

especially in New South Wales – that immense tracts were said to have been bought, – title deeds, (however useless), were sold and re-sold, – ruinous losses and disappointments were the inevitable consequence, – and dissatisfaction began to spread, not only among the white, but also among the coloured people.

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New Zealand was then, and had been for about twenty years, a resort of convicts escaped from the adjacent penal colonies, – who very soon adopted the habits of the natives, – acquired their language, – and, in several instances, were tattooed. Sealing vessels, and ships engaged in the whale fishery frequented the coasts, and as their crews, – particularly the sealers, – were usually reckless in their conduct, lives were frequently lost in the more remote harbours, of which no public account has been given: but particulars of the most notorious massacres have been repeatedly published.

I regret to say that in nearly all the affrays, – the origin of which I have been able to ascertain – the white man appears to have been the aggressor, not always unintentionally. Ignorance of language, customs, boundaries, or taboo marks, have not caused so many quarrels as insult, deceit, or intoxication. Thus while the

missionary was endeavouring to christianize the native, – and was eminently successful for a time, – his numerous opponents were diffusing their vicious influence, and demoralising the followers of their depraved examples.

At the beginning of the year 1839, it is supposed that there were not fewer than 80,000 aboriginal natives, (including women and children), and nearly 2,000 white people in these islands. Perhaps about 3,000 only of the above number of natives were on the southern islands, while not less than 77,000 were on the northern. This great disparity in population between two adjacent islands so nearly equal in area, seems to have been partly a consequence of the comparatively recent peopling of New Zealand, and the course of migration; but chiefly the result of a disparity of climate. Neither the kauri tree, nor the kumera plant, are found on the southern (or middle) island: those shores are more exposed to wind and tempestuous sea; and as there are only a few harbours on the eastern coast, canoes cannot be much used. It is said, however, that the natives of the middle, (or large southern) island, were more numerous before they became acquainted with white men, – from whom they caught 'measles' and other diseases, which carried off many more people than now survive.

In the northern, or principal island, the natives were most

numerous along the accessible parts of the coast, and about the rivers and lakes, much of their subsistence being fish.⁹ They were not migratory, – excepting when conquerors of better territory; a case by no means infrequent, because the chief cause of their quarrels was land. Nearly every freeman in each tribe knew his boundaries, and the history of his family and possessions for several generations; but the extent claimed was sometimes insisted on tenaciously as a point of honor, rather than for its actual utility, since there was usually much more than they required for their own use. However, it should be remembered that extensive lands not only kept doubtful neighbours at a distance, but afforded a greater range for selecting trees for canoes, for fishing, for eel preserves, for rats,¹⁰ and for the choice of fertile spots for cultivations.

About 1000 white settlers were then living near the Bay of Islands and Hokianga, and not less than an equal number were dispersed over the country; some – the escaped convicts – secluding themselves as far in the interior as possible. This limited number of white men excited no jealousy on the part of the natives, with whom they traded. On the contrary, every chief of note was desirous of having his own "pakeha"¹¹ living under his protection, and acting as his adviser as well as agent or factor. The missionaries themselves, and all the early settlers, lived under the special protection of their native neighbours, – those generally from whom they had obtained land. This state of things gratified the chiefs, and they naturally thought that with more "pakehas" they would have more trade, and more advantages over other tribes. At that time they felt no loss of influence or authority. They themselves were the undoubted masters.

The principal and the more respectable settlers, then habitually looked to the chiefs for security from molestation on the part of ill-disposed inferior natives, – and to the missionaries for restraining the covetousness or anger of the chiefs, which the great influence acquired by the missions could alone effect.

The universal respect in which the natives held these pioneers of Christianity and civilization is a sufficient proof that

their personal behaviour was generally correct. The natives are such keen observers of character and conduct, – so quick in detecting inconsistency, and estimating individuals by their actions, that an inconsistent person – though professing to be a missionary – would have no moral influence.¹²

It appears that personal character – as sincere friends and truthful advisers – upheld the missionaries with the majority of the natives, nearly as much as the doctrine which they taught. However readily the gospel was received, and eagerly as this sagacious and inquisitive people learned to read and write, it may be feared that only a rather small proportion of nominal converts became really christians. Novelty, and what may be called a fashion of the time, have very great effect on these islanders: a striking instance of which may be given in the speedy apparent conversion of many natives to the Roman faith, when the French bishop, Dr. Pompallier, and some French priests first arrived in 1838. When asked by the old English missionaries why they did so, the reply was: "we like to try what is new."

When the rumour of intended colonization and government by Great Britain was spread abroad, a fresh light dawned on New Zealand, and all the early native jealousies, lulled since 1825, were revived with increased force. The mission dreaded the effects of extensive colonization, although desirous of British government. Some of the old settlers were disinclined to lose their monopoly of trade, and to submit to the restraints of English law. American and other settlers, not British subjects, were naturally averse to our interference; and bad characters – especially escaped convicts – of course dreaded the approach of legal authority.

But when once the decision of the British Government was made known, no exertion was spared by the Church of England and Wesleyan Missions to dispose the principal chiefs favorably towards such a change – a political change, which increasing local disorders and plans in preparation by various speculators, rendered imperative. Mr. (now Archdeacon) Henry Williams, at that time the head of the Church of England Mission in New Zealand, was particularly zealous and active; and his influence was then greater than that of any other individual in the country.

But the missionaries could not conscientiously urge, and

did not encourage the natives to part with their lands in the wholesale manner then required by speculative purchasers. On the contrary, they cautioned them to remember the future wants of their children, when numerous strangers would be settled among them; and while advising the natives to encourage the new comers, and treat them kindly, they dissuaded them, openly and honestly, from parting with such land as would be required for their own maintenance, and that of their descendants. The hasty attempts of the New Zealand Company to buy large tracts of land, without even ascertaining the correct boundaries, or communicating with most of the owners: and their precipitate settlement of British colonists in ill chosen localities are now known to the public. Their first and principal settlement, at the south end of the Northern Island, was established at the end of 1839.¹³

Early in 1840, Captain Hobson, of the Royal Navy, who was instructed by government to treat with the natives for the cession of their sovereignty to the Queen of Great Britain, arrived at the Bay of Islands. He was cordially welcomed by the Church Mission, the Wesleyan Missionaries, and the more respectable settlers, as well as by many influential chiefs; but the French Romanist Missionaries, the Americans, and a considerable proportion of the natives, looked on with displeasure and distrust which were but ill-concealed.

The treaty of Waitangi, so important to all parties interested in New Zealand, was signed on the 6th of February, by most of the chiefs present; and copies were forthwith sent about the country, as well as round the coasts, in charge of Mr. Henry Williams, Major Bunbury, Mr. Shortland, and other duly accredited persons. Major Bunbury went, in H.M.S. Herald, to Cook's Strait, and along the middle island to Stewart Island. Mr. Williams and others went to Cook's Strait, and round the southern part of the northern island. Mr. Shortland visited the tribes north of the Bay of Islands.

After lengthened and minute explanations, and earnest discussion of the actual import and probable consequences of the treaty, it was signed by a large majority of the principal chiefs, on behalf of their tribes and themselves. Those who did not sign were either opposed to the arrangement, were of minor importance, or were

in the interior, out of reach.

This treaty has now been viewed in many lights. Some

persons still affect to deride it; some say it was a deception; and some would unhesitatingly set it aside; while others esteem it highly as a well considered and judicious work, of the utmost importance to both the coloured and the white man in New Zealand. That the natives did not view all its provisions in exactly the same light as our authorities is undoubted: but whatever minor objections maybe raised, the fact is now unquestionable that the loyalty, the fidelity, and co-operation of any natives in New Zealand has hitherto depended mainly on their reliance on the honor of Great Britain in adhering scrupulously to the treaty of Waitangi – the Magna Charta of New Zealand.

When Heke was agitating the northern natives by his arguments against the government, he took great pains to show them that the British flag being hoisted on any territory, was a sign that the land belonged to the Sovereign of Great Britain, and that the people of that land were become slaves. He contended that the governor and the bishop were only slaves, – that they were obliged to obey the directions of their Sovereign (who now was a woman) and that to preserve the freedom of New Zealanders the British flag must not be admitted on their territory. To meet these arguments, Archdeacon Henry Williams circulated printed copies of the treaty of Waitangi, and himself discussed the question of the flag¹⁴ at every meeting of the natives in his neighbourhood. By degrees he succeeded in counteracting Heke's mystification of the subject.

¹ Hokianga, Kaipara, Wanganui, admit vessels a short distance within their mouths.

² Almost too much so, the pruning knife being constantly required in gardens.

³ This sandy clay forms a tough sub-stratum, approaching to stone in hardness, previous to exposure to the weather.

⁴ Cold sandy clay.

⁵ There is much volcanic soil in the northern and central districts of the northern island.

⁶ Duatera and another, who were chiefs of some note.

⁷ 1815.

⁸ Mr. King.

⁹ Eels are particularly prized, and are caught by wicker traps like those used in Europe.

¹⁰ Rats (the native animal so called), were sought for food. It is supposed that this was a small creature resembling a rabbit rather than a rat. It is now seldom seen.

¹¹ Pakeha means stranger, alien, or foreigner.

¹² The loss of character and influence caused even by settlers' misconduct with respect to native women is remarkable, although unhappily of ordinary occurrence.

¹³ Two of those places having very little available land, and the third having no harbour.

¹⁴ Te kara (the colour.)

CHAPTER II: 1840-1844

CHAPTER II.

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1840 – 1844.

The misgivings and partial opposition occasioned by the proceedings of the British authorities, and recent settlers in the northern part of New Zealand, as well as the jealousy roused by the sudden arrival of large bodies of colonists in Cook's Strait, were neutralised for a time by the attractive advantages of a brisk trade with these new-comers, whose demand for pigs, potatoes, fish, and native labour, was unprecedented and very lucrative. By the payment received for these, and for their lands, the natives in the vicinity of the Pakeha¹⁵ settlements became rich in the estimation of their remoter countrymen, and were not a little envied.

Eagerness to trade, and to have settlers near them, overcame all other considerations during 1840, and 1841; but in 1842 the tide began to turn. More settlers arrived in every ship. The natives were not only treated with less caution and less kindness than previously, but they were threatened, even on trifling occasions, with the punishments of English law;¹⁶ and they were told by ill-disposed or unreflecting white men that their country was taken from them, that they were now Queen Victoria's slaves, and that they could not even sell their own property – their land – as they pleased. These taunts were felt deeply. The natives had been so accustomed to pass freely across land or water, wherever they pleased in their own districts, that they were perplexed by seeing fences rising, and by finding that people were becoming averse to their company. They also found that land which they had hastily sold for a few articles, soon consumed or worn out, was resold for many times – perhaps more than thirty times the value which they had received. They discovered that the government understanding of the treaty of Waitangi not only bound them to give the Queen of England the first offer of land they wished to sell, but that they could not sell to any other person, even if the government, on behalf of Her Majesty, declined to purchase. They were moreover much astonished and irritated by

the interference of government with estates purchased from them previous to 1840; and by hearing that all land so bought, exceeding a certain quantity to each original purchaser, would be transferred to the government. In addition to these and other serious causes of irritation, the chiefs began to feel that they were no longer the principal persons; but that their influence and power were diminishing rapidly: that they were becoming suitors to the white men, instead of – as formerly – the white men being dependent on them.

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Probably, there is not in the world a race of men more truly democratic with respect to civil and personal independence, and yet equally aristocratic in their regard for descent and family connexion. On these subjects their feelings are sensitive in the highest degree. As an instance, when the now notorious Heke first heard the Queen prayed for in Waimate Church, instead of the chiefs (who were considered the principal authorities previous to 1840), he asked, indignantly, why the Queen of England was exalted to the skies, and the chiefs of New Zealand were trodden under foot. As another case, I have witnessed a long and anxiously sustained argument, lasting nearly a whole day, between two families, or portions of a tribe, respecting the ownership of a tract of land. One party had sold the ground to an Englishman for a small vessel of about thirty tons burthen; the other party denied their right to do so, and claimed the vessel. After tracing back their respective descents through eight generations, eagerly contesting every point, both parties agreed that the actual sellers of the land had not the right, and that the vessel ought to belong to the others, who also were willing to sell, on the same terms. On this the chief of the real owners waived the right of himself and his family, saying that they did not really want the vessel, but they wished their right to be known and acknowledged. For this right, I may add, they would have fought to extermination, if the quarrel could not have been settled in any peaceable manner.

These instances, among thousands similar, will suffice to show what a high-spirited and jealous people they are, and how keenly they must feel any attempt to treat their customs, or what they consider their rights, slightly: moreover, how anxiously they must watch the progress of a Race which they themselves say is causing them to disappear, just as the Norway rat, brought by the first English ships, has driven away or destroyed the native rat.^{17*}

It is necessary to bear in mind, that intercourse between the tribes, from one end of the islands to the other, is continual and rapid, whether war or peace prevail. Their mental activity, their love of talking, and their retentive memory, make them eager to collect and transmit intelligence. Hence, all proceedings of importance, whether at the Bay of Islands, or Cook's Strait, or elsewhere, are, in a few weeks, the subject of discussion throughout the country.¹⁸

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The gradual development of the real nature of the change which an established government, however feeble, would tend to work, – and the operation of courts of law, civil punishments, apprehension of offenders, and especially imprisonment for trial, – had already done much to make the natives more and more doubtful of the advantages of their altered position, when in June 1843 the fatal affray at Wairau gave a shock which vibrated through the length and breadth of the land.

That the settler should try to take land by force of arms was a startling idea, and it at once revived every former suspicion. Until then the settlers had been supposed to be men of peace, and trade; and the missionaries had invariably done their utmost to prevent warfare, but a new view was opened by the collision at Wairau. Happily – or, I should say, providentially, – the settlers at Wellington and Nelson were arrested forcibly in their insane projects of arming the community and attempting to act with farther hostility against the natives. Such conduct must inevitably have caused the total destruction of those settlements under circumstances of the most cruel description. Warlike preparations were stopped by the local government, conciliatory steps were taken, and the rising storm was dispersed. Awful indeed would have been the consequences, had a rash attempt been then made to apprehend the slaughterers of Captain Wakefield and his companions.

At this time there was neither fortification, nor defensible position, nor place of shelter or refuge for women and children, in either of the settlements. There were not four hun-

dred serviceable muskets among the whole white population, and even these were ill provided with accoutrements and ammunition. The whole military force consisted of one company¹⁹ of H.M.'s 80th regiment, stationed at Auckland. There was no ship of war.

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Afterwards the arrival of H.M.S. North Star, and a company²⁰ of the 96th regiment, at Wellington, tended much to quiet the alarm of some settlers; while the judicious conduct of the authorities suppressed the hostile demonstrations of other colonists.

Before passing on to the events of 1844, it should be carefully noted that the removal of the seat of government, in 1841, from the Bay of Islands to Waitemata or Auckland, caused very great dissatisfaction to the natives of the northern districts, living near that Bay and Hokianga. They soon discovered that the restraints and inconveniences of the newly-constituted authority which they had consented to acknowledge, however reluctant to obey, remained to interfere with them; while the countervailing advantages of augmented traffic, and good markets, were not only lost – gone to their greatest enemies²¹ – but that even the trade enjoyed

previous to 1840 was almost destroyed by the Custom House regulations, and by the presence of government officers at Kororareka – (now called Russell).

The illness and death of Governor Hobson,²² no doubt increased the difficulties under which the country was then struggling. The designs which he was forming, and the local acquaintance that he had gained, perished almost unrecorded. He suffered severely from the distractions of his false position, and the treatment he received while struggling to make the best of adverse circumstances.

Although selected for his difficult task on account of his qualifications; although he had previously visited the Bay of Islands and Cook's Strait in command of H.M.S. Rattlesnake, and had particularly distinguished himself by his conduct and gallantry in the West Indies, his representations of the real state of the country, true to the letter, were slighted, and his opinions, now proved sound, were bitterly assailed.

[15](#) Foreign, strange, alien.

[16](#) To them unintelligible.

[17](#) I have never seen a native rat, but suspect that it was an animal not yet described by naturalists. In the Friendly Islands, rat shooting was a favorite diversion. – See "Mariner's Tonga Islands."

[18](#) If a native who is travelling has really no particular news to tell, he invents something, in order that he may be a welcome guest where he stops. Frequently the natives sit talking by their fires during the whole night.

[19](#) (78 men)

[20](#) (56 men)

[21](#) The Waikato and Ngatewhatua tribes.

[22](#) In 1842.

CHAPTER III: 1844

Note. – As the four next Chapters notice questions in which I was concerned, they are not written in the first person.

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CHAPTER III.

1844.

The governor²³ appointed to succeed Captain Hobson arrived at Auckland in the last week of 1843, nearly a year and a half after his decease. During this long interval the colonial secretary²⁴ had acted as governor.

Auckland has many advantages in point of situation, but it wants more wood and running water. A better position might perhaps have been selected, in the same part of the island, and one less exposed to wind and rain would have been more agreeable; though possibly not so capable of defence as that of Auckland might be made.²⁵

The harbour is very good, the land around is not high: – and there is a spacious outer roadstead, land locked from prevailing or indeed from almost all winds, where fleets might anchor in safety. The adjoining coast is usually a weather shore with smooth water. Within the harbour, which is long but narrow, there are more than four square miles of good anchorage. Any ship may enter or depart under sail.

H.M.S. North Star²⁶ attended Captain Fitz-Roy, the newly appointed governor, from Sydney to Auckland, and thence conveyed him to Wellington and Nelson.

The stay of this ship having been limited²⁷ to one month, caused more haste in visiting those settlements than was consistent with the deliberate proceedings which their extremely critical state required; but as Sir Everard Home's orders were not discretionary, the governor endeavoured to make the most

of this one month by immediately visiting the settlements then supposed to be in a precarious state, – not from the natives' natural ill will, but from the consequences of provocation given by the settlers.²⁸

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At this time (1844) the New Zealand question was attracting general notice; and the insuperable impediments to colonizing that country peaceably, in the face of its native population – according to the "Wakefield theory" – were becoming evident. Colonization was stopped, and the capital already embarked was nearly expended without any adequate return, either realized or in prospect. Besides which the local government had neither money nor credit, and was in debt more than one year's revenue. There were no means of paying any salaries – however long in arrear: scarcely could the most pressing and ordinary payments on account of the colonial government be made. Various local laws, urgently required on account of frequent disputes which occurred between settlers and natives, – to whose condition English law is more or less unsuitable, – had been too long deferred; land claimants were suffering more and more from delay in deciding on their respective cases, and public affairs generally were very much in arrear.

At Auckland alone there was so much pressing business to be transacted by the government, that months of labour were required; nevertheless, the state of the southern settlements made it imperative on the governor to hasten thither, and before the end of January he landed at Wellington.²⁹

Words could not express the surprise and disappointment with which Port Nicholson and the town of Wellington were seen for the first time. The port is too large to be sheltered, even from prevailing winds; and it has a long narrow entrance from the open sea, between threatening and really dangerous rocks, making it almost a blind harbour. It is nearly surrounded by high hills covered with forests; and appears to have but little level, cultivable land in its immediate neighbourhood. The stormy climate, the straggling, exposed, and indefensible nature of the town, and the depressing prospect for the future in such a locality, during at least the present generation, might well cause sorrow that such a situation should have been chosen.

The principal objects of the governor's visit to Wellington and Nelson were to check and endeavour to allay the hostile feelings which were rapidly increasing between the white and coloured races; and to effect, if possible, an amicable settlement of the New Zealand Company's claims to land near Port Nicholson. It was quite obvious to unprejudiced persons that hostilities – especially on account of land, would prove fatally destructive to colonization; and that, therefore, the prosperity of the settlements depended on the maintenance of peace, mutual confidence, and good will. That sound policy dictated a pacific and conciliatory course, as plainly as right principle, cannot now be denied; but it was controverted at that time, and not a small number of the settlers were then so eager for hostile movements, that they scarcely seemed to have patience with the governor for refraining to adopt their suggestions. They would not believe that the natives could ever become formidable opponents, or that it would be useless to cultivate the soil if only under the protection of troops. They would not believe that no one could work in the interior while continually exposed to the rifle of the native; neither would they believe that no produce of the land could pay for cultivation at the point of the bayonet.

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The destructive effects of measures tending to bring on hostilities between the two races, seemed almost entirely discredited at Wellington and Nelson, where the feeling of animosity against the natives was so very strong that the permanent interest of the settlers – especially the scattered outsettlers – was altogether disregarded. No one appeared disposed to give the natives credit for courage, or skill in warfare, – no one seemed to doubt that they would fly before a very small detachment of military; – the prevailing feeling appeared to be anxiety for a collision.

Designing persons encouraged this feeling; partly with the view of having more troops quartered in their neighbourhood, and consequently a better market for their produce, – partly with the hope that hostilities would drive away the natives and leave the settlers in undisputed possession of all the land round Port Nicholson.³⁰ Where every storekeeper and farmer was interested in the presence of troops, it was hard to

separate an occasional truth from the inventions and exaggerations with which interested persons were continually deluding others. Had their efforts to bring on a quarrel been successful, there cannot now be a doubt that Wellington would have suffered a fate worse than that of Kororareka. The hostile natives would have been more numerous – nearly all heathens, unimproved in their habits – and there would have been no place of refuge for women and children.

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The governor endeavoured to check hostile feelings by public and private expression of the views of government, and of the improbability that more troops would be detached to New Zealand. He stated his own opinions also without reserve; and one immediate consequence was, the commencement of a virulent newspaper opposition to all his measures.

As the New Zealand papers have received undue credit in England – however little noticed in the colony where their editors and contributors were well known, – it

may here be remarked that the Wellington paper was then under the influence of the New Zealand Company, and a branch of the Union Bank of Australia.

The Nelson paper was an organ of the most violent advocates of hostility with the natives, but so cleverly written, that one could not help wishing its editor more creditable employment.³¹ Both these papers strove unceasingly to misrepresent the motives and acts of the governor, to propagate falsehoods, and to excite the settlers to a line of conduct, the very worst that they could pursue for their own interest.

From Wellington the North Star conveyed the governor to Nelson, where the state of affairs and the proceedings were somewhat similar to those at Wellington; but as personal feelings had been excited to the utmost, it was natural that there should be more difficulty in persuading those who had lost their friends at Wairau, that under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the government could not, without injustice, become their avenger.

The locality and neighbourhood of Nelson are very unsuitable for an important settlement. Far out of the track of shipping, – at the bottom of a deep bay – shut in by high wooded hills – with scarcely any level land,³² and with a

confined harbour accessible only to small ships, – it is indeed much to be lamented, that, under any circumstances, such a situation should have been selected.

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At Waikanae, opposite Kapiti (or Entry Island), the meeting took place with those notorious chiefs, Rauparaha and Ranghiaiaata, which has caused so much comment; and it was there made known that the governor would refrain from avenging the death of our countrymen who fell at Wairau.

It would occupy too much of this limited paper to give all the reasons for that decision, which was approved of fully by Her Majesty's Government, though most displeasing to a considerable number of the settlers at Wellington and Nelson. From that time their newspapers never ceased to revile Captain Fitz-Roy – to condemn his conciliatory policy, and to blame every measure which had for its object the prevention of hostility between the white and coloured races.

It may only be briefly remarked in this place, that, by their own shewing, the English party who caused the Wairau conflict were in the wrong, – that strict justice must have decided against them, and could scarcely have condemned the savages whose fury was so suddenly roused. But, supposing the natives apprehended and tried at a criminal court;³³ legal proof would probably have failed – and they would have been acquitted for want of positive evidence. What object then could have been gained by their trial? Would the great end of all punishment have been attained, that of deterring others from similar crimes? or rather would not an opposite effect have been caused? Indiscriminate chastisement, by arms, might have been applicable to rebels or aliens; but these natives were considered to be British subjects, and they were not then in a state of rebellion, however ready to rise and defy English authority in New Zealand. Any attempt to apprehend the chiefs Rauparaha or Ranghiaiaata would have been effectually resisted by force of arms; and had such an attempt been made, of course it must have been carried through. These leaders would have retreated into their fastnesses, where no regular troops could have followed: thousands would have joined them: hostilities against the settlers would have been commenced, and their ruin must have followed: – ruin under the most horrible circumstances of heathen warfare. Another course might have been taken by the governor. He might have kept the question open pending a reference to the home government. Had he done so, the interval of suspense would have been occupied by the natives

in preparations for defence: their whole thoughts would have been warlike: they would have been taunted and threatened by some of the settlers: and irritating passages would have been translated to them from the newspapers. As soon as they themselves were organised and prepared by strong pahi,³⁴ – they would have lost no time in attacking the settlements before the anticipated arrival of military reinforcements. These intentions are now known to have been entertained. It is also fully ascertained that they proposed to endeavour to draw their opponents into the woody defiles of their almost impracticable country, well knowing the advantage they would then have over the mechanically trained soldier; or the awkward settler unaccustomed to warfare.

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Almost naked, without shoes, and independent of a commissariat, the hardy native in his own forest is more than a match for the white man.

Can any reflecting person now doubt, after what has recently occurred in the north of New Zealand – that it was wise to make a virtue of necessity, and at Waikanae endeavour to close the fatal Wairau breach without delay.

The natives about Cook's Straits soon discovered with satisfaction that they were no longer in danger of hostilities, and their ordinary occupations were forthwith resumed; while the settlers proceeded as usual in clearing and cultivating their allotments.

As it is now known that several thousand men would have joined Rauparaha and Ranghiaiaata had there been any attempt to apprehend them, and that a general attack would have been made on the southern settlements, which must inevitably have fallen, being defenceless and indefensible, – a gentleman at Wellington, one of the company's settlers,³⁵ was right in asserting,³⁶ that the colonists at that place were "living on a volcano"; yet how little did he and others then know of the really formidable character of the New Zealand warrior.

The New Zealand Company's purchase of land about Wellington was next completed (except the upper part of the Hutt Valley) and then the commissioner of land claims proceeded along the west coast towards New Plymouth, to endeavour to effect a settlement of the disputed purchases at Porirua, Manawatu, Wanganui and Taranaki. H.M.S. North Star

sailed to Sydney, and the governor returned to Auckland, in the colonial brig Victoria.

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About the end of February Auckland was near being the scene of a serious collision, which might have precipitated the two races into hostilities. A native prisoner was rescued from the sheriffs custody in the court house; the military went in pursuit heedlessly: a friendly chief living very near the town was insulted in his own village, and his own son was carried off as a hostage for the rescued prisoner. Most happily as no blood was shed, although shots were fired, the chief protector of the aborigines had influence enough to effect a peaceable adjustment of the matter, and a voluntary return of the prisoner to his confinement.

Had a native life been lost, an attack on Auckland would have been made, to meet which there were about seventy young soldiers, fifty bad muskets, which would have been in awkward hands, and a few fowling pieces. There was no defensible position. The scattered wooden town might have been burned like dry grass, and then what would have been the fate of its inhabitants? Government house, the public offices, the gaol and court house (mere weather-boarded wooden structures) would probably have been the first in flames, and with them must have perished all the public documents of every description.

At the governor's return in March, a meeting of chiefs was assembled by him to discuss the subject of this rescue from the hands of justice; but though fair promises were made by them, and their behaviour was satisfactory, it was plain that our mode of apprehending an alleged offender, with a view to his being tried, did not at all comport with their ideas of justice, or their habits, and if persevered in, would – sooner or later – bring on serious difficulties.

During March and April large bodies of natives were successively visiting Auckland, to see the new governor and talk over affairs. These visits, however interesting and useful in themselves, were tediously prolonged, and occupied much time; but there was no alternative: each tribe thought its own visit the most important, and would have been seriously offended by a brief or cold reception. The largest room at government house was often filled with natives during the most valuable hours of the day: but as these people had travelled a long distance, they could not be uncivilly received, although their presence always put a stop to ordinary business, and caused other annoyances.

Preparations had been many months in progress for a great native feast, about three miles from Auckland, at which some

thousands of the natives were to be present. This gathering, so near the town, was anticipated with some anxiety. It took place early in May, and passed off happily, but reflecting persons saw these thousands of well armed and well disciplined warriors paraded before the settlers within an hour's journey of their chief settlement, with considerable uneasiness. An accidental quarrel, a mere chance medley, might have involved the whole in hostilities. Besides which, such a gathering, though peaceable at that time, might be repeated on a future occasion, as an easy method of collecting large forces, without causing suspicion. For instance, on one day more than two hundred chiefs were assembled in government house, above a thousand of their followers were in the town, and not less than two thousand in the neighbourhood, within an hour's journey, and at that moment the settlement was entirely in their power.

After a few months' observation and reflection the governor became more and more convinced of the absolute necessity of acting so as to make a large majority of the natives really friendly towards the government, and disposed, of their own free will, to support his authority. By the small physical force in the colony, it was plain he could then do nothing against such numerous opponents as any hostilities would raise; but by reason, – by strict justice, – and real impartiality, – supported by the influence of the religious bodies, he might have hopes of success, until adequately strengthened from home.

It is well known that the object of the British government was to promote peace and improvement in New Zealand, – not to excite hostilities, or encourage warfare. Of this correct and legitimate object, every Briton may feel proud; and failure in so good a cause, however much to be regretted, cannot be imputed to the intention of government. Experience has shown errors, and those errors have been more visible in the colony than at home. It is almost impossible for persons who have never been in that country to realise in their minds its true character and peculiarities.

It is now evident that the just and humane views of the British government might have been carried out better by an authority possessing some real power, supported by adequate military and naval force, and by fortified settlements, secure against musketry and sudden surprise. Too much reliance has been placed on the friendly disposition of the natives, too much confidence has been encouraged in their religious feelings, and in the influence of religion over their wild and covetous nature. The authorities at home, dreading that the

presence of physical power might encourage aggression against the natives, – called on continually for military aid in numerous parts of the world, and finding it as difficult as expensive to comply with even the most urgent calls, were naturally unwilling that a large force should be placed in New Zealand. Repeated denials given to reiterated applications of successive governors of New Zealand for more effective support to their position, obliged them to have recourse to a system of forbearance and conciliation, which, – in the nature of things, – could not long continue, and which encouraged encroachments, as well as injurious trials of strength, on the part of both races. In the colony an extreme of forbearance, – arising out of utter inability to carry out the law efficiently, rather than from real leniency, bordered on inhumanity towards the settlers, and placed the local authorities in a most painful and humiliating position. However kind and conciliatory the executive might be, there should always have been an imposing force in the back-ground to ensure respect and acquiescence.

The conciliatory arrangements which were made about that time respecting the sale of land by natives, were measures of bare justice, to which, and to the kind general conduct of the local government, the fidelity and co-operation of any of the aborigines in late hostilities is to be attributed.

Directly the concourse of natives dispersed from about Auckland, the legislative council assembled, and continued to sit regularly³⁷ till July. The governor had been anxious to obtain the assistance of a member from Nelson, as well as from Wellington; but succeeded only with the latter. The almost insuperable difficulty was the fact of there being no persons in so new a colony who could afford to leave their residence and occupation for two or three months in the year.³⁸ It may well be supposed that there is only a very limited number of persons qualified for a seat in the council, and that each of those few has his time fully occupied by his own affairs; hence, in so small a community, the difficulty of filling that position properly has been keenly felt by the executive. As the legislative council had not been assembled during

Mr. Shortland's administration of the government, there was much to be done for the rapidly growing wants of young settlements placed in immediate contact with such dangerous neighbours. One may observe here that persons in England do not appear to appreciate comprehensively the daily dilemmas and risks that are attendant upon the continual intercourse of two races, as little acquainted with each others habits and ideas, as they are, generally speaking, with each other's language. This mutual ignorance is a source of constant difficulty, and complicates every transaction, besides giving rise to quarrels that would not take place if each party understood and could make due allowance for the other. The lower orders among our own countrymen, such as rough labourers, or artisans, or seafaring people, are particularly apt to be obstinate and overbearing in their dealings with the natives, – caring for nothing but the object immediately in their view, and regardless of consequences to others, or even to themselves.

The native language is so capable of misapprehension, and ironical expressions are so often used, that those settlers who know a little of it, and believe they know much, are frequently led into absurd mistakes. Many years of familiar intercourse with the New Zealanders are absolutely necessary in order to acquire a trustworthy knowledge of their figurative and oriental modes of expression.

As a remarkable instance of this difficulty, it may be mentioned that the native speakers at the large meeting held at Waimate, on account of Heke's proceedings, were but occasionally intelligible to the bishop and many of the missionaries then present, who had been but a few years in the country. Only two or three of the earliest residents and best linguists, could understand and interpret the allusions, the ironical expressions, and the oriental exaggerations which prevailed in every animated speech from the oldest chiefs.

Such being the case, one cannot be surprised at the apparent fabrications which abound among the settlers, who are continually circulating rumours of the natives' intentions, or erroneous reports of their conversations, or mistaken explanations of their motives.

Very few persons have been long enough in the country to be trusted as correct interpreters. Not only is an accurate knowledge of native usages, as well as of both languages required, but a certain quickness of apprehension, and general knowledge, not commonly possessed.

[24](#) Mr. Shortland.

[25](#) If Auckland is not now in the best position for the capital, the only one superior is within twenty miles of that place.

[26](#) Commanded by Sir J. Everard Home, Bart. C.B.

[27](#) By the Admiralty.

[28](#) Between Auckland and Wellington it is usually a ten days' passage for a man of war.

[29](#) Four weeks only after arriving, with his family, at Auckland.

[30](#) These persons cared not for the general good of the settlement (which was much promoted by the vicinity of natives), they thought only of supplying the market with their own produce, at their own price, undisturbed by native competitors.

[31](#) The Nelson paper also was greatly influenced by the branch of the Union Bank of Australia, which was much mixed up with the Company's proceedings, and appeared to identify itself with that body.

[32](#) Except at a great distance.

[33](#) To insure an impartial jury the venue must have been changed.

[34](#) Their paha are soon constructed in a woody country. In a day, or from a day to a month, according to their size and strength.

[35](#) Mr. Hanson.

[36](#) In a letter to Colonel Godfrey.

[37](#) The difficulty of moving about a new and straggling settlement without hard footpaths or lights after dark, prevented the council from meeting in the evening, and the necessity of printing each days' proceedings, made it impracticable to sit oftener than on alternate days.

[38](#) One month for the voyage to and from Auckland; another month, at least, attending the council.

CHAPTER IV: 1844

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1844.

The subject requiring the primary attention of the legislative council was finance. At the beginning of this year (1844) the local government was twenty-four thousand pounds in debt: the revenue being then estimated at about twenty thousand pounds. All salaries and ordinary current payments were several months in arrear: there was no prospect of the revenue amounting even to two-thirds of the estimated indispensable expenditure: the establishment was reduced to that which was authorised by the Secretary of State in a despatch received just at the close of the previous year (1843): the governor was strictly prohibited from drawing on the British treasury: and no loan could be raised.³⁹

By reducing the establishment of government to an extreme much below what was absolutely necessary for carrying on the daily public business, a less expenditure might have been ensured, but, not only at a loss of efficiency, almost to the disabling of the local government, but to the extreme distress of many official persons who had been induced to leave their public situations elsewhere to form part of the establishment at New Zealand, where they had been obliged to build houses and settle their families, at no small expense.⁴⁰

In order to carry on the government until assistance and directions could be received from England: to relieve the creditors of government from distress: and to keep numerous families from extreme privation, some from actually starving: it was decided to issue notes, or debentures, bearing five per cent, interest after the expiration of one year; and as these debentures were at first refused by several speculators, and therefore seemed likely to be much depreciated, they were

made a legal tender. It should be noticed that this paper currency was not intended to be permanent; it was intended to serve instead of coin, during a very limited period, not exceeding two years, – before which it was probable that some arrangement would be made by the home government for their withdrawal from circulation. These debentures enabled the government to carry on its functions, and saved an extremity of disorder and distress which can hardly be appreciated by persons in an old country. Their principle has been much condemned by some theorists, (who reason about a young struggling colony without capital, as if it were really circumstanced like any portion of the parent state – supported by banks and capitalists); but since their beneficial effects were practically felt, and fully appreciated by those who might have been actually starved without them, the objections of theorists may be less regarded. As there were then no exports – the colony was drained of its small stock of specie by payments for goods and the usual necessities of life: and scarcely any circulating medium remained except notes of the Union Bank of Australia.

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But as the issue of paper money was in direct contravention of the governor's instructions; of course he was prepared to bear the consequences. There have been many occasions, it will not be denied, on which deviations from instructions have been productive of public benefit, however indefensible according to a general rule which must be maintained. Whether this was one of such occasions, the wretched state of the colonists in New Zealand may shew. Impending ruin, and actual starvation, threatened the greater number of the working classes, and many others, at Auckland, who depended on the government expenditure. No assistance from England could be expected in less than a year. – No money could be obtained by the government, in the Colony, or from Sydney, because no person would accept bills drawn by the governor without the express sanction of the Secretary of State.

The practical effect of these debentures was not only the removal of all actual want, but the promotion of much industry, and general improvement. Instead of a complete stagnation, as at the beginning of 1844, activity and abundant employment soon prevailed. Auckland and its vicinity improved rapidly, and an export trade began.

The necessity under which the principal holders of debentures lay to employ them in the colony, and as speedily as possible, lest there should be any deterioration of value, induced those persons to buy up gum, flax, timber, or copper, or other native produce – to be exported as remittances to

their correspondents instead of money. Some built small vessels; others improved their landed property by fences and better buildings. The results were conspicuously beneficial.^{41*}

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How to raise additional revenue amidst such general poverty and distress, was most perplexing; various methods were suggested, but strongly opposed by the non-official members of council; who wished to reduce the expenditure to the revenue actually raised, however small that sum might be. At last an increase of the customs' duties was decided on, – not as a good measure, but as the only one that seemed practicable.

The governor deemed it to be his duty to endeavour to raise a revenue adequate to maintain the establishment ordered by the home government, and necessary for the public affairs of the colony. The non-official members of council considered the establishment and expenditure too large, and tried to effect such reductions as would, if made, have prevented the local government from executing the duties demanded from it, not only by the wants of the colony, but for the information of the home government, which requires numerous and voluminous documents to be prepared and transmitted in duplicate. In an old country there are so many ways of raising revenue that a selection can be made. In New Zealand, a young colony, there are very few, and it is a great object to adopt such methods as may be least open to evasion, while executed with the smallest expense. Land, if taxed, yields but little, as so little is cultivated, and the tenure of wild land has been too uncertain to admit of its being taxed. Houses, animals, imports, exports, sales, licenses, deeds, and the individual members of the community, were the only objects available for taxation.

As much censure has been cast on the propositions of the governor to tax houses, cattle, and dogs, it may not be irrelevant here to remind the reader that there were no "rates" of any kind in New Zealand, such as are paid for houses in

other countries: – that a house is an object easily rated or taxed, without the possibility of any evasion: and that the number of rooms in it may form an easy scale for taxing.⁴² To say, as has been asserted, that such a tax would induce people to alter the construction of houses, – when it was only to be levied for a temporary purpose, during two years at most, – was obviously incorrect.

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It was proposed to levy an impost on imported cattle, because a large importation was expected, which could not be smuggled. Their number, it was considered, would not be affected by a moderate duty. Besides which, at that time the importers of cattle could afford to pay a tax better than most people. They were chiefly persons living in New South Wales. The tax on dogs (also much blamed) was intended solely as a means of diminishing their number, which had become a nuisance. It has been said that this tax would affect sheep-feeders. There were not then half-a-dozen shepherds' dogs in New Zealand; but had there been more, it

would not have signified, because the proposed tax was to affect those dogs only which were found in or about the towns: dogs used in the country being specially exempted.

Very incorrect accounts of proceedings in that legislative council appeared in newspapers, and possibly they may have been thought true, however strange, by persons accustomed to the correct reporting of public proceedings in England. They were, however, very incorrect, being the results of notes in common writing (not short hand) taken by the editors or composers of the Auckland newspapers, who trusted much to memory, and frequently colored their statements so as to suit the taste of their readers. One of these editors who used to write and publish a notoriously virulent paper, called "The Auckland Times," was an unhappy man, whose existence was lately brought to an untimely close by hard drinking. That such a man, utterly regardless of truth or character, should have been countenanced, was a lamentable proof of a very low tone of moral feeling in the colony.

Indeed, one of the most melancholy features of the growing society in New Zealand is a disregard for honorable and virtuous conduct. Truthfulness and sincerity are not cherished. The very few persons who are not (to use the current expression) "colonial" in their ideas and conduct, are neither under-

stood, nor estimated as they deserve to be, and as they would be in old countries.

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The business of the council was just finished, at the beginning of July, when intelligence arrived that very serious disturbances had taken place at New Plymouth, where the land commissioner's premature promulgation of his decision against the natives, in favor of the New Zealand Company, had caused such great excitement and alarm among the settlers, that hostilities seemed inevitable. Almost at the same time information was received that the chief Heke had cut down the flag-staff at Russell, (Kororareka), in the Bay of Islands, and that his followers had insulted and provoked the settlers in a manner that could not be passed over by the government without serious notice. It was necessary to check this chief without delay, as his object was known to be resistance to British authority at that place; but the means of doing so effectually were neither at hand, nor to be expected within many months. Application was forthwith made to the Governor⁴³ of New South Wales for troops, and a small detachment from Auckland was sent to Russell.⁴⁴

Meanwhile H.M.S. Hazard, which had just arrived in New Zealand, conveyed the governor to New Plymouth, where he was met by the bishop, who had travelled overland from Auckland in only seven days,⁴⁵ to assist in quieting the disturbances.

It appeared so clear to the governor that the view taken by the land commissioner could not be adopted by the government without causing bloodshed, and the probable ruin of the settlement, – because the injustice of awarding land to the New Zealand Company, which was well known not to have been purchased by them, was apparent to every native, – that information was made known publicly at a large meeting of the settlers and natives, that the commissioner's award would not be confirmed by the governor.

Arrangements were then commenced for securing the actual settlers in quiet possession of sufficient land; the natives being desirous that they should not quit the place, but determined not to sell them certain favourite localities. The substance of the case was this: the New Zealand Company's agents had endeavoured to buy a large tract of land from a few persons who owned about a thirtieth part of it, the great majority of the proprietors being then absent. When the

absentees returned to their own places, after a few years, they found white men settled there and cultivating. Of course the few (about forty)⁴⁶ who professed to sell to the Company's agents could not dispose of that which belonged to the absentees (many hundreds in number), therefore their land was forthwith demanded by them. However much this case may have been complicated or mystified by appeals to other laws than those of the New Zealanders themselves, the above will be found the simple fact. It may be asked what Englishman would give up his land under analogous circumstances, if sold without his authority during his absence. But, say some persons, these natives who returned to claim land occupied by settlers, were or had been slaves, and therefore they had no right to this land. Strange doctrine this to be held by Englishmen! These men had been made prisoners of war, – captives rather than slaves, – by the Waikato tribe, who, at the instigation of Christian teachers, gave them their liberty – and permission to return to their own land.

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Would an Englishman, after some years confinement in a French prison, or being enslaved by Africans, admit that he had forfeited his estate in England? But even the New Zealand usages, which in this case are more to the purpose, do not prevent a man who has been captured (or a slave) from owning and retaining land.

Before losing sight of New Plymouth it may be remarked here that if disappointment and sorrow were caused by the first sight of such ill chosen sites for large settlements as Port Nicholson and Blind Bay, what must have been the feelings excited by finding New Plymouth in a position that almost debar it from free communication with other places, either by land or water. The grievous error of landing a large body of very respectable settlers at a place, however fertile and pleasing, without a port, without even a safe roadstead for shipping, and so far from any other settlement that land carriage is at present and must long be impracticable, – is self evident, but now almost irremediable.

The manner in which the New Plymouth district was supposed to have been purchased was not a little remarkable, and merits attention.

Certain persons⁴⁷ went in a vessel to the roadstead off New

Plymouth, and landed an illiterate whaling master, who had a mere smattering of the native language, to negotiate the purchase of the whole adjoining district.

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With about forty men, women and children, an arrangement was made, and goods were given to them, in exchange for the whole district – as the Company's agents said; but in exchange for those natives' lands, or parts of them only, in the nearest district alone – as the natives understood. The interpreter was incapable of explaining correctly what the natives meant. They were asked the names of places where they had lands, and the names of all the principal points and hills then in sight; these were written down, as the places purchased for the New Zealand Company: the deed, a document quite unintelligible to the natives, was signed by them because they were told to do so before they could receive the goods, and thus, on a small rocky islet,⁴⁸ or on board a vessel,⁴⁹ was a nominal purchase of more than sixty thousand acres of land assumed to have been made in a few days.

Leaving New Plymouth perfectly quiet, the governor and the bishop went to Wellington and thence sailed to Auckland.

Being very anxious to reach the Bay of Islands in time to meet the troops then daily expected from Sydney, the governor hastened on from Auckland as soon as the necessary arrangements were made. One hundred and fifty men⁵⁰ had arrived, and disembarked at Russell; fifty were added from the detachment at Auckland, and H.M.S. Hazard had fifty seamen and marines ready to land, – making the force but two hundred and fifty in all; yet at that time, – (so much undervalued were the natives) – most of the officers and men thought themselves fully able to give Heke and his followers a severe chastisement, even at his own stronghold in the

interior.

The governor, the officer commanding the troops,⁵¹ and the engineer officer⁵² thought differently; and the former relied on assistance from many natives well affected to the government.

Previous to making a decided movement from Russell towards Kaikohe (Heke's place) several meetings with other natives were held by the governor in various parts of the Bay of Islands; and it was then so obvious that the main cause of their discontent was the deserted state of the port – owing to

the obnoxious customs' regulations – and that they had indeed reason to complain with justice of their ruined trade, that the governor determined to remove this root of evil, and forthwith took on himself the responsibility of closing the custom house. This was the commencement of a measure which he had always thought advisable for New Zealand, and had already brought under the notice of the legislative council, and the secretary of state for the colonies, with the hope of proposing it formally at a suitable period. This seemed to him a moment when such a change would be very beneficial, and he did not shrink from the decision: although unauthorised.

It was probable that such an alteration would be earnestly sought for by the chiefs, (urged on by white men) and he could not avoid foreseeing the facility with which the collection of customs' duties might be evaded, or openly resisted. It was on all accounts advisable not to risk coming to a trial of strength during the then powerless state of the local government.

The governor thought it right as well as expedient, to do that as a matter of justice and good feeling which he conscientiously believed ought to be done, and which, if not done spontaneously, might be extorted by force at a subsequent and not distant time. He had then no hopes of any support from England that would enable him to carry out English law efficiently among the natives.

As Heke remained at a distance, and evinced no wish to atone for his outrages, the troops were moved to the Kerikeri river, and preparations were made for marching inland towards Kaikohe, when the chief protector of Aborigines⁵³ arrived from Waimate, (where a large concourse of chiefs had assembled in consultation with the missionaries) to make known to the governor the general and anxious desire of a large majority of the principal men that the troops should not be landed at Kerikeri, but that those chiefs themselves should make acknowledgment of Heke's⁵⁴ delinquency, and undertake to prevent any farther outrage in future. Further, the chiefs expressed great anxiety to confer with the governor on various subjects, chiefly concerning their land, about which they were in much doubt and difficulty.

Knowing his real weakness, and the impossibility of acting efficiently against the turbulent natives without having the

support of those who were well disposed, – the governor acceded to the chiefs' wishes and directed the ships to return to Russell, while he went, with the senior military and naval officers,⁵⁵ to the missionary station at Waimate, where were assembled the bishop, several of the clergy and missionaries, the chief protector, and a large concourse of natives.

A formal meeting was held, opinions and intentions were freely expressed in public by all parties; and the result was a general decision on the part of the chiefs that the flag staff at Kororareka should be replaced, and should not be again cut down; that they themselves should be responsible for its security – for the tranquillity of the settlement at the Bay of Islands, – and for Heke's future conduct. As an acknowledgment of his delinquency, they offered to give up land, or property, to the government; but the governor would accept only a few muskets, and even those he returned to show that there was no desire to punish the well disposed for the faults of their relative, or even to deprive them of their weapons. In consequence of these arrangements the governor promised to withdraw the troops, and make trial of the chiefs' will and power to act up to their strong and public professions.

Subsequent events have shown how happily that affair was terminated by this arrangement. Had the wishes of the principal chiefs been slighted at that time, and had that handful of soldiers been employed hostilely against Heke, it is now almost certain that not one would have returned from Kaikohe, and that the consequences would have been most disastrous to the colony.⁵⁶

It happened that several of the oldest missionaries in the land were then assembled at Waimate on important business, and the governor had therefore an opportunity of availing himself of the opinions of those persons who knew most of the natives, and were very capable of forming a correct judgment as to their real feelings and intentions. The bishop, though not so long a resident in New Zealand, might be as able as any man in the country to form judicious conclusions from the statements of others; but in extent of intimate and general knowledge of the natives, the chief protector of aborigines, who had been twenty-three years in the island, was the best authority. All these however were of one opinion: and with that opinion the governor and his officers fully concurred.

Early in September the governor returned to Auckland, having thus succeeded in successively averting hostilities which had threatened each of the settlements: but anticipating greater difficulties in a short period, as his dispatches of September and October 1844 fully shew.

The legislative council assembled and unanimously agreed to pass a local ordinance establishing free trade throughout the colony, and substituting a method of direct taxation instead of raising a revenue by means of customs duties. The council was also unanimous in opinion that this change, however great, should take place as soon as possible in the following month,⁵⁷ the governor being willing to take on himself the grave responsibility of assenting to these steps, without waiting for the sanction of the home government; because he believed that not only the welfare, but the actual safety of the colony, demanded such a measure. Without any real power, though surrounded by a turbulent white population, and numerous tribes of almost savage natives on the eve of open resistance to his authority, the only prudent course was this painful one of temporising.

At this time the prevailing opinion in New Zealand was strongly in favor of free trade and direct taxation, instead of customs' duties. It was considered that in such a woody country, intersected by rivers and creeks, with a coast line of more than three thousand miles in extent, and abounding in harbours, smuggling might be carried on with impunity; while jealousies between native tribes, on account of ports of entry,⁵⁸ – and irritation caused by interference with their vessels or canoes, ⁵⁹ would tend to embroil the local government. The expense of collecting the customs duties amounted to nearly one-third of the gross amount; while the interference with shipping, required by the regulations, operated so vexatiously as to deter the greater number of whalers from seeking their supplies and refreshments in New Zealand, – inducing them rather to go among more dangerous islands in the Pacific where there was no custom house.

As a means of raising revenue better adapted to the circumstances of the country, it was thought that a tax on income and property, taken together, would prove adequate to the wants of the colony, in the course of two years, if not sooner. But a practical trial has since proved that direct taxation cannot yet be carried into effect, under the peculiar circum-

stances of New Zealand, – the local impediments being insuperable, – without employing more expensive machinery for collection than even that of the customs. The plan failed in the southern settlements, although it answered expectation in the north, – and after a trial it was abandoned; a return to the custom house system having become imperative, – partly owing to the failure just described, – but chiefly because of the altered state of the colony.⁶⁰

Early in October the decisive step was taken of allowing natives to sell land direct to settlers, without any concurrent fee to government, (except an almost nominal one to cover the expenses of legal documents): and perhaps no measure emanating from the government, since it was established, gave so much real satisfaction to the native people.

Under the existing circumstances of New Zealand, it is desirable that all the land in the vicinity of settlements, excepting native reserves, should pass into the hands of settlers. Many sources of quarrel may be thus removed, and the natives themselves kept farther from continual temptation.

Much sensation has been caused in the colony by thus allowing natives to sell land to private persons; some residents fearing that it will lose much of its value, others dreading that the total deprivation of the natives may be caused: but in reply to these it may be stated that the more land becomes the valid and available property of settlers, the sooner will all land rise in value. Doubtful neighbours now prevent much that is claimed by settlers from being valuable. Neither the mission property, nor any other lands in the interior now surrounded by native possessions, will be worth anything considerable until they have civilised and industrious neighbours. The natives are not disposed to sell land which they really want for themselves, though they do not usually regard their children's interest. The sooner all disposable districts, near our settlements, are sold, – the sooner will the natives apply themselves to industrious pursuits on other lands.⁶¹

The Cotter system, although deprecated by modern theorists, appears to be much suited to this country, if encouraged on a large scale, in the more thinly peopled districts. Working men may make their way and thrive on a few acres of land.

New Zealand is not yet, and cannot be for many years, a country suitable for those who require the convenience and comforts which are found in many other parts of the world;⁶² but to the hardy labouring man, who uses his tools himself with steady industry, it is even now a place in which a large family can be well maintained: partly upon the produce of a few acres of land: partly by keeping cattle and sheep,, which increase and thrive greatly. Those who have no cattle, or means of buying any, usually keep the stock of some neighbour, on condition of receiving a proportion of the increase; and in this manner soon obtain a few animals of their own. The more any tract of land is frequented by cattle, the more it improves; and as there is "bush"⁶³ feeding all the year round, the means of maintaining a family, brought up to work in the fields for their living, are certain and sufficient.

In November the governor again visited New Plymouth, completed an amicable adjustment of the land question sufficient for the resident settlers, and left them, as well as their neighbouring natives, peaceable and contented.⁶⁴

These repeated voyages to other settlements caused serious interruption to the progress of public business at the seat of government, especially correspondence, but they were indispensable duties. The usual passage to or from Cook's Strait is nearly a fortnight; to visit each settlement in succession requires about a month, in a man-of-war. Quicker passages are frequently made; but, on the other hand, sometimes three weeks are spent in going from Wellington to Auckland.

³⁹ This prohibition against drawing bills being known publicly, none could be negotiated: and the credit of government being destroyed, no loan could be raised.

⁴⁰ Materials and labour being then extremely dear.

⁴¹ It may be fairly doubted whether a metallic currency is indispensable for a young country. Some authorities think it not only unnecessary but prejudicial. A convenient medium of exchange that cannot be sent out of the country, appears to be practically sufficient for such a condition of society. Gold and silver, if required for exportation, may be bought or sold like any other property of which money is merely the representative.

⁴² In a young country where property is very fluctuating, and valuation is difficult.

⁴³ Sir George Gipps.

⁴⁴ Thirty men.

⁴⁵ The usual time being a fortnight.

⁴⁶ This number forty, is inclusive of women and children who signed the deed of conveyance, or in whose names marks were made.

⁴⁷ Messrs. Wakefield and Dorset.

⁴⁸ Outer Sugar Loaf.

⁴⁹ "Guide" Brig.

⁵⁰ H.M's. 99th Regiment.

⁵¹ Lieut. Col. Hulme, 96th Regiment.

⁵² Captain Bennett.

⁵³ Mr. Clarke.

⁵⁴ Heke being their relative and much their inferior in rank and influence.

⁵⁵ Lieut. Col. Hulme, and Commander Robertson.

⁵⁶ Captain Bennett, the engineer officer, considered the country between Waimate and Kaikohe impracticable for the troops then in New Zealand.

⁵⁷ On the 10th of October.

⁵⁸ Vessels usually frequent ports of entry solely.

[59](#) A serious source of disagreement.

[60](#) More ships of war, and military force; concentration of settlers, and fewer settlements.

[61](#) While the natives have anything to sell which costs them no labour, they will not become industrious. When their land is nearly all sold, they will betake themselves less unsteadily to raising produce on the remainder, and to working for wages. They are an acquisitive race, and will seek the means of obtaining those foreign articles which are now become necessities: such as clothing, seeds, tools, arms, ammunition, tobacco, &c

[62](#) In New Holland the country is open and accessible. Horses may be used almost anywhere, and there are few districts inaccessible to strong wheel carriages. In New Zealand, the colonists generally travel on foot, wheel carriages are useless except near the settlements, where there are a few very bad roads. Strong bullock drays are employed in some parts, but they require powerful teams of oxen.

[63](#) Browsing and pasturage combined, in the woods, or swamps.

[64](#) At his first visit to New Plymouth, the governor could only direct preparations to be made for the settlement which he effected at his second visit.

CHAPTER V: 1844-1845

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1844-5.

During December and January further disturbances occurred at the Bay of Islands, or in its vicinity, and it became evident that the object was to bring about a collision with the government, which might have the effect of freeing that part of New Zealand from any British interference.

The repeated refusals of government to sanction a larger force of military in the colony, all which were well known to designing men in that country, through the public newspapers, encouraged certain persons to prompt the natives to acts which, of their own accord, they would not have attempted without much more provocation. Passages in English newspapers, read to such men as Heke, with insidious comments by the translator, acted like poison, and totally overthrew all that could be urged by really truthful advisers. The natives believe so implicitly what they are shewn in print, if translated by a person whom they trust, that they are easily worked upon; and unfortunately there are those in New Zealand who have thus perverted their minds. The resolutions of a Committee of the House of Commons on the state of New Zealand, in July 1844, reached that country in December of the same year, and were soon known to most of the residents, with some of whom they did not long remain hidden from the natives.

A number of turbulent young men, encouraged by Heke, carried off horses from the settlers under vague pretences; the real object being to possess the means of rapid movement, with a view to future aggressions. Threats were held out that the obnoxious flag staff should not remain; and early in January, Heke went by night, and cut it down. A party of natives affected to oppose him, but would not fire upon their relation;⁶⁵ therefore of course he succeeded without difficulty. It should be noticed that the flag staff was on a hill above, and

at a distance from the town. It was not then guarded, except by those natives, who, hearing of Heke's intention, went to oppose him, but could not bring themselves to do so in earnest.⁶⁶ Heke departed unmolested, after sending word to the magistrate at Russell that in two months he would return to destroy the gaol and custom house, and to send away the officers of government.⁶⁷

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From these proceedings it was clear that no measure short of actual hostilities, would prove sufficient to keep Heke and his restless followers in check; therefore Captain Fitz-Roy made urgent applications to the governor of New South Wales and to the commander of the forces, for a military force adequate to protect the settlement, and to punish the aggressors. The vessel which carried this application met with a heavy gale of wind, put back, and was delayed about a fortnight. After she arrived at Sydney delays occurred in obtaining cheap transport for the troops, and not until the 11th of March did they sail.

Early in February the Hazard returned from Cook's Strait, and no time was lost in sending her with a small detachment of troops – all that could be spared – from Auckland, with a musket proof block-house to be erected at the flag staff. H.M.S. Hazard, and fifty men of the 96th Regiment with two officers, were then thought to be quite sufficient to prevent Heke's threatened attack; or, if he should attempt it, to beat him off easily, and perhaps capture or disable himself. The settlers were armed and drilled, though very reluctantly on their part; a strong stockade was erected, as a place of safety for the women and children; and some light guns were mounted. No anxiety as to the result of any attack was entertained; but, on the contrary, there was rather over confidence, and far too low an opinion of native enterprize and valour.

During the first days of March, armed natives collected in the neighbourhood of Russell, to the number of several hun-

dred, and some audacious attempts were made by them to carry off more horses, and destroy property.⁶⁸ An armed boat was sent to demand the restitution of the horses, – the boat could not overtake the plunderers, but was fired upon by the natives. These were the first shots. They were returned by the boat from her carronade, but to no purpose, as the horse-stealers were among woods overlooking the narrow space of water in which the boat was.⁶⁹ Another attempt to take horses from a place close to Russell was prevented by a few shots from the Hazard's party. These annoyances prepared the officers to expect more trouble, but they did not give the natives credit for any well concerted and determined attack, such as they made at day-break on the 11th of March, when Kororareka was taken – sacked – and burned.

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This result astounded every one. The natives were as much astonished at their own success, as the whole colony was at so unthought-of a disaster. That Heke should make a bold attack and should suffer for his temerity, was rather expected, but that the settlement should be destroyed entered no man's mind. The details of this singularly unfortunate affair have been so recently published, that it would be superfluous to repeat them here: but its effects on New Zealand are less generally known, and demand notice among these remarks.

For the first time, since the establishment of the colony, our troops had been engaged with the natives – and had failed. Their imagined superiority was gone. The daring and self-

confidence of the native was raised. He now went to the other extreme, and despised the soldiers, – saying that all he had heard about British troops was false. The immediate consequence of this feeling was an imperative necessity for greatly augmenting the military, there being no doubt that without their accustomed prestige, ordinary (perhaps raw⁷⁰) troops would find formidable opponents in the natives, even on open ground. The company of the 96th, divided between Auckland and Russell, was composed chiefly of very young men, who had seen no service: these were not soldiers fit to cope with hardy New Zealand warriors, – strong, active, and brave, – inured to hardship, – patient under extreme privation, and tried in several fights.

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Throughout the country great anxiety prevailed among the white population immediately, and for some time after the fall of Kororareka, – owing to indefinite dread of the native population uniting against the white, under the excitement of the time, and plundering indiscriminately. However not only was no such union attempted, but the conduct of the natives, even of those who took Kororareka, was such as raised them much in our estimation. Nevertheless the time was naturally one of the greatest anxiety, because all the settlements were in the power of the natives, and Heke threatened soon to make a visit with his forces at Auckland, which he might have reached in four days' journey from his own pah.

The legislative council was sitting at Auckland, when three large ships, supposed to be bringing troops from Sydney, or perhaps from England, were seen in the offing. But soon the joy which their appearance caused was changed into deep gloom and melancholy foreboding, when it was known the following night, that they were the Hazard, the United States frigate St. Louis, and an English whaler, – all three crowded with fugitives from the Bay of Islands: the Hazard bringing many wounded men, besides her gallant commander, whose recovery was then very doubtful.

Every exertion was made to prepare proper quarters for the wounded,⁷¹ and to find means of providing for the destitute refugees, about four hundred in number. Subscriptions were liberally made; and so large a quantity of clothing was collected by the ladies of Auckland that all the most necessitous

were placed in comparative comfort before they had been two days in the town.

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About this time a brisk trade in gum was beginning, and no person willing to work wanted the means of earning a livelihood. The militia also gave occupation to many who would otherwise have been idlers, so that little distress, and scarcely any lasting inconvenience, beyond the presence of some very bad characters, was caused by this sudden and unexpected influx of strangers.

At the next meeting of the council great anxiety was manifested to know what help might be expected from Sydney or England, and what preparations for defence would be made. To allay these anxieties in some measure, the Governor read extracts from various despatches earnestly soliciting efficient aid from the home government, as well as from Sydney: he showed that troops from Sydney had been expected every day for the last three weeks: that it was known they were coming: that every preparation for the defence of Auckland which could be effected would be forwarded with all haste: and that arms for the militia might be expected with the troops from Sydney. This information quieted the alarm of many persons, but others still entertained great apprehensions; among whom not a few packed up their most valuable property and hastened away from the country by the first opportunities.⁷²

In September 1844, the legislative council had deferred the enactment of a militia ordinance because such a measure was then highly objectionable, in their opinion, on the following grounds: –

First. Any general arming and training of the settlers would have roused the jealousy of the native population throughout the island, and would have caused even the most friendly tribes to be suspicious.

Second. Such a measure would have been most inconvenient to the widely scattered settlers, who would not only have had to go to a distance from their houses and helpless families for the purpose of being trained to arms, at times when their bread depended on their day's labour; but, in the event of an alarm, must have chosen between the protection of their own wives and children, or obedience to orders which might have directed them to repair forthwith to some distant rendezvous.

Third. Such a militia force as could have been raised, under any circumstances, could not have done more than assist in

defending a town, as a last resource, and under such an exigency their slight drill practice would have availed but little.

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Fourth. All the force that could have been raised would not have equalled one quarter of the force of natives that might probably be brought against them: – therefore it was thought prudent to abstain from any measure likely to rouse jealousy, or provoke any trial of strength.

Fifth. There were not four hundred stand of serviceable arms in the whole colony, (at Auckland there were not fifty) and there was very little ammunition.⁷³

Sixth. The local government had not the means of buying arms, or ammunition, or clothes, or accoutrements, or even of paying adjutants, or drill-sergeants.

These and other considerations had made the council unanimous in postponing the militia bill laid before them in 1844: – but in March of the following year, when one settlement had been destroyed, and the attack of others was threatened, there was ample reason for making every practicable preparation for defence, and there was no longer the risk of arousing any suspicion of our intentions being aggressive. The case was totally changed, and the urgency of the occasion made additional expenditure (even in debentures) imperative. Yet – be it fully remarked – that so objectionable to the community, and so very expensive to the colony was the arming and training of even a fourth part of the enrolled militia found to be, that in only a few months they were entirely disbanded.

The presence of increased military force was certainly one reason for disbanding the militia; but the principal cause was the heavy expence, which could not then be borne by the colony.

The American frigate "St. Louis," was in the Bay of Islands during the attack on Kororareka, and sent her boats, unarmed, to bring off the women and children. Her captain (in this instance, as well as in carrying them to Auckland) thus behaved with kindness and humanity. The frigate sailed in two days for her previous destination, South America, visiting the Bay of Islands again by the way.⁷⁴

The sudden demand for Kauri gum, in which the northern

part of this island abounds,⁷⁵ happened providentially at the particular time when the attention of the natives was most required to be drawn off from thoughts of Heke's valour, and the plunder that he had acquired; while it also gave immediate and profitable employment to numbers of suffering settlers, who must otherwise have been dependent on their compassionate neighbours. (This trade was afterwards checked by an over-supply having been sent to market). Yet this good was not unmixed with evil. The natives obtained large supplies of ammunition and guns in exchange for their gum: and although loyal natives were usually the direct traders, no doubt much found its way, through their relatives, to the rebels.

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The propriety of prohibiting the sale of arms and ammunition to the natives has often been urged; and it has been repeatedly asked why the local government did not put a stop to the traffic. Neither the governments of Captain Hobson, nor of his immediate successors, interfered with the sale of arms; and it may be presumed that their inducements for so acting were not very dissimilar. The reasons why Captain Fitz-Roy, while governor, did not interfere, were these: –

Since the earliest intercourse of traders with New Zealand, the objects most desired by the natives, have been the white man's weapons. By trade, and as presents, the New Zealanders have been gradually acquiring fire-arms and ammunition in such quantities as to have made many tribes independent of further supply for two or three years.⁷⁶–

No native freeman who knows the use Honghi made of King George's present⁷⁷ of fire-arms (and what New Zealander is ignorant of it!) will consent to be without a gun. – Indeed many have several guns. They most prize double barrelled percussion pieces, and they take great care of them.⁷⁸ The consequence of this general adoption of fire-arms is, as it has been everywhere, that their battles are now, each side being armed alike, less bloody and less savage than they were

formerly; and that the native weapons, the lance, the hani, the patupatu or mere, and the tomahawk, are reserved for close quarters,⁷⁹ and are gradually falling into disuse.

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As the New Zealanders will arm themselves, either with their own native weapons, or with others; and as the employment of fire-arms has certainly tended to render warfare less destructive, it appeared at least questionable whether an endeavour to prevent the supply would be advisable.

But, even if advisable, the attempt to do so by a weak government might have caused an effectual resistance to its authority. Traders would smuggle and sell in a manner that might prevent the government from acting against them, without also acting against their customers, the natives, – which would tend to bring on hostilities; while the general feeling caused among the natives would be, that the object of the government was to disarm them gradually, so that they might become mere slaves, incapable of opposition.

Any attempt even thus indirectly to disarm a warlike and high spirited nation, composed of tribes always jealous of their neighbours, and hitherto accustomed to exterminating feuds, must be attended with great hazard, if unsupported by adequate power; therefore Captain Fitz-Roy would not risk bringing the possible consequences on the colony.

But, it may be urged, would not the lives of our brave soldiers and seamen have been spared, had the New Zealanders been destitute of fire-arms? Would they not then have refrained from attacking Kororareka. No doubt they would. But the natives⁸⁰ were as well supplied with fire-arms and ammunition in 1840 as they were in 1844 or 1845. We must deal with the actual, not an imaginary state of things.

Had Governor Hobson intimated the probability of firearms and ammunition being prohibited by the government, he might have sent the treaty of Waitangi about the islands in vain. That very treaty guaranteed to the natives, their rights, their freedom, and their accustomed privileges. How could these be maintained between numerous rival tribes in such a country without arms, unless indeed the local government could deal by force with all of them – and protect the weak or quiet against the strong or turbulent, – a matter hitherto physically impossible.

At the sitting of the legislative council in March 1845, the

governor proposed farther reductions in the estimated annual expenditure, which were adopted. The estimated expenditure for 1845-6 was £26,000. The estimate for 1844-5 had been £36,000; that for 1842, in Governor Hobson's time, was no less than £56,000.

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These reductions were partly consequent on the termination of an expensive land claims commission: partly effected by reducing salaries: and partly by a much altered establishment for the collection of customs. Very painfully and hardly these reductions bore upon officers who had been induced, by promises and flattering prospects, to leave permanent official situations in Sydney, or other colonies; and now found themselves either much reduced or entirely out of employment; and this after having been persuaded to buy land, in the town, at a high price, and having laid out more than they could well afford in building dwellings for their families.

The destruction of Kororareka, and consequent stoppage of trade in the Bay of Islands by the natives' own act, gave a different aspect to the question of raising a revenue by direct taxation, or by a custom house establishment. It then became more than probable that the other small settlements, such as Hokianga, Wanganui (or Petre), Akaroa, and perhaps Taranaki, (New Plymouth) would diminish rapidly, owing to their extreme insecurity, and that the white population would become concentrated about Auckland and Wellington; in which case the collection of customs duties would become easy, and there could not be so much evasion. In consequence of additional military and naval force being expected, it would be desirable to check the sale of spirits; and the presence of ships of war would be an efficient hindrance to wholesale smuggling. In addition to which, the attempt to raise a revenue by direct taxation had failed in the southern settlements, where an evasion was almost general on the plea that until the settlers obtained legal titles to their lands, they could not be considered to have either property or income. To enforce the payment of their just rates or taxes, it would have been necessary for the government to enter into legal proceedings against half the landholders at New Plymouth, and against nearly all those at Wellington and Nelson.

Taking then into consideration the altered state of the colony with respect to the facility with which customs duties might be levied, and the failure of the attempt to raise a revenue by direct taxation, the governor and legislative council decided to re-establish the custom houses and their officers, but on a much reduced scale of expenditure, not exceeding one half of their expense in 1843. This change took place in April, throughout the colony.

⁶⁵ Heke is a Ngapuhi chief, related to many families of that large tribe.

⁶⁶ They would not be the first to shed blood on account of a piece of wood.

⁶⁷ These proceedings drew attention to the "kara," (the colour, or flag,) throughout the country. Native chiefs well disposed to the government, asked eagerly for flags to denote their loyalty; but others shewed much doubt, of rather a superstitious kind, as to the real import and consequences of the mysterious symbol.

⁶⁸ Heke seemed to desire an undeniable cause for war, without being himself the first to shed blood. Without a sufficient "take" (root) or "casus belli," the natives are very reluctant to commence actual hostilities. Remarkable instances of forbearance have been witnessed. Among others, the following may be quoted. Previous to an engagement between the Ngapuhi and the Rarawa tribes in 1842, Mr. Clarke, the chief protector of aborigines, saw two contending parties striving to force each other into being the first to shed blood. They were drawn up on opposite sides of a small stream with their muskets loaded. The encroaching tribe endeavoured to cross the stream. Their opponents pushed them back with the butt ends of their muskets, but would not fire. At last an act of Heke himself brought a fire upon his party, which caused loss of life. He subsequently shot three men with his own gun, and gained much reputation by his conduct in this affair.

⁶⁹ Near the Kawakawa river.

⁷⁰ Those at Kororareka were men who had never been under fire.

⁷¹ There was no hospital in Auckland.

⁷² Most of these people returned to Auckland in the course of a few months.

⁷³ There was no artillery; neither were there any ordnance stores in the colony.

⁷⁴ Heke had been led to expect that the Americans would assist him, and appeared to be much disappointed when the captain of this ship obliged him to haul down the United States' ensign, then flying in his canoe. This ensign had been given to him by a person who was acting as vice-consul of the United States. At the same time, the consul who had left this deputy, was on his way to New Zealand with a large cargo of arms and ammunition. He was wrecked near the East Cape, where much of the cargo was totally lost with the vessel – "The Falco."

⁷⁵ It is found near the surface of the ground; particularly in swamps.

[76](#) Their casks of gunpowder are deposited in dry caves, or in the forks of trees.

[77](#) In 1822.

[78](#) As yet they have not used the bayonet.

[79](#) To which they now seldom come till the contest is nearly decided.

[80](#) About the Bay of Islands.

CHAPTER VI: 1845

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1845.

Immediately after the destruction of Kororareka, the colonial brig was sent to the southern settlements with information and instructions. The bishop took the opportunity of hastening to Waikanae, where it seemed probable that his influence with Rauparaha might tend much to prevent disturbance in the south, and thence the brig was sent to Hobarton for troops.

On the 22nd of March H.M.S. North Star arrived from Sydney, with 200 of the 58th regiment on board; and the following day 50 more of the same corps arrived in a small transport.

An attack on Auckland being threatened, 200 men were landed and encamped, or quartered in the town, and 50 were sent immediately to Wellington, where hostilities with the natives were likewise apprehended.

Rumours were numerous at this time of general anxiety, and among those more generally believed was a report that Auckland would be attacked by Heke with about two thousand men, at the next full moon.⁸¹

This report was given on the best authority, and preparations for defence were made speedily; but a native war broke out⁸² at the Bay of Islands, and altogether changed the aspect of affairs. But for this diversion, and another caused by the brisk trade in Kauri gum collected by the natives, a formidable attack would probably have been made on Auckland; partly from motives of a political nature, partly for revenge, though chiefly for the sake of plunder. This warfare, between parties of natives themselves, occupied those who sought to attack the government, and to seek revenge for their losses at Kororareka, while the profitable gathering of Kauri gum fully employed all other natives, who would otherwise have been in arms for plunder.

This war between parties of the same large tribe of natives, the Ngapuhi, (companions of Honghi) was said by some to have been caused by the death of a half-caste child, killed by Heke's party at Kororareka. This child was nearly related to Nene (Thomas Walker Nene, the excellent chief now so

well known), but Nene himself always denied having taken up arms on that account. He asserted from the first, that he made war against Heke and Kawiti, because he promised the governor, at Waimate, to fight for and defend the flag staff (meaning the flag, or the government).⁸³ With Nene several principal chiefs, namely Taonui, Tawhai, Paratene, Repa, and others, united to attack Heke and Kawiti, who were thus not only deterred from advancing towards Auckland, but obliged to defend themselves on their own ground.

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These hostilities between the natives were in no way encouraged by the government, until a subsequent period, when Nene was very hard pressed by his opponents: but on the contrary, when application was made to the governor for his sanction to these natives making an aggressive and retaliatory warfare against Heke, he invariably refused, believing that such a war, without the control of government, would degenerate into interminable hostilities between various tribes, and speedily ruin what the missionaries had effected during a long course of years. It was, however, soon afterwards discovered that to the assistance of the loyal natives we owed so much that our troops could not act without their constant presence; and that, as the less of two evils, they must be engaged to co-operate with the troops.

Towards the end of April the chief Paratene went to Auckland, on behalf of Nene and his adherents, to urge the governor to send a force against Heke as soon as possible, lest Nene should be unable to cope with him and keep him in check until the expedition arrived which government was preparing. Finding the case to be very urgent, admitting of no delay, the governor dispatched all the force he could muster to the Bay of Islands,⁸⁴ with discretionary instructions to attack Kawiti, or Heke, in conjunction with Nene's native force, in the event of a fair opportunity occurring.

The sequel is well known by the published accounts; but the fidelity of the natives, and their courage, have hardly been enough noticed. The daring of Kawiti and his party could scarcely have been exceeded. The bayonet alone overcame them.⁸⁵

The result of this expedition – however unsatisfactory to those engaged, who expected to carry all before them, almost unopposed, was the complete dispersion, for the time, of the rebel force, and the loss of some of their most desperate chiefs.⁸⁶

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But scarcely had the ships and troops returned to Auckland, when information was received that Heke was again collecting men, and was actively engaged in building a new pah, which would be stronger than any yet constructed in New Zealand. It was evident therefore that the principal rebel was not humbled, and that farther exertions would be necessary before British authority could be firmly established at the Bay of Islands and its vicinity, without reference to other parts of New Zealand, the condition of which would depend on the state of affairs in the north.

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Reinforcements continued to arrive from Sydney, where Sir George Gipps and the commander of the forces⁸⁷ were making every exertion in their power to assist the local government of New Zealand. It was of the utmost importance to prevent the rebels from making head and collecting the disaffected from other parts of the island; therefore, without delay, another expedition was prepared, on a larger scale, and better provided, having received some light guns and a supply of ordnance stores from Sydney and Hobarton.

In June this second expedition⁸⁸ left Auckland; but the rebels' strength was again undervalued, and, although successful in the main, a lamentable loss of life was incurred by our gallant soldiers and seamen.

After destroying this strong pah and several inferior ones,⁸⁹ the troops took up winter quarters at Waimate, to remain there until the weather would admit of further operations in

the field, and additional force should have arrived from Sydney or England.

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Meanwhile Kawiti was fortifying a very strong pah in a position supposed to be impregnable, where Heke, (then recovering from a severe wound⁹⁰) was to join him, if attacked by our forces.

In September the troops moved from Waimate to Russell, to be in readiness for advancing towards Kawiti's new pah, and to be in a more commanding position, better for general communication under any possible circumstances.

About this time reports reached the colony that the governor was recalled, and that his successor would soon arrive. Rumour said that the governor had been too considerate and lenient with the natives, and that his successor would treat them differently. This rumour had an injurious effect among a jealous people, indisposed to have any authority at all over them; and they shewed much feeling on the subject.⁹¹

Official intimation of the governor's recall arrived at the beginning of October: – in the middle of November his successor, Captain Grey, arrived; and on the 18th he was duly installed.

Governor Grey brought money and additional forces, both military and naval. He soon repaired to the Bay of Islands, and there offered the rebels terms: his overtures were refused, and an attack on Kawiti's pah determined on. Preparations were forthwith commenced, and on the 11th of January that strong hold (called Ruapekapeka) was taken. Pardon and peace were then proclaimed, and the greater part of the forces were withdrawn.⁹² Early in February the new governor sailed for Wellington, with the whole disposable force, intending, it was said, to settle the land question in the Hutt valley.⁹³

It is very remarkable that during the hostilities which took

place in New Zealand in 1845, only four acts of savage barbarity are said to have been committed by the natives; and not one instance of retaliation upon unarmed persons, not engaged in hostilities, was known. Yet only a few years have passed since these people were habitually cannibals under their notorious leader Honghi, who was said to have "ate his way" into the middle of the island. (Alluding to the numbers killed and devoured in his murderous excursions towards the south.)

As the four acts above mentioned have been much exaggerated, it may be right to state explicitly that two dead bodies were partly mutilated by heathen natives, portions of flesh having been cut from the back part of the thighs, and that the scalp was taken off another. It is asserted by the natives that these were for offerings to their Atua or deity. The fourth was indeed barbarous cruelty. A soldier was caught straggling, he was taking provisions from the enemy's ground close to the pah. His cries were dreadful; they were heard distinctly in the camp, and there is no doubt that he was tortured before being put to death. His body was afterwards found, seared by a hot iron. These atrocious acts, perpetrated by a few heathen natives, occasioned so much dissension among the rebels, that many left them. One should not look at these barbarities without reflecting on the change that has taken place since every native was a bloodthirsty cannibal.⁹⁴

It is a very singular fact, and one which will hardly be credited by those who hold the popular opinion of these aborigines, that during the continual intercourse kept up with their chiefs by the governor during 1844 and 1845, not only verbally, but by very frequent correspondence,⁹⁵ not one deviation from truth – not one instance of deception occurred. During the general excitement caused by Heke's attack on Kororareka and the possible consequences, nearly all the principal chiefs (excepting those implicated with the rebels) wrote to or visited the governor to assure him of their fidelity.⁹⁶ Not one failed to act up to his professions: not even Parore, Heke's nearest relation, – nor Tirarau, a connection and ally of the chief Kawiti, whose position between the Bay of

Islands and Auckland made his allegiance of the utmost importance. But these influential chiefs, who still retained a considerable hold over their clansmen, wrote freely to the governor respecting their conduct in the event of the government violating its professions. Parore, a quiet sensible man, of superior intellect, wrote to the governor – referring to the rumour of his recall, – saying, that he himself would remain loyal, as long as the government continued to act justly; but if an attempt should be made to take away their lands by force, and degrade the natives, he and they would all rise and fight.⁹⁷

Among the principal chiefs a regard for truth, and a sense of honour prevail to a degree which one can hardly believe to be compatible with the dirty habits and uninformed condition in which they live. Moreover they are not treacherous:⁹⁸ on the contrary, they give notice of their intentions, and do not, in ordinary warfare, make attacks by night. They are as sagacious and enterprising as they are hardy and courageous. During former years when they had no fire-arms, the flash and report of a musket may have had a mysterious character which caused a superstitious alarm; but now, well accustomed even to rifles and double-barrelled percussion guns, their natural bravery is displayed. Of late years superstition has had only diminished effects on their minds, which has rendered them less liable to be influenced by any sudden panic. They are extremely clever in expedients and stratagems: particularly in war.⁹⁹

Between our forces, particularly the seamen, and the natives in arms against Heke, there was uninterrupted cordiality; a state of things that could hardly have been expected, considering the dissimilar elements that were hastily brought

together.¹⁰⁰ But this intimate acquaintance with our habits, and the knowledge thus acquired of the soldiers' unfitness for warfare in their almost impracticable country, may be turned greatly to their advantage against our forces, should the course of events be unhappily such as to alienate their friendship.¹⁰¹

The greatest difficulty under which officers – especially commanding officers – labour in New Zealand must not be overlooked: namely, the want of information, and the means of communicating with the natives.

Faithful and able interpreters are required continually; but they are very few in number, and those few have not been sufficiently appreciated.¹⁰²

Residents in the country are naturally reluctant to compromise their families by taking part in hostilities; yet such persons, especially those who have lived long in the land, are alone competent and trustworthy.

Much natural talent, as well as a readiness to turn the natives' sagacity to account, and a kindly treatment of them, are required in an officer acting against New Zealanders. He will find them accustomed to select the best military positions, to choose the best lines of march, to deceive the enemy by a variety of stratagems. They fortify their paha scientifically with double or treble stockades, ditches and flanking positions. They are not unacquainted with a method of approaching by parallel trenches, having used it long ago in their own wars, before they had intercourse with Europeans. They know how to avoid shot and shells by underground excavations, and they are accustomed to disperse entirely, when necessary, and

re-assemble again, at a given time and place, with astonishing rapidity and facility.

Much misapprehension has arisen from calling all their stockades, or palisades (some merely slight single palings) paha, by which the mere "kainga," or place of abode, has been confounded with the well fortified stronghold called "pa."

While Nene and his adherents were before Ruapekapeka, they erected a temporary musket proof pah, for their own use, in ten hours. Heke's pah at Ohaeowae was

completed in a month. Kawiti's stronghold at Ruapekapeka occupied his tribe, about six hundred men and women, nearly two months. The timbers (they could not be called palisades, or even posts) of these two pahs, were as large as those of a frigate. Six pound shot lodged in those at Ohaeowae, which were of tough puri-di-wood, equal to oak.

The late Captain Bennett, of the engineers, sent plans, sections, and descriptions of some strong pahs to the inspector general of fortifications as early as the beginning of the year 1843. With those plans, he sent his ideas respecting the best mode of attacking them, and he made an official demand for howitzers, shells, and rockets. No public effect was caused by his application, sent carefully through the proper channel, (to the knowledge of the colonial authorities in New Zealand) and the apparent indifference to this and other applications for military aid, caused bad effects in the colony, – where loyalty is not so influential a feeling as at home.¹⁰³

[81](#) April 22nd.

[82](#) Early in April

[83](#) Nene, the principal chief of Hokianga, with his brother Patuone, took the most decided part in advocating and signing the treaty of Waitangi.

[84](#) Under Lieut. Col. Hulme, and Captain Sir J. Everard Home.

[85](#) Bayonets have not yet been used by the natives, except on poles, or lances.

[86](#) In England, where the peculiar circumstances of New Zealand had been so little known, it has been asked why the governor was not at the defence of Kororareka. Perhaps it has been also asked why he was not with the force under Colonel Hulme, and afterwards with Colonel Despard; therefore it may not be superfluous to say, that the following are some of Captain Fitz-Roy's reasons for remaining at Auckland on those occasions.

An attack on Kororareka was not expected to be of much consequence, neither was the time at all certain. The place was supposed to be so well defended that no doubt existed as to the result of any collision, an event which was rather hoped for as a means of punishing Heke by the reception he would meet with. It would have been lowering the governor's station, in the estimation of the natives, had he waited at Kororareka till it pleased so inferior a chief as Heke to make an attack. It was not thought necessary even for Colonel Hulme to be there.

The regular annual meeting of the legislative council took place on the 4th of March (Kororareka was burned on the 11th), and the governor's presence at Auckland was indispensable, unless a stop were put to all the ordinary public business, during his absence for a very indefinite time. Troops were expected hourly from Sydney, – and, until they arrived, Auckland was in so precarious a condition, that the governor would not have felt justified in leaving that principal place, where all the public documents and offices were exposed to destruction in case of any accidental quarrel. The personal character of individuals in command on such occasions was of the utmost consequence; a hasty or prejudiced man might have provoked a collision, where another might have allayed the ferment. But there was a reason of more importance, in the governor's estimation, than even these. It was his opinion, that, as the principal civil authority to whom the natives were to look as an impartial person, he ought never to take part personally in hostilities against them, except in self defence. To have become the personal enemy of any chief or tribe in New Zealand, must have placed the governor of that colony in a false position with respect to that portion of the people under his jurisdiction.

The governor's expedition to the Bay of Islands in August 1844, was not expected to end in hostilities. It was intended to be merely a demonstration. Not so the operations executed by Colonel Hulme and Colonel Despard. Hostilities, perhaps prolonged for several months, were then anticipated. The governor could not have taken part in them, or have been even at the Bay of Islands, without delaying and interrupting the public business of the other settlements, and his correspondence with England (already inevitably in arrear) to an unwarrantable degree. He therefore remained at what he considered to be his proper station.

[87](#) Sir Maurice O'Connell, K.C.B.

[88](#) Under Colonel Despard and Sir Everard Home.

[89](#) Belonging to Haratua and other adherents of Heke and Kawiti.

[90](#) Received in attacking Nene's pah, June 11.

[91](#) Many letters were written to the governor from chiefs in different quarters of the island.

[92](#) At this affair there were about 1000 troops, besides a detachment of seamen and marines from H.M. Ships Castor, North Star, Racehorse, Calliope, and E.I.C. Ship Elphinstone.

[93](#) For further information on these and other preceding subjects reference may be made to the series of despatches from Governor Fitz-Roy, published in the Parliamentary proceedings of 1845, and 1846.

[94](#) Within the last few years Archdeacon Brown saw thirty native ovens in one row, all filled with human flesh.

[95](#) This correspondence occupied at least two persons constantly, in translating and copying for the governor.

[96](#) Te Whero Whero, and others of the Waikato tribes, told the governor that they would die for the British flag.

[97](#) Some of these letters were highly poetical, even Ossianic •j• Unless treated treacherously themselves, in which case they will go to any length in retaliation.

[98](#) Unless treated treacherously themselves, in which case they will go to any length in retaliation.

[99](#) A member of the House of Commons, who had been in Canada, asserted in his place in parliament, that one North American Indian was equal to nine New Zealanders: but the officers of the United States Frigate St. Louis, who witnessed the fighting at Kororareka, and Lieutenant Henry Eardley Wilmot, R.A., who particularly distinguished himself at Ohaeowae and Ruapekapeka, and had served some years in Canada, expressed opinions nearly the reverse of that above mentioned.

[100](#) The presence of native females at the camp was not discouraged by their relatives, – a lamentable feature in the New Zealander's character, against which the missionaries have striven almost in vain. It is a sad fact that they seem to entertain so low an opinion of women, that their illicit intercourse with strangers is not prevented, if attended with advantage to their relations. Of course while the women were thus encouraged to frequent the camp, it would have been very difficult for the officers to prevent their visits, but they were dangerous as spies, while prejudicial to strict discipline.

[101](#) The drill and habits of regular troops are unsuited to guerrilla warfare in such a country, however superior in open ground.

[102](#) Good guides are always wanted, but they are scarcely to be obtained without a liberal use of money.

[103](#) Besides the refusals given to verbal applications made to authorities at home – the published correspondence with successive governors of New Zealand (between 1839 and 1846), will prove that there was no prospect of adequate military support until last year, after Kororareka was destroyed.

CHAPTER VII: 1846

CHAPTER VII.

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GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

1846.

After reviewing the past occurrences, one is naturally led to consider what errors may be corrected, – what future alterations may be beneficial to New Zealand.

The main question, the foundation indeed on which every consideration must be based, for half a century to come, is – the relative situation and disposition of the two races.

New Zealand is not a country in which the natives can retreat as the white man advances. Having no extensive back country, as in America; and the habits, even the existence of many tribes being dependent on free access to the sea shore, they cannot be considered in the same light as the aborigines of continents. (On this point, as well as on the tenacious tenure of land, I insisted particularly, in my evidence before a committee of the House of Lords – in 1838).

The native question, as it may be called, being supposed the principal, as well as the primary subject to be kept in view, it seems advisable that matters of temporary importance (such as fiscal or police arrangements) should be so managed as not to cause irritation or jealousy. Much, very much, may be effected by rigid justice; – the natives having the practical as well as theoretical privileges of British subjects, when those privileges are favourable to them; but being allowed the full consideration due to ignorance and their peculiar habits when brought under the arm of English law. This may sound too much like undue partiality: it is in strict accordance, however, with the treaty of Waitangi, and – it may be added – with truly equitable conduct.

Perhaps there is not in any part of the world, a race of men, who, taken as a body, have a keener sense of injustice, imposition, or personal indignity.

An old tattooed chief, though smeared with red ochre, wrapped in a dirty blanket, and with feathers stuck in his head, like Rauparaha, Ranghiaiaata, Kawiti, Teraia, or Heuheu, will

be found as keen a lawyer (in native usages and common sense) and as proud a democrat as may be met within the precincts of Westminster. You may reason with these men, and may convince them, if you have justice as well as truth on your side; and further, you may move them out of their intended course, if not against their self-interest; but, to drive – to coerce them – will be most difficult.

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Witness old Kawiti, who argued thus: Before my children were killed by the soldiers, I fought for them; now they are all gone, I am no longer of any use while living; therefore I must fight till I die.^{104*}

To govern New Zealand according to the pre-conceived theory of legislators who could have known but very little of that country, still less of its aboriginal inhabitants, – is found to be impossible, without destroying numbers of its population; which God forbid. The endeavour to fit to New Zealand a theory so generalised as to suit scarcely any country exactly, is as unpromising an attempt as was that of Procrustes. Whether urged forward by private speculation, or by the disinterested motives of the British government, such a plan must fail in practice. I allude particularly to the theory of colonising New Zealand according to what is usually called the Wakefield system; – and to all the ruinous delusions which have arisen out of a continued endeavour to force that system into practice in a country unfit for its adoption.

This injudicious attempt led to the formation of the New Zealand Company; and the proceedings of that company obliged the government to interfere, and to try to carry out a legalised system, – similar in principle, though differing essentially in practice. In the proceedings of the government there has been no wilful deception, there has been no breach of faith, there has been no moral error. The home government has acted on the highest and purest principles; but it would be unreasonable to suppose that in arrangements for so peculiar a country as New Zealand, unlike any other, there should not have been misapprehensions, if not serious practical errors. The actual consequences are that the colonisation of New Zealand is stopped: that the company is unable to continue its operations with the least prospect of success as a commercial body: and that the British government has a problem to solve which will require more time, more trouble, more men, and more money, than most people are willing to believe.

All the difficulties of the New Zealand question are greatly

increased by the distance from England, as well as by its total dissimilarity to any other colony. Some of the difficulties which were felt by Spain, in governing her colonial empire, are now pressing on the British government with respect to the colonies; although the integrity of personal character, and the freedom of the press, prevent those greater evils which became so notorious in Spanish America, notwithstanding the unremitting exertions of that excellent tribunal, the council of the Indies. But the effects of distance are being lessened yearly by improved means of communication: and, if the home government will but listen as readily to the opinions of respectable residents in the colonies, as they naturally attend to the voices of those who join in parliamentary debates, it will be impossible that misapprehensions of much consequence can exist long, or that difficulties should arise, which perseverance and talent will not find means of overcoming. After objecting so decidedly to a particular system of colonisation, it may be expected that some other plan should be suggested as preferable. I am fully aware how well the Wakefield system has appeared to succeed in South Australia, how numerous and influential are its advocates, and how carefully a committee of the House of Commons considered all the details of the Land Sales Act of 1842.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, I will venture to submit that the present circumstances of New Zealand require a less artificial, – a more natural mode of proceeding. Money capital will not be employed for many years in the interior of the island; but there are thousands of active men, accustomed to labour, whose means of maintenance would be very much improved by having each a few acres of that land, to which they might be allowed to raise a valid claim merely by cultivation. Such men would soon raise surplus produce, and become enabled to consume manufactures. It may appear that the more natural method is, to let those buy from the natives who can, provided they are actual settlers, and will conform to certain conditions necessary for the public welfare. Proof of fair purchase, conformity to regulations, and undisturbed possession, after surveying the boundaries,¹⁰⁶ should be followed by a grant from the Crown.

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Lands now belonging to the Crown, or rather to the public,

which are yet unsaleable because of their remoteness or critical situation, might be granted, in small lots, to actual settlers on such allotments, after they had gained the good will of the natives in their neighbourhood sufficiently to warrant their erecting cottages, and cultivating ground.¹⁰⁷ In this way the hardier

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labouring men might become pioneers of civilization in the interior. Their example would have its effect gradually, while the natives would not be jealous of their superiority, or their numbers – during the infancy of the colony.

But these men must, for many years to come, be beyond the reach of efficient physical protection from government; in which, however, they would not differ from hundreds of our countrymen who have been and are still living among the natives, actually under their laws, – however favoured or exempted from many penalties or punishments in consequence of their being white men, and therefore ignorant of native usages.¹⁰⁸

There will be such difficulty in effecting the sale of Crown lands in New Zealand for many years to come; and there will be so much reluctance to emigrate there from Great Britain, that a regular supply of immigrants may rather be expected from the adjacent Australian colonies, whence adventurous young men are continually moving.

Every additional white settler, located and cultivating in New Zealand, is not only a productive member of the community, (and therefore beneficial to the parent state as well as the colony, by his demand for manufactured articles for which he gives produce of the soil) – but he adds to the strength and influence of the colony: he sets an example to the native: and he pioneers the way for future colonisation on a larger scale, very inferior certainly, but still analogous to that which is progressing so wonderfully in North America.

I have said that there are now some hundreds of white men living entirely among the natives of New Zealand, under their law. These men are more or less settled: many have native wives: some have large families. They speak the language, and have no uneasiness as to their security. They are effecting a silent but perceptible alteration in the native character. In the Waikato district, where there are many of these men, cultivation is much on the increase among the natives;¹⁰⁹ their newer huts, are higher and better: their habits are im-

proving; they have even a few water mills to grind their corn,¹¹⁰ which they are growing in such abundance that if peace be not interrupted, the traders will be able to buy up good wheat from them at little more than two shillings a bushel.¹¹¹ Now if there were at this present time, some thousands of such hardy adventurers scattered over the country, not living together, but dispersed so as to be everywhere dependent on the natives themselves for protection, (which would ensure their quiet conduct,) the gradual change effected by their means might be general; but this is only a supposition, mentioned merely to illustrate the idea, that New Zealand requires a generation or two of pioneers whose industrious labours will not only maintain themselves and their families in that productive country, (without perhaps seeing money for months together), – but will prepare the face of the land for a much more numerous multitude than it has yet borne in its most populous time. In short (strange or even absurd as it may seem to supporters of the Wakefield theory), I would suggest that land should there be made as cheap, and as easy of attainment as possible.

There is another material consideration in connection with this subject. Emigrants now prefer taking their money with them and buying land which they have seen, rather than trust to other persons, or to a lottery, and after a long passage find themselves in a strange country where they cannot discover their expected property; or, if discovered, are not allowed to occupy it: but are obliged to return home; or work for others as common labourers.

These questions with respect to New Zealand are now become so complicated, that it will be far better, in every point of view, for the government to meet the whole case of that colony comprehensively rather than to temporize in detail. The New Zealand Company might have a place in history by the side of the South Sea Company;¹¹² and money should not be spared in rendering at least a considerable part of that country safe and habitable for colonists, who while benefitting themselves and the mother country, would also improve the condition of the aboriginal natives.

By means of money employed judiciously; and solely by the government; this entangled question – this problem may be solved: and the two races may yet live amicably. But while

there is an irresponsible commercial body, whose object is selfish and local, operating either as a middle-man between the government and the colony, or as an officious helper of the government, for the sake of its own advantage, there can be no peace or confidence.

Money is urgently required for building defensive forts and walls; for military and naval forces; for the civil government; and for the natives. Hitherto government has erected no hospital, – has established no school, – has constructed no place of shelter,¹¹³ – has contributed towards the erection of no church for the aboriginal population.¹¹⁴

When a native chief asks what benefits the British Sovereign has conferred on his race, what reply can be given to him? The advantages really derived from the presence of a settled civilized government, the natives themselves do not appreciate fully, because they find that it is neither strong enough, nor sufficiently prompt to deal out the summary justice to which they have been accustomed; while it is some check upon their taking the law into their own hands.¹¹⁵ This may appear advantageous to their general well-being; but in reality it generates discontent, promotes disorder and licence, and has gone far towards great disorganization among the rising generation.

The gross misconduct of some white men, – not only escaped convicts, but traders on the coast, and even young men who were educated respectably, – has often irritated the natives, and has operated unfavourably for the government, which could not punish such offences for want of legal proofs, and witnesses who could not or would not appear. Fraud was often practised – promised payment evaded altogether – women were enticed away, and perhaps deserted – the hospitality of chiefs was abused by idle young men living at their pahs, – and small vessels were promised but not given in return for cargoes of produce. Of three stipulated cargoes perhaps two would be taken in advance; but the vessel never returned, and nothing more was heard of her, or their payment, by the natives. Such cases as these occurring frequently, naturally induce the wish for a more efficient executive power than the slow and technical English law, which in so many respects is unsuited to the present state of New Zealand.

In 1610, Sir Francis Bacon advised martial law to be enforced in Virginia, and the colony prospered under it, from 1611 to 1619, in a surprising manner; so much so that the settlers believed their establishment secure, and scattered themselves over the country.¹¹⁶

Money employed for the native population might be divided between objects tending directly to the bodily as well as the mental welfare of the natives,¹¹⁷ – and objects of a political nature affecting both races, such as salaries to native chiefs¹¹⁸ acting as keepers of the peace and agents of government, payment to natives acting with our troops; pay, clothing, and arms for a native corps, also for presents and for subsidies.

Expensive as this may sound, it would be a less extravagant process than attempting to reduce New Zealanders to submission by the sword, – a lamentable alternative to which we seem now to be fast approaching. Unless it is made evidently and strongly their interest to become British subjects in reality, as well as in

name, no force will make them submissive while they retain life, amidst the fastnesses of an almost impracticable country, whence they can attack their opponents at any time.

The great object to be kept in view being, the peaceable intercourse of both races, without which no material progress can be made by the settler, no improvement in the condition of the native; and as the state of New Zealand for generations may depend on the conduct of Great Britain during the next few years, let me entreat those who take a real interest in that country to exert themselves speedily, and in earnest.

Few persons accustomed to consider the New Zealand Company in the light which the list of their directors ought to warrant, can bring themselves to believe that they cannot continue their operations as a commercial body undertaking to carry on colonisation in New Zealand. Under all the force of censure which may be the consequence of my presuming to give a decided opinion on such a subject, I now venture to assert that the continuance of their operations in New Zealand, however assisted by the government, must be attended

with disadvantages and pecuniary loss; and that the sooner they cease to act, the better it will be for themselves, – for the settlers, and for the natives. My reasons are these, the company commenced operations upon the principle of obtaining land cheaply in large quantities, and selling it at a very large profit (more than nineteen hundred per cent.) Land cannot be obtained in the northern island of New Zealand in sufficient quantity, and at a price sufficiently low to enable the company to realise a profit that will even cover their expenses. To take land by force from the natives, or without the full consent of all its numerous owners, would involve in hostilities, not only the takers, but those who attempted to settle there, and their local government. Were a person in England to endeavour to enclose a common, without taking cognizance of all the claims to right thereon, in what litigation would he not involve himself? yet the company have attempted an infinitely greater and more complicated encroachment in New Zealand, where the natives resort to muskets and tomahawks, instead of attorneys and barristers.

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I believe that the majority of the directors and shareholders of the New Zealand Company are to this day under a delusion, are still mystified about that country, and that the time will come when they will feel thankful that the local government took such a course in 1841-2-3-4 and 5, as saved the settlers whom they sent out to the Antipodes from still greater distress, if not from extermination.

Let not people now say: "why did you not tell us this sooner?" – Local knowledge cannot be acquired in a few weeks. Time for enquiry, for inspection, for calm comparison, and for reflection, are necessary before fixed opinions of any value can be formed. The only persons who could give the New Zealand Company accurate information previous to 1840 were the missionaries and their correspondents. They did give it, openly, in print, as well as privately in conversation. Their opinions were controverted, slighted, or despised. Now their truth has been manifested, – but how painfully – by what an amount of misery!

As one among the many who hoped that the company might work beneficially for all parties interested, I left England in 1843, prepared to co-operate with them cordially; but on arriving at Sydney, and more in New Zealand, my eyes were opened. The Wairau proceedings, as detailed by the Wellington and Nelson newspapers, which I received from Colonel Wakefield at Sydney, not only convinced me of the settlers' erroneous views, but of the injurious manner in which the operations of the company had been practically car-

ried out by their agents, and by the colonists over whom they had influence.

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A very momentous question is now frequently asked, to this effect: What will be the state of New Zealand for the next few years? My answer to such a question would be: Unless Providence avert the impending evils in a manner which we now cannot foresee, there is too much reason to fear that it will be distracted by warfare, not only between the natives themselves, but between the white and coloured races.

Religion has lost much of the limited influence which was acquired previous to 1840. Roman catholics have entered the field which was exclusively protestant till 1838. Elements of distrust and discord have been spread over the whole island; and there is now no influence to control or unite the population. Unsettled and jealous feelings have been roused by the recent hostilities, by the arrival of troops and ships of war, and by false reports of the intentions of government. Appearances are very threatening, and I much doubt the propriety of adding to the excitement by any attempt to take land^{119*} by force. A little time, and a few hundred sovereigns, might save many thousands of pounds, and hundreds of lives.

The expedition to Port Nicholson, to which I referred in the preceding chapter, may be apparently successful: the intruding natives may fall back for a time: but it will hardly be safe to cultivate that land,¹²⁰ and a dangerous effect will be caused among all the aborigines of New Zealand.

An alteration was made by the executive in the early part of this year, which I cannot but regard with the deepest anxiety. The vitally important office of protector of the natives was abolished; the chief protector was offered an inferior occupation as native secretary in the colonial secretary's office, and the subordinates in the protectorate department were dismissed, or offered employment as clerks or interpreters, as future vacancies might occur.

I cannot think of this measure without the keenest feelings of regret, and the most earnest concern for the consequences.

Unfortunately, some influential members of the House of Commons have said: "Let New Zealand have more protectors of Englishmen, and fewer protectors of natives." Those members could not have been aware of the paramount importance to the colony, of the officers who, though called

protectors of the natives, have hitherto been more efficient protectors of their own countrymen.

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The knowledge of native usages and language, which the protectors must possess, and their own personal influence among the aborigines, enabled them to allay many a fast increasing feeling of vindictive anger, – to prevent many a serious quarrel. They were the eyes and ears of the executive authorities at each of the settlements, with reference to the aboriginal people; and how those authorities will contrive to carry on their duties efficiently without such assistance, I am unable to conceive. To deprive the governor, or the superintendent at Wellington, or the police magistrate at New Plymouth, of the assistance of a resident protector of aborigines, seems to me like taking away the confidential dragoman and his assistants from an embassy at Constantinople, pending intricate negotiations involving immediate hostilities.

That the British government will confirm so important a change in their conduct and arrangements with regard to the aborigines of New Zealand, as to annihilate the protectorate department, I cannot bring myself to believe.

Even the Spanish government always maintained protectors of the Indians; and not only so, but by hospitals, and salaries to caciques, and by repeated instructions to successive viceroys, the council of the Indies did more on behalf of the American Indians than, after all our professions, we of Great Britain have yet done for the New Zealanders.

If the government should be so ill advised as to change its policy materially towards New Zealand, to the extent of falsifying what the missionaries, the bishop, and successive governors have solemnly asserted to be the fixed intentions of Great Britain, – the consequences will be fatal.

How those men, of unimpeached character among the natives (however slandered by some of their own countrymen), were pained while reading the debates of 1845 in the House of Commons, I cannot adequately describe.

[104](#) He has since made peace. Will it be lasting?

[105](#) Our settlements are so multiplied, that emigrants of the labouring class cannot now be confined to the place for which their labor was intended on leaving England.

[106](#) This is the surest test of a valid and undisputed purchase of land.

[107](#) Being proofs of undisputed tenure.

[108](#) Rather a lesson to ourselves.

[109](#) It is estimated that above one hundred thousand acres of land are now cultivated by natives, throughout the islands.

[110](#) Steel hand mills are in much demand.

[111](#) Sixteen shillings a quarter.

[112](#) Of 1725. Among many points of resemblance, each company employed lotteries and great exaggerations.

[113](#) Excepting one small building at Nelson.

[114](#) As the Aborigines contribute materially towards the revenue, – by their consumption of manufactured articles, it may be truly said that they have a just claim to more advantages from the government than they have yet received.

[115](#) Which they would prefer.

[116](#) Yet even then the Indians were planning their destruction, and four years afterwards, a general attack took place, in all quarters – at one time.

[117](#) But not lavished like the thousands of pounds formerly expended annually in Canada.

[118](#) In Spanish America the caciques received salaries for similar purposes.

[119](#) At the Hutt Valley for instance.

[120](#) In the valley of the Hutt (Heretaonga.)

CHAPTER VIII: 1846

CHAPTER VIII.

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COMMERCIAL RESOURCES.

1846.

Political occurrences and local sketches have chiefly occupied the preceding pages. I will now, in conclusion, touch lightly on a few of the present and promising resources of New Zealand in a mercantile point of view, and on their probable consequence in connection with its geographical position. I will refrain from details, not only because they would require too much space for admission into this limited paper, but because I believe that they have been already published by others whose authority is preferable to mine.

The natural resources of New Zealand hitherto discovered, are now well known to be great; but they are not of a kind to demand merely slight exertions, in order to make them available. Industry, temperance, integrity and discretion, are indispensably required by those who would derive much advantage from the natural resources of that country. Capital alone will not yet do much; safe channels for its employment are wanting.

A very healthy climate, favourable in a high degree to old as well as young people, but particularly to children; a rapid vegetation, which continues throughout the year, excepting a few weeks; and an equable moderate temperature, are permanent advantages of the first class, – but the excess of wind and abundance of rain, in some particular localities, must not be overlooked. There are many good harbours on the north east coast of the Northern Island (though in other habitable districts they are by no means numerous, or easy of access) and inland communication by boats or canoes, is extensive. Thus the healthiness and accessibility of the country add to the value of its natural productions, the principal of which are: timber (of many qualities, from the hardest and toughest to the lightest or most pliable), flax, gum, bark, dye-wood, copper, sulphur, manganese, iron, china clay, fuller's earth, coal, limestone, lead, silver, alum, ochre, pumice stone, and volcanic earths.

As cultivation extends and cattle increase, corn, European flax, potatoes, hides, and wool of excellent quality, will be

produced in greater abundance. Even in the rough "bush," as it is called, cattle, horses, sheep, and goats thrive greatly; but as pastures improve, animals will likewise become proportionally better in their respective qualities. The wool of New Zealand is already known as long in staple, and uniform in strength of fibre, – (effects of equable moderate temperature, and continuance of nourishing food throughout the year). It is probable that wool, hides, tallow, and salt provisions will become staple articles of export, especially from the middle island (called New Munster) where there are so few natives that the progress of colonization would not be impeded materially.

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Very little is yet known of the mineral treasures even in the northern districts, and nothing at all of the contents of the central and southern parts of the islands. Volcanic action has been remarkably intense in the northern island, and slight earthquakes have been felt; but there is no evidence of any damage to buildings hitherto erected, neither have the natives any distinct account of serious convulsions having occurred for some generations.¹²¹

Copper is said to be very abundant, and easy of access. Coal is plentiful in several places, but has yet been worked near Nelson only. There is an extensive coal field near the Waikato River belonging to Whero-Whero; and there is said to be excellent coal remarkably convenient for shipping in Preservation Harbour, at the south end of the Middle Island. Tin also, and other minerals of value have been found, although search for them has been only recently made, and not by persons fully conversant with mineralogy.

As a coasting trade is growing fast, and there are great facilities for building small vessels, it will not be necessary for over-sea traders to visit inferior harbours; their cargoes can be collected at the principal ports. The violent winds that are frequent, and the iron-bound character of much of the coast, make it advisable for ships of burthen to avoid exposure on the western or south-eastern shores, where high seas prevail and where few harbours exist.

Some of the coasting vessels are owned, and almost entirely manned by natives; but owners of English vessels and their masters, usually prefer white men, although more expensive – on account of the difficulty of dealing with natives in their own country, without a good knowledge of their language and

usages. Native seamen are found by masters of vessels (as native women are by husbands), so completely under the influence of their families and a variety of native usages, that they sometimes become exceedingly troublesome, to say the least; and on this account, as well as others, natives are not preferred on board English vessels, although whalers and oversea voyagers in the Pacific take some occasionally. They make active and hardy seamen.

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The geographical position of these island is generally acknowledged to be very important – politically as well as commercially considered. Their situation immediately opposite to the principal Australian colonies; the nature of their productions; the facility with which ships sail from New Zealand to South America, the Islands of the Pacific, China, or India, and from each back again, in about equal times; show that the future importance of the colony will be great, however slow may be its progress for many years, and whatever difficulties and disasters may unhappily befall the present generation of settlers. Perhaps no colony is better suited to British habits and constitutions: or would be better adapted to British enterprise, were it not peopled by an aboriginal race, whose strength and numbers have hitherto been so little appreciated that a threatening state of affairs has been brought about, which at present checks progress.

There are some – perhaps many persons – who look on the New Zealanders themselves as impediments to the prosperity of British settlers in that country. To such persons I would say: the best customers of the settlers in New Zealand are the natives. They are purchasers of a large amount of blankets, clothing, hardware, tobacco, soap, paper prints, arms, ammunition, boats, small vessels, canvas, and other articles, for which they pay in ready money, in native produce (such as flax, pigs, fish, potatoes, corn, &c.) in land, or by their own labour. The amount of native produce consumed by the settlers is really

surprising; and a similar practice will continue while peace prevails, because the native is heedless of the value of time, and can sell his produce at prices considerably lower than those which can be afforded by the settlers.

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In conclusion, it is my deliberate conviction, that the prosperity of colonists in New Zealand will depend on the prevalence of amicable relations with the aboriginal race.

[121](#) Nevertheless it is a country in which earthquakes may be expected, therefore buildings should be planned accordingly, extended in width, rather than height.

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