

## CHAPTER I.

## IN THE BEGINNING.

“THE ISLANDS of New Zealand have long been resorted to by British subjects on account of the valuable articles of commerce which those Islands produce, and by reason of the peculiar advantages which they offer to whale ships requiring repair. But the nearness of those Islands to the British penal settlements of New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land has also led to their being resorted to as an asylum for fugitive British convicts, and such persons having associated with men left in New Zealand by whale ships and other vessels, have formed a Society which indispensably requires the check of some contending authority. Her Majesty’s Government have, therefore, deemed it expedient to station at New Zealand an officer, with the character and powers of a British Consul, and I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that the Queen has been graciously pleased to select you for the appointment.” So wrote Viscount Palmerston, Foreign Secretary in Lord Melbourne’s Cabinet, on 13th August, 1839, to Captain William Hobson, R.N., and this letter may be taken as the first satisfactory evidence we have that the British Government had at last consented to shoulder their long-evaded responsibility in connection with New Zealand. Ever since the day when Captain Cook took possession of the country in the name of and for the use of King George III, these islands had been allowed by succeeding British Governments to remain a neglected geographical quantity, and this very neglect had now robbed the nation of the title which Cook

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had by his splendid enterprise secured for it. The law of Nations has well defined the principle that before a country becomes entitled to claim sovereignty in any part of the globe "by right of discovery," it is not sufficient that the mariners of that country should sail forth and discover new lands, but there must be some effective act immediately following, such as systematic occupation, in order to bind other Peoples to respect the discovering nation's claim.

During the latter part of the century which had elapsed between the time of Cook's proclamation to the world and the day when the Melbourne Cabinet decided that Britain must assume in earnest her responsibilities in the South Pacific, there had not only been no systematic occupation of New Zealand by Britain, but rather a systematic renunciation of the nation's intention in that direction. The Duke of Wellington had petulantly declared that England had colonies enough,\* and Minister after Minister who had presided over the Colonial Office had in deeds, if not in words, endorsed this policy of anti-Imperialism. There was at this time none among the British statesmen blessed with that broader grasp, that wider vision of an Empire "extending over every sea, swaying many diverse races, and combining many diverse forms of religion," which afterwards animated the Colonial policy of Lord John Russell.† The courage and capacity which that planter of Imperial outposts declared were necessary to build such an Empire—to effect such a wholesome blending of peoples—were wanting, and there was even an imminent danger that in this nugatory attitude toward colonising, other Powers would come to regard Britain not as an equal, nor

\*In 1829 the Duke of Wellington received a deputation on the subject of the settlement of a block of land acquired by the New Zealand Company at Hokianga, in 1825, under the approval of Mr. Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, but he who was virtually to add South Australia to the Empire, then thought "we have colonies enough." *Vide* Dr. Garnett's *Life of E. G. Wakefield*.

†On one occasion when Lord John Russell was asked by a French Diplomat how much of Australia Britain claimed, he promptly replied, "The whole of it." Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, 1875, p. 203.

with the fear that an equal can inspire, but as a timorous weakling, a nation destitute of enterprise, the product of a waning courage, and of a pusillanimous hand.

Thus it came about that when in 1839 the Ministry of Lord Melbourne found themselves coerced by circumstances into recognising the need for systematic colonisation in this part of the globe, they discovered that they were destitute of what most people believed they possessed—a title to sovereignty in New Zealand “by right of discovery.”

The spirit of the British nation had not, however, been as idle as the British statesmen, and inherent enterprise, combined with an inherent love of adventure, had sown and matured the seed which continuous Ministries had persistently declined to nourish. The elements which had contributed to the irregular settlement of New Zealand were faithfully recorded in Lord Palmerston’s letter to Captain Hobson, and a more unpropitious beginning for any colony could scarcely be imagined. The number of British subjects who, up to 1839, had resorted to New Zealand for the purposes of legitimate and respectable trade was comparatively small, but it is estimated that even earlier than this, there were over five hundred escaped convicts living along the sea coast in and around the Bay of Islands, the point at which settlement had, up to that time, chiefly congregated. Of those belonging to various nationalities directly and indirectly concerned in the whaling industry there must have been a considerable array, for it is officially recorded that in the year 1836 no fewer than one hundred and fifty-one vessels had visited the Bay of Islands alone, and the proportion was even larger in the first half of the succeeding year.

The combination of whaler and convict was not one calculated to strengthen the morality of the community, and so large a leaven of the lawless class, together with the insatiable desire of the natives to procure muskets, had

the effect of creating a state of society which in the words of the Foreign Secretary “indispensably required the check of some contending authority.” In the absence of any such authority, the more respectable settlers at the Bay of Islands had organised themselves into a self-constituted Association, into whose hands was committed the administration of a rude justice, which recognised a liberal application of tar and feathers as meet punishment for some of the offences against society. A steadying influence had also been supplied by the appointment at intervals since 1814 of gentlemen empowered to act as Justices of the Peace, their authority being derived from a Commission issued by the Governor of New South Wales, and, if illegal, was on more than one occasion acted upon with salutary effect.\*

Although it has been a popular sport on the part of many writers to throw darts of sarcasm at the labours of the missionaries, they too must be accounted a tremendous influence for good, not so much, perhaps, in checking the licentiousness of the Europeans, as in preventing the natives from becoming contaminated by it. Destructive internecine wars had been waged “with fiendish determination” for many years under the conquering leadership of Hongi, Te Wherowhero, Te Waharoa, and Te Rauparaha, by which whole districts had been depopulated, and tribe after tribe practically annihilated. Still the Maori people were a numerous, virile and warlike race, capable of deeds of blackest barbarism, or equally adaptable to the softening influences of Christianity and civilisation.

So far as the darker side of their history is concerned we have it on the irreproachable authority of the Reverend

\*As indicating the state into which society had fallen it may be mentioned that one Master of a trading vessel who had no muskets to sell, gave a chief a packet of corrosive sublimate wherewith to destroy his enemies. To correct this condition of affairs a proclamation was published in the New South Wales Government Gazette in 1814 appointing the Rev. Mr. Kendall and the chiefs Ruatara, Hongi, and Korokoro, Magistrates at the Bay of Islands, for the purpose of suppressing outrages. This authority was subsequently revoked as being illegal.

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Samuel Marsden that the tragedies in which the natives made war upon the Europeans were in almost every instance merely acts of retaliation for earlier outrages.\* The killing of Marion du Fresne, the massacre on board the *Boyd* were unquestionably so, and the dread of the natives which for several years after these events almost suspended the sea trade with New Zealand was the natural fruit of that cruelty which trusting Maori seamen had suffered at the hands of unscrupulous captains who had either inveigled them, or forced them on board their whalers. Dark as the history of New Zealand was during those Alsatian days, there is no chapter quite so dark, or which redounds less to the credit of the white race, than the story of the sea-going natives who were taken away from these sunny shores,† and abandoned in foreign countries, or driven at the end of the lash to tasks far beyond their physical strength, resulting in the premature death of many, while the poison of undying hatred entered into the souls of the survivors.

The position on shore was scarcely less disgraceful, for the natives resident in the seaward *pas* were cruelly ill-treated by the crews of the European vessels who visited them, and it is stated in the records of the Church Missionary Society that within the first two or three years of the arrival of the missionaries, as many as one thousand Maoris had been murdered by Europeans, the natives unhappily not infrequently visiting upon the innocent who came within their reach, revenge for crimes perpetrated by the guilty who had evaded their vengeance.

But apart from the commission of actual outrage, there was debauchery of several kinds and always of a pronounced type. "They lead a most reckless life, keeping grog shops,

\*"The Rev. Mr. Kendall has received a Commission to act as a Magistrate, but it does not appear that he possesses the means of rendering effective assistance to the natives against the oppressions of the crews of European vessels, and of controlling in any degree the intercourse that subsists between them." Commissioner Bigge to Earl Bathurst, 1823.

†This practice was prohibited by the Governor of New South Wales by proclamation, on 9th November, 1814.

selling spirituous liquors to both Europeans and natives, living with the native females in a most discreditable way, so that the natives have told me to teach my own countrymen first before I taught them. They have called us a nation of drunkards from their seeing a majority of Europeans of that stamp in New Zealand." Such was the testimony of an erstwhile missionary catechist, Mr. John Flatt, when giving evidence before the House of Lords, regarding the northern portion of the country, and not less unsatisfactory was the position of the South Island, where the whalers were the preponderating section of the white population.

At both Cloudy Bay and Queen Charlotte Sound there was, in 1837, a considerable white settlement, each man being a law unto himself, except in so far as he was under the dominion of the head man of the station. This at least was the opinion formed by Captain Hobson when visiting those parts in H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*. In describing the result of his enquiries to Governor Bourke, he dismissed the probability of these settlements being attacked by the natives, because they were so confederated by their employment; but he significantly added: "The only danger they have to apprehend is from themselves, and that is in a great measure neutralised by the contending influences of their own reckless and desperate character."

The Rev. James Stack, a Church missionary, then labouring in the north, in writing home to the parent Mission Society, complained bitterly of the unprincipled white men who had escaped from the chain gangs at Sydney, and who had recently shown themselves so desperate that two were seized and taken to Sydney to be tried at the Assizes on a charge of attempted robbery and murder.\* Mr. Stack pleaded for the intervention of the

\*Edward Doyle underwent the extreme penalty of the law at Sydney for a burglary committed at the Bay of Islands on 18th June, 1836, the sentence being imposed under a statute of George IV

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British Government, which he hoped would not leave the country at the mercy of the escaped convicts, or the natives to the influence of a commerce carried on with so many circumstances destructive to the moral health of the people that, if unchecked, would effectually do the work of depopulation. "We have no law or justice," wrote Mr. Stack, "no punishment for crime but private revenge."

In the beginning of the year 1840, Kororareka, the settlement at the Bay of Islands which had the greatest right to claim the dignity of a township, contained about three hundred inhabitants of all ages, exclusive of the numerous sailors, whose nightly revels constituted the only interruption to the peace and harmony which generally prevailed. These gentry resorted in great numbers to the native village at the inner anchorage, where the principal chief carried on the lucrative business of grog selling, besides another of a still more discreditable kind, for the convenience of his reckless customers—French, English and American. "Here," according to Dr. Jameson, "might be seen the curious spectacle of a still savage chief, enriching himself at the expense of individuals who, although belonging to the most civilised and powerful nations in the world, were reduced to a lower degree of barbarism by the influence of their unbridled licentiousness."

Contact with such social degenerates was not calculated to inspire the natives with a high idea of European morality, nor offer a conspicuous example of rectitude; but where the influences destructive of decency and order were less virulent, the missionaries had a more hopeful tale to tell. "The door is opening before us in every direction, and the people are pressing and entreating us to enter. Had we only more help, where we have now a hundred natives under our care, we would soon have a thousand." Such was the report of the Rev. Mr. Turner, one of the Wesleyan

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## THE TREATY OF WAITANGI

missionaries\* at Hokianga, in urging his Society to send more workers to this corner of the human vineyard. The attendance and attention of the natives at Divine worship were regular and fixed, while it is recorded that their responses to the reading of the Litany were particularly devout.

The sincerity of many of these early converts was one of the most remarkable features of the evangelising of the Maori, and the Rev. Dr. Beecham, in giving evidence before the Lords' Committee in 1838, quoted this eloquent passage from one of the letters of the Rev. Mr. Hobbs, to illustrate the warmth of Maori piety. "The beauty of the Liturgy as translated by our brethren at the Bay of Islands into the native tongue is most exquisite, and to me hardly loses any of the force of original composition, and I have no doubt has been made a great blessing unto many by putting words of prayer into their mouths, and thus teaching them to pray. Many times has my heart gloried within me while repeating the *Te Deum laudamus*, and especially that part:

*Tapu tapu tapu rawa E Ihowa te Atua o nga mano tuauriuri whaioio,*

That is,

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth,

and hear them respond,

*E kiki ana te Rangi me te whenua i te kahanga o tou kororia.*

Heaven and Earth are full of the majesty of Thy Glory."

I have been informed, continued Dr. Beecham, by those who have witnessed the celebration of public worship in the principal church at Mangungu, that to hear 700 or 800 of the Christian natives correctly and promptly utter the responses, and then sing the praises of the True God, is highly affecting. Another feature of their character is their strict observance of daily social prayer. At dawn of day all the inhabitants of the villages assemble together in the chapel at the sound of the bell, or

\*The Wesleyan Mission in New Zealand originated in a visit made to this country in the year 1819 by the Reverend Samuel Leigh, a missionary of the Wesleyan Society then stationed in New South Wales. He made the visit for the benefit of his health on the recommendation of the Reverend Mr. Marsden.



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some piece of metal used as a substitute, to read the scriptures and to pray. The same order is observed in the evening. When the evening approaches the whole of the population move to the house of God, and close the day with devotions. Their reverence for the Sabbath is remarkable. Those who come from a distance to attend Divine worship at Mangungu do not travel on the Sunday, but on the Saturday, and return on the Monday. They refrain from all work on the Lord's Day. So strict are their views on the sanctity of the Sabbath they do not even prepare their food on that day. The arrival of a vessel is always a matter of considerable excitement to the natives of New Zealand, but if a vessel arrives on the Sunday no stir is made.

It would be difficult to find any description quite so touching concerning the religious observances of the *Pakehas*, whose irreverence more than once roused the righteous indignation of the Rev. Mr. Marsden.

Although the British authorities had as yet taken no decisive step towards acquiring sovereignty in New Zealand, it cannot be said that the state of society in the country had entirely escaped their notice. Especially were the successive Governors of New South Wales vigilant in keeping Ministers posted as to passing events. Many must have been their anxious moments, for they, being the nearest representatives of the Queen, were naturally most solicitous for the conduct and fate of their countrymen. As far back as 1814 Governor Macquarie had declared New Zealand to be a part of that Colony, and it was thought that the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court had also been extended to this country. These proceedings were, however, almost a nullity, for had they been formal and constitutional—which they were not—the practical difficulties in the way of bringing offenders to justice were so great that the attempt was made only in a few isolated and extreme instances.

This state of official inaction continued until the tidings of the part played by Captain Stewart and his brig *Elizabeth* in Te Rauparaha's Akaroa raid, of 1830, reached Sydney.

Then Governor Darling and his successor, Sir Richard Bourke, realised that this game of glorified bluff could not go on indefinitely. The strongest possible representations were accordingly made to the Home authorities, and these representations were followed by a pathetic petition from the natives to King William IV, which was transmitted to Sir Richard Bourke through Mr. Yate, one of the principal members of the Church Missionary Society's staff then labouring in the country.

The leading chiefs of the northern part of the islands had long ere this realised the ineffectiveness of their tribal system to cope with the altered state of society. The missionaries on their part watched with anxiety the unhappy trend of affairs, knowing that if some more enlightened course were not given to events a serious collision would in all probability arise between the two races, which could scarcely terminate otherwise than in the extermination or expulsion of the one or the other.

Being fully persuaded that to maintain the chiefs and their tribes as an independent people was the most effective safeguard against foreign aggression they saw with deepest regret the intestine warfare which was going on among the natives, thinning their ranks, and rendering them every day less able to resist the pretensions of a foreign power. Stung by a sense of failure, and excited by a rumour that the French were at hand, the chiefs placed themselves under missionary direction and addressed themselves to the King in the following diplomatic terms:\*

\*Petition sent to King William through Mr. Yate, Colonial Secretary of New South Wales, November 16th, 1831.

The Rev. Samuel Marsden says that in his journeyings through the country, the native chiefs repeatedly discussed with him the wisdom of having some more stable form of government to take the place of their tribal system. As early as September, 1820, after his first visit to the Thames, Marsden wrote upon this matter to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society as follows: "At the river Thames the chiefs on both the west and east side requested that they might have some protection afforded them from the British Government. Wherever I have been the chiefs and people are sensible of the advantages of some regular government, and most of them wish to lay aside their war pursuits and turn their attention to agriculture, but allege they are compelled