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EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908329-11-3

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908332-07-6

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: The Dillon letters : the letters of the Hon. Constantine Dillon,
1842-1853

Author: Dillon, Constantine

Published: A.H. & A.W. Reed, Wellington, N.Z., 1954

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THE DILLON LETTERS

1842-1853



Constantine Augustus Dillon

THE DILLON LETTERS

THE LETTERS OF THE
HON. CONSTANTINE DILLON

1842-1853

Edited by
C. A. SHARP



WELLINGTON
A. H. & A. W. REED

First Published November 1954

A. H. & A. W. REED

182 Wakefield Street

Wellington

New Zealand

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Published with assistance from
Department of Internal Affairs

Set in Linotype Times Roman 11pt
and printed by
Wright & Carman Ltd., Wellington

16 JAN 1987

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INTRODUCTION

The founders of New Zealand included a number of gifted writers of letters, journals and reminiscences. Among these were the Hon. Constantine Augustus Dillon (the fourth son of an Irish viscount) and his wife, Fanny, who set sail for Nelson in June 1842, a few months after their marriage.

Born in 1813, Constantine Dillon served first in the Navy and then as an officer in the 7th Dragoon Guards and the 17th Lancers. After a term as aide-de-camp to Lord Ebrington, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he accepted a similar position under Lord Durham, Governor-General of Canada. While in Canada Dillon made the acquaintance of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, one of Durham's lieutenants, who probably directed his attention to New Zealand as a land of opportunity. Dillon was at length persuaded to invest in several land-orders of the New Zealand Company, and the letters take up the story as the emigrant ship, *George Fyfe*, is about to head out from Spithead on the first stage of the long voyage to the antipodes. From that moment until Dillon's tragic death in 1853 one is able to follow in detail the fortunes of Constantine, Fanny and their steadily increasing family in the new land.

The *Dillon Letters* are written in a clear, crisp and unaffected style that compares favourably with some of the best colonial letters of the period. They contain many humorous observations and reflections and are sometimes enlivened by wit. Dillon was on close and friendly terms with Sir George Grey, William Fox, Alfred Domett and other leading colonists of the period, some of whom contribute letters to the series. In other words, the *Dillon Letters* are at once a valuable source of New Zealand history and a charming narrative of people, opinions and social life.

In preparing the text for publication the main aim has been to combine accuracy with readability. In a few places where Dillon's handwriting was difficult to decipher brief link passages have been inserted within square brackets. A small amount of inconsequential matter has been omitted, and the whole has been repunctuated in conformity with modern usage. The original spellings have, however, been retained.

My thanks are due to Miss Kathleen Dillon of Oxfordshire, England, for permission to publish the letters, to Mr A. G. Harper, Secretary for Internal Affairs, Mr David Hall of the former Centennial Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs, and Mr John Reece Cole of the Alexander Turnbull Library, for material assistance and moral encouragement. I am also indebted to Mr John Miller of the Alexander Turnbull Library for invaluable help in checking the text and explanatory notes, and for many hours of argument.

ANDREW SHARP

Wellington, March 1954

THE LETTERS

1. *FANNY DILLON TO LADY DILLON*

Spithead, 22nd June [1842]
Wednesday Morning

Dearest Lady Dillon,¹

We are just getting under weigh, the decks are wet and uncomfortable, but our little cabin is very nice. We have got our books in the bookcases and have emptied all our various packages into the lockers, so we have much more room and it is very much more comfortable than we expected. The captain and first mate are very civil. I have not yet seen anything of our fellow passengers. My flowers are safe on board and look very well. Conny has hired young Godfrey for his servant for the passage and gives him a pound a month. I am very much more reconciled to Secker, she is very obliging and useful. Our beds are very comfortable and we both slept very soundly notwithstanding the noise of weighing of anchors during the night, for they tried to get out before, but could not. I shall leave my letter open till the Pilot leaves. Give my very best love to dearest Margaret and all. Conny desires his best love to you and all.

God bless you, my very dearest Lady Dillon,

Your very affecte. daughter

FANNY DILLON

¹ Henrietta Lady Dillon, Constantine's mother, was the widow of Henry Augustus, the 13th Viscount Dillon, who died in 1832. See the family tree on p. 168.

2. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS SISTER MARGARET HAMILTON

Nelson, N.Z. Jan. 16 1843

My Dearest Sister,

I fear that this must be a very hurried letter, as I did not expect an opportunity for some time to come, but the doctor who came out with us and has been staying for Fanny's confinement is going back this night via Sydney and will take our letters. You will be glad to hear that Fanny was confined on the 2nd of January very well of a boy. I am sure you will feel with me, my dearest Margaret, very grateful to God for her safe delivery. The little fellow is doing very well and so is Fanny, who sends you her love. He was baptized a few days after. A Missionary, a Mr Reay,² who happened to come one Sunday our way, called to baptize him and we were all abroad about a name, as we had not thought about it before. However we at last settled it should be 'Henry Philip Constantine'. He never asked for Godfather and Godmother so that the little gent has all the responsibility on his own shoulders.

We are settled on the plains of Waimea about 10 miles from Nelson, but we can get up to within 3 miles of our house by water. We have had it all put up, indeed we had it all up for a fortnight before Fanny's confinement, and barring that the roof is not quite properly fitted yet and that the rain comes in, we are all right. I have begun vigorously to cultivate. The plain on which we are is all fern, about shoulders high in some places, and flax in others. Some of the fern in the woods is very pretty. But I cannot this time, my dearest Margaret, give you much about the country. Get my letter to Mother for that.

I got all your letters by the *Prince of Wales* about a fortnight ago. They gave me so much pleasure, as you may well imagine, my own dear Margaret. I never can forget you, tho I am as happy as it is possible to be so far from all I love. How are your little kids? I hope you will love my little chap as much as I do yours.

This is not a comfortable letter but it is not intended to count. I have been so very busy with Fanny's confinement, and getting the garden made and the land ploughed, that I have not had one moment to do anything. I had intended to write a little every two or three days, but there will be another opportunity in about 3 weeks direct to England, when I shall send you a long account of all my doings. The doctor has promised that he would call on you and tell you about us. He has been very kind to Fanny and very attentive, but I do not know what we should have done had it not been for the wife of a farmer who came out with us, a Mrs Redwood,³ who came and staid with us, and was more like a mother to Fanny, she was so good to her, and would on going away accept nothing.

Fanny desires her best love to you and all yours. . . .
Goodbye, God bless you, my dearest sister.

Always, believe me, your aff. brother

C.A.D.

I am ashamed of this short letter, but I have had but very little notice to prepare and was frightened at a four months' letter.

² Nelson's first resident Church of England clergyman.

³ A well known Roman Catholic settler whose son, Francis, was Roman Catholic Archbishop of New Zealand for nearly fifty years.

3. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON*

Nelson, N.Z. January 16 1843

My dearest Mother,

I am sure that you will be very happy to hear that Fanny has got safely over her confinement. She was delivered on the 2nd of Jan. of a boy who has since been baptised by what I consider the strong names of 'Henry Philip Constantine'. We have every reason to be thankful to God for the way everything happened. We were here in time to have our house a fortnight before she was confined and all comfortable. We had staying with us the doctor who came out in the ship with us and a very good farmer's wife, a Mrs Redwood, whom I mentioned in my last letter. Nothing could exceed her attention and kindness. She could not have done one bit more had it been her own daughter. Fanny did very well for the first five days, but she thought she was all right, which caused her to get ill again, but she and the baby are now doing very well indeed.

We came out at once to the country and settled on one of our suburban sections on the plains of Waimea about ten miles from Nelson, but navigable up the river till within three miles of our house. The climate here is very fine but the nights are cold, almost as much so as in England in summer. We have no wood nearer than a mile and a half off, so that we have no shade, but we shall with the aid of a verandah make out. I have not felt it hot yet, tho' I hear the other people say it is hot, nor do I believe the thermometer has yet been up to 80, but I am in hopes that we shall have some warmer weather in February. I have already got a garden, and the peas and turnips have begun to show two days since. The land for miles around is fern and the roots

are *thickly* matted together, for which reason I have advised Henry Story,⁴ if he comes, to bring strong, heavy harrows and rakes. The fern was all burnt off by the surveyors so that it is not higher now than one's knees, but where some escaped it is up to one's shoulders. The land is generally very good since all the farming people agree it is very fine. It is an upper soil apparently of decomposed vegetable matter about a foot deep, with a subsoil, varying from 2 to 3 feet in depth, of sandy clay. The land is not generally quite so good as wood land but it can be cleared and ploughed and the seed put in properly for between £5 and £6 an acre, which is what it would cost in England to clear land which has got foul. The wood land costs about £30 an acre to clear. I shall never cease to regret that I have not brought ploughs and harrows. I have got nothing superfluous. Everything is enormously dear and all things made of iron very bad indeed. Nothing but absolute necessity would induce me to buy anything here, especially iron. I am going to write to Manning to blow him up for not giving me ploughs.

I have got some cows and bullocks, but I have not seen them for some time, as there is very fine forage for them all about the country and they are turned out to shift for themselves. Keeping cows will answer, if the price of butter remains as it is 3/- a pound. However none of my cows give me any milk yet so that at present is against us, but I hope they will soon calve.

This place is I think far superior to Wellington in climate and many other respects. Capt. Wakefield⁵ is invaluable. He is very active and does his utmost for the colony. Some Scotchmen have begun about the flax and I think will make it answer. There is not the wind here which they have at

⁴ Captain Henry Story, R.N., Constantine's brother-in-law, was one of the original New Zealand Company's land purchasers but did not take up residence in New Zealand.

⁵ Captain Arthur Wakefield, R.N., brother of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, was the New Zealand Company's Agent at Nelson.

W., but the sea breeze sets in regularly at 12 o'clock and makes it quite cool all the rest of the day. Those who have been here the winter say that the frost was very trifling. It never lasts later than 8 o'clock in the morning. The cold weather begins in the end of May and ends in the middle of August.

I am going to send you home some of the seed of the flax. If you can raise it do so by all means, for the flower is very handsome, tall red flowers full of a juice which tastes like sugar and water. The plant grows all over the country but seems to delight in swampy places and by the sides of slow running streams or rather water courses. It flowers here about the beginning of Dec., which is June in Europe. I do not think it cares much about great heat. I have seen the plant 8 or 9 feet high in some places. The stick on which the flower grows is about the thickness of a bamboo and varies in length from 3 to 12 feet. There are few plants different from the European besides that as far as I can see.

The birds are caw-caw, a kind of parrot very good to eat, pigeons, and large ducks about the size of a small goose—the people here call them paradise ducks—and another sort like the English wild duck. I brought some fowls with me, but a small dog that I have got will lie in the nest. The consequence is that all the eggs are broken so that there is no chance of a brood this year, though all poultry increase very rapidly here. We have planted the fruit stones you sent us. I think I have told you enough about myself now.

Jan. 17 1843

I am going to send this home by the doctor, who is just off to Nelson to go home via Sydney. He will be the bearer of this letter, as also of the seeds, and some varieties of fern which I found for you yesterday in a wood where I went to look for one of Harry S[tory's] sections, which is about two miles from us but in the middle of a wood. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Wood here is valuable, but the expense of getting it down is great.



Nelson at the end of 1842

—By John Sexton



I had almost forgot to write to you about a very essential thing. I left England without a letter of credit and the consequence is that I can get no money but at a great loss, as of course the risk is great. Will you be so good as to arrange with Ransom's that I should have one sent out as soon as possible? For the present, one on my annual income would do, as I do not wish to touch my capital till I see my way quite clearly, and yet I should like in case of a good opportunity offered to have some means of drawing. I dare say you will be able to arrange that for me, but at any rate will you get him to send me a letter of credit at least for my income. . . .

My next letter shall contain more detailed accounts of the country and what I think of it. I do not think I have yet seen enough to entitle me to judge. H. Story wants me to advise him, but that I would certainly rather not do, as I should be very sorry to be responsible for others. For myself I think I shall do well, and think I shall be as happy as it is possible for me to be so far from all those whom I love, for no distance or time could make me forget those I have left behind. I expect another opportunity in a short time by a ship going direct from Wellington to England, which ought to have gone a month ago but was not ready, and then I shall send letters to the girls. In the meantime give them mine and Fanny's best love and to all my dear friends. Fanny desires me to say that the kid is very good, which I am happy to corroborate, for if he did take it into his head to bawl we should in our wooden house be destroyed by the noise, as there would be no means of escape. I hope Henrietta⁶ is come back renewed in strength from the German baths. Give her my fondest love. Goodbye, my dearest mother, think of me always as your affectionate son

C. A. DILLON

I enclose a long list of commissions from Fanny and am to tell you never to deal with Thomas again for stockings, as they are *very bad indeed*.

⁶ Henrietta Browne, Constantine's cousin.

4. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS SISTER MARGARET HAMILTON*

Nelson, August 7 1843

My dearest Margaret,

Since I wrote to you last a most dreadful calamity has occurred in this settlement, which I have no doubt you will have heard of before you get this letter, as a ship went home direct from Auckland, but by which we had no opportunity of writing. As it is a subject of such importance to us, I dare say it will not be uninteresting to you to hear the true account of it. I ended previously telling you that you need not be the least alarmed for our personal safety, and you will see the reasons as I proceed with the melancholy story. You must know that there is a portion of land in this settlement called the Wairau, which the New Zealand Company state they have purchased from the native chief Raupohora,⁷ but which he now denies ever having sold. Whether he has [or] not is not a thing which it signifies to enter into now. Capt. Wakefield, believing by the deeds he has in his possession that the land belonged to the Company, proceeded to survey it in order that it might be distributed to the settlers.

Whilst the surveyors were at work Raupohora and his general Ronghiatu⁸ came and desired them to go away, and immediately pulled down the huts of Mr Cotterell and Mr Barnicoat, two of the principal surveyors, and burnt their clothes and stole their flour. They came to Nelson and, having made depositions, the Police Magistrate, Mr Thompson, and a full bench granted a warrant for the

⁷ Te Rauparaha, the Ngati Toa chief, whose tribe had conquered the Wairau in the eighteen-twenties.

⁸ Te Rangihaeata, Te Rauparaha's nephew.

apprehension of the two chiefs on a charge of arson and robbery, intending to have brought them here and explain to them that they must not do such things, but if there was any question of claims for the land they ought to be referred to the Land Commissioners appointed by the Government to enquire into them. It was thought right that two or three magistrates should go with a sufficient force of constables, and many persons took that opportunity of going there to see the district, altogether 49. The gentlemen of the party were Mr Thompson the Police Magistrate, Capt. Wakefield, Mr Richardson, a person of very good family in England and one who is mentioned in one of your letters as having sent to England some wonderful ears of corn, Capt. England, an officer who had just retired from the army with the intention of settling here, Mr Tuckett, the Company's chief surveyor, and many others. With all these we were living on terms of intimacy, but especially the two first, who we knew very well and to whose houses I always used to go when I had to go to Nelson. Well, they left here and proceeded to the Wairau. It is near Cloudy Bay, which you can see in the map.

On their arrival at the spot Mr Thompson produced the warrant. He told them they knew him very well, and that he wished them to come on board the Government brig, lying then in Cloudy Bay, that the thing might be settled. He told them that it was no question about the land claims, but for arson and robbery he was come. Raupohora said nothing, but Ronghiatu, who is a very fierce fellow, came up and said, 'Enter into the question here. If we like your decision we will do what you say but if not we won't. We don't care for this Queen of England.' It appears that now words got high, a musket on our side went off by accident, and was followed instantaneously by a volley from the Maoris which killed Mr Patchett and one of the constables. Our people then began to fire and some to run away in a most cowardly manner, firing at the same time at random. In vain all our people amongst the gentlemen waved white

handkerchiefs and called out peace. Our cowardly blackguards of white people continued firing and running away till only a few of the gentlemen were left, who kept together and surrendered. Mr Tuckett, being a Quaker, had left the field when the fight began. At this time about five or six of our people had been killed in the fight. Mr Cotterell, the surveyor, also a Quaker, surrendered to the Maoris early, confident that as he was well known to them and a friend of many his life would be spared.

All this time E Phua [Te Puaha], a Christian chief and one of the rangatiras or men of high rank, had been going from white men to Maoris with an open Bible in his hand trying to stop the fighting. When the white gentlemen, viz. Mr Thompson, Mr Howard, Capt. Wakefield, Mr Richardson, Capt. England and a few more had assembled, he again came up and said, 'Now there has been much blood spilt. The Pakeha (white men) have killed many Maoris and the Maoris many white men. Let us have peace for the sake of God.' The Maoris, and Raupohora amongst them, said nothing but shook hands with them, when Ronghiatu, coming up, said, 'Raupohora, will you allow my wife, your daughter, to be killed without revenge? If *you* will *I* will not.' It has been ascertained that she was not killed,⁹ but if she had it would have been her own fault, as she was in the habit of carrying a musket and fighting on all occasions. The Maoris then hustled the white people and murdered them all, about 2 hours after the fight was over, in a most shocking manner by striking them with axes on the head, and then left the country and went to their own homes in the Northern Island, for they do not live at the Wairau but once conquered it, and having massacred all the natives had abandoned it.¹⁰ And yet with all this what do you think the Government are going to do? Just nothing!! They say they will not do

⁹ Te Rongo, Te Rangihacata's wife, had in fact been killed by a stray shot while sheltering at a distance.

¹⁰ In 1843 the Wairau Valley was still occupied by a section of the Ngati Toa.

anything till they hear from home, but *we* intend not to let the matter rest so easily, and to bully the Government till they do something.

It has given the settlement a very heavy blow. Most of our best men were killed. Capt. Wakefield can never be replaced. He was invaluable as the agent of the Company. He was a man of great energy and activity, both of body and mind, and was pushing us up hill very fast. He was besides a great friend of every one, very popular with all classes. Mr Thompson was also a very amiable, kind person, very much liked by all the people of the upper classes, very hospitable, and a person I was getting to be on terms of great friendship with. He was also protector of the Aborigines, in which office he had tried all in his power to advance them, as he took a great interest in them. I dare say you might know who he was from John Abel Smith, with whom he was very intimate. He has left a widow, a young woman, and a child about 13 months old. You may fancy what a deplorable condition to be left in without a friend. We have brought her away from Nelson to live with us up here in the country, away from all the trouble consequent upon this event. Fanny, like a good creature as she is, proposed at once to go down to Nelson and see what could be done for all the poor widows, as out of the twenty-two people killed, 12 had wives and families, and indeed I think, if she had not gone, that poor Mrs Thompson would have been in a bad state, as she had, as is usual on such occasions, a number of kind persons who came to comfort her by describing to her how the body of her husband was mangled, etc.

I cannot write all this affair over again, so you had better send this letter to my mother or anyone else who would like to read an account of it. I send you also some papers, in one of which you will see, if you take sufficient interest in it, the depositions of the survivors. Some people, and amongst them a Mr McDonough, the government agent at Wellington, have taken advantage of this to run down

Thompson and say that it was his hasty temper that brought this on, but we have proved to him that he was guilty of telling a wilful and malicious lie, and public meetings here and elsewhere have made him and all others holding these opinions [agree] with ours on the same subject. I tell you all this because, in case you should see any person of his friends, of decency let them know that those who have had the best opportunities of judging think that he acted with prudence and discretion and is in no way to be blamed. For this reason also we (the magistrates¹¹ I mean) have against the will of the government, expressed to us by a person sent on purpose for it, published all the depositions that the truth may not be concealed from the public, and we have one and all told the government that we would resign the Magistracy if they would not allow the publication of any further evidence they may have on the subject.

I have told you a very long story, my dearest Margaret, but as it is a subject of such dire importance to us, I hope it may not be very uninteresting to you. As for ourselves we feel no fear from the Maoris, for they would never hurt any man who did not attack them. At the same time we think that the two chiefs should be taken and punished, as well as some whalers, who I think were as bad as they, if not worse, for I believe they instigated the Maoris into it. If the subject should be talked of, as perhaps it may be amongst a few who have friends here, you may make what use of this letter you like as far as relates to the narrative. We think that perhaps we may have to send a petition to Parliament against the Government, in which case I hope that William,¹² if he agrees with us, will make use of what I have here stated.

In all other respects we are getting on very fairly. Our little boy is flourishing and in very good health. He is a fine little fat fellow and *very* lively. I suppose the Greigsons will

¹¹ Constantine Dillon was a Justice of the Peace.

¹² William Hamilton, Constantine's brother-in-law, and a member of the House of Commons.

say he is like your picture. I hope he may be like you, my dearest Margaret, in every respect.

I have been buying a lot of cows and intend soon to commence a large dairy, and as I now look out of the window I see before me a nice field of very promising wheat. But yet I cannot make my mind about the prospects of the Colony. Things do fluctuate, as we are like little infants—very little affects our health. As for bodily health, ours is very good. The winter is finer than the summer, the thermometer is in the day generally from 78 to 84 in the sun, tho it often freezes $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch in a night.

I have now got to the end of my second piece of paper so I must say goodbye for the present. I will write to you by the *Nelson*, a ship going home direct with oil in about a month. God bless you all, my love to the spouse and the children. I am, dearest Margaret, your very affectionate

C. A. DILLON

5. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Nelson, Feb. 11 1844

My dearest Mother,

I am sorry to say that I have not yet received the letter you say I. Hamilton has written to me about Margaret, but we have to thank you for a box come by the *Bangalore*.

I wish I could say that everything that has come to us by that ship was as welcome. She was the ship that brought Governor FitzRoy,¹³ and I must premise by telling you that though he has only been 6 weeks in N.Z., he has managed to disgust and sicken every lady at Auckland, Wellington and Nelson by his bad taste, injurious manner and extraordinary language. I am perfectly lost in astonishment at him. If I had not heard him speak I would never have believed that he was the man, but I will just detail a little and leave you and the people at home to judge.

First he remained some time at Sydney where he has, as he says himself, received most of his information about this country. On his arrival at Auckland, he held a levee at which he called up a Dr Martin,¹⁴ a man who has long been known in the Australian colonies by his decidedly *bad* character, and who now edits a low paper at Auckland, and this man he thanked publicly for the articles he had published in his paper in defence of the natives. So far so good, but as Dr M. was leaving he called him back and, Mr Shortland¹⁵

¹³ FitzRoy was the second Governor of New Zealand who, after a stormy tenure, was recalled in 1845.

¹⁴ Samuel Martin, editor of Auckland's first paper, the *New Zealand Herald and Auckland Gazette*.

¹⁵ Lieutenant Willoughby Shortland, Colonial Secretary and acting head of the Government between Hobson's death and the arrival of FitzRoy.

being present in the room, said to him—'Allow me to add [thanks] for your strictures on the local government and censures you have passed upon it.' Mr Shortland of course left the room and sent in his resignation as Colonial Secretary. He then instantly appoints to the vacant office a surgeon of a merchant ship or convict ship, who happens to be there by accident and knows nothing of N.Z. whatever.¹⁶ After three weeks he comes down to Wellington where he breaks out in the most violent and intemperate language, says that we are all the most 'wicked and foolish' persons he ever heard of, tells young Wakefield¹⁷ he is the 'devil's missionary' and a libeller of the natives, and that the whole European population have no object in view but to 'obstruct the growth of Christianity and seek the extermination of the natives, but bad as they may be *we*, the Nelson people, were far the worst'.

Here he comes and talks in the same strain, but adds in a public place that he 'will for ever have to blush, in common with the rest of his countrymen, for the folly and wickedness that has marked the conduct of the people generally, but the magistrates particularly'. After this I asked for a private interview for myself and brother magistrates, which he granted; here he broke out with fresh violence. He abused us all round and added that *I* was by far the worst. He blushed for me, he was horrified, he wondered at my bad taste, being so young a man!! and so late a settler!! (15 months in a colony 2 years old), at being chairman of a meeting, which, by the bye, was called to offer him a congratulatory address, and when I only took the chair because *nobody else would*. All this abuse because, acting under legal advice, we had granted a warrant for the apprehension of Raupohora on a charge of the murder of 22!! of our countrymen. He was obliged to confess we had acted quite

¹⁶ Dr Andrew Sinclair remained as Colonial Secretary (the main administrative official) until 1856.

¹⁷ Edward Jerningham Wakefield, son of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, nephew of Colonel William Wakefield, and author of *Adventure in New Zealand*.

legally, but he said we were firebrands and sought only the extermination of the natives. He says that the natives are entitled to the full protection of the British law, but not to be punished for some crimes by it. He would not tell us if murder were of the number.

He then said he had read a letter published in the papers by me *when he was in England* full of 'strictures' on the local government which has grieved him and disgusted him. I told him he must be mistaken, as I had never written any such letter. He contradicted me flatly, saying 'You did, for I read it.' Of course that was conclusive, like the judge in *Pickwick* who said, 'You did say so, for I have it on my notes.' Through all his rudeness and ill breeding I kept my temper and did not answer him, tho he was, as all confessed who were present, most *ill* bred, but especially to me. After our conference I sent him in a file of papers since my arrival and begged he would show me the letter in question, but I added, 'Tho I deny having written the letter I will (as a British subject has a full right to do) make what remarks I choose when and where I like on every act of the government.' He sent me back an answer by his private secretary to say that he had not seen it in England but at Sydney, but yet could not point it out.

Before this he had thought it proper to read a long lecture to us about how we ought to aid the missionaries in the promulgation of religion, and hinted that we acted in a canting way, looking continuously at me. At a subsequent meeting he told us that he had been told at Sydney by Sir E. Home, a Capt. in the Navy, that we did not know how to behave ourselves as gentlemen, and that he would never set his foot ashore here again unless ordered, on account of our ill breeding. Since he has said that our great *ill breeding* consisted in threatening to write to ask a *French* frigate to come to our assistance.

Upon getting cool upon it I thought the best way would be to write him a private letter, which I did, asking him as one gentleman to another what he had against me and my

conduct, and to undeceive him as to my hatred of the natives and the missionaries. I might have given him as proof to the contrary the fact that the Bishop of N.Z., who was here some time since, and Mr R[e]ay, the Church missionary, requested me to perform divine service in the church we have built and for which I have offered to advance the money, and also asked me to preach or read a sermon without ever hinting to me what it should be, thereby showing the confidence *they* have in me. But I preferred standing on my own character. I have asked him *who* has chosen to speak to him about me at all, and in allusion to a remark he made to me that 'if I valued my character at home!! I would alter my conduct', I said to him, 'I trust that my character amongst those whose opinions I value rests upon too firm a foundation to be shaken by any representations made by any person whatsoever and not supported by good evidence, my conscience acquitting me of having committed any act, since I have been here, which as an honest man or a gentleman I have to blush for.' To this he has returned no answer. Upon what evidence do all his accusations rest? Upon that of this E. Home who is a vulgar, coarse *toping* Capt. in the navy, and who upon going to the police magistrate's house to breakfast, looked to see what books he had, and went and told the Gov. that he was an immoral man and an atheist and repeated all the conversations he heard. As to that man I told Capt. Fitzroy I was as good a judge of what the conduct of a gentleman should be as he was.

Another of his informers is a Major Richmond,¹⁸ to whom he has given a place of £600 a year. This is the man who offered to get us a '*minor or inferior chief* to bring to justice instead of the principal Raupahara'. Had I not seen the latter writing I should never from his proposal have supposed him to be an Englishman, but would have fancied that he must be a Chinese or Persian, but if you read Ayesha you

¹⁸ Major Mathew Richmond was appointed Superintendent of the Southern Division of New Zealand (which included Wellington, Southern Taranaki and the South Island) on 1 February 1844.

will see that his proposal has not the merit even of originality. These are the men whom the king delighteth to honour. He sets himself up as a moral and pious man, and he has appointed at Wellington for Police magistrate a man who figures in the Adelaide hue and cry as a swindler, and here one who is not so bad but would never be chosen if any one else could be got as he is generally drunk. But all his appointments are the same.

All we magistrates resigned, except one who says he will wait till he is turned out and send the whole affair to Lord Stanley.¹⁹ I was rather amused at his sending for a number of persons to make magistrates, most of whom told him that they quite approved of our conduct and would act like us if appointed. He at last got two, one a very proper man who says he will not stay long unless he mends his manners, and another, a person who has not £10 a year in the place, and who is on his return to England.

With all this I must say that where the natives are not concerned he acts fairly. He will adjust other land claims in the course, *he* says, of a few days. But he will never get on well, his manner is so overbearing. He speaks to *us* as if we were little middies on board his ship that he can bully as he likes. He said, 'I am come to dictate and not to be dictated to, to govern and not be governed, to rule and not to be ruled, etc., etc., etc. You will find that you have caught a t——' tartar he would have said, but stopped himself—and said 'the wrong kind of man to deal with'. I never heard Lord Durham²⁰ speak half as hostilely or importantly even when addressing people who were all but rebels. Nor did I hear Ld. D. say *I* and *we* so often in five months as this man has done in my presence in 3 hours. In fact Ld. D. was a meek lamb to this man. He has got hold of the word which is in all that kind of person's mouth, 'The Attorney

¹⁹ Lord Stanley was Secretary of State for the Colonies in Peel's Ministry.

²⁰ Lord Durham, author of the famous *Durham Report*, under whom Dillon and E. G. Wakefield served in Canada.

General'. The Att. Gen. shall prosecute all who do this. The Att. Gen. shall prosecute this paper or that paper. The Att. Gen. shall prosecute all who libel the natives. The Att. Gen. will have more to do than Mr Nobody in Wood's comick annual or Punch. I send you a copy of the memorial which we sent him, that you may judge if he is right when he says it is couched in the most intemperate and improper language, and totally unfit to come before the eyes of the high and mighty prince and potentate Robt. FitzRoy. In answer to our question as to what was improper he said the word 'desire to know'. Johnson's dictionary says, 'Desire v.a. to ask, wish earnestly, to entreat'. Which of these he objects to we are at a loss to make out.

The name he had on board ship was a very good one, 'The Queen my Mistress'. Here he is called the King of the Cannibal Islands. But I think I have given you a dose of this fellow. He is gone. It was proposed that he should be piped down to the boat, but it was thought better to treat him with contempt, and he was suffered to walk away to his boat without one single attendant but those to whom he had given *salaried* offices, nor did a soul who met him take off their hat or bow to him.

I forgot to mention the principal thing in all this, which is that he sees no grounds for a judicial enquiry into the Wairau massacre, that Raupohara acted with forbearance, and that till the land claims are settled we are not to take any steps to protect our property, and—what is in direct contradiction to Lord John Russell's²¹ letter which he pretends to be guided 'by—that if the natives fight amongst themselves they are to be allowed to kill each other and no European is to dare to interfere. He says, which I was much pleased to hear him say, for it will show what a fool he is at home, that Raupohara was justified in killing Mr Thompson and the others, for that Mr Thompson was acting illegally. But mark the grounds of Mr T.'s illegality. He says that the

²¹ Lord John Russell was Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord Melbourne's Cabinet in 1840.

magistrate, before he issues a warrant for the apprehension of a man charged with arson, should ascertain whether the house belonged to the man who set it on fire. In this case he says the house belonged to Raupohara as it was built on his own ground, or at least on ground which may be said to be what in England would be called in Chancery, as it is not yet settled to whom it belongs, whether to the New Zealand Company or to this Raupohara. But the fact is that there are others who claim the land and say that it is not Raupohara's to sell, and that if he has sold it he sold what was not his own. Capt. FitzRoy *is now gone to see them, Raupohara and Rangihiaata*, and to have a *personal interview* with them.

Raupohara lives with a Mr Hadfield,²² a missionary, and he says he is like St Paul. St Paul, he says, was very bad before he was converted, but afterwards became good, and he is like him for that reason. But I am sick of the subject and no doubt you are so too.

Fanny is quite well, rather excited by all that has taken place, but we are all cooling now and have returned to our labours. I think, if things do not take a very different turn, I shall, as I told Capt. FitzRoy, as soon as I can wind up my affairs without serious loss, go home or somewhere else where he is not.

The little boy has cut two teeth at last at 13 months old. He has not suffered the least in doing so and I think some more are now coming thro. I am going to write to Margaret, so, my dearest Mother, I must end this very long letter. Believe me, your very aff. son, with love to all at home,

Your,

C. A. DILLON

²² The Rev. Octavius Hadfield, later Bishop of Wellington and Primate of New Zealand, was at this time attending to his mission stations at Waikanae and Otaki, where he had obtained extraordinary influence over the Maoris.

6. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

April 10 1844

Answers to Queries

1. How many servants have you got? Answer. Two indoors.

2. In what capacities? Dinah Secker dairies, minds the boy, and is generally useful. Another washes, cooks, etc., etc., etc.

3. How many labourers? Three men and one boy, two of whom are paid £1 a week, viz. 15/- cash, and provisions for the other 5/- (consisting of salt meat 7 lbs., flour 7 lbs., tea 3 oz., sugar $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.); boy, about 17 or 18 years old, 8/- a week; and one man paid by the year with cottage and $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre of ground. This man is the milkman and of course is paid for Sundays, but only $\frac{1}{2}$ wages for that day, and gets no provisions. This plan of giving rations I am discontinuing as fast as I get fresh men. The wages also we are going to reduce to 18/- in a few days, and soon they will have to be reduced still more. No labourers are fed in the house since Bolton and Godfrey went away. I congratulate myself daily on having got rid of Bolton. I am sure that had he remained with me he would have ruined me by this time. The fact is he never had been accustomed to work. He bragged very much of what he could do till put to it, and then could not do it. I have just done 3 times more work at less expense in the six months he has been away than whilst he was with me. He was always lounging and such a *dreadful dawdle* it quite killed people of active minds like Fanny and me. Let me impress most strongly on the mind of any one going to the colony *not* to take anyone with them. Another case has come before the public within the last few days of the folly of it.

4. How many paid in money? }
 5. How many fed? } see answer No. 3
 6. What is the rate of wages? }

7. How much land have you ploughed? Fifty acres and fenced in.

8. What size is garden? One acre, including the house.

9. Is the frost sufficiently severe to kill vegetables such as spinach? See the other side of the sheet for an answer to this question.

I have got my 50 acre section broken up. Half was in corn last summer, but failed, with the exception of wheat, which is very fair. But hope that now the land is well worked it will produce something. All grain is *very* fine but as yet not in great *quantity*. I had eight acres of barley which produced very little owing to the land having only just been broken up, then ploughed across and the seed sown, but the *quality* of the grain is superior to *English*. At least so I am told by a Scotch farmer, a neighbour, who takes care to remind me continually that the English are no farmers but 'afar ahint o' it', by which I understand him to mean backward.

Our cattle cost nothing to keep as they run all over the plain, but they cost us a great deal of time to find and we lose all the manure. But this we hope to remedy as soon as we can grow food for them and keep them in the yards.

On an average we do not get to work at our ploughs till 10 o'clock. I have 12 working bullocks in use, more than is necessary, but then as I have them for sale I may as well work them and charge a pound a head more for them because they are broken in.

Milking cows nine, in milk at present only four. Average of butter per cow last summer, $5\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. a week, price of butter from 1/9 to 2/-. The cows, like the working cattle, graze on the plain and are brought in morning and evening to be milked.

Garden one acre, including house, flower and kitchen gardens—labour on it I reckon about a third of a man.

Summer vegetables, turnips, peas, French beans, broad beans, all sorts of cabbage, lettuce, beetroot, cucumbers, celery, onions, all sorts of pot herbs, *very good*. Most of these do very well all winter, such as every sort of cabbage, lettuce, celery, carrots, parsley, thyme, sage, chervil, marjoram. I have only just made sea kale and asparagus beds, so do not know what they will do. Tomatoes do well, peas and beans about 8 months in the year, spinach I think will do well all the year.

For fruit we have had a *few, very few*, strawberries, a few raspberries, cape gooseberries, which make a very good preserve—it is not a gooseberry plant, properly speaking, it is a creeper and, as the learned folk say, a 'solanum', like the potato or tomato. We have made very good jam of tomato. Melons will do very well when we know the seasons better and are able to force them on in the beginning of the seasons. I have about a dozen plants which are very well covered with fruit, but I fear the frost will kill them before they ripen. We have as yet had only some of the green flesh netted melons which we think very good, perhaps because fruit is a scarcity with us. Water melons do, but not to be compared to the Florence ones. I think we have been wrong in transplanting the melons, as it is those we left in the seed beds that have ripened. We have also a great variety of pumpkin kind; the Yankee squash, a thing like a crown in shape, is very good to make puddings and tarts of. Indeed I did pass off a squash pie as an apple pie and took the people in. We have planted vines, peaches, figs, plums, apricots, cherries, apples, and pears, but none of them do well with us, perhaps for want of skill on our part. But I shall, I think, employ a gardener for a few days to come and put them all to rights. My crops this season will be 20 acres of wheat, 6 of oats, 8 of barley, 4 of grass, 10 potatoes. Wheat fields to be sown with turnips as soon as corn is reaped in January next and fed off with sheep, 500 of which I am expecting daily from Australia, as well as 2 cart mares. I have two mares now, but both are very

high bred ones. One foaled about a month ago, a very fine foal, but she has [not] been broken in and I am about to do so for Fanny to ride. The other which Fanny and I ride now I expect to foal in a short time.

Answers to Queries continued.

10. Where do you assemble for public Worship? In the church. You will no doubt have seen by my letters how the church has been built, but as they may have been lost I will repeat it to you. Before the church was built, Mr Reay the Missionary used to come from Nelson and preach in a barn or shed, as did also the Wesleyan Mr Aldred (a Chipping Norton man), but it was a long way off and very inconvenient. Subscription was got up to build a church but it was not enough, and Mr. Reay said he was sure the Bishop would pay the balance. So I offered to lend the money if they set about it, which they did, and built a wooden church just like an English country church with a spire and chancel, etc., etc. But I was not called upon for any part of the money, for when the Bishop came he said that quite as much was subscribed as was wanted, for he gives out of funds he has for that purpose twice what is subscribed. For instance, we had subscribed in money, labour, timber, etc., etc., £35. He gave £35 out of the £5000 the New Zealand Company has given, and £35 out of the £5000 which he has got from charitable funds at home for these purposes, so that we had altogether £105 for our church. It is built about the centre of the Waimea West plain, about a mile from our house. Mr Reay or his deacon, a Mr Butt, come occasionally, but as they cannot *always* come Mr Reay has asked me to read scripture and a service every Sunday afternoon, so that we now always have one service every Sunday. I have generally to perform it two Sundays to their one. I tried to establish a Sunday school but could not. However, now some children come to the church on Sunday forenoon, and for some Sundays I have been down to teach them, but we have as yet only four boys and two girls, but I hope they will soon increase. The books Margaret gave me have been very

useful. Our congregation varies from 30 to 40. There are several Wesleyans and one Roman Catholic family, our neighbours. We have no school master or mistress yet, but there is a regular school at Nelson connected with the Church of England, one Wesleyan, one British and Foreign Bible Society. I fancy that Sunday is kept much the same as in England, or at least was till lately, when Capt. FitzRoy's new police magistrate, who is drunk about twice a week, gave a stimulus to sporting on that day by publishing notices that he would fine and imprison and do all sorts of things to people who would not be holy by Act of Parliament.

11. 12. 13. 14. Answered by the last.

15. Can an industrious man *with no capital* obtain a decent living for his family? This question is one which would call for a very long answer and require a long dissertation on political economy, but to be incisive I would briefly recommend such a man not to come here, and for this reason, that capital and labour bear no proportion to each other in this settlement. We want capital. I have no doubt that had we capital to call forth the resources of the country we should progress rapidly, or at least do very fairly, but there is an immense preponderance of labour and yet good labour is dear, as you will have seen by my answer to No. 3. Why, because we have an immense number of mechanics instead of agricultural labourers, and because the New Zealand Company is obliged to support about 300!! families by giving them work on the roads. There is no doubt that the people are as well off at present as they are in England. No man need starve, for land is very cheap, but how long it will last after the Company's money is expended I don't know. Many are gone to Valparaiso to be much worse off than they were here. N.S. Wales is in an awful state. So that I would say to a man of that sort, do not emigrate to the Australian colonies, by which N.Z. must also be understood. Now about those with capital, I will say that if a great number of persons with capital emigrated they would do well for themselves and for the country, but

if only one or two come I fear they will be disappointed. The principal want here is, I say again, capital to employ the labour and to bring forth the resources of the country.

The climate is, I must say, good, not so fine as Tuscany, but it is good. The summer is not hot enough, indeed at Wellington not enough so to ripen grapes out of doors, but perhaps that is because of the *violent* gales which are *always* blowing there. You may perhaps judge better by what I have told you of the melons and cucumbers. However, one thing we do suffer from is rheumatism, tho this is decidedly a dry climate. Our near neighbour, Dr Monroe,²³ a son of the professor in Edinburgh of the same name, says that with all his admiration for the beauty of the climate he must own that it is rheumatic.

The land I think will be fertile when it is tilled, but it will need much tilling to get rid of the fern root (per *Teresa* the grubber, an *invaluable* implement, arrived and was landed at Nelson yesterday, and also per *Teresa* I am glad you sent the seed barley, for we have finer barley here than they have in England, or at least as good as the best).

Imported provisions are wonderfully cheap, per example flour the ton of 2000 lbs. from £15 to £16, which runs to about 2d. a lb., salt beef (Homburgh) £2/10/- the barrel of about 180 lbs., very good brown sugar 2½d. and 2½d. lb., very good white moist sugar 3d., very good green tea 1/9 lb., very good black tea 2/-, coffee 6d., arrowroot 6d., vegetables of course very cheap. You must understand that these are prices when one buys a whole bag or package, such as ½ ton of flour, a whole barrel of beef, a chest of tea and so on; retail of course they are dearer. But we send a dray down to Nelson and buy chests of tea and bags of sugar. At this moment my men's rations cost me weekly 3/6 per man. I am selling cows for £12, steers £17, broken in £18, fresh beef and mutton 10d., but the latter will be cheaper soon I hope. We shall soon be able to sell it for 5d. or 6d.

²³ Later Sir David Monroe, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives.

a lb., and then it will be cheaper than salt flesh, which is very bad food. I assure you the lowness of these prices is also owing to the dreadful depression in N.S. Wales, from where these articles come to be sold for what they will fetch.

16. If Waimea is a treeless plain, where do you get wood for fences?

17. Would iron hurdles be useful?

When I said that this was a treeless plain I was perhaps wrong to a certain extent, for about a mile and a half from us is a forest of many thousands of acres. But it stops suddenly short, and from that to the sea, about five miles, there are no trees except for the banks of the river, which has little woods which the settlers call *bushes*. . . . My outer fences are post and rails, cut in the forest of a tree called totara, and the inner ones of what is called in England staple and board. These have all been done by contract, both cutting and putting up, which is a much cheaper way of doing things than doing work and carting the stuff. My outer fence cost me, when put up about six months ago, including carting, £78. As the stuff had to be brought from five miles off it took 180 days to bring it, so that the cart had to go 1800 miles for the stuff. Everything is getting cheaper now, roads opened in the woods and so on, which assist very much. Iron hurdles would be very expensive to bring out and not better than what I can get made here for 1/2 a piece.

Who are your neighbours? Here on the plains are two young men Scotchmen, sons of a country gentleman of the house of Tytler. They are of a legal family, I fancy, for they have several relations judges in Scotland. They are very gentleman-like, industrious young men and not at all Scotch. I like them very much. Dr Monro is another of our near neighbours. I have told you who he is. He does not practice his profession but has sheep and cattle. He very good naturedly refused to accept of any fee from us for having attended Harry since his birth. Mr Duppa, a young man, a son of a gentleman in Kent near Maidstone, is a little

farther off on the other side of the Waimea river. He is my partner in a herd of cattle. He has very large herds and a large dairy where he makes a great deal of butter and cheese. His dairy is of about 40 cows. Next to me is a Mr Newcome, a son of an Archdeacon Newcome in Wales. He was in the army before he came out. We have besides these a Scotch farmer [Kerr] who was sent here by Capt. Wakefield as a sort of model farmer, and also an English one [Redwood], a Cat[holic], late a tenant of Sir Clifford Constable in Staffordshire, and whose wife is a great comfort to Fanny. They came out in the same ship with us. Bolton lives with them now and I understand they *make* him work.

We got all your letters by the *Teresa* on Easter Sunday, for which I do not know how to express to you all how grateful we are. We always feel so happy to hear from you all, tho lately letters have not been particularly of a happy sort, especially for poor Fanny. She felt Maria's death very much but had been for a long time prepared for it, but her Father's death came upon her very suddenly and unexpectedly and she has felt it very much. We cannot tell you how grateful we feel to you for all your kind remembrances of us. I hope soon to hear from you from Paris after you have seen Margaret, and that you will be able to give me a better account of her than the last. . . .

The rivers have been so high for some time from heavy rains that I have not been able to go down to Nelson to see about the things come per *Teresa*, but I am much obliged to you for executing the commissions. I have been obliged to buy plough and harrows and all those sort of things, as I could not have waited as long for these and thought my letters had been lost, but I am not sorry for the arrival of these, as I shall be able to sell them well if I do not want them. As for the grubber, it is a thing which if I did not want myself I could sell for any sum. We have now got all sorts of seeds of our own growing in the colony so do not send any more common seeds.

Jerningham, Burke and Weld²⁴ are, I am told, come out in the *Teresa*, but I have not yet seen them. I was going down but it has been raining so hard that I cannot go, and I much fear that I shall not be able to get this down there in time to go by a mail to Sydney tomorrow. But we expect a ship here any day to call on her way home, in which case she will go direct to England.

I sent you a great variety of seeds of native plants and many specimens of ferns by our *George Fyfe* Doctor, but I suppose they are all lost. I will therefore send you more by another opportunity. I will send you some flax seed—it has a very fine flower—also some acacia, and some very beautiful clematis. On the plains there is but one sort of fern, and that is very coarse, but in the forest there are a great variety and some very pretty and delicate.

We are trying to get mats and clubs, etc., etc., from the Maoris, but they are getting scarce. When we have a collection we shall send them to you. We have no Maoris where we are, as Capt. FitzRoy's friend Raupohara massacred them *all* about 30 years ago.

Of this worthy Capt. FitzRoy I am sorry I can not say one good word. He is every day more hated and abused. His conduct is getting more infamous. I shall to prove it to you send you a paper containing his interview with Raupohara. It is official but I wish to point out to you that the whole was arranged before he went ashore. He says that he thinks Nelson should be abandoned. We wish he would abandon us and leave us to ourselves. He complains that he was here three days and no one paid him any attention. He was asked to lunch in one house, that of the clergyman, the day he first landed, and he sent a most impertinent message to say that he would not put his foot into a single house in Nelson. He told us that he had made his mind up that we were a hard lot and that he would show us we had caught a tartar, and yet he expects us to be civil to him.

²⁴ Later Sir Frederick Weld, pastoralist, explorer, Premier of New Zealand and Governor of several colonies.

However, a petition is getting ready to Parliament, which I expect will have 1000 signatures, and if he does not catch it for taking the *law* into his own hands I shall be astonished, for he has constituted himself prosecutor, grand and petty jury, judge and dispenser of mercy very much in the style of an eastern monarch in his job. I am honoured by being the person to whom he is most spiteful. He says I put myself forward. Poor foolish man, he cannot see that the bumpkins will think me of more importance if the governor takes the trouble to abuse me.

To give you an idea of what a coward he is as well as bully, he sent for a person to whom he had given an office and said to him, 'I do not think you have ever acted improperly but the public will not have you, so I beg you will resign. I consider you the victim of popular clamour.' This was after he had blustered and sworn that he was come to rule with tight hand and to dictate and not be dictated to. This charge was brought about mainly by the editor of an Auckland paper calling on him and, handing an article to him, said, 'If you make that appointment I shall publish this'; and so this coward and bully sacrificed a man he thought innocent, or pretended to think so. He has done more harm in this country in the short time he has been here than he will be able to repair in years. Amongst the high or low it is just alike. His name is never mentioned but with a curse or a jibe. His officials tried to get up a vote of confidence [in] him, but after a canvass of many days they could only get 35 signatures out of 3000 people. Twenty-six of these 35 have publicly recanted since. But I will leave the poor wretch and not mention him again till I can hear good of him. But I wish you would as far as you are able say what you hear of him, as this whole thing is sure to come before Parliament. All we ask is a judicial enquiry into the Wairau massacre. Let mercy by all means be shewn to the savages after they have been brought to justice, but let them not go away under the impression that they have a full right to burn, kill and destroy. They will never know it if they are not taught it.

I think it is time I should make an end of this long letter. My hand is quite tired and so are my eyes. My next shall be to the girls and to Arthur. I have complied, as you will no doubt know by this time, with the family endorsement, exceeding regulations by sending a certificate of birth. Touching Ransom's I will not care about a letter of credit now. I do not think I shall want to draw any more money, and if I do I can manage now to get my bills backed. I wish you would continue to pay Manning the balance of his bill. You can draw on Ransom's to my account for it.

Fanny and I join in love to all. Harry knows all his Aunts and his 'gangas', as he calls his grandmamas. He runs about now and has lots of teeth. Fanny has done his picture on my fine plan. After I had spent much time and trouble in making that plan Fanny and some others thought they would illustrate it, and I was too late to make another so must send it as it is. You will see by that the fine arts are making some progress at the Antipodes.

Ever my dearest mother your affte son

C. A. DILLON

This letter has neither beginning nor end, but I would advise you to begin to read at 1st answers and go on from that.

Godfrey, since he has left me, has been employed with a boat which he has bought and lets. He uses it also as a passage boat from Nelson up here. He never comes near us but I have my eye on him.

7. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS SISTER
MARGARET HAMILTON*

May 24 1844

. . . . You may perhaps have heard before you got this letter, but in case you should not I repeat to you, that Fanny was confined on the 8th of this month of a big girl, and both she and the little kid are doing very well, tho the child was born of itself. Fanny had been taken ill three weeks before, but it had proved a false alarm, so we sat on the carpet of patience and smoked the pipe of expectation, and as I thought there was no chance of its coming, I was obliged to go to Nelson after having put off some business I had there for a fortnight, but on my return early next morning I was met half way by a messenger going to Nelson for a Doctor for her.

I galloped home and found that the child had been born for some time and no one with her but Dinah, as she would not allow the old lady who acts as midwife to be sent for because it rained!!! She had sat up all night, and in the morning about 5 o'clock, when she found it coming on, she did not call anyone up, but lit the fire, put the water on, got the baby's things ready, and then called the people up and went to bed and was confined in about an hour after. When the kid was born she did not know what to do, nor did Dinah nor one of the labourer's wives, a young woman who lives close to us. When I arrived all I could do was to send boy after boy to hurry the old woman, who was then coming as fast as a pair of oxen! could gallop. However all went off very well. She was very strong before and has been since her confinement, and so has the baby, who is very big. But *all* the children are very stout here. People talk stuff about the climate. I say it is all the people who come here are young and healthy.

June 7

Fanny is now quite well and has been up for some time. Miss Nameless is also very well. We intend to have her baptized on Sunday if Mr Reay comes up and it is a fine day to take her to the church. We have debated a long time as to what her name should be and I think we have at last decided—that is Fanny has—that she should be called Constance Louisa. I wanted to call her after you but Fanny had so set her heart on Constance that it has been settled for her. I hope there will be no more kids for a long time, as two are quite as many as we can manage comfortably, but we must take what God gives us, and if they turn out creditably and good Christians I shall not regret any discomfort that I may suffer on their account. We have every reason to be grateful for little Henry. He is the picture of health and a source of great enjoyment both to Fanny and myself. Of course we can only talk of his 'physique'. I often think of how he and his young English cousins will agree when they meet. I am afraid the little savage will be too boisterous for the civilized Britishers. Assure young Stanley that he has not a ring through his nose—it is not the custom of the Maoris. He is a regular little Anglo Saxon with fair hair and blue eyes.

And now I must tell you of some more general things. First about my school. It gets on very badly and I never can get more than three or four boys at most to come to it, but I have settled with Mr Reay to try the plan of going three times a week during the long winter nights to teach them, in hopes that if they have continued teaching they may take an interest in it. It is quite extraordinary to me how difficult it is to persuade them to come, especially as at a village about 10 miles further inland where there are none but labouring men settled on small pieces of land they have voluntarily built a chapel and established a school which all the boys and girls attend regularly. Five of the men take it by turns to teach them and I am told that they never miss. I had some of the boys from that place which is called Wakefield

down here to pick potatoes for me. They were here about ten days. We used to have them in on an evening after the work was done and make them read, and Fanny used to lecture them. I was quite astonished to find they read so well and yet they had had no assistance from the so-called upper class. I think that if I see it continue well it will make me a great advocate for the voluntary principle.

June 11

I have just heard that the *William Stoveld*, a ship going direct to England from Nelson, sails the day after tomorrow, and by that conveyance I purpose sending this letter so that I hope you will get this quicker than some of them have gone.

We had our little girl baptized yesterday and called, as I told you, Constance Louisa. Both she and her mother are doing very well. Let me hear from you in your next letter, my dearest Margaret, that you also are doing well. I assure you I feel very anxious about you and your little fellows. You ought to take more care of yourself than you do. I am quite sure that you over-work yourself.

I am now much happier than I was, for I begin to see my way more plainly in this country than I did at one time. I confess the prospect was very dark but it begins to look better now. Perhaps it is because I understand things better than I did. I see more chance of exports from N. Zealand which I did not at first see with the flax. We are not doing much but still we are getting a little better every new attempt. I personally have nothing to do with it. I confine myself to farming and grazing. Of course that will be no use if we have no mouths to feed, but if the flax and the wool turn out as we expect, then of course I shall have a good return. I have just got a cargo of 1000 sheep from Australia, which I keep in partnership with another person, and it is from their wool principally that I have to make my money. It would amuse your English people to see how we gravely talk of what at home are such trifling things, such for instance as a man having 30 acres under cultivation we look upon as a

good size farm. We make calculations as to whether in the whole settlement there will be 150 or 200 acres of wheat next year. This sounds very small, but when you consider that two years ago this was a vast wilderness it turns out much greater than at first sight might appear. I have now got my fifty acre section all under cultivation and have it regularly worked with horses, not in the Oxfordshire way of three great brutes one before the other, but in the improved Scottish way, two horses abreast and one man. I am beginning to learn my trade of farmer and can do most things myself, such as ploughing, milking, looking after stock and so forth. I have been mainly instrumental in getting up a flour mill to grind our own produce, so that next year we shall eat our own bread and not have to send out the enormous sums we have done hitherto for flour alone. You see how gradual is the making of a country. We have got an excellent brewery from whence we shall be able to send beer and ale to India in another year. This appears to be the only place in the Colonies where it has succeeded, as it is too hot to brew in Australia. I have not been able to hear about William's brother how he gets on there. I hope he has not been included in the almost general bankruptcy of that country, but it is generally thought here that after this crisis they will do much better, that is those who have weathered the storm. Certainly the misdoings there have been quite awful.

On the whole things look much better than they did nine months ago and if we could but get a decent governor we might get on very well, but with *one* exception, that of Sir George Grey in South Australia who is a prodigy of a governor, all the governors in these colonies vie with each other in trying to ruin the people they are sent out to benefit, and Capt. FitzRoy is acknowledged all thro the Southern Colonies as the very worst of them. But I must tell you what one of his *four* supporters, for that is the number of them now, said to me when praising him. He said Capt. FitzRoy was, he believed, a well meaning man, but

'unfortunately he is injudicious, headstrong and self opinionated. He is a man who must raise many a Mordecai against him.' But I caught at that and asked him if he then meant to call his friend Haman. He hummed and ha'd and FitzRoy is now generally called Haman.²⁵ I for my part am sorry for him, for I do not think he has such a bad heart as people generally do, but I think he has a bad head and a very bad temper and detestable manner. That I am not singular in my opinion is evident from the petition which goes home by this ship, and which has been signed by 45 out of every 50 men in the country.

Fanny desires me to send her kindest love to you and her little favourite Alex particularly, but all your dear little kids. She wishes you would, if you can do without much trouble, get her some shoes from Paris. Her number is 56 *tres étroit*. She says she is quite ashamed to ask such a thing, as it must look such a piece of nonsense in a 'colonial lady' wearing French shoes, but she cannot wear street shoes in the house and the price of them here is ruinous. Dinah paid a few days ago 10/- for a pair which were worn out in a very few days after. My Mother will settle about the payment of them. I am going to write to her a long business letter but I shall wait for the next ship for that. It is now getting late at night and I have to write two more letters before I go to bed and to dash off early to Nelson as well to take them down as to attend to my flour mill. So my dearest Margaret, God bless you and return you to health and strength. Give my kindest love to all your family, your spouse included of course, and remember me, ever dearest Margaret, as your affectionate brother

C. A. DILLON

²⁵ Haman, grand vizier of Persia, was anxious to exterminate the Jews. Esther and Mordecai frustrated his endeavours, and Mordecai succeeded him. See the *Book of Esther*.

8. *CONSTANTINE AND FANNY DILLON TO
LADY DILLON*

Nelson, June 24 1844

My dearest Mother,

I return you the power of Attorney and the other documents. The signatures have been witnessed, as you will see, by the New Zealand Company agent, Mr Fox,²⁶ and the manager of the Union Bank of Australia, Mr McDonald, both whose signatures can be attested at their respective offices in London. I hope you will suffer no inconvenience from the delay. It was very foolish of me never to have thought of these things before I left England, but I confess I am not a good man of business, tho' I am improving now every day. I hope you will pay yourself for all the disbursements you have made for me out of the income still accruing from uninvested capital of £1800 and Fanny's £100 a year, for such I make out the balance to be after the £900 is paid for the purchase of land. By the bye, I do not see the interest of that charged in Ransom's account and I think it must have been due the next day if I do not mistake. I have written to the house of Baring²⁷ to tell them to pay Fanny's £100 into Ransom's as it comes due, but if I can avoid the income tax by not doing so I wish Arthur, now he has the power of attorney, would countermand it. I think it very hard that I should have to pay income tax when I

²⁶ William Fox, later Sir William Fox, Premier of New Zealand, who was the New Zealand Company's Agent at Nelson from 1843 to 1848.

²⁷ Fanny Dillon was the daughter of Lydia (née Baring) Story, and thus had a connection with the famous banking house. Francis Baring was the first chairman of the New Zealand Association which was the precursor of the New Zealand Company.

derive no benefit from it. We are pretty well taxed here. Capt. FitzRoy is putting the screw on. He is more hated every day. He has put a land tax of 2d. an acre on all land cultivated or *uncultivated*. This we do not complain of because it will make the English proprietors pay something and will perhaps make some cultivate their land who would not do so otherwise. A tax of a pound on every room above three—this is of no use; the return will be 'nil' as everyone is putting up shifting partitions. I think he will not collect ten pound of this. One tax he has just put on will benefit me, but I do object to it most strongly on principle. It is like a corn law. It is a tax on the importation of cattle, sheep and horses. Now as I have cows, ewes and mares, it must benefit me materially who have got all these in duty free and of course will sell what I breed at an advanced price in consequence of the duty, or at any rate I shall be able to undersell those who have to pay the duty. But it is a bad principle. However, it is what Capt. F. calls the beginning of free trade.

I must however say that on the whole our prospects look much better. They seem to have suddenly taken an active turn. All people are in better spirits. The fact was we were paralyzed for some time, but now we talk with confidence of exporting wool and flax. In the latter article a great improvement has taken place, so much so that a merchant who has just come from England has ordered a good many tons. I hope next year to send home a good lot of wool. It will be coarser than the Australian but the difference is made up by the greater quantity. Did I tell you in my last that my sheep had arrived from Australia? After all expenses paid and losses by death before and since landing they cost me 15/7 each. They are by far the cheapest that have been landed and acknowledged to be very superior. I continue to keep them with a Mr Stafford,²⁸ a Louth man from near Rokeby, who understands it well. [This] makes the expenses fall lighter on both, as it will take only one boy to look after

²⁸ Edward William Stafford, later Sir Edward Stafford, Premier of New Zealand.

1000 sheep at 8/- a week as it would take that to look after 100. I have also got two good brood cart mares, a thing for which there has been great demand but no supply.

The public news by the *Bella Marina* has helped to put us in good cheer about the country as we now see that the falsehoods propagated by our Government will not be believed at home. It is hoped also that Capt. FitzRoy will be forced to resign. You must not think me violent, my dearest mother, but you must put yourself in our position and, after all our hard life and our struggles to get on, to be upset by a pack of noodles who call one of the most horrid massacres ever perpetrated by savages 'a conflict between some settlers and natives'—those settlers too their officers, doing their duty in carrying the law into effect—it is too bad. We the whole population of Nelson, with the exception of the government officers and 20 persons (for his list of 35 is now reduced to that number), are determined to make justice in that a 'sine qua non'. We are convinced that honesty is the best policy, and if the government chooses to be dishonest we will not be so too. It is not, as you sometimes see at home, that the agitators are the lower and poorest class. It is here those who have the 'stake' in the country—those who have their capital, small tho it may be but it is their all, invested in the country, and who must with the prosperity of New Zealand rise or fall. And I am happy to say that it has never been my lot to associate with any set of young men of more genuine, honourable, generous and unselfish principles than those whom Capt. F. calls democrats and republicans. I firmly believe that not one of those who takes an active part in this affair but what is activated from the purest and highest motives.

July 11th

My dearest Lady Dillon, Conny has just sent me word from Nelson to finish his letter and send it to him, as a ship is on the point of sailing for Sydney and will take letters to be sent on to England. I enclose the power of Attorney and the Certificate of Constance's baptism. Conny

went down to Nelson this morning to attend the funeral of poor Mr Burke who was drowned last Sunday in the Wairoa river which runs through the Waimea. He had finished building his house and was going to the Waimea village to get some provisions. He had several men with him. He was warned not to cross as there had been a flood and the river was high and flowing very rapidly. He turned back once but he ventured again, saying he would not get wet for nothing. He swam strongly for a short time but the current was too strong for him and he was carried some way down the river. His body was found the next morning. His servant who tried to cross with him was with difficulty saved by some men on the opposite shore, who pulled him out of the water half dead. Conny has written to tell his father, a most distressing office.

He must have lost a great many of your letters as those we have received only allude to poor Henry Browne's²⁹ shocking death and we have not received any connected account of it. We were told of it before by some people who had seen it in an English paper and we were very anxious for letters to know the truth. I need hardly say how much shocked we were and how sincerely we grieve for his unfortunate family. We were very nearly ourselves having a similar affliction for our little Harry the other day ran out of the garden and threw a little pot at a cow which was standing with her calf, and she ran at him and tossed him a little way and rolled him some distance. Our German girl saw the cow toss him and screamed violently, at which we ran out and picked up poor little Harry. But excepting a slight bruise he was not in the least hurt. When he was picked up I thought he was dead for he did not cry. I never lose sight of him now, for nothing frightens him and he will run up to any beast and pull its tail. I have plenty to do looking after him and baby, and plenty to do whilst they sleep.

²⁹ Constantine Dillon's cousin.

I should be sorry not to have constant work. It keeps me from thinking so much of home and my poor dear Mother. It is very dreadful to be away from her, but dear Conny makes up for everything. But I hope and pray that brighter days may come and that we may go home and see all those who are still left us, and I am sure you will love your little N.Z. grandchildren very much for they are really great darlings. We are going to send you a box by the *Bella Marina* containing all the Maori curiosities we can collect, but they are really difficult to procure besides the exorbitant prices the Maoris ask, far above their real value. I have got two sticks which are presents to me, one for Arthur and the other for my little fat Johnny Stanley. A friend of ours, Mr Tytler, is going home in the *Bella Marina*. We have asked him to go and see you and tell you all about us. He is a very nice person and has been exceedingly kind to us. He lived with his brother on the Waimea half a mile from us. You may rely on him for giving a correct and unprejudiced statement of the country. We shall send our letters and box under his care. Give my very best love to dear Lou and Helen³⁰ and all, Ever, dearest Lady Dillon,

Yr. very sincerely affecte. daughter,

FANNY DILLON

Do ask somebody to tell me the fate of my riding whips, and tell Lou I should be so very grateful for any little nice bit of music or song. It is so refreshing to get a little music here sometimes, for we have not many amusements and miss music more than anything.

³⁰ Louisa and Helena Dillon were Constantine's sisters.

9. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS COUSIN
HENRIETTA BROWNE*

Nelson, July 13 1845

My dearest Harriet,

I need not tell you with what sincere pleasure we received your letter two days ago. We were not the least prepared for the announcement it contained, and I was truly happy that the first information I received of the happy change in your circumstances came from yourself, whom I have always loved as one of my own sisters. That you should be happy is a great pleasure and happiness to us both, nor can I doubt that you will be so, since you have placed your happiness in the hands of one who bears so high a character. But it is not for me to be sounding the praises, which I only know by report, of one with whom you must be so well acquainted and whose good qualities you are so well able to appreciate. I saw him in Canada the last time I was there and I hope we shall renew our acquaintance when I return to Europe, whenever that may be. You will, I hope, now get over all your difficulties. May you long live to enjoy the blessings which I trust are in store for you. Married to an amiable and kind man who loves you and whom you love, you have no more to fear from the world. I speak boldly, you will say perhaps, but I have now had three years and a half experience of the married state and I feel that what I state is correct. They have been the happiest of my life, even tho I have been separated most of that time from all those I love best excepting wife and children. I cannot wish you more than that your lot may be as happy as mine. I shall look forward most anxiously to your next letter announcing

that you have been married.³¹ This I trust will be the last that you will receive addressed to H.B. I have a superstition about addressing it otherwise till I hear that all is right.

I will not tell you much about myself, as you have no doubt seen my letters to my family and you must know of all our goings on here. I have plenty of occupation, such as it is, and plenty of leisure also to enjoy the society of my own Fanny and my two dear little chicks. The eldest, little Harry, is a boy such as you would love, with a fine, open, honest countenance, fine large blue eyes and flaxen hair—quite a little Saxon. Such a little chatterbox. In our way of living the children are always with us, and I see them all day and have learned to know them much better than if I had been in Europe. But you know I was always fond of the little folks. The little girl is a very nice, gentle, pretty little thing, just beginning to talk. It is very selfish of me to be writing to you about my little fellows, but I know you will feel an interest in them.

If a turn takes place for the better in New Zealand affairs and that we can get rid of our curse Capt. FitzRoy, I dare say I shall not be here more than a year longer than I at first thought. We are all in the highest glee at the last debates in Parliament about our affairs. I assure you that we have been tried very hard, but now we are all hopes again. Everyone seems quite changed. One sees happy faces where but a short time since everything looked gloomy.

I cannot write to you, my dear Harriet, without alluding to a subject which I have felt deeply—too deeply to mention before. I mean the death of your poor brother. It has prevented me from writing to you on more than one occasion. I shrank from renewing a subject which, tho new to me, was old to you. Not that I can imagine that it could ever pass away from you, but I feared at this great distance that I might renew grief which time was beginning to soften. I need hardly assure you that both Fanny and I felt it deeply.

³¹ Henrietta Browne had married Charles Ridley, a younger son of Sir Matthew Ridley, Bt, in April 1845.

But I will say no more on the subject. God rest his soul.

Fanny joins most heartily in my congratulations to you. She is up to her elbows in letters or she would write herself; but we do not often get opportunities, so when we do we are busy enough. Give my kindest regards to your dear father and mother, and believe me always, my dearest Harriet, your affectionate cousin and friend

C. A. DILLON

Don't forget to say many things *de 'ma part* to your Signor R.

10. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON*

Feb. 7 1848 Nelson

My dearest Mother,

I sent you a hurried letter a few days ago which it is very possible you may get at the same time as this. In order to explain it to you I must remind you that about 9 months ago Grey³² was here, and asked me to take an office under the new constitution. I made no answer to him, but told him that I had a great idea of going back to England, and I heard nothing more from him till about the beginning of December, when the letter which I enclose to you followed me to the Wairau about the same time that Fanny wrote her last letter. When Grey was here a few days ago he again asked me to accept the office, and told me he would make it £400 a year if he possibly could. After some conversation on the subject which my modesty prevents me from repeating, I accepted and we settled that he would send a Government vessel to take us away. He had at the same time appointed two other persons, a Mr Domett³³ to be Colonial Secretary, and Mr Fox, the Company's agent here, Attorney General. These three appointments made people very angry here because they said it was robbing Nelson of three of its principal persons, and he received several remonstrances on the subject. In consequence of this he sent for me and told me he would leave it to myself to stay here with the office of Superintendent of the district if he could remove the present man (who it appears has been forced upon him by Lord Grey and who is very unpopular), or to go to Auckland

³² Sir George Grey, Governor of New Zealand.

³³ Alfred Domett, journalist, poet, friend of Browning, and later Premier of New Zealand.

as his Civil Secretary. He told me at the same time that his reasons for wishing me to go to Auckland and being near him were very great, and here again my modesty prevents me from explaining myself. At the same time he foresaw that great evils would arise from taking the three persons away at once who in very difficult times here kept things together, and that he feared to leave Major Richmond³⁴ 'who,' he said to me, 'is an excellent man, a most estimable man, but it is no flattery to you to say that you are worth two of him.' We had a very long conversation upon the subject and he recommended me to consult Fanny about it and to be guided by her. I asked him leave to speak to Mr Fox about it and he told me I might do so to *him*, but on no account to mention what he had said to me to another creature. The fact is he wants me at Auckland for the purpose of being a check on the other officers of the Government in whom he has not the smallest confidence, whom he cannot trust, and whom he cannot turn out. The present Colonial Secretary, one of FitzRoy's men, an ignoramus as far as political matters are concerned, tho a clever botanist and a great land jobber, I suspect he wants to reduce to the position of a mere signer of his name. He told me the pros and cons and in fact said he wanted me so much at both places that he could not say where he wished me most to be. I told him that the prosperity of New Zealand was mine and that I was quite prepared to do what he might consider best for the public service, and that I wished him to advise me, but that I feared I had not the talents required for either place. This I do not say from mock modesty, for though I see many persons much greater fools than I am holding high offices in colonies, I do not at all fancy making my stupidity public. All this I told him, to which he answered that he knew me very well and that *he* was satisfied that I had quite sufficient ability for it 'but at any rate, if you had not,' he said, 'it is your earnestness in a great cause and your unflinching

³⁴ Richmond remained as the senior Government official at Nelson until 1853.

honesty and uprightness which I most particularly want to make heard against the country. But I know all your opinions and all your words since you have been in the colony and I have sufficient proof that you are perfectly competent to fill much higher employments.'

Now if I stay here my £400 a year will go as far as 500 at Auckland, I shall be spared a voyage and a demenagement, I shall remain amongst my own people and in a place which has undoubtedly the finest climate in the Australian Colonies. The office of Superintendent is higher in rank. This is in favour of staying at Nelson. Against that are the following arguments. My two greatest political and private friends, Mr Fox and Mr Domett, are removed; the influence of which Capt. Grey hopes so much which I possess here will be very much diminished by my holding an office under the Government; and I fear I will be left alone to fight the battles of Grey's policy against a set of horrid bigots, the old friends of FitzRoy, who are all much opposed to Grey's policy, which would be very tedious. I should also be under Mr Eyre³⁵, who is a goose. Being at Auckland I should be immediately under Grey and have no other superior whatever in the Colony. I should have much more important duties as all the correspondence of the Colony and of the Home Government would pass through my hands, all business between the local government and the military and naval authorities would come through me, in fact I should under Grey have all to do which belongs to both provinces. As Superintendent here all it appears to me that I should have to do would be to give orders for the jailor to set a couple of hard labour prisoners to mend patches in the roads, and to sit all day in the police office and hear assize cases. In the latter office I should clearly learn nothing, and in the

³⁵ Edward John Eyre, Lieutenant-Governor of New Munster, was responsible to Sir George Grey for the administration of the southern province of New Zealand which included Wellington, part of Taranaki and the South Island. Eyre had previously made a name for himself as an explorer in Australia.

other I should learn a great deal and have besides the advantage of such a man as Grey to teach me. I should be qualifying for higher appointments if I should ever get one. In either case I should have to build a house as I should have to live in the town of Nelson, and in either case I should have to appoint an agent to manage my sheep and sell my farm produce and so on, as it would not do for me to be huckstering and driving bargains, a thing to which persons in these colonies in official situations have been too much addicted owing to the low standard from which they have been taken. In either case I should have to learn to write legibly but in the Auckland office I should have more clerks.

All these pros and cons show in favour of going to Auckland and against all this is to be put that both Fanny and I are very much afraid that the children will suffer from the bad voyage. We are going to make enquiries amongst all the doctors as to the chance of sea sickness troubling children, as we fear for little Marian. I have written you a great deal about this, more perhaps than I ought, but for obvious reasons you will see the necessity of keeping all I have said about Grey and the crew of officials strictly private as if it should get to Lord Grey's ears it might cause great mischief. What *my own* opinion of these individuals is I have expressed publicly both in print and by word of mouth, so I care not who knows it. We are called in consequence 'a band of Southern Demagogues', but what has come from Grey I hope you will not repeat to any one, for you would be astonished if you were to hear how things come back.

I am going to write to Louisa and to answer a very kind letter I have had from her future Spencer Ponsonby.³⁶ I shall direct the letter to Witton Crescent for fear of accidents. I am also going to write to Lydia, so that I shall have enough to do to catch the ship that is going tomorrow night to Wellington. Fanny is doing pretty well. She is lying very quiet this time and is wheeled about on the sofa from one

³⁶ Louisa Dillon, the sister of Constantine, married Spencer Ponsonby, a younger son of the fourth Lord Bessborough, in October 1847.

room into the other. Pray tell us about you all in your next letter. I see most forcibly all the arguments you make use of in your last letter. It would be folly to think of going home. I have written so much now that I reserve the notice of that for another occasion, as also an account of my trip to the Wairau. Ever my dearest mother your aff. son

C. A. DILLON

Reading over this letter again I see that I have mentioned two or three subjects which it would be very wrong should be known and which I ought not to have repeated. I have also, I find, said two or three things about myself which might just as well have been left out. I therefore hope you will be very careful not to repeat them *to any one*.

I cannot find Grey's letter to send to you, but it is immaterial as I have told you all.

11. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Nelson, May 1st 1848

My dearest Mother,

We received a few days ago your letters by the *Indian*, the latest date of which was the 15th of October, and at the same time saw in the papers that the house of Ransom and Company had stopped payment. We are very much distressed at the state you represent yourselves to be in. We wish so often that we could have some of you sitting by our little cosy fire side to comfort you. It is of course foolish to think of such a thing, but you do not know how happy we should be if we could but take you in to live with us. We have all the necessary comforts of life and it is only what the conventionalism of an English society considers necessities that we do without, and you have no idea till you come to try how many those are. We often make castles in the air and think how nice it would be to have you seated in the armchair going to sleep over your work in the evening when the noisy little brats had been put to bed. But I suppose it is no use thinking of such things for none will come out here. Even Henry Story, I suppose, has now quite made up his mind not to leave Europe. We wrote to him and to Tom to persuade either or both to come out here and look at the country if they did no more. I quite agree with all you say about the folly of going home just at present and you will long before this have seen that I have abandoned the idea and the reasons I have for doing so, besides the ones you have so wisely urged.

My last letter was written to you just after Grey had been here and had persuaded me to accept his offer. You will remember that I there stated that there was a possibility of

my remaining here. The doubt in my mind has been set at rest, for yesterday I received a letter from Grey begging me to go up to Auckland as soon as possible to commence upon the duties of Civil and Military Secretary and that a Government vessel would call for me in a few days to transfer myself and family to the so-called capital. We shall be off in about 10 or 14 days. You may well fancy that it is no small thing for us to get ourselves and four children³⁷ ready in ten days, but we must do it. We shall have to make a complete demenagement and as we have no freight to pay shall take all our furniture with us and three horses.

I have been very busy making arrangements about my stock and have at last settled it all. Dr Munro undertakes my sheep, 2000 in number. He takes all the expenses upon himself, for which he is to have one third of the wool and one fifth of the increase. In about ten months, that is when my first lambing is over, I shall have about 2800 sheep, which is a very tidy flock for this Island where sheep are on an average worth £1 a head. My cattle and horses, 60 head of the former and six mares and some colts of the latter, I have with a man who is to take up a dairy which I have settled in the Wairau district.³⁸ He is to find all the expenses also and to be paid in produce, that is he is to have two thirds of the butter and cheese and five per cent of the cattle reared and that reach the age of six months, but I am to build the dairy, house, yards, sheds, find all the dairy implements, in fact to start the whole thing and to deliver him the cattle on the spot. My house is to be let for this year to a Mr Duppa, whom I have before mentioned, for the ridiculously small sum of £30, including a garden and ten acres of grass paddocks.

³⁷ These were Henry, Constance (nicknamed Dots or Dolly), Marion and Philip (nicknamed Bobo). Two more, Lydia and Constantine, were born during the next few years.

³⁸ This became locally renowned as the Delta Dairy farm, managed by William Brydon.

My farm³⁹ is taken by a man who gives me one half *of all it* produces in kind, I finding agricultural implements and he seed and labour. This seems a funny arrangement but everything is to be had here but money. I shall therefore have my flour and oats sent to me at Auckland from here, as well as butter and cheese from my dairy, and bacon. Are not all these very curious arrangements? Now that the time has arrived for me to go I quite grieve over leaving the place, which we really have made very nice and have reclaimed from a perfect wilderness. I assure you that there is a great pleasure in looking round you and seeing wheat and barley, potatoes, vines, fruit trees, all growing and looking so well where six years ago when I arrived there was nothing but fern up to one's chin, and that so thick then one could not force one's way through it. One looks at the fern now, which is poor and stunted owing to the cattle having constantly trodden it down, and thinks with pleasure that it is conquered.

I have often vowed that I would not leave this place till I left it to go to England, but I think that it will be a great deal better for the kids to push myself forward. I can try now if I can be good for anything. I shall begin under a good master. If I do well I have no doubt that I shall be able to push on and get promotion, perhaps into another colony, perhaps in another line, and I must confess I shall be a little pleased that I have got on without doing any capers. If I do not succeed I shall be no worse, for my stock will be increasing here to pay their own expenses. The only thing is I want ready money, as all these affairs have to be started and I shall have more heavy expenses before I get settled down at Auckland.

I have written to Powell about more bills which I had drawn through a mercantile house here and which I fear stand a chance of being dishonoured in consequence of Ransom's stopping payment. I would not trouble you in all your distress about the matter but have written to Powell and

³⁹ This was Constantine's smaller farm in the Waimea, near Nelson.

begged him to communicate with Mrs Story, to whom Fanny has also written. I wish he would make almost any sacrifice rather than let the bills be returned, for not only would it be a very heavy expense, but also as I am to a certain extent in business would injure my credit. I do not tell you this, my dear mother, that you should give yourself any trouble in the matter, for I am sure you must have quite enough on hand and quite torment enough of your own affairs. . . .

I should be very much obliged to you if you could find out from Strickland if the wife of *David Jeffreys* is alive. *He* is out here and has been one of my shepherds for some time. He wanted me to remit his wages to his wife but, as he told me, 'there has been so much starvation and fever and sickness in it there was no knowing who'd be alive and who dead'. He has written to her but never had any answers, which distresses him very much. He is doing very well here. He is out of my employment but he can always get plenty of work and high wages, as every one can who will only take it when offered, for no man need ask for work here, the work goes looking for him, and one says to a labourer, 'Mr So and so, will you be so good if you are disengaged tomorrow or next day to come to me and give me a turn? I shall give you 3/6 a day.' If it is any extra job then he gets his keep and victuals. Mr So and so answers if you are a friend of his, 'Oh, I always like to oblige you. I don't mind if I do.' If you are not intimate he says, 'Likely I'll be down your way about 7 tomorrow morning.' From seven to five are the working hours, with one hour for dinner. This is a *glorious country* for a labouring man!!! No starvation, no fear, no poor law union, high wages, short hours, infinite grazing land for his cows, no doctor's bill; no, not even an accoucheur seems necessary, and very few clothes wanted to keep the cold out. You ought really to try to send a lot of your people here who are so hardly off at home. It does not make me get over my radicalism. I often laugh at some of my acquaintances who seem to suffer dreadfully from this state of things.

I am not sorry to see that the Anglican bishop⁴⁰ has got a dressing [down]. I do not think the word '*Turbulent* priest' applies to him. He is much too great a Jesuit to be turbulent. He goes about insinuating himself quietly. He has been here for about a fortnight trying to do the amiable but he takes no one in here. He volunteered to exculpate himself to a number of people who met him to talk about more strictly temporal affairs from the charge of being a Puseyite.⁴¹ He said he did not know what it meant. I thought, 'then you ought'. He has dressed up his clergy in such funny coats, buttoned up to the chin and nearly down to the ankles, with great broad sashes round the waist, which to our eyes look most furiously Popish, and in reading the miracle of the feeding the people in the wilderness they read, 'He gave to the *DISCIPLES* and the *DISCIPLES* gave to the people'. I do not know why they should lay such an enormous stress upon the word disciples unless they wish particularly to put them between God and the people. We have a fund of about £10,000 in this settlement for the foundation of a collegiate school and he is trying very hard to get the handling of it. He offers his assistance and advice in the most insinuating maner and hints that if we give him the management he will join some more to it. But we would rather see the whole of it at the bottom of the sea than that he should have anything to do with it.

I send you Grey's letter to me, both that you may see that he is really very kindly inclined and also that you may see what he has to contend with from such an influential party as the missionary, though I must say they are not all alike.

I shall not have time to write to Louisa as I had intended as we are hard at work packing, but will you tell her that we have a tea caddy making for her of N.Z. wood, which we shall send her as soon as we can get an opportunity. I shall write to Margaret as soon as we get to Auckland. I am

⁴⁰ George Augustus Selwyn, first Bishop of New Zealand.

⁴¹ This was the time of the famous Oxford Movement when the ideas of Newman and Pusey were anathema to 'low' churchmen.

writing to Powell a duplicate of a letter I sent him about a month ago. In this I shall enclose a certificate of 'Philip Gerald's'⁴² birth and beg of him to forward it to the proper place. But I wish to mention to you that this time it will not be a clergyman's certificate but, as a law has been passed obliging all people to register the birth of children, I have thought it would be better to send the regulation certificate. I mention this in case it should cause any surprise not being like the others. He is such an enormous boy, quite a fright.

Fanny is now *very well*, but after her confinement she had erysipelas and after that a whitlow, which taxed her very much. We have been very fortunate here and escaped all the epidemics which have been hunting the children in all the other settlements.

I wish you would not wait for opportunities to write but just do so when you have anything to say, put the letter in the post, and let it take its chance. I had a letter from the New Zealand Company dated Nov. 26 at the same time that I had yours of Oct. 15. I wish you would tell us a great deal about all our new relations that we may know something of them, but do not forget all the old ones. I have not had a letter from Margaret for a long time but I am glad to know she is so well as you describe her to be.

We were so pleased to know that Theobald⁴³ was come home. I seriously think it would do him a great deal of good and amuse him very much if he would just take a run out here and see us. He might wait till he gets a pleasant party to go back with. I shall write and propose it to him when I get to Auckland.

The seeds are those of a very handsome shrub with a very large scarlet flower. The translation of the Maori name for it is parrot-billed Kowhai. It is a *clianthus*. I have been

⁴² Philip Gerald, Constantine's fourth child, whose descendants are still farming in the Wairau.

⁴³ Theobald Dominick Dillon, an elder brother of Constantine, who eventually became the 15th Viscount. See the family tree on p. 168.

told the right name for it but have forgotten it. We have several of them in our garden and they are very beautiful. They strike very freely from cuttings. Have any of the seeds I have sent you ever grown? It is a very curious thing that we cannot get mignonette to grow in our garden. Can you guess the cause?

Goodbye, my dearest mother. Don't forget my love to any of our dear friends.

Ever your aff. son

C. A. DILLON

12. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS SISTER
MARGARET HAMILTON*

Auckland, June 22 1848

My Dearest Margaret,

You see by the dating of this letter that I have taken upon myself my new mode of life. We have been here about three weeks, during which time we have been living with the Governor who and Mrs Grey have been exceedingly kind to us. We move today into a house which has been lent us till we can get one for ourselves, but this is such a horrid place that we shall not be able to get one and shall have to build one. Attempting to get such a thing done here now is out of the question as wages are at such an enormous high rate owing to the very great expenditure the Government is carrying on for barracks, forts, etc. We have therefore sent to Nelson to have a wooden house built and put up for us in frame to be sent to us as soon as possible, and we shall buy a small bit of land at one of the first public sales a little out of the town and put it up there. They ask such an enormous rent for the smallest hovel of a place, and to buy the price is quite awful, for some of the houses are no better than sheds. I have several times repented, as far as I was myself concerned, having left Nelson, where we were so comfortable.

This is such a horrid place, always raining, up to one's knees in mud and dust, everything dirty and shabby, the people almost all Jews or people from N.S. Wales. There is not one person who can be called a bona fide settler. They are all speculators and sharks, everyone is a land jobber, and more or less concerned in FitzRoy's nefarious tricks about land sales. Since I have been here the most horrible acts of

corruption, falsehood, deceit and falsifying of public records of that individual have come under my notice, which were they published would exclude him for ever from the society of gentlemen. I could not have believed the things I now know about him to be true, had I not carefully examined heaps of documents and assured myself that the signatures were not forgeries. You had better not talk of this. And yet I heard not a few days ago a person who I think *must* have known some if not all these things about him call him a high-minded man. I always thought him a fool and bad man, but what I now know about him leaves me no alternative but to look upon him as a *low blackguard*. But I will say no more of him for I am quite sick of him, literally sick.

I am however glad that I have come here, for though there is some personal discomfort, yet I feel I am doing some good. I have not yet entered into my active business. I am rather reading up for it and Grey is, as I told you before, all kindness. He is a man for whom I have the greatest admiration both as a public and private person, and in whose honesty I now have the most implicit faith. He has very great difficulties to encounter. The country was in such an awful mess when he undertook it that it is wonderful he has got on as well as he has done. Then again they will meddle so in England about things they know nothing on earth about.

Mrs Grey is also a very nice person, clever and agreeable, both very fond of children and romping with ours all day. They have none, theirs having died.

We were very unfortunate coming here. We lost two horses, one of them a very valuable one, owing to bad weather. However we have felt the loss less that the weather is so bad here. One can seldom get out and another thing is that there are no stables to the houses. There is no land in cultivation and no *natural* pastures—at least the cultivation consists entirely of grass and they rely for their provisions upon foreign countries such as Australia, Van Dieman's Land and the southern provinces of New Zealand.

I think we shall now have peace for a long time, but it

will be kept at a great cost of money. The natives, of which there are a very great many, are much employed in road making and also as stone masons. The latter trade they are very good at indeed. Sixteen hundred of them are employed at and about Auckland earning about 1/9 or 2/- a day, and as they are extremely greedy of money this keeps them very quiet. Grey certainly manages them very well.

I have nothing to do with this province and am under no one in the Colony but Grey as Governor in Chief. Each province has its own Secretary, called the Colonial Secretary of that province, who is the next man to the governor of his province. But Grey is Governor in Chief over both provinces as well as Governors of each, and in the South he has a Lieut. Gov. I am therefore the Secretary to the Governor in Chief and am the medium of communication between him and the other Secretaries on all matters which relate to the colony generally. I tell you this because it may be supposed that I have done a poor thing in accepting an office after having been all my life in N.Z. abusing the Government. But I never abused Grey's Government, but always upheld it because it has been good. I did not ask him but *he* asked me to take the office, and I have taken it as much from liking the man as from any other cause.

Were he to go away I question whether I should retain the office under another Governor. I certainly should not if I did not like him. I am perfectly independent here and need ask no one any favours. You must not think I am proud, but really if FitzRoy had had men who would have spoken to him as I would have done and rather give up their places than support him in his course of reckless folly, the Colony would have been immeasurably in advance of what it now is.

The *Flora* arrived here a few days ago and brought us your letters and a box which you have all of you in great kindness sent us. I really cannot tell you how grateful we feel to you for remembering us in all your distress. You do not tell us who the different things come from so that we

do not know who to thank individually. Fanny is particularly grateful for a pair of slippers and I for a lot of books, but I must tell you that some are duplicates of what I already have, for instance Vols. IX.X of Mackintosh's *History of England, Memoirs of Col. Hutchison, Barbary and the Baltic*. Do not when you send books send any more of Colonial Library or of Chambers for every one has them in this country. Rather when you are so very good as to send books, send standard works. I have to thank some one for the 4th Vol. of Aubigné's *History of Reformation*. I should like to have the three first also. If you remember you sent them to me in English, but I should like to have them in French, as I always like to have all works written in a language that I can read in that language. I have given the English version to our library at Nelson on coming away. But we are very grateful for anything in the shape of a book and we read all we can get with avidity. . . .

I am quite vexed about your not getting letters, but you will get them oftener and more regular now, as I shall always know in my office when mails are made up. We never get letters from you but when they are very old. This last time all the other people got letters about the 4 or 5 of February and we got none later than Dec. 27. Fanny had none from her people at all, at which she is always much hurt.

Sunday June 25

The evening of the day I wrote the above after dining with the Greys we left Gov. House for our present habitation the Council chambers, which has been lent to us by the Governor till we can get a house. Mrs Grey urged us to stay a day or two longer, but as you will see by the sequel it was most providential that we had sent the children over and most of our things, for about four o'clock the next morning (that is Friday the 23) my servant came calling out that Government House was on fire. I ran across to about 60 yds off and saw that it was burning most vividly. There were only a few soldiers of the guard but the bugles were sounding the alarm

in the barracks close by. No attempt of course was made to save the house as it was one of Manning's like mine, only eight times as large.

Give my love to all and say that I will write again to some one else in about a fortnight, so that I think you will now hear of our news a little oftener. I liked your last letter *very* much. You tell me so much about everyone and especially about your own family. Give my especial remembrance to William and kiss the little kids for me. I find it is hopeless to keep the children all correct of all their cousins; they excite a great confusion in their minds. I was greatly in hopes that we could have got a great many Maori curiosities to send their cousins, but I find that it is as difficult to get anything here as it is in the parts of the Colony where there are few natives. But I shall, if I can, get some images to let my little nephews and nieces see what our savages are like here. Goodbye, God bless you dearest Margaret.

Ever your aff. brother,

C. A. DILLON

13. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Auckland, August 6 [1848]

My dearest Mother,

A vessel has looked in here on her way to England direct, so that I am in hopes this will reach you in a shorter time than usual. We are all quite well, and I am thankful to say we have escaped without scarlet fever of which there has been a great deal in this filthy town. Many children have died of it and I really wonder that more do not die as it is so wet and undrained and so very dirty. We are now living about three miles from the town in a little tiny cottage smaller than our Manning's house and without half the comforts. But I much prefer living out of the town, partly because it is more healthy and partly because I see less of the odious people of which this place is composed. We have five acres of land in grass and a tolerable little garden for which we pay £40 a year. I have to go in every morning at 10 o'clock to my office and stay till four.

I like Grey very much. He gains very much upon one on acquaintance. I always liked him as a public man but I now like him very much as a private man. He is very *unpopular here* at Auckland because he has to end all the rascally tricks which his blackguard predecessor did, but in proportion as he becomes unpopular here he gets more popular and is more liked at the other parts of the Colony from his conduct. I have now plenty to do as he has added to my department the office of Native Secretary, so that I now have all the business of the natives passing thro my hands. I am now a kind of 'protector of aborigines' tho that name is abolished. I get no extra salary for this last office but I was very much pleased to have it as it is very interesting. I should like Fitz.

to know that I have this office as he said that 'I thirsted after the blood of the natives'.

We have not had any direct news for some time from England but we hear dreadful rumours of war. Will Italy come free out of it? I hope those Austrians will be driven out of it but I suppose the Italians will never agree amongst themselves.

I am quite vexed to think that it will be such a long time before we have any news from you, as our letters will all go to Nelson of course and there is little or no communication between the two places. In fact I sometimes write to Nelson via Sydney!! Grey is just gone down there and I suppose we shall get something when he comes back in about two months. Till then we may not hope to get any letters. I wrote to Louisa a few days ago by H.M.S. *Calliope* which is gone home, but as she has to call at several places on her way I dare say you will get this sooner. I have sent her a very ugly and vulgar dish made of native wood, but it was the best I could get and I hope she will accept it on account of the good intentions. Have the Gerald⁴⁴ any prospects of a family?

I am very uneasy about money matters at home. I fear that, as Charles⁴⁵ is of course unable to pay as much, there may be a deficit. I had occasion to draw on England to move here as I could not have raised money at Nelson to settle my affairs there and meet the expenses of moving without doing so at a loss. I have however written a long letter and I trust an explicit one so that I think all will be right. I hear no more of Ransom's stopping payment and I have made enquiries amongst all the banking and mercantile people who are likely to know. I am however quite certain that it was in a newspaper, I think a Sydney commercial paper, but of that I am not sure. It has caused me great uneasiness, I can assure you, as I am in fear of my bills

⁴⁴ Gerald Dillon was a younger brother of Constantine.

⁴⁵ Charles Dillon, the 14th Viscount, Constantine's eldest brother, who died without issue in 1865.

being returned. We are I think going to manage to live on our salary £400 and save the rest, so that you need now have no scruple in accepting what I offered you some time ago if it is to be got. But really I have had no proper account for such a time that I do not know how my affairs stand.

Persuade Theobald to take a trip out here if only *pour passer le temps*. It will be very agreeable to him, I have no doubt. He could go home via India or via Panama and see something of S. America. For a person with nothing to do and the world before him I can fancy nothing pleasanter. Have the Arthurs⁴⁶ any more than the two children? . . . Is Henrietta going to have any more children? Fanny and the children send you their love. I enclose an old letter from Fanny which she wrote some time ago but had no opportunity of sending. Pray give our love to all, including Aunt Georgina whom we always remember with the greatest affection. . . . I wrote to Margaret not long ago. I hope she got my letter. Harry has a long letter written to you but I think you will be as well without it.

Goodbye my dearest mother. Every your aff. son,
C. A. DILLON

⁴⁶ Arthur Dillon, an elder brother of Constantine, who later became the 16th Viscount.

14. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Auckland, Sept. 5 1848

My dearest Mother,

We were overjoyed yesterday by the arrival of a vessel from Nelson which brought us your letter by the *Victory*. You mention in that that you have written by the *Acheron* and also via Sydney. Neither of these have we got, tho' the papers that come via Sydney we received some time since by some unaccountable way. We were glad to find that the accounts of all were good and were much pleased by Louisa's scrap in your letter. We do not know how to express our gratitude to you for your presents to us in your distressed state, and if it were not ungracious to do so after so much kindness from you we should find great fault with you for spending so much upon us.

You had evidently not heard of our intended move up here when you wrote. I will therefore not advert to your remarks made in your letter concerning our movements. You will be able to judge when you have received our letters upon what we are doing.

We had heard a report and apparently a very well authenticated one that war had been declared by France and England against Prussia, Russia and Austria, but I suppose it was all a mistake as we now hear no more about it. The only revolution I take a great interest in is that of the Italians. I am really happy to find that there is some prospect of the Austrians being driven out of Italy at last, and I suppose that if they are now once fairly put out they will never show their faces there again.

The prospects of cholera in England are very alarming. God grant that it may pass lightly over the land. I trust we

shall be spared a visitation from it. We think the influenza bad enough. We were fortunate in one respect in leaving Nelson when we did. We have escaped the whooping cough which arrived there a few days after we left and has killed several children. We as yet are clear of it and thank God both ourselves and chicks are quite well and hearty, tho I fear that this awfully wet climate will never do for us after our splendid Nelson climate. Here it rains regularly five days a week. The other two are not bad generally. I feel it very much having to come in and go out every day three miles, but it is nice warm rain and does not hurt.

I do not like this place at all. I like neither the climate, the country or the people. Everything is as different from our old Nelson as if the two counties were thousands of miles apart. There is no communication between this and the South. I have been here three months and yesterday for the first time have we had news from Nelson. Grey is gone down to the South, which I much regret, as there are but few people that I like here or that I associate with besides him. But I am made contented by thinking that I am being useful to myself and the community at large where I am, at least in a small degree and in my humble way.

Whilst I think of it I wish to testify to the truth of Mr Anstey's statements touching fruit coming upon trees without grafting. I have only tried it on peach trees. They bear very heavy crops without being grafted and very good large fruit, but not with such a good colour as the grafted trees. They are also much later. Cuttings also from all kind of trees will strike and bear fruit abundantly, a thing I am told unknown in Europe or at least in England. Peach appears to be the most common fruit here. The natives sell them in the season for about two or four shillings a cwt. We have a great abundance of fruit in the garden of our little house here, but people here do not care about being anything nice or tidy. In fact they are a revolting low set from top to bottom.

I am at present very busy learning to speak the Maori

language as I am the Native Secretary. It is very uphill work, for tho a very poor and meagre language in some respects, it is very copious in others. They have a dual as well as singular and plural and so many nice shades in the personal pronouns that it is quite puzzling. I have taken a Maori servant to teach me, and this is useful in other respects as it will teach the children not to be frightened at them. I never saw anything to equal Harry's horror of them at one time. He is now getting reconciled to them. What is very curious about that is that he has never been afraid of negroes. Fanny gets on quicker than I do with it.

Little Godfrey wrote to me about some business of his. I do not think he will ever be tempted to double the 'orn' again after the sufferings he has endured. I suppose, poor man, he has his reward and is looked upon as a living wonder at Chaffry—'a great feat', a circumnavigation *sans doute*.

But my reason for alluding to the little man is that he says a Mr Beit has called on you. I did not believe the old fellow [Beit] could have had such impudence as to go and see you. I once suspected he might and intended to have warned you about him. He is the greatest blackguard out of the hulks in the Northern Hemisphere and the greatest out of Norfolk Island in the Southern, and he has been told it 50 times, nay 500. I do not know how many times I have told him myself what I thought about him. But he is a regular Jew. If he should still be in England keep him off, for he is very plausible, and has a good respectable manner, but at bottom he is an old scamp and what is vulgarly called an old fib.

You mention the *wrecked* boxes by the *Louisa Campbell* and wonder how the water got in as they were tinned and soldered. The reason is that by being tossed about they were broken and the tin was much knocked about. All the tinned boxes I saw were in the same plight. I should think there could be no difficulty about recovering the insurance. *One box was quite lost*.

I send this via Sydney. I hope in a fortnight to have

an opportunity of sending your letters direct to England. Fanny had begun a letter to you, but as I have written so much she says she will not send hers at least this time. She wishes to thank you very much for the things you have sent, especially the books which are always a great treat to us. Here in Auckland there are no books but ledgers and day books. I do not know whether Fanny ever told you that a collection of ferns and other dried plants was being made for you by a real botanist, a Dr Sinclair. We hope to be able to send it by the *Indian* which will sail soon. I shall not be able to write to any one but you this time as I had intended, as I have had but short notice of the sailing of this vessel. You must however give my kind love to all. I am much flattered by Mr Pigou's saying that he hears my letters read with interest. I am glad of it as everything that helps to bring our little colony into notice is good for us. I have nothing more to say so will close by begging you to give our love and remembrance to all who care about hearing of us. God bless you, my dearest mother. Ever yr. aff. son,

C. A. DILLON

15. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Auckland, Oct. 9 [1848]

My dearest mother,

I have not much to say to you, but I cannot allow such a fine opportunity as the sailing of a ship direct to England to pass without a letter. By this opportunity (the *Indian*) you will, I hope, get safely a parcel of ferns which have been collected and arranged by a *botanist*, one Dr Sinclair, who is Colonial Secretary of this place. I hope they may be interesting to you. We were anxious to send them at once or we might have possibly had a larger collection. They will in all probability be delivered to you by Mrs Reay. She is the widow of a missionary who was for a long time with us at Nelson. She is now going home and has offered to take things for us. She is a very good kind of person in many respects but very odd and not *over* and above fond of telling the truth. In fact she is given to romance so that if you should see her you must not believe *all* she says. As for ourselves we are all very well, tho there is still a great deal of fever in the town of Auckland which we, I am happy to say, escape from by living in the country. Your letters have all been disarranged. We got one by the *Clara* about nine months old, tho the *Clara* was only four months on her voyage. But I suppose there are several letters for us at Nelson and we shall get them all in due time.

We are getting on very well now. All the settlements are prospering fast, partly in consequence of good government and partly owing to our being at last settled all amicably with the New Zealand Company.⁴⁷ I think it was almost time after waiting so many years for it.

⁴⁷ The Nelson settlers had claimed damages from the New Zealand Company for breach of contract.

We are so much obliged to you for all the *Times*. I have read the history of Europe in them very carefully. I should like very much if a good history of all these proceedings is written, or anything in any of the reviews, to have it. What I take most interest in is the Italian part of it. I cannot very clearly make out the German part, for one day they appear to me to rise against the kings and emperors and next day to fall down and worship the same and call him [sic] father and all such twaddle. I suppose Mr Pigou is all alive for the Poles. What will they do? I suppose that if they want to be free the nobles will have to make large concessions to the people this time.

Fanny wishes you would be so good as to send her a clock, which is amongst some of the things that were left at the Pantechnichon, the first time that anything is sent out here. I have, only just a few minutes since, heard that the *Indian* sails directly. I shall therefore write by H.M.S. *Dido*, a frigate which goes in a few days to England. Will you tell Margaret that I shall try and get some shells for her but that real conchologists tell me that there are none here worth collecting. I will however send whatever I can pick up.

Give my love to them all and believe me, my dearest mother,

Your aff. son

C. A. DILLON

Since writing the above the ship has been suddenly detained to take home a young woman who is just married to a Naval officer. She sails in the *Indian* as soon as she is married and he sails in his own ship the *Dido* in about a month. Don't you think this a funny arrangement, but young people will be young people. I however take advantage of this to reopen my letter and to tell you that we yesterday had forwarded to us from Nelson a letter of the 2nd May from Helena in the corner of which we were glad to see in your writing 'All well'. I have nothing to add. Once more God bless you all.

Ever your aff. son

C.A.D.

Oct. 11/48

16. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON*

Auckland, Jan. 20 [1849]

My Dearest Mother,

Your letters of the August mail have at last reached us after a very long and unaccountable delay, but we were very happy to get them, tho' I must say the accounts by them, both private and public, were of a most doleful nature. We can hardly express to you how grieved we were at poor Helena's disappointment, tho' we hope it may not prove more than temporary, and that when Sir W. de Bathe gets out of his difficulties there will be a change for the better. We do not like to write to Helena or trouble her with condolences which are much better left alone. We shall, we hope, too, soon have to congratulate her on a happy issue out of all her afflictions. If all should have turned out well when you get this letter, as we hope, pray give her our most sincere congratulations and tell her how happy we are to hear that she is happy.

As for the further disasters which are also the cause of your poverty and misfortune, we cannot tell how often we think over and grieve for you. I really hope you have taken advantage of the offer we made some time ago to you and taken whatever could be of service to you out of our small sum at home, but such as it is you may be assured that you will be conferring an obligation on us by using it. We are living here in affluence. We have made up our minds and are determined to live on our salary and we find we can do it. What we make at Nelson we either reinvest there or lay out in the place advantageously for ourselves and the settlement. There is therefore Fanny's £100 a year and a trifle more quite at your service, *not* as a loan but as a gift from

your two children, who tho' absent from you love you as much as they can. One condition we would put, and this is especially Fanny's idea, that if you can any way, without offending her, give Aunt Georgina £25 or pay a bill for her, or in fact use it as you think best for her, we shall be very much obliged to you. It would be some slight token of regards and affection to one who has always proved herself very kind and obliging to us and for whom we feel the greatest affection. Now we do hope you will not think we are making any sacrifice for we are not.

We are at last settled quietly down in a very comfortable house for which we pay £63 a year. We have about four acres of ground attached and a very fine view. We are about a mile from my office so that I just get a pleasant walk there and back. When I get no more that at least ensures me good exercise.

Nelson has made most rapid strides in the last year and its prosperity is increasing fast. It has now for so young a place and one which has had so many vicissitudes a very fair export, and were it not that wool is very low we should be quite rich people. But we have now a considerable export of grain of all sorts. A most opportune arrival of emigrants just before harvest has put us all in high spirits and they all get ready employment at high wages. You see I speak of *Nelson* as *we*, for with this place I have no connection. It is just a small garrison town and I do not know half a doz. people in it. I write you all this which I have told you so many times before to show you how well off we are, which joined to our few wants makes us quite rich and comfortable. You need not scruple therefore to make what use you like of such funds of ours as may be available.

I fear I gave you a most distressing account of the earthquakes at Cooks Straits. I confess I was in a great state of agitation when I wrote, but all the accounts we had heard had been so dreadful that it was enough to fill one with alarm, especially Mr Eyre's dispatch, and yet one can hardly blame him—to have the ground rocking under one for a

month must be disagreeable to say the least of it. It has turned out, as you will have heard and as you will see confirmed by the letters and papers I send you, to have been much exaggerated. Nelson has not suffered tho' the shocks were severe. I fancy we have been the greatest sufferers in the settlement, for a new house and dairy which was just finished and established at the Wairau and which had altogether cost me about 80 or 90 pounds has been levelled to the ground. However the dairyman made the best of a bad job and has put up a hut which he has built on the same spot again and is quite happy. You see that this colonial life, if it does nothing else, gives elasticity of view and teaches people to help themselves.

I must tell you that we were very vexed with Grey for withholding the promised constitutional government and I was almost inclined to resign, but I have thought it over and he has made all his plans appear so just to me and fair that I have quite given in again to him and now we understand each other much better. I have no doubt that he is a man of superior ability and great tact.

We (the Nelson people) are very busy just now about the establishment of a collegiate school. You may perhaps remember that it was in the plan that there should be such an institution in the settlement. The funds have been accumulating for the last seven years and are now available. It is not very much but it will do for a beginning, about £10,000. We are very anxious to do it, well satisfied that if it is well done it will be assisted and that scholarships and fellowships will eventually be added. We are therefore seeking information wherever we can get it. If any of your acquaintance possess any knowledge in these matters get them to help us. I am anxious to obtain the assistance of a Mr Arnold, a son of the Master of Rugby, who is now settled at Nelson. I do not know him personally as he went there after I left, but I hear him very highly spoken of. At any rate his name would be a host in itself. It is one of the subjects I am most interested about connected with the place,

and one which I should like to see settled upon a good foundation before I leave the country, whenever that may take place. One condition we seem to be all pretty well agreed about, which is that it is not to be sectarian, and we are trying all we can to make that sure and it is upon this subject above all that I should like to obtain information. I trust to the great interest which you have always shown to our community for an excuse for thus troubling you upon such a subject.

Dec. 24

I am going to send this by a vessel which sails today. I have nothing further to add to what I have written above. Fanny and the children send their love. I had intended to have sent you a letter I have had from Wellington about the earthquakes which modifies very much the account which I sent before, but I have had such a rowing for showing the letter I sent you that I will not again attempt to show people's letters. I must beg of you to excuse the blotting of this letter, but I have bad paper, bad pens, bad ink, and four children buzzing about me. God bless you, my dearest mother.

Ever your aff. son

C. A. DILLON

17. CONSTANTINE DILLON AND FANNY DILLON
TO LADY DILLON

Auckland, April 17 49

My dearest Mother,

Your letters and Margaret's of the 1st and 2nd Nov. reached us on the 1st of this month and we at the same time got our box by the *Ajax*, for which we have again to express to you all our very great thanks, especially to Margaret for her very handsome present of Helena's picture, which we think beautiful. Helena must have grown a very handsome woman. We are very proud of it and like it much though it does not very much remind us of her, and yet we are getting more used to it and brings back slightly our recollection of her.

You say something in your letter about wishing you could join us here and that you would do so were the passage shorter. It has been one of the things we have often talked over, at least we have said how happy we should be if we could hope such an event possible. It has been one of our most constant *chateaux en Espagne*. Now steamers will go to Sydney from England you can come out here in *two* months. There is therefore no reason why you should not come. Tom Story or some one else could come out to take care of you. We could make you very comfortable. If you could add £200 a year to our income you could live perfectly well. We could feed you, clothe you and keep your maid well for that or even less. Of course we could do it and would be only too happy to do it for nothing at all, but for this you could live *en Princesse* and keep a horse and carriage to go about in. You could botanize and garden to your heart's delight. We have ample room for you here or at

Nelson. Whatever our plans may be we shall wait here till we hear from you here. I am sure that if you think over it you will find the plan feasible. You will be able to save money to pay your debts in three years from the time you leave England and we shall all go home together. Fanny has looked much better for the last few days than she has done for two years in consequence of the idea of the possibility of your coming. The only difficulty I foresee is Helena for of course we cannot think of her coming, tho' of course we should be only too happy were it possible for her or indeed *any of you* to come. I am quite serious in what I say. Fanny and I have talked it over often and we see that it is all very easy to be accomplished. Your peace of mind will be restored. You will be free from dunnings, and tho you will not have much society yet you will find a few honest plain people and you need not see them if you do not like.

Since writing the above I have just this moment had a letter by the *Ennerdale*⁴⁸ from Jerningham dated 15 Dec. in which he says you are quite well, which has made us very happy. His letter is dated 15 Dec. I suppose we shall in a few days get yours of the beginning of Dec. via Sydney. I shall therefore reserve letters I had intended to write to Helena and Margaret till I get yours. Mr Dashwood⁴⁹ is come out to Nelson and I have written to him to advise him strongly to stay there, tho' I have asked him to come and pay me a visit here as I can give him a great deal of good advice. Will you tell them to alter the address of the *Courier* as it

⁴⁸ There is some uncertainty about the spelling of this word. The typescript in the Alexander Turnbull Library has *Easondale*. But there was no ship of that name. The Auckland newspaper, the *New-Zealander*, of 18 April 1849, mentions the *Ennerdale*.

⁴⁹ Edwin Dashwood, Fanny Dillon's brother's brother-in-law (Captain Henry Story married Amelia Caroline Dashwood), settled in the Wairau. He was the first European, in company with William Mitchell, to go overland via Hanmer to Canterbury in 1850. In 1863 he became Sir Edwin Dashwood, 7th Baronet, of West Wycombe, England.



Governor Robert FitzRoy



Dillon in his first uniform

always goes to Nelson first. We are very glad that there is a chance of our getting the stove out, as it will be a great saving here where fuel is so dear. At Nelson our fuel did not cost us one quarter of what it does here and we used to keep immense Xmas fires always. Here we sparingly put a few sticks on.

I was very sorry to see Charles Buller's⁵⁰ death in the papers we got yesterday, but not astonished for he never was strong. I remember he used to suffer very much in Canada if he was at all overworked. I also saw that Baptist Noel⁵¹ had left the Episcopalian Church. I suppose he is become an Independent for I cannot conceive his turning Baptist. There will soon be no Church of England people left here if George Augustus N.Z. goes on as he is doing. Some few are turning Catholics. One of his own college young men did so a short time ago and is now a priest here, but the great majority turn Independents and Baptists. This college⁵² is reduced to 6!! English boys and 20 Maori boys, none of them either English or European from Auckland where he is best known, all from the South. This is the result of 6 years labours and immense sums of money, and yet I hear people say with this staring them in the face that he is a 13th Apostle and call him the blessed Bishop. I hope you will never subscribe one farthing to propagize so exceedingly rotten a system. How the people in England can be so benighted as to give their money to such a popish monkery astonishes me. I expect that as soon as our college is established at Nelson with Mr Arnold at its head he will not get one boy.

We cannot too much express our thanks to you all for your kindness in remembering us in your distress. I fear that we

⁵⁰ Charles Buller, M.P., the celebrated colonial reformer, had been with Wakefield and Dillon a member of Lord Durham's team in Canada.

⁵¹ Baptist Noel was a prominent London divine who left the Church of England in 1849 and became a Baptist.

⁵² St John's College at Tamaki near Auckland.

have been very extravagant getting things out from England, especially the [piano] of which we are much ashamed, but it is the only amusement we allow ourselves, and now that we can live comfortably on our official income we are going to have our Nelson income and leave you at home our English income whatever it may be. But we are quite sincere and looking forward anxiously to an answer to the first part of this letter. Why should not Theobald come out with you and recruit his own finances? I am sure this splendid climate of Nelson would do you all good both in body, mind and purse. Every one here is happy and cheerful, plenty of work and plenty of means and no reason why one should not have plenty of intellectual enjoyments as well. The chicks are already expecting you and getting impatient, and great are the preparations they make for Grandmama's coming. God bless you, my dearest mother. Think of us always as your affectionate children

C. A. & F. D. DILLON

18. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Auckland, July 2 [1849]

My Dearest Mother,

We have to acknowledge several letters down to those by *Berhampore*. This last ship brought us a letter from you. She had a very quick passage, having been only 98 days from London. The *Jane Catherine* which sailed 3 weeks *before* her arrived a fortnight *after* her, but by her we had no letters. The *Mary Catherine* by which you have sent us some things is still at Sydney but is expected daily.

I have to thank you very much for the trouble you have taken about our banker's account. . . . I clearly see now that after all expenses are paid I have a capital of £1500 or £75 a year left.

As regards the stove I am not sorry I have sent for it, as it will be an enormous saving in fuel and I am sure will pay for itself in the fuel saved the first year. The sending for the piano was entirely *my* extravagance, Fanny had nothing to do with it, but she has so little amusements and is always so busy and hard at work that I was anxious she should have some relaxation. I am sorry Jerningham should have told you about it as I particularly wished him not to do so, knowing that you are always so kind and generous that you would wish to help me with it. In fact I cannot tell you how ashamed we are at all the trouble and anxiety we must give you about us.

Henry must have misquoted Fanny's letter to you for she has never desired to give a black picture of our start out here, far from it. If she or I had felt what Henry describes we would not have written as we have done both to him and Tom, urging them strongly to come out here as it would

be [to] their immense advantage and which advice to them I am ready to repeat. But I suppose one does write at times in a fit of the spleen or the blues and then what one writes takes the tinge of our mind at the moment. I confess that the deprivation of our friends and relations is an incalculable loss and that nothing hardly will make up for it. This I have always allowed. But as far as worldly prospects go, I repeat what I have always said, that I am *very well* satisfied with my lot, and had I to begin life again I should again do what I have done. I have three times changed my mode of life in 21 years and yet I do not regret having been in either. I have learnt something useful in all, either morally or otherwise. One thing I have learnt at any rate in New Zealand is to be content with my lot. I think I have said all I can by money matters. I do not think I shall draw any more on England unless under very special circumstances which I do not now anticipate as likely to take place.

I daresay this letter will be delivered to you by a young man, a Mr Wills, who has been some years in N.Z. and is now going home on business of the Canterbury Association. We have seen a good deal of him as I have had some official business with him connected with that association. He will give you a description of us and of the kids, and I dare say you will get this soon as it goes direct by a ship called the *Louisa*. He will, I hope, take you some likenesses of Constance's and Marian's which I have been trying to get done, but the wretches will not sit still and when they try to look serious they make hideous faces. Constance is a very dear good child, very like Lou in character, and the most ridiculously unselfish creature possible. Marian is very pretty but delicate. It is quite ridiculous how they inherit tricks which they never can have seen. For instance Constance shows her affection by grinding her teeth and squeezing the object of it just like Louisa, and Marian by getting hold of the ears of any one she likes and pulling them just as Margaret did. . . . Sometimes little Bobo's ears are quite sore from the intense love she bears for him. This latter little fellow

is a very strong stout little fellow, quite the stoutest we have had.⁵³ Fanny also looks far better than she has looked for a very long time, which I attribute in a great measure to her being far more quiet, as she has not near as much hard work as she used to give herself at the Waimea.

And now I think I have told you all that there is to say about ourselves. I wish you would thank Helena very much for her kind present of Macaulay's *Hist. of Engl.* which we read with great interest. We have lately been quite set up in books which is an immense comfort. I would write to Helena myself and thank her, but if I write to her I feel I must allude to her disappointment about Mr de Bathe and I think that would be a great pity, or it *might* be one if her mind is beginning to get settled. I hope that you will tell her for us how very much we have both felt for her if you think it right to do so, and then you can explain our reason for not writing to her. We are going to write to Louisa by this opportunity or perhaps we shall wait for a few days and write by the *Berhampore* which goes to Singapore next week and send you a letter by the Indian mail. So look at the dates and mark the receipts.

July 11

The *Louisa* sails this afternoon, so I finish my letter for you which I have put off in hopes of hearing from the South and being able to tell you we shall be off soon, but we have heard nothing yet. The *Berhampore* sailed without taking a mail. I do not regret it much as it is after all a roundabout way. We got your letters (Margaret's and Lou's) of Jan. 30 the day before yesterday, about 3 weeks later than those of March. The weather is so very rainy that tho' the *Mary Catherine* has been in some days we are unable to get our things out. We have all sorts of rain here from the heavy tropical of Jamaica to the drizzle of Mayo. It is one everlasting downpour. We all have colds. Harry has had the croup 3 times this winter. We are getting used to it in time,

⁵³ He later played football for England.

I dare say we shall miss it if we do not have it at least once a week. It certainly is an *odious* climate this Auckland.

Mr Wills has assured me that he would call in person with the portraits and tell you in which respects they are like. Harry's is very fair. Constance's is the best. Fanny desires me to assure you that the hair curls *quite* naturally, there is not even a wet brush put to it. She is afraid you should think that there is time lost in curling it. Marian is very like in the upper part of the face, in fact the mouth is the only part which is not like. The two latter are for you if you will accept them. Harry's is for Mrs Story. . . . Fanny wishes very much you would send her a box or desk she left at the Pantechnicon with your things.

I have had another letter from an old brother officer of mine for advice about emigrating. His name is Johnson. If he should call will you be so good as to give him any information you can about N.Z. from what I have written to you. Poor man has 7!!! daughters and four sons and very small income. I have advised him to come to Nelson where they will all be convertible into gold, the sons and daughters I mean. He is a good honest man and I should be happy to assist him by my experience and advice.

If this Canterbury settlement goes on it will be a magnificent thing for this country and in a very few years I think we shall see the East coast of the middle island one splendid sheep pasture. I have not a particle of fear for New Zealand now. I am proud to say that *not one* soul is gone from the Company's settlements to California tho' every inducement has been used by ship owners to get them for the sake of the freight and passage. This proves how comfortable people must be when they are not lured away by the prospects offered of making an immense fortune in a few days. . . .

Louisa's letter is very cheerful. I am sure the dear girl is as happy as she deserves. I am made quite happy by the much more cheering accounts we have had from you *all* lately. If poor Helena could be happy it would be a great

source of pleasure to us all.

You must not think that we have abandoned all idea of going home now because we have an appointment, but I have learnt one thing from Capt. FitzRoy, 'not to let one rope go till you have hold of another', and I think you will agree with me that it would be madness to throw up £450 a year without good cause as long as I can keep it consistently with honesty. What is delayed is not abandoned, on the contrary it betters my prospects. I can assure you I think constantly of going home and so does Fanny. It is generally the last thing we talk of at night and it very seldom happens that we omit passing you all over in review. I do not think I have much more to say, so goodbye, my dearest mother. Fanny joins me in sending our love to all, especially dear Helena. Believe me, ever your aff. son

C. A. DILLON

19. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS BROTHER
THEOBALD.*

Auckland, July 11 [1849]

My dear Theobald,

Altho' I have written a long letter to my mother detailing all our goings on here, I take advantage of a ship going home direct to England to write to you a few lines to welcome you back to England after your long absence. I am happy to know by all the letters I have had from home that you are in such care as you are represented. Tho' I have not corresponded with you since we parted on board the steamer at Naples, now more than seven years, I have never ceased to hear about you and have always been much interested in what came to my knowledge. As I apprehend you now have some leisure time on hand, I hope you will devote some of it to writing to me from time to time the news both public and domestic. I had hoped that I should have been able to get home about the beginning of 1850, but the bad accounts of the mother country and my having got an appointment in N.Z. has made me defer my departure as I have an increasing family, tho' I am happy to say it is in some way met by an increasing income. Now as you are doing nothing and have plenty of time, which must I suppose occasionally weigh on your hands, I wish to invite you to come and pay us a visit here. Depend upon it you will save money by it, and will have some amusement in the complete change of scene. We are going back to my old haunt at Nelson where we shall be very happy to see you. We have plenty of room for you and can find you lots of work to keep you employed so that you will not find yourself dull. You will also have an opportunity of making some eligible investment of your money.

Seriously speaking I wish you would write to me, my dear Theobald, and tell me something about yourself. What are you doing, what do you intend to do, are you going to live on in England, are you going to follow the good example set you by all your brothers and take to yourself a wife in your old days, now that you are well stricken in years! I quite tremble when I think of the number of new acquaintances I shall have to make in the way of brothers and sisters in law, nephews and nieces.

I shall send this home by a Mr Wills, a young man who is employed in the new Colony of Canterbury in N.Z. He will give you a full and true account of our goings on.

I have written to an old brother officer of mine whom you may remember to have met. His name is Johnson. He was adjutant of the 7 G.⁵⁴ He wants to emigrate to N.Z. Will you if he calls on you tell him all you can about us and help him a little as to information which you may glean from my mother and those I have written to about this country. If you will do this you will oblige me very much. I ask you because I know how good-natured and kind you always are and also because I fancy you have more time than my other brothers who are busy at their offices, as well as because you will have a sympathy for an old officer.

Do you ever see Tom Story? If you do, advise him to come out to us. He is sure to do better here than hanging on about watering places with nothing to do. Fanny urges the same thing. Let him at least come out and see how we get on and he will, I am sure, join us. It is just the life for him and will keep him out of all temptation. The climate will just suit him.

We have not yet seen Mr Dashwood, Henry's brother in law, but we hear him highly spoken of by all our friends at Nelson. He is likely to be a very steady and good colonist. Did you meet him at all before he came out?

I have said all I had to say of any interest to my mother and so have exhausted my little stock, but you cannot have

⁵⁴ The 7th Dragoon Guards of which Dillon was an ex-officer.

the same excuse as I have. We have so many common friends and acquaintances about whom you can write to me. Do you ever pay a visit to Dublin? If you do pray remember me to all our old friends.⁵⁵ By the bye Dunn has a lot of uniforms of mine. Did he ever sell them for me and also the scimiter. . . ? If you should see him remember me to Dunn M.P., who I see figures much in debates about poor laws in Ireland. . . .

Ligar the Surveyor General of this Colony was at Sandhurst with you in the same Co., the B. Do you ever remember him? So was Grey the Governor. Do you remember him? They both often mention you. Fanny desires me to say many things to you *de sa part*. Believe me, ever, dear sir,

Your aff. brother

C. A. DILLON

⁵⁵ Dillon had served in Dublin under Lord Ebrington, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

20. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Auckland

Xmas Day 1849

My Dearest Mother,

We have to acknowledge your letters of August last which we got some time ago, they having had rather a good passage. We were glad to hear you were all well at that period and that the prospects in Ireland were so much better.

I am sorry I cannot give a good report of Fanny. She was *very well* for the first six weeks after her confinement but she has had a return of her old complaint and it is no use trying to get her to lie up. She will do so for an hour or two at a time but she jumps up and will walk about. . . . The climate of this place is so relaxing that I fear she will be much longer recovering than she did in the fine dry climate of Nelson. It is very muggy here and damp. The baby is a very fat plump and pretty baby. She has as yet no name. All the rest including myself are very well indeed.

I have been expecting Mr Woodhouse here for some time, but he has had an accident (I hear he has been gored by a cow) which has detained him. However I had a letter from him and he seemed in very good spirits and very well pleased with what he had seen of the country up to that time. I think from what I hear that he will make up his mind to settle at Nelson.

We were startled with Ld. O[ranmore]'s⁵⁶ announcement of his intention of applying to be Gov.-in-Chief of N.Z. We heard this from Louisa. I really do not see why he should not. If I thought there was the least probability of it I could

⁵⁶ Dominick Browne, the first Lord Oranmore, was Lady Dillon's brother. See the family tree on p. 168.

send him a vast amount of information which would be very useful to him. After all in these bad times a salary of £2,500 a year is not to be despised even for Ld. O[ranmore]. Tho' the distance is great the climate is very good and living very cheap. He is a good liberal and I therefore think he would be a very good governor, for tho' he is not over fond of work, the great fault of most colonial governors is that they *will* do too much and do it all themselves, and so are eternally at work with very few good results.

Grey has injured himself very much by refusing to allow the introduction of representative institutions in this colony after Ld. Grey⁵⁷ had proposed it. He is now as much disliked as he was liked before. *I* believe he is acting from conscientious tho' mistaken motives, but those who are not in his confidence of course attribute his conduct to a line of deceitfulness. The fact is that tho' in theory a liberal he is practically a great conservative. He is partly fond of power and partly afraid of trusting power into the hands of others. Altogether I fear he has injured his reputation very much. I am sorry for it, for personally I like him very much. He is certainly clever and he is in theory at least very liberal in civil and religious matters, especially in the latter, tho' he is what might and indeed ought to be called a religious man. I have thought of resigning my appointment more than once on account of his withholding representative institutions, but my friends have advised me not to do so, and so I have remained.

Now if Ld. O[ranmore] were to come out and bring liberal incomers he would get on perfectly well and with no difficulty to himself. One thing is certain, that it is no use to send *any conservative* as a governor to any colony. I do not speak of the West Indies or Ceylon for I suppose it is difficult there owing to the bulk of the population being negroes or Singalees, but to any colony inhabited principally by a European population where the tendency is naturally and

⁵⁷ Earl Grey was Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord John Russell's Ministry.

always will be (whatever Mr Wakefield may say to the contrary) democratic and strongly to republicanism. This tendency cannot be stopped or even checked. All attempts at doing so only produce jarring and squabbling in which the democratic principle eventually gets the upper hand. How can you expect it to be otherwise? There is no material for forming an aristocracy. But I find that instead of writing a letter I have got onto a critique on Mr E. G. Wakefield's Book,⁵⁸ which I dare say you have not read and do not take much interest in. However if you should do so, I can assure you there is a great deal of good in it and what he says about the appointment of government officials in colonies is quite true. The cases he cites did actually exist in N.Z. to my certain knowledge.

I am very much obliged to you for the enquiries you have made relative to our college and the interest you seem to feel in it. I am always thinking about it. I would rather see that progress than almost any other institution in the colony.⁵⁹ I think I have before pointed out how absolutely necessary good education is in a colony and even how much more important it is here than in the mother country. With the quickness that people have in a colony it is necessary to take great care that it should not degenerate into sharpness and robbing, but good education will do this. But all this I have explained to you before.

I was much astonished a short time ago by the arrival of a Mr Peter Burke whom I knew at Castlebar as Under Sheriff. He has come out and left his wife at home and she is to follow him. I wish he had got some letters from you on to me explaining the reason of his sudden resignation, for a paragraph has appeared stating that he has absconded taking with him some public money. I do not believe one word of it myself. He has behaved with great candour to me as well as to Sir G. Grey, who knew him when quartered

⁵⁸ E. G. Wakefield's last book, *The Art of Colonisation*, was published in 1849.

⁵⁹ Nelson College was opened in 1856.

at Castlebar some years ago. He has explained fully and satisfactorily his reasons for leaving, but still this is only his own statement and it would be better that it should be confirmed. I should therefore like very much to have some letters on the subject from some person of status and respectability in the County. One fact is certain, he has no money with him, at least not more than 60 pounds, having left Mayo with 120. If you could procure me any information you would oblige me very much for the poor man's sake.

The accounts he gave us of the country are awful. I was really quite ill after having the awful accounts before. What is all this about the peat? If what we hear is true, Ireland will surpass California in wealth.

There is a great trade springing up between N.Z. and the latter place in timber. The timber of this country is light and will float ashore from the ships at San Francisco, which none of the timbers of the neighbouring countries will do, the consequence is that the cost of landing is too great to allow it. Very many ships have sailed from here with timber and ready made houses and many more will sail with potatoes as soon as they are ready. In fact it is for us quite a considerable trade. Several ships have come back and most of them have brought back their cargoes of all but timber and potatoes. One man took bricks but found on his arrival that they would cost a dollar each to land, and so brought them all the way back. I have seen several people who have been and returned and are going back again. Have you seen any of the circulating medium in the shape of pieces of gold, in shape and size something like cubes of Indian ink? The gold is melted and run into moulds with an inscription on the lumps stating the mercantile source from which it comes, the weight and value in dollars. The pieces I saw were in value from £25 to £5. The person who showed this was a merchant who had been there and is carrying on the timber trade described. The worth of goods is quite awful. San Francisco he says looks like Greenwich fair!!! Amongst other things he was much struck by seeing the holes in what

are called streets stopped up with bags of biscuit. He describes the law (Lynch) as being very well tho' *speedily* administered, and said that the streets were more orderly than those of London.

The parcel you sent us by the *Thomas* has come to hand, as merchants say, and we have to give you our dear thanks for the contents, but Fanny wishes me to mention that some of the articles, viz. the children's shoes and the waistcoats, are not amongst them. . . . The Woodstock gloves have never come to hand, at least *to our* hand, but perhaps they were lost in the *Richard Dart*, which vessel I fear is gone.

26th Dec.

The vessel that takes this, the *Wm Hyde*, sails today for England direct. You will therefore have later news than usual from us. . . .

I think I have written enough this time. In about two or three weeks I shall write again to some more of the family. Give my love to all at home and believe me ever, my dearest mother,

Your very affectionate son

C. A. DILLON

21. WILLIAM FOX⁶⁰ TO CONSTANTINE DILLON

Wellington, 8th February 1850

My Dear Dillon —

I plead guilty to the charge of not writing, but have written so much in other ways that I hate the sight of pen, ink and paper, besides which there has been so little stirring here for the last six months that there has been nothing to write about. The infrequency of direct communication with 'the Capital' also is a great damper to one's epistolary ardour, and the knowledge that if sent overland news will be a month old when you get it likewise operates as a check.

Our latest event is the departure of the Lieut. Governor for Taranaki to be married to a Miss F. Ormond, sister of the new private secretary⁶¹ (quondam private secretary's confidential clerk), who arrived by the *Berkshire* and was arrested there by Lady G. and Sir George who sent off the Brig for the bridegroom, who having made great preparations here for the reception of the lady and got Mrs Col. Gold to turn her home topsy turvy on the occasion also, was in a state of immense disgust at what he calls Grey's unwarrantable interference, and went off in a state of mind a point or two nearer insanity than Governors and Lt. Governors are usually at. I shouldn't at all wonder to hear of a great row between him and Grey about it and perhaps ending in Miss O's going back again to her respected parents in a huff.

Two of Mrs. Fox's sisters were passengers also in the *Berkshire* and came on here in the Govt. Brig (the only good

⁶⁰ William Fox was at this time the Principal Agent of the New Zealand Company at Wellington.

⁶¹ J. D. Ormond had accompanied Eyre from England. He later became a leading pastoralist and Minister of the Crown under Fox and Atkinson.



Fanny Dillon



Sir George Grey

use I have ever known the vessel put to). One of them I am sorry to say is suffering from advanced consumptive symptoms, with I fear not much chance of recovery—the other came out to take care of her on the voyage, during which she suffered very much, particularly from the heat of the line, when she was not expected to live. There is just the chance that the climate, which has proved itself very favourable to such cases, may restore her, but the Doctor shakes his head a good deal.

Our politics have been at a standstill since we sent home our 'resolutions' in reply to Grey's dispatches on the Constitution. We are, however, going to have a meeting to express our sympathy with the Cape Colonists, who are making the best stand against the Home Govt. which has been made since the Bostonians made tea in the harbour. The Cape papers have been backing us up on the constitution question, and it is only fair to reciprocate. They also are agitating for self government. The rads. here are talking of 'election Governors' such as they had in the old American Colonies. That reminds me of what you say of your uncle Lord O[ranmore]. I should think from what you say he would do very well, and if he brought free institutions with him, he would be sure to get a good start. At least it would be his own fault if he did not. I think his age rather in his favour. We do not want a man of any *great* talent provided he be honest and really liberal at heart. My firm belief is that G.G. is not liberal—that his sympathies are with the conservatives—Lord Stanley seemed to me in the course of more than one conversation I had with him to be his political idol—and in a discussion on European politics here last year he exhibited not one spark of sympathy with the liberal movements—but on the contrary laboured to prove to me that they were originated by a set of *sansculottes* who had the most revolutionary ends in view. Nor do I understand how any man who had a particle of faith in liberal principles could miss the opportunity which was afforded him of bringing them into play here.

The *Thames*, a 500 ton vessel, is loading with sawn timber for California—the speculation being carried on by Revans and Levin.⁶² There will not be above 8 or 9 passengers, though they are willing to take any number. This speaks volumes for the character of the Cook Is. settlers compared with your Auckland Jews and Sydneyites, who seem to be running away in hundreds. If successful the speculation will give a great spur to the timber trade and do a great deal for the Colony. I think it can hardly fail to pay. Sawn timber by the last advices from California was selling at £6 11s. the 100 ft. and it is not probable that any great supply can have reached them. Here it is put on board at 10 shills the 100 ft. Revans calculates that to supply the wants of the *present* population, 10,000 loads will be required. North Island timber is much preferred to Sydney or Hobart Town, being easier worked. The principal risk will be the cost of landing it and the, if any, delay. But as Levin's brother in law has a house in San Francisco he expects they will have not much difficulty on this score. If this cargo pays we shall probably export from £50,000 to £100,000 worth of timber annually from this port—if hands can be got to saw it.

Wool progresses, but mutton is coming down. Weld clipped 4½ lbs. per head on his flock this season!! Duppa writes that he expects to clip 4. This beats N.S. Wales 'considerable'. I hear awful accounts of scab in the Wairau. Only three flocks are said to be clean—Cooper's, Duppa's and Morse's—all at the top of the valley—and the last, which is lowest down, is doubtful. They say it will cost Monro £800 to clean his own (and I presume yours) and some other flocks which he admits caught it of his. He has the credit of having taken it there, in which case it serves him right. He lays the blame on Schroeder. I expect they both are equally guilty. Newcome is living in the Kaiparathau.⁶³

⁶² Nathaniel Levin founded the well known firm of Levin and Co. in 1841.

⁶³ Kaiparathau was the old name for the Awatere, south of the Wairau.

You will see the result of the election of Trustees.⁶⁴ I was glad to see Greenwood was dropped out. . . . Fell says '*the Doctor*' has more talent in his little finger than Dillon, Jollie, Monro, Cautly and Stephens have in their whole bodies all put together—and 'that is why they used to be so jealous of him'. I hear all this from a Nelson correspt.

Bell⁶⁵ and I have patched up a reconciliation, without however very much Pylades and Orestes in it—but still a decent one before the public. I intend to go over there on my return from Port Cooper and Otago whither I go in the *Acheron* next week. Apropos of the former, Hutt and Godley write to Thomas that they have *constant* applications to sell land at Canterbury, but refuse till they know that the site is fixed.⁶⁶ I think from all I hear that it will go on. Whether the Company will or will not is more problematical, but I *think* it will for a time at all events.

I have been up the coast lately visiting our new district of the Rangitikei, on this side of Wanganui. It is a splendid country—for the size (about 200,000 acres) far the finest I have seen in N.Zd. It is magnificent grass land, and at the same time nearly 800 acres fit for wheat growing; better soil than any I have seen in N.Zd. It is nearly level all over. There is as much more of the same character still unpurchased, nearer to the Manawatu. The Wanganui country also is very

⁶⁴ These trustees were elected at Nelson to arrange for the transfer of certain funds that had been set aside by the New Zealand Company for the promotion of religion, education and steam navigation in the settlement. The Company had previously misappropriated the funds.

⁶⁵ Francis Dillon Bell was at this time the Nelson Agent of the New Zealand Company. He had recently been severely reprimanded by Fox for accepting a seat in Sir George Grey's nominee Legislative Council and for failing to purchase land in the Wairarapa.

⁶⁶ Captain Joseph Thomas had been sent out by the Canterbury Association to lay out the Canterbury settlement. John Robert Godley, the Agent of the Association and the guiding spirit of the new settlement, arrived later in 1850.

fine, and the river excepting the bar first rate. Vessels of 100 to 200 tons can enter it and once in they or much larger can sail for 10 or a dozen miles up, and boat navigation extends far beyond. The Manawatu is much such another, and runs through a great extent of fine but rather wet land. I had no conception before of the extent or goodness of this side of Cook Strait. It would carry a very large population and no end of sheep and cattle. About 25 miles from here the hills begin to recede from the sea, gradually widening, till you have a fine plain of from 30 to 40 miles wide running in fact all the way to N. Plymouth, with one or two breaks, and most of this is level, grassy, and *first rate* agricultural land, with two large rivers, and a dozen more capable of admitting 10 ton coasters, etc. By large rivers I mean as wide as the Thames at Westminster, and as deep or deeper.

You would not be sorry to hear of old Rauparaha's having been laid with his fathers. The Missionaries tell us that 'he made as fine an end as any Christian child', but I suspect that he was to the last the same old hypocrite as he had always been. Two of our settlers called (out of curiosity) to see him on his deathbed and while there the Missionary came in and felt his pulse. R. behaved himself with great decorum but as soon as the Missy. was gone he put his tongue in his cheek and said 'What good will that nonsense do my belly?' He then asked one of them 'whether he had won anything at Wanganui races?' and recommended him to take his horse to Welln. 'as he might pick up a little money'. They gave him a fine funeral, but not many natives attended it to what might have been expected. Hadfield sent in for a grand coffin and pall and read the service over him I believe. Rangiaeta was chief mourner.

I am glad you told that horrid toady Fitzgerald⁶⁷ what you did. Macshane told me just before his death that he had in

⁶⁷ Dr J. P. Fitzgerald, Colonial Surgeon, Wellington, achieved an honoured name in medical welfare work, more particularly in connection with the Maoris. MacShane was the Colonial Surgeon at New Plymouth.

three months more patients at N. Plymouth than Fitz has here in a year, and that he would almost undertake to carry on his hospital for the cost of F's 'medical comforts', i.e. ale, wine, sago etc. He described it as an outrageous job from beginning to end, and I believe there is little doubt about it. Macshane complained sadly that all the supplies *he* could get from Andrew Sinclair were one scalpel and a pound of lint, and that he had used up all his own drugs in the public service, while Fitz had duplicate, and triplicate supplies of every sort—for instance he had 3 quart bottles of jalap or ipecacuanha (I forget which) which is only given in grain doses, and then not very often. Nor can I understand why Fitzgerald has £200 a year, forage for a horse etc. etc. when the Taranaki Colonial Surgeon is cut down to £100 a year and no horse forage, and yet has three or four times as much to do. At the same time it is all so much in the dark that nobody knows the exact extent of the jobbing. It is just one of those things which we want a representative council to overhaul.

You will see an account of a Magistrates' meeting here in the *Independent* of 7th Feb. Observe about the letter which Domett wrote to St. Hill⁶⁸ requiring all Magistrates holding paid office to vote with Govt. *on all occasions*. What do you think of that? I have seen the correspondence, and it is perfectly true. St. Hill behaved pretty well, but required a good deal of patting on the back. Domett shifts it on to Eyre's shoulders. I intend to ask the same question at every J.P. meeting where any question having a political bearing is under discussion.

The *Havannah* and *Fly* sailed yesterday for the Auckland Isles to see Enderby.⁶⁹ Bolton went with them, also a Mr

⁶⁸ Henry St. Hill was the Resident Magistrate at Wellington.

⁶⁹ Charles Enderby had prevailed on the British Government to appoint him as Lieutenant-Governor of the sub-Antarctic Auckland Islands, 200 miles south of New Zealand, with a view to colonising them and setting up a whaling station. The impossible climate caused the venture to be abandoned.

King, grandson of Governor King of N.S. Wales, who is to be Secretary of State to Governor Enderby. I prophesy that the whole will be a failure. He will there have to colonize a miserable country as well as whale. If he had come up to Pigeon Bay at Akaroa in Banks Peninsula he might have made it answer—would have had provisions etc. close at hand—native crews—and nothing to do *but* to whale.

We hear there is a Lieut. Governor Dunlop on his road to Otago—some horrid Scot I suppose. If they have another at Canterbury (Lord Jno. Manners they say it is to be) Lt. Governors will be 'good and cheap' as the old writers say.⁷⁰

We were sorry to hear of Mrs Dillon's illness. It is all the Auckland climate. If you had a few of our *genial* breezes, you would never be ill. We have been rather short of them ourselves lately but have had very fine weather—what we always call Nelson weather, to vex the Wellingtonians. Today it is blowing a comfortable half gale of wind again.

With united kind remembrances to Mrs Dillon and yourself

Believe yrs very sincerely

WM. FOX

⁷⁰ These remarks about Lieutenant-Governors soon proved to be rumours only. Henry Dunlop was the Lord Provost of Glasgow.

22. ALFRED DOMETT⁷¹ TO CONSTANTINE DILLON

June 1 [1850]

Dear Dillon,

I scribble you a few lines in haste—the stupid Brig being about to start *this time before* the appointed hour.

I like your inability to read my writing and can back my incompetence to master the obscurities of your hieroglyphics against it any day.

There are great complaints about the Brig's provisions—quite *just*, I believe from all accounts. You will see an account by Fox in the 'Impertinent', as Kettle⁷² calls the *Independent*. Of course he tries to lay the blame upon Government and misrepresents as much as he can as to the *cause* of this truly stated effort. You know it is entirely the Captain's own affair—I believe he is entirely unfit for the berth, has sent in a resignation once here, and means to give it up the moment he reaches Auckland.

There has been a great row at Nelson. N——, S—— and a new man named T—— were passing the evening (not in the *most* reputable of all possible ways) in the house of a woman of *relaxed* if not loose character whose appearance, they say, as well as that of her tastes, offers strong evidence of her being fully acquainted with the Peripatetics of Regent Street. This woman thus loose was entertaining our friends and it appears had been married to the mate of the vessel she came out in. He was, not without reason one would imagine, jealous and hired six bravoës (some from the brig)

⁷¹ Alfred Domett was at this time the Colonial Secretary of the province of New Munster, with headquarters at Wellington.

⁷² Charles Kettle, a surveyor, who had explored the Manawatu River and laid out Dunedin.

to fall upon them with *fists*. In consequence N—— got very much mauled *superficially*, S—— not much and the other pretty well. They pulled up the blackguards and got two of them fined £5 a piece. I wish to God they had *killed* 2 or 3 of the ruffians, if it had been by fair blows. There is said to have been great excitement at Nelson thereanent.

The other Nelson news is that Wither has *married* his servant, the daughter of Cautly's old woman. It is a sad pity, but doubtless worse in appearance than reality, as usual in cases of outraged conventionalism. Considering how few even of educated women are *conversible*, in any rational sense of the word, I think it matters little, or rather the chances one way are as great as in the other. I scarcely know 2 women who care about any thing *general, wide, high* and beautiful, to talk about. And there is at least some *nature* in the uneducated. You will believe that I don't flatter you or Mrs Dillon when I say *she* is one of the two exceptions.

Eyre is meditating a *Council*.⁷³ I think it is perfectly *useless* to hold one and therefore unwise. There is nothing to do except pass an Education Ordinance and an Appropriation Bill. But it is utterly absurd to undertake so general a subject as the former with such a Council. For experience has shown the people will have nothing to do with these Ordinances—and not one has I believe hitherto been acted upon. But I should be loath to endanger the right plans about Education by attempting them under such unfavourable circumstances. Moreover *Monro*, they say *with real cause*, and old Seymour is gone to England. There only remains then old Greenwood whose authorship of any measure would alone suffice to render it unpopular—and Cautly who, though good, is not sufficient to outweigh the *utter utter* incapacity of the Wellington *automatons*.

I think holding a Council will only stir up all the *quiescent* elements of hatred and factiousness again, without any corre-

⁷³ The provincial Council of New Munster with members nominated by the Governor attended to local administration and legislation until the establishment of representative government in 1853.

spondent benefit. And I am really *ashamed* to march through Coventry with such a ragged regiment.

We have Godley here, a great acquisition and a man who knows how to be a radical without ceasing to be a gentleman.

If you are talking to Grey about a Council here and it be of the slightest use, give him my opinion. I fancy he will rather be inclined to see the thing in the same light.

Every one is anxiously expecting news from England about the intentions of Govt, or Parliament constitutionally speaking—which renders our present Council etc. still [more] of a temporary expedient and makeshift—and contributes immensely to make people intolerant of any manifestations it may make or pretend to make of activity.

I long equally with you to be shepherdizing.

‘Would thou and I were far away

Feeding flocks in Himaleh!’

as Shelley says—for which read Wairau.

There is a row about the £500 for an instalment for Rangitikei. While Eyre was at Auckland, I and the Council took a bill on the Company drawn by Fox under a letter of credit specially for the purpose of meeting such payments. This was for £600. The Union Banker, owing to like Company’s debilitated state, refused to cash the bill without the Colonial Treasurer’s endorsement. *This after getting a written declaration from Fox that he could not pay the money in any other way*, we allowed, and directed the Col. Tre. to endorse, because, though this wd. make the Col. Govt. liable, in the *improbable* case of these affairs not being arranged between them at home, the devil’s in it, if, *no grant for the Territory having been given*, Govt. could not raise 5 or 600£ upon it, if it were *hard pushed*. We could sell the land ourselves and make a good thing of it. Eyre however, thinking to make a case against the Company, refuses to take the bill—has no money to pay the natives himself and risks all the evils of a breach of agreement with them—and the ridicule they will throw upon the Government. And the natives will of course say—*We sold the land to you the Govt.* What have

we to do with the Company?—Govt. duly insisted on being the first and only purchaser and it will be no answer to say, The people *we* sold the land to, or bought it for, won't pay us, therefore we won't pay *you*. What reasoning!

There is no doubt that the Company ought to provide the cash. What I complain of is the inexpediency and *unwisdom* of the present mode of proceeding. Eyre says the Council took the step in the former case '*without his sanction or approval*' forsooth!

Mrs Eyre seems a nice unassuming and unaffected rather pretty girl. Eyre has been giving evening and dinner parties and a ball—but *will not let her* dance polkas or waltzes except with her brother—which *she* much dislikes, *they* say. For *I*, not being one of the *teetotumizing schism*, do not enter into the passions and discussions that agitate it.

Keppel has been here, a fine fellow—a great friend, as you know, of Brooke of Labuan.⁷⁴

We hear nothing of the old *Acheron* due 1st of May. Richards,⁷⁵ a deuced nice fellow, has been staying with me the last 6 weeks. Woodhouse . . . is now here—consumptive but prepossessing in appearance. Your cousin 'My Lord' as he is called at Nelson (Dashwood) they say has reformed and turned suddenly *steady*—not before it was time.

Remember me kindly to Mrs Dillon, Sir G. and Lady Grey and believe me always

Yours very truly

A. DOMETT

⁷⁴ Captain Keppel commanded H.M.S. *Meander* which called at Wellington in 1850. Brooke was the first Rajah of Sarawak.

⁷⁵ Captain Richards was in charge of the marine survey being made in the *Acheron* at this time.

23. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS BROTHER
ARTHUR*

Auckland, Oct. 29th [1850]

My dear Arthur,

I only last night found out that we had to thank you for a nice present of a tea-service. Both Fanny and I are, I assure you, most obliged to you and Ellen for it. The children have not yet seen it, and I am sure they would be full of thanks to their cousins for the presents of the mugs. I have made several attempts at writing to you, but the fact is that when I have written my family pamphlet I have exhausted all I had to say, and it would be stupid to repeat in other words the same sentiments. We have, as you remark, beaten you in the number of children, but I suppose that is all right as population increases in a colony quicker than at home.

The only change I find in myself is that on trying on an old coat I find it doesn't meet by about 8 inches. Whether the climate of this country causes cloth to shrink or stomachs to swell I look for wiser heads than my own to settle. Fanny, I am sorry to say, has not been very strong for some time, she is, however, much better now. I have just taken her to a village called Howick, about 15 miles from this place, where she will have the advantage of sea bathing whilst I am away. I myself sail in a few hours for Wellington where I am going with the governor. I do not suppose you take much interest in our politics or I would send you a draft of a kind of Chartist bill which is to be introduced in the Council giving us representative institutions.

I wrote to my Mother a few days ago by a ship going to Valparaiso. This goes by a ship direct home. Compare the dates and let me know which gets home quickest.

Moving an establishment of five children is not so easy an affair in a very young colony as at home, especially as we are leaving our house for good, so you may fancy we have been in a fuss for the last few days, which accounts for Fanny not writing to Ellen by this opportunity. I left her this morning about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 6, and expect to be away about 3 or 4 months.

You must write and let me know where you stand in your office, that is in which class, for I know all about the classes as you explained it to me before I left England. It is quite curious with what rapidity time passes. It is just eight years since I arrived in N.Z. and tho' I have passed through a great variety of scenes since that time and seen an immense change in the country, everything I did, and said, and thought before I left England is quite fresh, and in talking of it I am always inclined to call it the other day.

Would you be so good as to let Mother know that I have written to you, and explain to her the reason I do not write any more by this opportunity is that I am in a great fuss moving myself, my family and my office.

And now, my dear Arthur, let me thank you most sincerely for your kind remembrance of us, and let me beg of you to remember me most kindly to Ellen. Do not forget to teach your kids to know us. I am always trying to teach ours to know their numerous uncles, aunts and cousins, but it is a difficult affair as their name is legion. You have not the same excuse for not writing to me that I have for not doing so to you, as you must always have plenty of interesting matter to communicate. I am always afraid I shall tire people with accounts of our little petty colony.

Addio, Ever your aff. brother

C. A. DILLON

24. CONSTANTINE TO FANNY DILLON

Wellington, Nov. 18 [1850]

My own dearest child,

We arrived here after an eight days' passage with the usual proportion of fair and foul winds, gales and calms, all in faith. I took up my quarters at the Foxes' for some days. I am now staying with Domett till an opportunity offers of going across the straits to Wairau. A vessel is just come in from thence which I trust will return soon, as I am beginning to get very tired of this place. Newcome came over here yesterday and will return with me and Woodhouse.⁷⁶ Newcome looks much better than he ever did before. On our arrival here we found a vessel from England, the *Councillor*, out of which I got my mother's letter enclosed. She brought the news of the Company's stoppage, which takes the Foxes home, as he says he has no more occupation here. Chapman⁷⁷ thinks he is going on account of his wife who *has* been quite deranged. They say that whilst her sister was dying she did all sorts of most astounding things such for instance as going all day about the house seizing a large mop and having the windows cleaned incessantly and floors scrubbed. I see no symptoms of madness in her now so that I trust she has quite recovered.

People say that Fox is anxious to get out of the country as quietly as he can now that the Company has wound up before all their peccadilloes are brought to light. I cannot help believing that he is actuated by some such motive. He is ten times more unpopular than ever at Nelson, most persons not hesitating to say that he has acted most unfairly

⁷⁶ Dillon wrote Woodhouse and Wodehouse according to fancy.

⁷⁷ Judge H. S. Chapman of Karori, Wellington.

in more ways than one to favour his partner Duppa. I must confess his explanations are far from satisfactory and some of the awards, Duppa's for instance, will never stand. It is an infamous job by all accounts.⁷⁸ He has persuaded the people here to refuse to accept the bill⁷⁹ which Grey brought down, on the ground that if they give it the sanction of their approval Ministers will stop at that. All here now go for responsible Government. It is the old story of the Sibyl's books. Two years ago one quarter of what is now offered would have been gladly accepted, and the longer it is delayed the higher will the people's demands rise. I think that Fox is also anxious to keep the public from looking too closely to the Company's affairs. He therefore keeps exciting them about this. I am rather tired of him. He is such a perfect partizan that not a word can be uttered by any one but he perverts its meaning and puts a wrong construction on it. I have made up my mind that should I be here when he goes and that a public dinner is given to him, I will write to him a public letter stating the grounds on which I decline to join in it. But I will not write any more on political affairs. You will see the papers on both sides. . . .

Mrs Godley⁸⁰ is a very nice looking person and has all the appearance of being thoroughly amiable. They go to Port Cooper in a day or so. He is very delicate, gentlemanlike, but dogmatic, in fact doctrinaire. I do not think you will care about hearing gossip about a parcel of strangers. I must not however forget Mrs. Fitzgerald. She was so candid to me and spoke so kindly about you that I was quite touched. Indeed *every* one of our old friends seems to express the greatest regret at your not having come down. I had no idea

⁷⁸ Before leaving New Zealand Fox published a denial that he had any interest in Duppa's land, claiming that he had merely placed his sheep with him on a share basis.

⁷⁹ Grey proposed to let two-thirds of the members of the provincial councils of New Munster and New Ulster be elected by the people.

⁸⁰ Charlotte Godley (wife of John Robert Godley), whose *Letters from Early New Zealand* were recently published.

you were so popular, indeed all the people, even those we never saw and many we never heard of, seem to be filled with curiosity about you, and full of regrets at the disappointment they have suffered at your non appearance.

. . . . Mrs C——, who has lately been confined and has at last produced a daughter to their inexpressible delight, is a person who must have been very pretty though common looking. I should take her for a respectable housekeeper in a comfortable family. . . . I have forgotten Miss Halcomb. She is neither pretty nor plain, neither tall nor short, neither clever nor otherwise, neither dark nor fair. You can make out what she *is* yourself now I have told you what she is not.

As Mrs G. Pitt⁸¹ always takes interest in military ladies you may tell her that Mrs Gold⁸² is a very pretty little woman of 25 with eight very pretty children. The daughters are supposed to be like you.

The Greys remained here only a week as the *Fly* was obliged to go on, Sir G. being anxious to see Otago and Port Cooper. He is to be back in about 3 weeks or a month from the time he started, when he will go to Nelson where he will pick me up, and upon him will depend my movements. In the meantime he leaves the people to discuss the bill.

I am very impatient to get out of this as almost all those I am most anxious to see are now in the Wairau at the shearing. Wodehouse seems a very nice person, rather simple but gentlemanlike *very*. He is recovered his health and seems pretty well, tho from time to time he gives an awfully sepulchral cough. He cannot make up his mind what to do. I have asked him to come back with me to Auckland as I would place more reliance on your opinion than my own as to his fitness for settling. He is evidently *very* steady and longs to marry and lead a quiet life. I fear his means are very small from what he has told me, but I have not had

⁸¹The wife of General George Pitt, Lieutenant-Governor and military Commander of the northern province of New Zealand.

⁸²The wife of Colonel Gold who was stationed at Wellington.

opportunities of speaking to him fully yet. He looks on us as his guardians.

I am sorry to hear many bad accounts of D——. Everyone agrees that in his manners, conversation and ideas he is when sober perfectly gentlemanlike, but he is dreadfully addicted to drinking and when he takes to it they say he is awful. Newcome obtained some influence over him and tried to convert him of this but he said at last that he could not help it, that it was hereditary, that his father died of delirium tremens, and that his uncle is put to bed in a state of drunkenness every night. In fact it is the family failing. Added to this he has taken another man's wife to live with him and tho she keeps him steady, they say, yet it is not the right way. This woman too was, it is said, a woman of the town in London before she married the mate of the ship she came out with. I am very sorry for this as it will prevent my going to his house for more than a passing call as I pass through the Waimea. I could not have time to do him any good by expostulating with him. I think it would be indecorous in me to go to the house of another man who lives in open adultery.

I ought to have said sooner that Lady Grey's knee was much better, but she has written to you herself. I fear I shall not be able to get you anything here that you cannot get at Auckland as the shops are *very* inferior here. Mrs Fox will send you some dimmity frilling for your trousers which she has of her own. None can be bought here. This place as far as Wellington goes is comparatively very little improved. I rode up the Hutt one day with Grey. That is certainly a very fine district but very limited in extent, tho much has been done there. The Wairarapa and Rangitikei are what the Wellingtonians principally rely on. Of these districts I cannot of course speak from personal observation but the latter is unanimously praised.

I have written to you without interruption all the gossip I could think of that I might afterwards have leisure to write also without interruption, my own precious darling, about

yourself. I shall premise however by telling you all I have to say about myself in a very few words. I am perfectly well. I rise early, walk a good deal, bathe every morning in the sea before breakfast, so that I have no excuse for being otherwise than well. I now want to know in the first place how my own darling Fanny is. Have you taken care of yourself and not been overworking yourself? I do so long for a letter to know how you are and how the dear little kids get on. Has Bob got over his cough? Do not let baby forget me if you can, but I suppose it is hopeless to think of that. I want to know if you are any stronger, now that baby has been weaned for some time. You do not know, my own darling child, how I miss you. I keep feeling that there is something wanting to me every minute of the day and then I feel it is you. I miss you wherever I go, and at everything I see I find I have not you to join with in noticing it. Now that Lady G. is gone I have no one to talk to about you comfortably. Do let me implore my own Fanny to take great care of yourself. I shall I am sure be back at the time I stated, that is at the end of December or very early January if I can get a passage up, but the communications are so rare that I almost fear I may have to wait longer. However I have made up my mind that if no opportunity offers I will go overland. Will you give each of the dear little chicks a kiss for me, bless them. Do the little wretches miss me at all? I am sure I miss their gabble very much now that I do not hear it. You will see by Margaret's letter that compared with children at home Henry is rather forward. Do you know, my own dearest Fanny, that I have been accusing myself since I have been away very much for my neglect in assisting you to teach the children? I have made up my mind that as soon as I get home I shall put myself under you and will give every day some time to helping you. I cannot help thinking that my neglect has thrown a great deal of extra work on you and that you would have been stronger if you had not had so much to do. How grateful I ought indeed to be to you, my precious one. Ever since I have

known you you have been my guardian angel. When I look at other people and see the unmarried without the society of a wife, the married with unhappy homes, I indeed feel grateful to God for sending me such a wife, and grateful, yes, perfectly grateful, to you, my own beloved one, for all the happiness I owe. I think this always when you are present but absence makes me feel it more keenly.

Nov. 20

My own precious darling, the *Councillor* does not sail for a few days yet, but I must just write to you a line for my own satisfaction, just to be with you as it were in mind. I miss you very much, my own dear one. When I ride or walk out I am sure you would be so pleased with the prettiness of the scenes if you could ride out on some of the new roads that have been opened out. Some places do indeed remind me of Baden very much.

Nothing is settled about the change of seat of Govt. and [I] fear Grey will [not] do it now, but we shall see. If he makes up his mind I should like to take the Jones' house. It is next door to Govt. house⁸³ and is very nice. It has a very good drawing room 18 x 16, a dining room about 16 x 10 I fancy, three bedrooms next to that and two at the back of the drawing room. At the end of the drawing room there is a very nice green house. There is a W.C. out of one of the bedrooms, one at the back out of sight, a three stall stable, a clearing shed and two servants' rooms, a very tidy garden and two acres of very good paddock. The price is high, he told me this morning, £70 a year, but much would depend on the tenant and the time for which taken. There are several chimneys in the house but of course nothing can be done. One advantage it possesses is great in my estimation. It is within 3 minutes walk of the sea, and a capital bathing place might be made for a couple of pounds for you, where you could bathe at any time of the day from the end of the

⁸³ Government House was situated near the present Parliament Buildings.

jetty which I dare say you remember at the end of what was then called Barrett's hotel.⁸⁴ Some one has built a little room on the end of it where I go every morning to bathe, with a screen all round it. It would make an excellent bathing place for ladies, and several say they would join to make it very good and convenient.

I fear I shall not be able to get across the straits till Saturday. It has been calm all the time I have been here and very warm, I might say *hot*. It certainly is a very pretty place as far as scenery goes.

Newcome is just come in so that I must leave off again, so for today goodbye, my own most precious dearest child.

Nov. 22

No chance yet of a vessel for Wairau. I have therefore taken a provisional passage to Nelson in the *Phebe* [sic] *Dunbar*, a 700 ton ship, for Nelson. She is to sail on Sunday the day after tomorrow. Newcome goes with me. No report comes from Auckland. I am still therefore without news of my precious ones. I fear I have done a very extravagant thing but I could not help it. I saw some perfect little side saddles and I thought of my own little Dotty, so I got one and have sent you by the *Councillor*. It will do either for a boy or a girl as the crutch takes out. Do not scold me for my extravagance, as we shall want such a thing for the dear little girls and it will last several years. It cost £2.5. I saw some very nice open worked cotton stockings for women and children, the women's are 3/- a pair. I did not get any as you may have suited yourself already, but if you have not, send me down a pattern for size in a letter and I will get you some when I go back. I am very much afraid I shall not be able to get the trimming for your trousers but I have written to my mother for some.

There is a piece of extravagance I must be guilty of as soon as I get back to Auckland, and that is to have your picture

⁸⁴ The old Barrett's Hotel was at the north end of the town near the bottom of Molesworth Street.

taken, for I cannot ever go away again without it. I have nothing to remind me of you but a pair of your gloves which I found in my coat pocket. I do not know why, but whenever I think of you, you always present yourself to me as I first saw you on my arrival at Florence, with those pretty curls you then had. Do you remember you used to have your hair done in three light curls on each side? I do not think tho that if I get back to you this time I shall run away again for a long time. I do miss you, my own precious Fanny, very much, very much. I think I shall write home to my mother to have a copy made of Brochy's picture of you, but I am not sure that that is what I should like. But I wish I had had it done at Florence when we first met. But it is no use wishing, I must just hurry home again to you.

I wonder what has become of the *Barbara Gordon*. Perhaps she is gone to Port Cooper, and if the brig comes after I am gone I shall lose your letters for a long time. I dare not lose this opportunity of going to Nelson as I may not have another for such a long time. God bless you, my own darling Fanny, kiss the chicks, bless them. I forget whether I told you that there was a letter from Margaret. I think you will like the sensibleness of it. I am sure she does not mean to dictate.

Nov. 23

I have had a long talk about you this morning with Dr Fitzgerald. He practices with very good results the cold water cure, and without nonsense has benefited several persons very much. Mr Wakefield⁸⁵ who had paralysis has under his treatment received a great deal of good. Col. McCleverty⁸⁶ for liver complaint, and Mr Godley who in England was despaired of, both express great gratitude to him for the good he has done them. In fact several persons have put great faith in it and several of the medical people pay

⁸⁵ Daniel Wakefield, Attorney-General of New Munster. Edward Gibbon and William Wakefield also suffered from paralysis.

⁸⁶ Colonel William McCleverty was military commander of the southern province.

considerable attention to it. I spoke to him about you and he has promised he would give me some directions for you. I will send you up a tub for the bathing. However he does not pretend to prescribe for you at this distance without seeing you. He has had one patient under his care with the same complaint, and a very bad case he tells me, who is now quite well. I hope, my darling, you will try it. I really wish you would come down and put yourself under him. Will you do so if only for a month? Leave the younger children under old mother Shearer and come down by the first ship. I will wait till I get an answer from you. I am quite confident he would do you an immense deal of good and he says that if he saw you and told you what to do he is quite sure you could afterwards prescribe for yourself. So many persons speak well of the system that I have great faith in it myself.

I hope it is *all right* with you. Are you getting any stronger? I am so much afraid that you will overwork yourself. Do, my own precious one, take care of yourself. I wish most sincerely you would come down with Henry and Constance and stay for a short time under Dr F. The change of air and scene would in itself do you an immense deal of good. If you want money draw against me on Harvey and Johnston here. I shall make all straight with them. I dare say there will be a ship in a short time coming down. If you wish I will go for you, but I really have great faith in Fitzgerald. A ship has just come in but I do not know what she is. I am going down to enquire in hopes it may be the *Barbara Gordon*. My ship for Nelson does not go till Tuesday. If by waiting I get a letter from you I shall not be sorry for the delay.

I have not seen any of the nice boots that Lucy J. used to say could be got here. I keep looking for something nice for you but there is nothing. God bless you and the darlings. How is Bobo's chest?

Nov. 25

Sunday, and the *B. Gordon* came in last night and I got your two letters. Many thanks to you, my own darling, for these. I am glad to hear a good account of yourself in it but you do not particularize enough. Are you getting stronger and better? Tell me this distinctly in your next. I do hope you keep quiet and do not run about too much. I am quite serious in what I say about your coming here and putting yourself under Dr Fitzgerald. I am sure it would do you a great deal of good. What do you say?

You see I had already adopted this plan you recommended of writing a little every day. I go on Tuesday, not as I at first intended to Nelson, but across to Cloudy Bay in a ship and from that walk over to the dairy. I had a long letter from Cautly but as he begs me to bring it with me I cannot forward it to you. He has sent over 160 wethers to be sold and proposes to sell all there that are fit for the butcher in order to lessen the expense of curing them of scab. I shall think over this. I think it a good plan at first sight. I was very happy to see that those that were landed were not nearly as bad as I had expected, but of course they were the best. *Everybody's* sheep in the Wairau have got scab except Wither's. Cautly seems to think he will conquer it in ours. The dairy he reports as getting on very well. There is none of our cheese here at present or I should send you some.

I went to the Wesleyan church this morning and heard a very fair sermon by Aldred on the temptation Matt. IV 1 to 11. I am going to ride up to the Hutt to see Mrs Petre⁸⁷ tomorrow. Their father is dead and they are very much cut up about it. If it had not been for that I should have gone sooner, as I am curious to see her. I have seen a good deal of Weld since I have been here. He is really a very nice person. He goes home in the *Bentinck*, I think to get a wife. I hope he may and trust she may be nice, as he lives

⁸⁷ Wife of the Hon. Henry Petre, Colonial Treasurer of New Munster.

over on the other side of the straits. He deplores dreadfully the want of nice *ladies'* society. I make use of the word in its restricted sense. I have no doubt that to a lot she will be a nice person, which she may be, as he is refined in all his ideas. You would like him. In all this I have been thinking of this for you, for it would be dreadful for you if ever we go back to have no pleasant female companions. They say that there is a nice family of Wrays at Nelson. He is a brother of a Sir Somebody Wray of very good family. Mrs E—— is certainly not pretty, though not altogether unpleasant looking. She has pretty eyes and hair but such feet. You know that is one of the things I generally remark. Hers are indeed remarkable. *Du reste* there is not much beauty here. Miss R—— has a *very* pleasant *smile*. But she is not pretty and she too has hands and feet like a big man. She has grown tall and big and rather coarse. . . . I am asked to dine out here so often that I shall be glad to get away to escape from it.

Domett lives very quietly here and we have long discussions. We agree generally very well. He is fond of reading metaphysical poetry. He is certainly very entertaining and full of generous and noble sentiment, in fact between him and Fox there is a great conflict in my mind between Benthamism and Carlyleism—the first speaks to the head, the latter to the heart. Fox, more practical than ever, is a perfect disciple of Adam Smith and reduces everything in life to L.S.D. and Manchester opinions. Domett is all for inspiration, old prophets and Carlyle. I agree with both and try to reconcile the conflicting doctrines. I am sure it can be done. I think, my own precious darling, I have given you a pretty good dose of my opinions. Can you ever read this letter through?

There is a newspaper called Ladies' Paper which one sees everywhere. It is a pictorial thing and very pretty. I wanted to get one to send you as it pillories fashions. I do not like them much. All the children are dressed after them. Big girls even of 10 years old have only short little trousers to

their knees and long white stockings which look very ugly. The trousers have rich work to the ends. The women say it is very pretty. I do not know whether you would admire it. If I can get a copy I will send it to you.

I see that there is a man who does Daguerrotypes⁸⁸ at Auckland. Do not get yourself done by that as it is always hideous. When I have you done I shall ask you as a *great* favour, and I am sure that my own one will present it to me, that you will have yourself done with your hair in curls as it was at Florence, not in one long curl but in three light ones on each side. Do you remember it? That is the way you keep coming back to my mind. I am just writing on nonsense for the sake of being with you in thought. I am sure it will not tire my old Fanny. You write just the same to me, in fact send me a pamphlet; just write what comes uppermost and all about yourself, your health, your thoughts, your occupations and all about the blessed little kids. This will have to close tomorrow, so God bless you, my darling. Kiss the dear children and talk to them about their old papa.

Nov. 27

Newcome and I start positively tomorrow for the Wairau. I am not so vexed at this detention as I was, since I have had a letter from my own precious one. I have been thinking about your coming down. Will you come by yourself or will you wait till I come for you? I shall wait here for an answer from you, but write to me both to Nelson and to this place about it. I see the tub is nothing but an ordinary tub and so will not send it, but I enclose Fitzgerald's directions or such as he says he can give without seeing the patient.

The weather has certainly been very fine indeed since I have been here. We have had only two windy days. It certainly blew then and even G. Pitt would have seen the propriety of 'allowing his wife' to wear trousers, at least

⁸⁸ Daguerre had invented an early photographic process which was published in 1839.

in N.Z. But on the whole the weather has been very fine and some days very hot. Either people have got used to the wind or the climate of the place has altered, for all agree that there is not near so much wind as there was. I did not go to see Mrs Petre yesterday, as I was busy getting some tobacco for Cautly which was just going to be burned at the Custom house as no one would pay duty for it. Bill Stafford, Monro and all the rest I care about seeing are in the Wairau. Did I tell you that Cautly gives more favourable accounts than he did of the sanitary state of the sheep?

Tell G. Pitt that Mitchell⁸⁹ is gone to India but that his agent here, Levin, has orders to receive his things. He had better send them down. I have made all right about your drawing on *Harvey and Johnstone* here if you want money to any amount you may require. There will be no difficulty about settling afterwards. There is a very nice old gentleman, a Capt. Scott, who talks of going to Nelson. He has a wife and daughters at home. I hope he may stop there. By the bye I hear that Duppa, that is Duppa and Fox, have been offered by a man at Sydney £12,000 for their property at Nelson. Duppa stands out for £15,000. Considering that they have not invested more than £5000 and that in 8 years, I think it is pretty good work. Tell Tom this if you write to him. It may encourage him to come out and settle. I do not vouch for the truth of this statement but I believe it myself. Duppa is gone to Sydney for his health. They say he is really very ill and has been advised to take great care of himself. He is *dreadfully* unpopular here. Every one says he is mean and sharp. . . .

And now, my dear beloved darling, I must just wind up this very long epistle. If it gives you half as much pleasure in reading as it has me in writing I shall be content. Once more let me beg of you to take *great great* care of yourself and not to walk too much. Think about the cold water cure and write to me about it overland addressed to Nelson. I

⁸⁹ Earlier in 1850 William Mitchell and Edwin Dashwood had discovered an overland route from the Wairau to Canterbury.

was very sorry to hear about little G. Pitt having been ill again. Perhaps it will induce Mrs Pitt to go and stay a short time with you at Howick. I fear you must find it awfully dull there. I wish you would have some one to stay with you whom you liked. Why do you not ask Miss Travers or any other girl you like? Kiss all the little darlings for me. Tell Marian that Capt. Oliver⁹⁰ took great care of me and that I am quite well. God bless you all. Remember me to the G. Pitts most kindly. Ever, my own Fanny, your most affectionate husband

C.A.D.

⁹⁰ Oliver was the captain of H.M.S. *Fly*.

25. CONSTANTINE TO FANNY DILLON

Dairy, Wairau
Saturday 6 Dec. 1850

My own precious Fanny,

My last letter to you left Wellington in the *Councillor*. The same day, the 27 Nov., Newcome came over with me and we had a comfortable passage across the straits to Port Underwood, where we stayed the night as the tide did not admit of our getting into the river that night. We got in next morning about 11 a.m. and I started off to walk to this place. I left Newcome at Dashwood's house. D. had gone to Nelson. When about 8 miles from this place, which is about half way up the valley, I met Shepherd on horseback, who told me he had but a few minutes parted with Cautly, Bell and Jolly, and that if I got on his horse I might overtake them in a certain direction and take his horse back with me. I promised to send the horse back next day and started after Cautly and Co. I soon overtook them and Bell and Jolly came back and staid with us a day at the dairy, where also we were joined by Monro whose station is about 3 miles from this. You may guess whether there was not an abundance of talk. Then these started off on Sunday for Nelson and I remained with Cautly to look about all our affairs. The reason of all this gathering, you must know, is that this is shearing time. The clip this year, in spite of the scab which all but two flocks have got, is very good and the prices for wool rising. The scab is being got under and if all join unanimously to put it down will be conquered. The great expense is the high price of tobacco,⁹¹ but fortunately I came in time to save about 1600 lbs. of this from being burned,

⁹¹ Tobacco was often used at this time for sheep dip.

and got it for 1/3 a lb. instead of 2/6, which they have been obliged for some time to pay.

Cautly is greatly in hopes of getting the scab *quite* out of our sheep by April next. The cost of doing so is very great, but Monro, whose sheep have also had it and which are now cured, thinks that sheep breeding is still so profitable that he is looking out for more to buy. Our sheep look very well indeed considering the messing about they have had for some time. Under any circumstances I should say that they looked well. The run upon which they are is magnificent. *Entre nous* I should say it was twice as large as we are entitled to,⁹² but indeed they are all too large for the number of sheep owners. This is acknowledged by all. The dogs, tho' not all gone, have been much reduced by poison, shooting, etc. etc. Redwood has been even a greater sufferer than ourselves. At one time they were so bold that they would actually come up close to the pens before the shepherds' very faces and take hold of the sheep. None have done any damage for some time. I cannot tell you how well Cautly behaves about everything. He gives himself a great deal of trouble about everything and spends a great part of his time in the Wairau looking after our affairs and his own. The dairy is very well managed. Brydon and his wife are very active and good servants, and as Cautly lives here he is able to see whether they do justice or not, and he says they do ample justice to the cows, indeed I have seen so myself the last ten days.

The cattle, of which there will soon be 100 head, are disgustingly fat, indeed the cows too much so for milking. I shall bring back with me a keg of 56 lbs. of butter. There is no fresh butter made here. It is all made salt and put into kegs at once. In about a month from this date they will have 27 or 28 cows in milk and then they will make nothing but cheese. There is no cheese now ripe enough to

⁹² These early pastoral runs, which were held on license for a small rental, were in unsurveyed country defined by natural boundaries such as streams and mountains.

take away. I am going to Nelson on Thursday with Cautly when we shall drive about 6 fat bullocks to that place with us. They are so ridiculously fat that they will be hardly able to travel. Fat cattle fetch as high a price in Nelson now as ever they fetched. Instead of one bullock a month being killed there as formerly, they kill three a week.

The cattle in the Waimea are fast dying from starvation. It is so overstocked . . . people are all anxious to sell their stock there. They say they *must* raise artificial pasture. Cautly and I are going to look at the Wairau farm with a view to laying it down to grass, but we will do nothing till we have consulted my own Fanny. . . . *Several* cows had dead calves before they came here, but this is easily accounted for by the very high banks they had to go up and down in the Kaiparatahau when heavy in calf. On the whole, however, I am very much satisfied with the dairy and cattle and I am sure it will be *an excellent* speculation. The house and dairy are both very substantial buildings. The house has three rooms and a kitchen and loft, all good sized lofty rooms. One is called my room. The dairy is capacious and well ventilated with a good cheese room attached. It is built very strongly of clay walls 18 inches thick and good stout timbers in it. The stockyard and milking yds better than the one we had at Waimea. It has cost just £90, which is considered by everyone as a paragon of cheapness. Cautly is now enclosing a piece of 35 or 40 acres to keep cows in a few days before they calve, as they are very apt to stow themselves away then. For instance one has now been away under those circumstances for a fortnight. Cautly and Brydon have both seen her but cannot come 'anent her'. When you get down to the south you will be glad, I am sure, to see the place. It is a very pretty spot and only wants wood.

The boar was killed by a dog at the mouth of the river so that the pigs have not increased, but I am going to make provision for replacing him. Next winter they will make some bacon. There are now at the dairy five very nice pigs

preparing for that fate. I think I have told you all about the sheep and dairy, but I forgot that I had told Cautly to buy with the £100 that Monro will pay in a month or two 10 cows, and he advises me strongly to do so as there is no doubt several people will want to sell theirs in the Waimea when they are starving. We have been most unlucky with horses. Stiffy's foal, the one that fell in the well, died the day before Towirau in foaling. Stiffy's progeny is now all gone. The other horse stock is doing well.

We have a section at the mouth of the river Wairau, or rather at the confluence of the Wairau and Opawa, which as you will see by the enclosed is the head of the little harbour formed by the mouths of these rivers. Cautly thinks—and I am of his opinion—that this ought to be made into a little town or village, and that it will become the place from whence the Wairau produce will be shipped to Wellington and Port Underwood for England.⁹³ At present all the wool has to be transhipped into boats and put into sheds etc. etc. which adds greatly to the expense and risk. Wethers for Wellington (and that place is almost altogether supplied from hence) have to be driven an immense [way] round to get only in reality a mile from the mouth of the river. He has had several applications from persons wanting to buy or lease it, but I am strongly against selling it, as I am convinced . . . that it must eventually be a very valuable property. What we propose doing is to have it surveyed and laid out in lots of say 5 acres from the frontage back, and letting it on leases of 21 years to improving tenants who will build houses, stores, homes etc. etc. At first perhaps it may be necessary to sell a few acres to start the thing, but not at less than £10 an acre. Cautly and I agree that from its position it is well worth as a section £1000. Indeed it was with such an idea that we selected it. Two persons who now keep stores at the mouth of the river have applied for lots on it to establish themselves. But after having it laid

⁹³ The earthquake of 1855 lowered the land and made the rivers navigable to the 'Beaver', later Blenheim, further inland.

down on a plan as a village we purpose, after you have said if you agree to it, to advertise it for lease in lots of one or more acres. What do you think of this? I went down yesterday with Cautly to look at the place and we slept down there and came back this morning. I am quite delighted with the place. It will be necessary in one place to make a bridge over a deep still creek which runs back from the Opawa. This Cautly says would cost £25 or 30, I say £50. However he proposes that those who take lots should pay towards the erection of the bridge and that I also should join. Without the bridge it is certain the section is worth nothing as you could only get to it by swimming.

Now have not I written, my own precious darling, a long business letter? It is high time I left off, but I must just hope, my own Fanny, that you are taking great care of yourself and not doing too much. I cannot tell you how I miss you, my own Fanny. . . . Do you feel getting better and stronger? Will you come and put yourself under the cold water cures? I am sure it would do you good. I wish so that I had you with me here. Every one talks of you so kindly it is quite a pleasure to hear you spoken of. And how do the little darling children get on? God bless you and them, my own precious one.

Dec. 9

A vessel goes to Wellington tomorrow. I will therefore close my letter to my own darling. As I told you above, Cautly and I start for Nelson on Thursday. I am happy to say that the river is unusually low and the fords very good at present.⁹⁴ Goodby, my own precious Fanny, do do take care of yourself, and let me find you quite strong and well when I get back. Tell old Dots that her cow will have a calf in a few days. Kiss all the little darlings for me. There is a little girl in this house just like Marion at whom I look all day. How is old Bo's cramp? Keep Bob in mind of me. Thank Henry for the shells he is keeping for me.

⁹⁴ Until well into the 'fifties the way between the Wairau and Nelson was by a rough track through the Upper Wairau Valley.

Don't forget to send me the pattern stocking that I may get you some at Wellington. Did I tell you that I had written to my mother for the frilling stuff? I forget whether I told you that I had contrary to your injunctions tried everywhere to get you the boots but could not. If I had been able to get them I would. Will you send to Mercia your French ones as a pattern and let him make you some nice ones to wear at Howick when I get back? Do you mind, my own Fanny?

Ever yours most affectionately,
C.A.D.

Cautly sends 'his love' to you. Would you mind writing to him to thank him for his exertions, telling him how satisfied we are.

26. *CONSTANTINE TO FANNY DILLON*

Nelson, Dec. 29 [1850]

I yesterday received three letters from you, my own dearest Fanny. I can hardly tell you how annoyed I felt at knowing that you had been turned out of the house at Howick. I had almost begun to fear it might be so before I got your letter. However I do not think you need scruple about going to Gov. House if old Mrs Pitt is not there. I am sure the Greys would have no objection. I cannot for some time ask them. I have been expecting them here for the last fortnight but there is as yet no sign of their arrival. I wish to goodness they would come, as I am getting most anxious to get home to you and the little darlings.

I have been at Nelson for about a fortnight and am staying at the Bells'. I can hardly tell you how everything here has improved, not only in the way of cultivation and outward prosperity, but in contentment and satisfaction with all classes. Every one is in good spirits. With regard to our place, tho' it looks very bad at first sight, I do not see anything that 2 or 3 weeks of a gardener would not put straight. The beds are overgrown and the trees choked with weeds and grass, but this will soon be cleared away and then it will not look so bad. The vine trellis which had been blown down is put up again with new posts. All the trees in the orchard have been destroyed and the ngaio on the village side of the garden are dead, but I see in Monro's garden that all the trees planted amongst the grass are stunted and have not grown an inch since we left, whilst those planted in ground which is worked are quite tall. The oak stands well at the bottom of the garden. The Wards and Goulters live in the house and are putting a new fence round the garden. I have got them to put the garden fence on the south side about

ten or 12 yds further back so as to plant a few rows of trees for shelter. I hope you will approve of this. There is now a capital paddock of excellent grass of 15 acres round the house. The part taken consists of that piece at the top where the first wheat was sown. Cautly is still of opinion, and I am confirmed in mind to the same effect, that it will be as well to fence in the whole of the 250 acres, but we will not do it till I have spoken with you on the subject. Grazing is very expensive now and when fat sheep or cattle come from the Wairau they have either to get lean till they are killed, or the butchers have to hire paddocks at a very high rate. From the number of sheep and cattle that have been grazing on the land which was once cultivated there is a very thick coat of manure on the ground, and all the learned in farming say it would be quite enough to scatter grass seed all over it without ploughing and that it would produce a capital crop of hay which sells at £5 a ton.

When we come back you might also keep a dairy of 30 cows easily besides taking in sheep and cattle to graze at so much a head per week.

Now I must tell you a thing which you must not however talk about. I think if you would like to come back and live here an opportunity offers. As the Company have given up it is quite evident that the Crown must employ some one here to do the duty which has hitherto been done by its agents, that is selling and leasing land, collecting rents, settling disputes about runs etc. If you would like it I should ask Grey for this and he would no doubt give Bell my place at Auckland. We might live at the Waimea 8 months at least in the year perfectly easily, and the winter if you wished it we live in or near the town. Think well on this. We might have a capital dairy at the Waimea and live much cheaper than at Auckland. Of course the salary would be nothing like what it is at Auckland, I suppose not more than £300. I have spoken to Cautly and he thinks it would be very wise. We should save house rent, and commissions to Cautly for looking after our affairs here. He would still

look after the dairy and sheep in the Wairau which is about as much as he can manage. What do you think of this? The Wards have the house for another 18 months, but there is no doubt we could get them out at the end of the year if necessary.

There are some nice people come out, amongst others a Mr and Mrs and 2 Miss Wrays, one of them to be married to Mr Morse. There is a Mr and Mrs Taylor who have lived much in Germany. They have built a nice house near Mr Macrae's. I have not seen Mrs Taylor but she is described as very German. There is a very nice looking old lady, a Mrs Collins, wife of an ex-officer of the 2nd Life Gds. These are all the people I have seen except a Mr Adams who is very nice and amiable looking. Mrs B—— I think is a nice person. I thought her plain at first but she improves very much. She has the soft melancholy look that deformed people sometimes have, but she is not deformed, poor woman. Their very nice little baby, on which B—— dotes, is only 9 months old and she is within three months of her confinement. No one here except Mrs Monro seems aged. Every face looks so cheerful. All old quarrels are made up. Mrs Monro is the only person who has at all altered. She does not look at all well. She has lost her two front teeth which gives her a most curious appearance. Old Mrs R—— looks as well as ever but they say her temper is so bad they do not know what to do with her. They were obliged not long ago to have the priest up to exorcise a devil which they supposed possessed her. I am going to the Waimea again tonight to sleep at Mrs Kerr's who has sent me some 20 messages to come. She is, I am told, very infirm, and as we have some tenants there I must see after them.

I must now tell you about D——. On my way to Nelson, passing by Fox Hill I found him at a house which is a kind of roadside inn. He was going back to the Wairau. Altho it was still early and we had settled to travel 12 miles further to Richmond that night, Cautly and I agreed to stay and sleep there the night. I found him most intelligent, agreeable

and *very* gentlemanlike in his manners, language and appearance, but sad to say he had by his side a bottle of brandy from which he kept pouring libations. He ended by getting quite drunk. I spoke to him much about his mother and when I mentioned his sister he was quite upset and I thought he would have cried outright. I felt for him very much. I fear that he is incurable as he says it is hereditary and *all* his family are the same. How awful. When sober no man is more liked. Not even James Tytler was more popular. Every one without exception speaks well of him but with pity. For mercy's sake do not speak about this to anyone, especially to Henry and his mother. He begged of me most earnestly to say nothing about it. Nor would it be any use.

I shall have some most amusing stories about Mrs Impey and her husband when I see you. It is hard to say which is the worst, he or she. Everyone is delighted that they are gone and Duppa with them as far as Sidney. Many say they hope he will never come back.

You will see by the papers my 'splendid speech' at the school meeting.⁹⁵ I was in an awful fit of nervousness when I delivered it, and had no idea what I should say when I got up. We had a very fine, really a very respectable show of fireworks the other night. The man who makes them is a man from Vauxhall but he will not do it professionally. He is however very good natured about it, and he has promised me some to take away with me when I told him it was to amuse children. It will be a great treat to the children.

No sign of Grey coming in. I am getting very impatient to be back with you. I cannot tell you [any] news about the change of seat of government, as I have not seen Grey or heard from him for six weeks, nor has he had any despatches on the subject, but I expect him here hourly. I suppose he will stay here about a week. I shall try to take him back by the Wairau, which has now lost many of its terrors as it is *very* low. He can have the *Fly* to meet him at Cloudy

⁹⁵ Dillon's speech was reported in the *Nelson Examiner*, 28 December 1850.

Bay and then I shall be off to Auckland as soon as I possibly can.

I am still in hopes that it is possible you may have come to Wellington in accordance with what I wrote to you by the *Councillor*. I shall write a long letter to Henry by the *Ld. W. Bentinck* about his affairs. He offered all his land to Dashwood for £300 and Cautly has sold only two of his sections in the Wairau for £400, so that he has £400 and still keeps 500 acres of land, some of them very good sections indeed.

Statement of our landed property in Nelson at this date, *January 1st 1851* Showing its position, quantity and assumed value:

<i>Waste</i>	Town of Nelson 3 acres at £40 per acre	£120
<i>Richmond</i>		
<i>House</i>	Do. by compensation 1 acre	£350 350
<i>Our home and farm</i>	Suburban sections Waimea west 66. 67. 68. 69. 70 250 at £3	£750
<i>25 acres let to 5 tenants</i>	Sub. Sec. Waimea west next to Kerrs 50 acres at £3	150
<i>House & dairy</i>	Rural Section Wairau 200 acres at 10/- per acre (Delta Dairy)	100
	Do. confluence of Wairau and Opawa Township of Ditchley 150 acres say £3	450
	Town of Waitohi ⁹⁶ three $\frac{1}{4}$ acres nominal value	----

Total No. of Acres 654 $\frac{1}{4}$, value £2020.

Of this, one town acre has a house and garden rented by Major Richmond paying an annual rental of £30.

Eighty acres are cultivated on Waimea west. There is a dwelling house which, with 15 acres of land laid down in grass, pays a rental of £30 a year. The remainder of this block of land is at present waste.

⁹⁶ Waitohi, later Picton, was planned by the New Zealand Company as a supplementary town to be distributed in lots among the Nelson landowners.

Part of the Sub. section next to Kerrs is to let to tenants but of this I take but little account.

One rural section in the Wairau has a good house and dairy on it, value £100. About 40 acres of this are fenced.

The value of the sections at the mouth of the Wairau is prospective. It is now laid out as a township and in assuming its value at £3 an acre I have laid it at what I and others consider far below its value. Indeed I should not like to sell it in its present state for less than £6 an acre as it is almost certain to be the spot from which all the Wairau produce will be shipped. The road which is now about to be made joining Nelson and the Wairau will add considerably to its value.

I have been speaking to Hargreaves the butcher and he tells me that he now kills annually for himself and Mrs Bird 900 sheep, 60 hd. of cattle, 50 calves, besides pigs in winter. When we left he used to kill 300 sheep and 12 bullocks yearly, besides pigs and no calves. This will give you some idea of the increase in the consumption of meat in the settlement. It confirms me in the necessity or wisdom of fencing in our sections on Waimea West if you approve of it. He told me he thought he could ensure taking 200 wethers from *us* annually, besides fat cattle about 14 or 15, if he could only get them in small lots of about 20 at a time.

27. CONSTANTINE TO FANNY DILLON

Jan. 30 1851

Another day has passed and yet the time seems interminable before which I shall be again joined to my *petite Fanchette*. I have written to Grey and I have no doubt my letter will hurry his sending the brig to Auckland.

I have this morning seen Campbell about the acre I wrote about yesterday, and tho' we have not quite settled I have made a proposal which he says he considers reasonable. I told him that tho we did not wish to *sell* land on account of our children, yet we should not feel satisfied in refusing a tempting price. The acre having been valued at £70, I said I would not feel justified in parting with it for less than £100, as below that we would rather keep it. He then asked if I would let him have it on a 12 year lease with a purchasing clause for amount above stated, and if so what the rent would be. I said I had no objection to do so if he paid the ordinary rate of interest 10 per cent, and he then said he considered that very fair and would consider it. If there was sufficient time to consult you I would do nothing in the matter without your sanction, but there will not be time and I have no doubt you will agree with what I have done. The £100 can be reinvested when paid in any way you may think best. In the meantime we shall be getting £10 a year rent for the acre instead of £2-5 for which it is now let to Dr Renwick.

I think I have now told you all about business. Henry Redwood is breaking in Rose Lad, the filly out of your old mare by Barbieri. He was telling me yesterday that she will make a capital lady's hack, and he is very careful and does not, like the rest of the horse breakers, get on their backs and ride them before they are sufficiently tamed.

I hope that this is the last letter I shall be called upon to write to you from this place, as I am in hopes of being the bearer personally of any further news about myself, but do not, my dear pet, cease writing to me in case of unforeseen events. Kiss the darling children for me, God bless them, and give them all the kindest remembrances from me. I hope poor Bo's head is getting better. Do you ever go up to your neighbours the Grovers? It must be a great pleasure to you to have them sing to you sometimes. Capt. Travers has, I hear, gone back overland from Wellington. Had I been at that place I should have most certainly gone with him. Remember me most kindly to the G. Pitts. I am much obliged to him for helping you about the house. . . . I have written to Louisa to send you out some music. In fact my letters to her and Henry were all about you. I had such a pleasure in writing to persons who I know love you so well that I could hardly write about anything else. I am sorry to have to finish my letter. I always feel after posting my letters to you that I am as it were undergoing a fresh separation, for whilst writing I fancy myself with you. I have no more to tell you about Dashwood than what I have already written, but I shall write to him by the first opportunity and tell him what you say about his mother, and shall urge him to come and pay us a visit. I am sure you would be pleased with him. . . . Goodby, my own dearest and best wife God bless. Kiss the kids, and think of me as you own aff. and faithful husband

C. A. DILLON

Do not fret, my own child, about me, but keep yourself in good spirits.

28. *CONSTANTINE TO FANNY DILLON*

Nelson, Feb. 10 1851

My own Fanny,

This is our ninth wedding day, and altho I have no opportunity of sending a letter I do not like to let the day pass without having some communication with you. Just about the time that I am writing, this day nine years ago, I for the last time kissed Fanny Story. We then were married and placed our happiness in each other's hands. I will not say how it has fared with you since that day, but I can for myself say that as far as you could make me happy you, my own darling, have succeeded most perfectly. Never have you given me one moment's cause of anxiety or grief. Never has one seriously cross word issued from your lips to me, and when you have had to find fault with me you have always done it as a friend. I wish that in looking back I could really believe that I had acted as well to you as you have towards me, but I cannot help remembering that I have many a time brought tears into your eyes and caused you much pain and sorrow. I know that this has been the case, and yet your love has, I feel, never diminished for me, because it exceeds even all we have ever heard of woman's love, great as that is.

I do not think that I have done so much of late years, and that will be a proof to you, my own child, that it was not from natural hardness on my part, but from the greater coarseness of man as compared with the refinement of woman, a refinement which you possess in a superior degree and which I possess perhaps less than some other men. But we now understand each other and I know that my own Fanny loves me as much as it is possible for woman to love, and trust

her love is returned. When we look back to the last nine years we have much to thank God for. Indeed we have received many blessings. Of the children which He has given us we have lost none, and I trust in him that they will continue to be as good as they now promise to be. What greater blessing can we hope for than that, and if it pleases God to spare you to them for some years to come I am sure that there will be little fear for them. May the next nine years of our lives, if we should be spared as long, be as productive of joy and comfort to me as the last nine, and may God give me to be a stay and comfort to her whom above all other created beings I love and adore.

I will put you to the expense of this as a separate letter, for I cannot bear to write on any other subject today. I shall merely tell you how deeply sorry I am for my long absence. I hope, my own child, you do not fret for me. I will indeed go back by the very first opportunity, but none presents itself. I am expecting the Governor hourly. Till he comes there will be no vessel at all for the North or even across the straits. I should not wonder at his coming in tonight as the wind is fair. Kiss the darling children and tell them that I am as anxious to see them as they can be to see me back, and that I shall hurry home as soon as possible. God bless you and keep you, my own Fanny. Never forget your own faithful husband

C. A. DILLON

29. CONSTANTINE TO FANNY DILLON

Nelson, Feb. 17 1851

My own dearest wife,

I am greatly distressed at having still to write to you from here, as I had expected that I should have been with you long before this. I got your letter of the 11 Jan. only two or three days ago by the Gov. Brig, and I cannot tell you how distressed I was at finding that you had not got any letters from me up to that time. I have however no doubt now that you will by this time have found out that I had written upon every possible occasion, and indeed Fanny I was not likely to miss one, as writing to you has been my only pleasure since I have been here. I have done nothing but fret to get away. Had I had the slightest or faintest idea that there would have been an opportunity of going to Auckland from Wellington I should have gone, but the Capt. of the Brig when here told me there was not the slightest or remotest chance of a vessel going there. You may therefore fancy my disgust when I found that Nugent⁹⁷ had gone up in the *Luters*. I thought it would have been no use for me to go to Wellington and stay there instead of here, especially as I was anxious not to meet Fox before he went to England after all his land jobbing. By the bye, get the *Spectators* for the last two months. Blackmore will give them to you and you will see how he has been shown up.

But I must now come to the more important point of my letter. Sir G.G. on his arrival here last Thursday told me that he was only going back to Auckland for a ten days or a fortnight, that he would spend most of the time he had to remain in N.Z. at the South. He was going to remove Bell

⁹⁷ Capt. C. L. Nugent, Private Secretary to the Governor.

to Wellington in charge of the Land Office at that place, and he asked me whether I should like to take charge of the same office here. He and Lady Grey must have talked it over, for he said that he had considered that as she and Mrs Geo. Pitt, your two great friends there, were to be gone from Auckland,⁹⁸ you would most likely wish to return here. I had to decide in a day or two and so I was obliged to do it without the advice of my own dearest Fanny. I accepted and I hope that you will be satisfied with the arrangement.

This is all that appears, but I have suspicion that there are going to be some further changes. Richmond is going to Auckland, *he* says just for a visit. I have a strong suspicion that he is going in some kind of a situation to fill old Pitt's place, I do not think as Lt. Governor, but perhaps as Superintendent. However that may be, I am almost sure that he is going away for good, as Grey has made frequent allusions to how comfortable we should be with such a nice house and garden to live in, tho' I keep repeating to him that Richmond has it for five years more.

I confess to you that the hesitation I should have in changing here was on your account, as you would have no female friends here, and Mrs Bell, who is almost the only nice person, is going. The rest you know. However, it weighed with me that Lady Grey and Mrs Pitt, who are in reality the only persons you liked much, will soon be gone. When that takes place you will be as well off here as there in that respect. You will have a far nicer house here than there, and a really very nice garden. Grey said nothing about salary, but I do not think he intends it to be reduced, as Gisborne⁹⁹ gets £300 a year and my duties here will be of a very much more important nature, as I shall have to conduct all the sales of land as well, and many duties which at Auckland are done in half a doz offices. I rather fancy it possible that if, as I suspect, I shall have to do the same duty as Richmond, that he will give me a higher salary than I now get, but I

⁹⁸ General Pitt had died at Auckland in January 1851.

⁹⁹ William Gisborne was Commissioner of Crown Lands at Auckland.

have not liked to press him on this subject yet.

If you prefer living at the Waimea I have no doubt we shall be able to get the Goulters out of our house there, but I shall do nothing more here till you come, as I am sure everything is better done by my old Fanny than by anyone else, God bless her. There is a very nice little four wheeled carriage that has been brought here from Sydney which I shall buy for you if I can. It will just suit you. I am going to look at in a day or two. It is low and you can get in and out without fatigue. The roads now for some miles are as good as the Epsom road. The mare that Redwood has broken in for you is very nice indeed. She is very pretty and of as good a temper as her mother. She is, if anything, rather small, 14 hands and 1 inch. That is about the height of my cob at Auckland, but of course much slighter. If you think her too low for you she will always do for Henry or Dots, but I am sure you will like her.

One thing has weighed with me about the change. I am satisfied that the change to this dry climate will do you a great deal of good. I have also made arrangements, which I have no doubt will be satisfactory to you, for the erection of a bath, in which you will be able to dip up to your neck in a stream of running water not far from Richmond's house, and this I am sure will do you good. For the present we shall be able to fit into the present house pretty well, but we shall, I think, want to enlarge by and bye, and it can be done easily. The rooms now are

Drawing room	20 x 12
Dining room	do
Bedroom & Dressing room	
	each 8 x 10

2 larger bedrooms

kitchen and servants' room, a well of *excellent* water as you know with a good pump, and also what I know you love so much, a good store closet. The garden is crammed full of vines and fruit trees. I think I have told you all now,

and I hope that what I have done meets my own darling's approval. Without that nothing will satisfy me.

I am just going with the Governor to Motueka. We leave there for the Wairau on Tuesday the 25, the Brig to meet us in Cloudy Bay and from that to Auckland as quick as we can get. The Brig will bring us back in a fortnight after. God bless you, my own darling. Get quite well and look as handsome as you always do when I get back to you. I am quite in an ecstasy at the thought of being once more not to part again from my best and dearest and kindest Fanny. Love and kisses to the children. If you think it necessary pray say all sorts of condolence to the G. Pitts for me. Tell Burke I shall not forget him. Once again, God bless and protect my own, my precious one.

Your own aff. husband

CONNY

30. CONSTANTINE TO FANNY DILLON

Nelson, February 20 1851

My own darling Fanny,

I wrote to you a hurried letter two days ago as I was starting off for the *Motueka* with the Gov. The vessel not having gone, I still have time to add a few lines, as I do not wish an opportunity to pass without spending a few moments even in the spirit with my own precious wife. I am happy to tell you that since I wrote the other day, the Gov. has made up his mind *not* to go by the *Wairau*, but to sail at once from here for Wellington and from that to Auckland as soon as possible. The Gov. himself goes back to Auckland in the brig, but I do not think Lady Grey will go, as she is far from well, and he is coming back himself as soon as he can.

I find Major Richmond is not going *now* to Auckland. Sir G. Grey has just been telling me that he was to go *on leave* to Auckland as soon as I come back to Nelson, and that during that time I should have to do the duty of Superintendent here. I think there is more in it than he says. Perhaps his plans are not matured. Do not say a word about this to anyone as perhaps it is only my own fancy.¹⁰⁰

I can think of nothing now but the prospect of being once more with my Fanny, from whom I shall never go away again. Had I foreseen that I should have been away from you all this time, you may depend upon it I should never have left you. I can think of nothing but the dearest and best and most affectionate of wives. Do not fret about me, my own child. I can assure you I have written to you by

¹⁰⁰ Richmond remained as Resident Magistrate until 1853 when he became Commissioner of Crown Lands at Nelson.

every chance I have had and not for one instant have you been out of my mind. Take great care of yourself and look as nice and handsome as you always do. What *would* I give for one nice kiss from that pretty mouth, God bless it.

Mr Tollemache is going up to Auckland with us. He is quite a character. I rather fancy him because he is not commonplace. He told me the other day that he had known your father at Brighton and described your house there. He does not remember you, tho' he has often seen all the children, as he called all you small fry. He was very intimate it appears with Mr Kemp, with whom he was in Parliament. Mr Dech¹⁰¹ was married this morning to Miss Wray. I fear it will be a most unfortunate affair as she has only married him on purpose to be married before her sister who is to be Mrs Morse. She is very fine, very cross and as Newcome says very cassino ish, but Newcome is very fastidious. I think her very far from nice. She is the picture of Queen Bess as represented on the staircase at Ditchley,¹⁰² just the same colours and figure. I do not know what Miss Hammond will say. I should like to see them meet at Auckland. The fun would be great. If you think it necessary will you say many kind things for me to the Geo. Pitts. I really think she will be a loss to you, but as she would have had to go away soon anyway, it is a consolation that the change here will not be so great to you on that account. There are some people talking so loud about land claims that I hardly know what I am writing about. Have you heard that Mrs Labouchere (junior) is dead? You have not mentioned it in any of your letters. I hope you take good care that the children shall not forget that they have a father, poor little darlings. I do not fear about the older ones, but I am afraid that Bobo and baby may. For one hour and a half that maniac, Mr Tollemache, has been swearing and talking so vociferously that I have been obliged to give up writing.

¹⁰¹ The commander of the Government brig.

¹⁰² Ditchley Park was the Oxfordshire seat of the Viscounts Dillon.

Now, my own blessed darling, goodbye. Do take care of yourself. I hope I shall be at Auckland as soon as my letters. How happy I shall be. Why do you not write longer letters, you wretch? God bless you. Kiss the dear little chicks.

Tell Burke that I have been speaking to the Governor about him, but I do not yet know what he can do for him, as Mr Eyre has promised so many places that Sir G.G.'s hands are quite tied up, but do not tell him this as it may make mischief.

Miss Richmond tells some funny stories about the way Mr and Mrs —— go kissing and pawing each other in public. She felt quite uncomfortable on one occasion when Mrs —— told her she did not look on her as a stranger, which poor Miss R. was quite sorry for.

Once more goodbye and God bless you my own Fanny and dear children.

Ever your aff. husband

C.A.D.

31. FANNY DILLON TO LADY DILLON

June 25 1851

Govt. House
Wellington

My dearest Lady Dillon,

I have just been told of a mail that is closing for Engld via Lima, and altho' it must be a very hurried letter I thought you would like to hear we are all well, at least as far as I know, for we left our three youngest darlings at Nelson under the care of an old trustworthy nurse and the superintendence of a doctor, and I trust to see them safe and well again in a few weeks. Conny was obliged to come over here to the Legislative Council, and as I had only just got him home after a five months absence, I did not like the idea of being separated again so soon for an indefinite period, and as Lady Grey wrote me a most pressing invitation to stay with her and bring the whole family, I contented myself with Dolly and Harry who are great favourites here. I am only afraid they will get spoilt. Their excessive shyness is their best safeguard. Unfortunately the house is in such a state of topsy turvy, as the Greys have not yet got their furniture from Auckland, that I have no place with a table and chair where I can teach the children, and I am afraid there will be a great falling off in the lesson way.

I am afraid we shall be unsettled for some time, as the house our children at present occupy in Nelson is to be turned into an hospital and we do not know where to go, as our Waimea house is too distant and our Nelson one let for the next 5 years. We wish to avoid building if possible, as it would be another and a bad investment of capital, and our great wish now is to save so as to be able to take our children home for a time at least, in about five years.

It is a long time since we have had any private news from

home. We have just heard via Hobart Town of the change of ministry, so I hope William Hamilton may come in for something in the fresh division of places.

Conny wrote a long letter to Margaret just as we left Auckland to thank her for her very kind and pretty presents from Heidelberg. I wrote many letters but forget who they were to. The next ship direct to Engld. will, I hope, take a small box from us of things in N.Z. wood which we have ordered here, but it is so difficult to get work done here one has to beg and pray and make the greatest favor and express the greatest thanks when done. Farms are at a standstill for want of labor, and even although flour has risen and is likely to rise to a frightful price in consequence of this gold found near Sydney, still no one for want of labor can begin to farm, or dare do it to any extent, as when they get their crops in the ground it is most probable that they would not get hands to reap them. Conny is not writing as he says he cannot collect his ideas at such a short notice.

We are now waiting for the Govt. brig from Auckland to take us back to Nelson. We were 8 days coming here. I hope we may be more fortunate going back as the passage ought to be made in 30 hours. Will you, dearest Lady Dillon, give our best love to all our friends and tell them the reason we cannot write this time. With Conny's and our chicks most affectionate love to you.

Ever, dearest Lady Dillon, yr very affecte and grateful
daughter

FANNY DILLON

32. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Nelson, Oct. 15 1851

My dearest mother,

The last letter I sent via Valparaiso was so successful that I purpose making another attempt at the same route, and as a ship sails from this port for South America this day I shall just send you a few lines. I wrote to you a few days since via Sydney and have nothing to add since then as to our state of being. Thank God we are all doing well.

Fanny, I think, seems to get stronger every day, and I now really trust that taking due care of herself after her confinement, which is to take place about the end of December, that she will turn out quite renovated and restored.

I wrote to Margaret to say that we thought we should very likely be in England in about four years from this date, that is when Harry will be 13 years of age. The idea has taken a strong possession of my mind and as I have never had a *very strong* impression without its turning out correct, I think I can say that we shall be able to venture home for a season at least, the duration of which will depend upon circumstances. My object will be to put Harry and Philip, or Bobo as he is generally called, to school in England and see what is to be done for them in the way of bringing them up to some business. At present I cannot say what either will be fit for, but we think it would be better to make a pecuniary sacrifice for them now and put them in the way of doing well hereafter, than to save up for them and teach them badly. In order to enable us better to do this we would be very much obliged to you if you could manage for us what I am going to say.

In 1844 I signed a release to Charles¹⁰³ for £740 as you are aware. I should now like, if such a thing can be done, to pay that back so as gradually to pay off the debt I have incurred on the £4000 that I had when I married. By doing this I should have got back that £4000 paying me 5 per cent, besides all I might have made in N.Z., and if I were to go to England I should not be entirely dependent on our N.Z. property, as I should by this means with Fanny's £100 a year have at home £300 a year. To pay off this £740 I purpose appropriating any sum I may have in hand next June at Ransom's, to which I will add the money I shall get for this year's wool, which I shall order the brokers to pay in to Ransom's to my account instead of remitting it back to me here. What this sum will be I cannot tell, as it will mainly depend upon the price of wool at the time of sale, which I expect will take place about the month of June. I think however that after payment of all expenses of management and every other expense it will be between £250 and £300.

If you think this plan feasible you will greatly oblige me by carrying it into effect. If the price of wool keeps pretty steady and that I continue to hold my present office, I shall of course each year return a still larger sum on the proceeds of my wool sales. . . .

By a ship which arrived a few days ago, but brought us no English letters, we were glad to learn that the *Ld. Wm. Bentinck*, which sailed from Wellington in February, and by which I had written several letters, had arrived early in June. You will have learnt by her that we were to be back here or at least that it was probable. We therefore look daily for the arrival of the *Columbus*, by which we expect later news from you all.

I was much pleased by all you wrote about my leaving this colony. I am sure you are quite right and I feel very much obliged to you for giving me your opinion. I have

¹⁰³ Constantine's eldest brother, the 14th Viscount.

quite given up all idea of it and am perfectly convinced that your judgment is quite correct in the matter. . . .

I suppose you are getting pretty tired by this time of the Exhibition.¹⁰⁴ I know your dislike to crowds. I fancy therefore that you are not a very frequent visitor. It has come out here in every form and shape as prints, medallions and description.

I think I have always forgotten to mention the very great pleasure that I have had from a packet of letters that Margaret sent me out in one of the boxes. I learnt more from that of family affairs than I could have gathered any other way, and we both read them over again and again with the greatest pleasure and fancied ourselves amongst you all again. I do not like to make any allusion to Theobald's affairs. I sincerely wish for his sake that it would come to something. He would be much more happy were he once settled. Pray, my dearest mother, give my kindest remembrance to all of them. With love from Fanny and little ones, Believe me, my dearest mother

Your aff. son

C. A. DILLON

¹⁰⁴ The 1851 Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, London.

33. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Nelson, Nov. 14 1851

My dearest Mother,

Our hearts were gladdened by the sight of a letter from you by the *Columbus*. I fortunately rescued it on its road to Auckland. We were made happy, as we always are, by finding that all were well at home, which is the first thing we always look for. You allude to some former letter which we suppose must have gone to Auckland or elsewhere. You say it was in answer to ours by the *Ld. W. Bentinck*. We shall be impatient till we get it. We have already written several letters to England by the ship that takes this. She was to have gone to Ceylon, but when she had put out of the harbour all her men deserted and preferred going to prison for three months and losing all their wages to going on in her. She has now a crew from Port Cooper and promises to sail for China today. This letter will therefore reach you by the Indian mail.

When are we to look for letters from you by steam?

I have been interrupted so many times that I have no time to finish this letter. I will therefore slip it into a *long* letter Fanny has just sent to me for Helena, and which I dare say contains all the information which may interest you about us. I also slip in a list of orders from Fanny.

With best love to all at home, believe me, my dearest Mother, your aff. son

C. A. DILLON

34. CONSTANTINE DILLON TO LADY DILLON

Nelson, Dec. 13 1851

My dearest Mother,

We have to thank you for a letter by the *Columbus* and a crate of milk dishes, which were most acceptable as I was on the point of buying more. We shall also be glad of the glass ones if they come soon, as we are increasing our dairy. I am in hopes that we shall be able to let our house and farm at the Wairau on seven years' lease for £100 a year. This is a small rent but it is to a good improving tenant. We are at present in treaty about it. If we do not let it we shall live there ourselves, and Fanny is determined to have more cows and to dairy there too. We have been unfortunate this year with our cows from a curious cause. They are *literally so fat* that several have died in calving.

Since I wrote to you last on business, I have departed from my then intention of leaving all I could save to pay off the £740 to Charles, but the fact is that I was tempted, a few days ago at an auction sale, by seeing some newly landed sheep going ridiculously cheap from the mere cause of their being no purchasers present, to buy about 350 for £200. And as I had to pay cash immediately for them I drew on Ronsom's for it. I will however remit my wool money to Ronsom's. My wool is already shipped, about 22 bales of 300 lbs. each, and will be sold, I suppose, about June, which I understand to be the first wool sale of the season. I have no idea of what it will fetch, but I suppose about 8d. a lb. net after all expenses are paid of shipment etc. etc. I ought not perhaps to bore you with all these details, but I have heard from two or three persons that had found information contained in my letters accurate and useful, and so I tell you all these things.

Before I forget, I wish you would tell me if the Mrs Dashwood we knew at Lucca Baths is any relation to the Wycombe Dashwoods. There is a nephew of the Sir George Dashwood King of Wycombe settled here. He is a brother of H. Story's second wife, a very nice person, very intelligent and gentlemanlike. . . .

Fanny is better, and looks better, than she has done for a long time. She will be confined, or rather expects to be so, about the end of this month. We are looking forward to it with some anxiety, as our doctor tells us that upon her lying quiet after that depends her perfect cure. She promises faithfully that she will lie quite quiet for three months after it. I hope she may have sufficient resolution to do so, but I have fears, as she is of too mercurial a disposition. She has however suffered so much for the last two years that I hope she has acquired wisdom. And I have promised her to allow a governess to come daily to teach the children for some hours a day in order to relieve her.

We are looking forward daily to the arrival of the *Ld. Wm. Bentinck*, by which we expect answers to our letters sent by *Wm. Hyde*.

I am just told that the mail is about to close earlier than was expected. I must therefore hurriedly say goodbye. Pray give my love most affectionately to all at home, and believe me, my dearest mother, your very affectionate son

C. A. DILLON

35. *CONSTANTINE DILLON TO HIS BROTHER
ARTHUR*

Nelson, Feb. 6th 1853

My dear Arthur,

I have to give you many thanks for your very kind letter written on my 39th birthday. The 40th and 41st must pass over, but I really hope, and begin to think my hope will be realized, that I shall be amongst you all on my 42nd. Does it not seem a wonderful age? I suppose you do not have the same feeling in England, but here I always fancy that the last 11 years have passed away as only a few days would have done elsewhere.

I am very much ashamed of myself for being such a very bad correspondent, especially as so many persons are so kind as to write to us, but the fact is that after I have written my family letter to my Mother I find I have exhausted all my talk, and that there is nothing that interests any one at home. Had we been living in the gold regions one might have had more interesting events to chronicle, tho' even gold appears to be getting a commonplace affair. You have no doubt heard that gold has been found and is being worked in the Northern part of N.I. near Auckland. I do not think that there is much. However, there is no doubt that traces of it have been found not two miles away from the town I now live in, but merely traces. I hope that either none will be found or a very great quantity, in which latter case property of every kind will rise very greatly in value, and I will sell out and do what is vulgarly called cut away as fast as one can, before the usual rogues and vagabonds arrive who make all these gold regions next to uninhabitable. As yet we have felt no inconvenience from the Australian Diggings, the exodus which was predicted has not taken place, the men

who left us to go to Port Phillip have returned, and brought some others with them. The price of labor has risen in such a manner as you can hardly conceive when you are accustomed to hear of wages at 7/- or 9/- a week, but this we trust will not last long.

To give you an idea of how one is treated by one's servants here. Not long ago a man we had told us when we came home to dinner that if we choose to keep such hours we had better look out for some one else to serve us, as he would not. We had ordered dinner at half past six and had not come home till a quarter to seven. Since then we have had a mad woman, knowing her to be such, but we could not stand her, and now we have no one to cook, as a girl we engaged had declined coming without assigning any reason or sending any message to say she did not intend to come. I do not trouble you with all these details as domestic ones, but to give you an idea of the state of society we live in, and the subjection we are obliged to live in for fear of being discharged by our servants, not only domestic but of every sort. Fortunately for us we have got pretty well used to it and we do not care about it—much.

I was made quite happy by seeing in the *Times* that part of the Castle MacGarrett¹⁰⁵ estate had been sold, supposing, what I afterwards found to be the case, that my aunts and uncle John would get some of their own. I fear they must have suffered very much for want of news these years back.

I am much obliged to you for carrying the welcome news to the Endowment Society, I hope I shall not have to put your services in requisition again for some years at least, but if you will be so kind as to cause the enclosed to be delivered to them I shall feel obliged. I do not know why they should require it, for I sent the registrar's certificate which should be a more authentic document as far as regards age.

Pray is it to you that I am indebted for two coats which came out in the last box? They fitted me exactly as if they

¹⁰⁵ Castle McGarrett, County Mayo, Ireland, was the family seat of the Brownes, Lady Dillon's family.

had been made for me. Next to the pleasure of receiving them I felt great pleasure in thinking that others had grown as stout as I have. I have tried starvation, hard exercise and every other plan but I cannot reduce myself below 11½ stone, which for a person of my stature you will allow is sufficiently ludicrous. I hear that Simon has rounded to a very respectable size. I hope we shall hear better accounts of his belongings by the next mail, we were indeed quite sorry to hear of the wretched state of his wife and child's health. I hope you will, when you have an idle moment, just send me a few lines, you can hardly conceive the jubilee it is with us when an English mail comes in and we get a *lot* of letters; you can always send us some interesting news, we have none to send you in return. I hope you sometimes mention to your children their Antipodean relations. I try to teach my children all the names and histories of their uncles, and aunts, and cousins, but I fear I do not succeed, for I am constantly asked 'whose brother is uncle etc. etc', or some such like question. When one comes to put all the names down there is certainly a considerable number.

Fanny joins me in kind remembrances to Ellen and to your kids. I was very glad to hear what you told me about your resistance to the sale of Ditchley estate. It would have been such a pity and yet I do not like to allude to it.

Ever dear Arthur,

Your aff. Brother

(Sgd.) C. A. DILLON

36. SIR GEORGE GREY TO MRS DILLON

Government House

Wellington June 8th 1853

My dear Mrs Dillon,

You must allow me to write you a few lines—I heard of the dreadful loss¹⁰⁶ that had fallen upon yourself and the whole colony at Auckland, and left it as soon as I could get away, for I was really sick at heart, and sadder than I have been for years, even now I cannot realize to myself so terrible a blow. It is no use my trying to tell you how I feel for you—for that I cannot find words to express—I never knew a man who I loved, and respected more—I never knew one so generous and entirely unselfish as poor Dillon was—I never knew anyone more truly amiable and in all respects loveable than he was—I have never felt any death more than I have his—I cannot try to console you, because I cannot even console myself. You know much better than I do, how to look for consolation to the only quarter from whence it can be obtained—and you have his dear children to teach and care for, for his sake. I really can say no more, and feel so sad I can hardly bring myself to write what I have done—but I must add that I shall ever throughout my life take a deep interest in his children for their dear father's sake.

Believe me,

Very dear Mrs Dillon,

Most sincerely yours,

G. GREY

¹⁰⁶ Dillon had been drowned in April while crossing the Wairau. Mrs Dillon and the children returned to England. The second son Philip Gerald later came back to New Zealand and took up the sheep run in the Wairau.

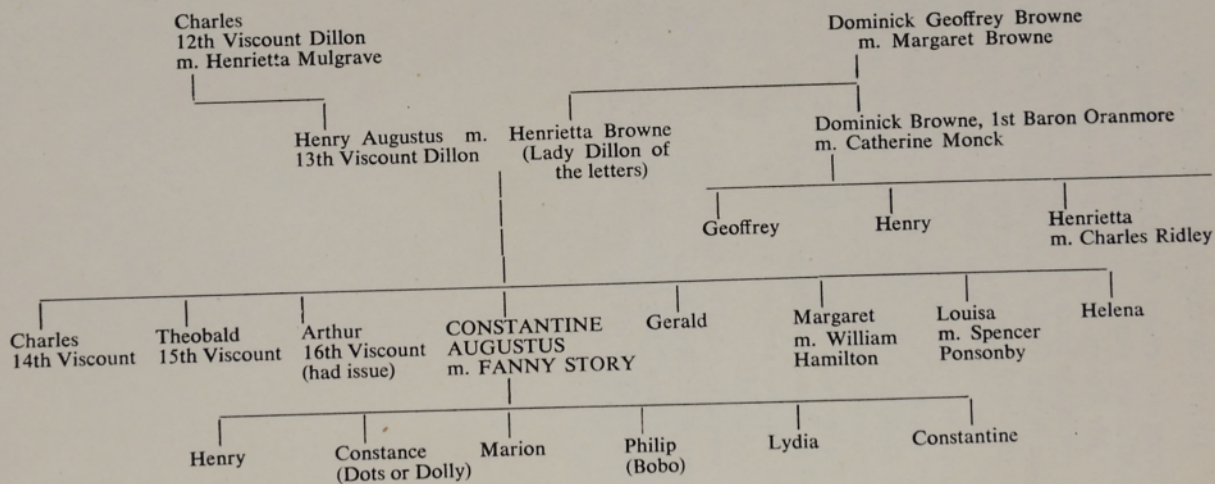
THE DEATH OF CONSTANTINE DILLON

as related in the *Nelson Examiner*, 23 April 1853.

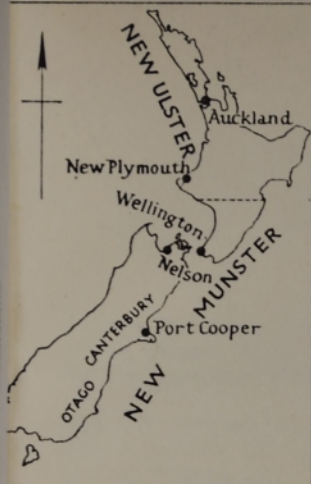
It is our melancholy duty this week to record the death of the Hon. C. A. Dillon, by drowning, which occurred on Saturday evening last, in attempting to ford the Wairau river. The circumstances which attended the lamented gentleman's death are as follows:—Mr Dillon, accompanied by his son (a lad about ten years of age), N. G. Morse, Esq., and a young gentleman named Pasley, reached the Wairau river, opposite Manuka Island, on Saturday evening at sundown, on their way to Nelson, the three gentlemen on horseback, and Master Dillon on a small Timor pony. In order to enable the child to cross the river safely, Mr Dillon placed his son on his own horse, and sent him across with Mr Morse, and determined to ford the river on foot and lead the pony, but taking the precaution however of laying hold of Mr Pasley's left stirrup iron. To this arrangement Mr Morse objected, and offered to return with Mr Dillon's horse after taking over the boy (as he had done before at the Branch river), but Mr Dillon insisted on crossing as we have described, saying, that he had a change of clothes, and did not mind getting wet. After entering the river and walking a short distance, Mr Dillon requested Mr Pasley to stop while he put the bridle over the pony's neck and let him follow of his own accord, and then, on proceeding a little further, Mr Dillon asked Mr Pasley whether his horse was swimming, saying at the same time, that he was 'off his legs'. On this the deceased seized the stirrup leather higher up, and attempted to raise himself, which caused the horse to become fidgetty, and as they had by this time incautiously approached the edge of the fall, and Mr Pasley having slackened his rein

in endeavouring to render Mr Dillon assistance, the horse and both gentlemen were rolled over the fall together into deep water. Mr Pasley rose above the horse in the stream, and tried to reach the bank by swimming, but not succeeding, he was carried down to the horse, which he laid hold of, and was brought on shore by it. Mr Dillon's arm was seen raised only once by Mr Morse, who saw nothing of what was occurring until the unfortunate gentlemen were being precipitated over the fall, and although he ran down to the bank of the river, such was the force of the stream that he could render no assistance, nor even see the slightest trace of the body. Mr Pasley was very severely bruised. The body of Mr Dillon was found on Monday morning by G. Duppa, Esq., thrown on the shingle, nearly two miles from where the accident occurred.

The body was conveyed to the Waimea, where an inquest was held upon it on Wednesday, in the house of Mr Kerr. The verdict given was, 'that Constantine Augustus Dillon was accidentally drowned in attempting to cross the Wairau river on foot'.



DILLON FAMILY TREE



Scale of Miles

0 10 20 30 40 50

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