

cattle, and most of their pigs, their houses have fallen into ruin; their clothes are ragged; their mills, ploughs, and threshing-machines are left to go to decay, while the owners are travelling about to "huis" and "tangis," or spending their days in sitting watching a boundary-line that they may pounce upon stray cattle. In the coming winter there will probably be serious scarcity of food. At Peria, in November last, William Thompson and his tribe were living exclusively on fern-root; they are the most generous and hospitable of Natives, but at that time they had not a pig or a potato either for themselves or their guests.

The Natives themselves are quite aware of their increasing poverty, and are eager enough for wealth; but steady productive industry is the only way in which they will not seek it. At Rangiaowhia, a law has been passed to stop all further sale of pigs, potatoes, and corn to Europeans; partly to secure a sufficient supply for themselves during the winter, and partly because it is intended to fix a higher scale of prices, in order to gain more money for that which can be spared. One chief source of supply is the money spent in the overland mail service; they have lately been making a foolish attempt to increase their gains from this source, and have run a serious risk of killing the goose that has laid them these golden eggs. The Ngatihaua demanded a higher rate of pay for carrying the mail from Te Rapa to Tauranga, and the mail has been discontinued. The Kihikihi Natives refused to carry the mail from Otawhao to Whaotu, or to let any one else carry it, unless the payment was raised, so that the public conveyance has been stopped for some weeks. Very recently one of them repented, and asked Mr. Morgan whether, if he wrote, the Chief of the Mails would not let the Ahuriri mail come again. Taati, of Ragiaowhia, made a law that none but King's soldiers should be carriers between Otawhao and Meremere, because they want to earn uniforms; and a civilian carrier, William Toetoe, was stopped and turned back at Ngaruawahia, while a soldier carried on the bag. A very common way of acquiring property is by the appropriation, on slight pretexts, of the property of Europeans. Horses, cows, sheep, and guns, have changed owners in this manner. They are sometimes taken with forms of law, the party alleging injury being commonly the judges. The 500 sheep taken by the Natives of Taupaki were seized because one of the Natives themselves, who was engaged as shepherd, drove 100 of the sheep for his own convenience upon their waste lands; they will not let them go under £200. As there are not more than a dozen natives at Taupaki, the share of each, when the spoil is divided, will be considerable. There is hardly a European in the district who would not leave it if he could take all his property safely away with him; but all have pledges in native hands, and they hold on in hopes of better times, when some part of what has been taken may be recovered. There is a great deal of talk at the present time about leasing lands to the Europeans: short leases only are intended, not such as would make it worth while for the occupier to fence and improve the land. There are many obstacles in the way of this project. In the first place it would be necessary to settle all the old land feuds, and the natives are themselves of opinion that an attempt to do so would break up their alliance. Then before any Europeans could be induced to rent land, an end must be put to the present state of lawlessness; there must be some better security for life and property than can be enjoyed under the Runangas and the King. These objections are so strong, that Rewi and many members of the King's Council have resolved that no land-letting shall be permitted. On the other hand, William Thompson is said to have actually let land to a European, but to have cancelled the agreement when expostulated with by the King.

I have no means of comparing the sanitary condition of the Natives with what it may have been in former days; but there is a frightful amount of scrofulous disease in every village, especially amongst the children; and as long as they persist in sleeping crowded together in leaky and smoky hovels, wearing one filthy garment day and night in the severest weather, living on a meagre diet of potatoes which they diversify by sudden wild feasts of putrid maize, there is no mystery in the causes which are destroying the race. Unhappily, they are spending their remaining strength in resisting the only help which might save them.

The education of their children is now totally neglected; they are left to run about the villages with the dogs and pigs, wild, naked, and dirty. Not only has the number of children in the Mission schools decreased by more than half, but almost all those village schools which gave so much promise a short time ago have come to nothing, and there is no effort and no desire to see them revived. And that there may be no hope of saving the young generation from growing up in ignorance and barbarism, the parents are firmly resolved that they will not accept the assistance of Government or of Europeans in doing that for their children which they will not do themselves. A law has been passed and agreed to by them all, that no fresh European schools or schoolmasters shall be allowed within the King's dominions; to this law even William Thompson himself confesses that he has agreed. His own school at Matamata has dwindled down from sixty children to less than a dozen; and though he regrets its downfall and would himself do anything to restore it, he positively refuses any assistance from the Government. Unless this state of things is very speedily changed, the next generation of Natives will be even worse educated than the present, and as ignorance increases the anarchy of the land will become still more difficult to cure.

(3.) *Their Disunion.*

It must not be supposed that the tribes allied under the Maori King live in perfect union and fellowship; among them, as among all equals, there are jealousies and quarrels.

Their old hereditary land feuds are dormant but not extinct. There is a chronic dispute between Ngatikoroki and Ngatiraukawa about a small extent of waste land beyond Maungatautari, which has