

Whakatohea men as kingites, &c., &c., &c. Puhipi evinced great soreness at so much land having passed into the hands of the Pakeha, and at the stoppage of powder and grog; he asserted absolute disbelief in Sir George Grey's sayings, and refused to have anything to do with his plans as long as he remained in the country; and said that the Maoris' only remedy was to get all their land back again from the Pakeha. In spite of such an unpromising opinion, we—or I should rather say Mr. Fulloon—in the course of the day brought round Puhipi and Te Hira, the two principal men, to consent to inquire into this new policy and to promise a decided answer on my return, and to approve of the whole plan as the thing required to place them on an equality with the Pakeha. I may here remark, that I have found one of the most telling arguments in favour of the policy, to be that the Maoris will be the principal workers of it; that the Europeans' share in working it will be to point out the way, and to save the Maoris from making mistakes and from losing time in trying plans which have been tried by us already and found to be bad. Puhipi said that they (the Opotiki men) would be glad to hear that Thompson had been to Auckland and dined at Government House, then they would know that everything had been settled. Mr. Fulloon said that that was also the Governor's desire, and that Puhipi had better go and persuade Thompson to do so. Puhipi answered that he would not go in person, but that his letter should go; and declared that he and all his people were neither for the King nor the Governor, but that he would stand with his arms open ready to receive "nga mea pono, nga mea tika" (the true and just things). Should the Governor strike him or go against him, he would draw in his arms; and the same if the King struck him.

On my return through Opotiki, Puhipi reported that, during our absence, he had called together four meetings in different quarters of the place, and that they all agreed to receive the new "tikangas," and that they will build four "whare-whakawas" (court-houses) by the spring: and pleaded hard that he must be allowed some grog. He also wrote to the Governor.

Puhipi has thus in some measure redeemed the conduct above related, so ill-befitting an Assessor; but I am still very doubtful of his sincerity as an ally. I fear that one of the strongest motives for the fair speeches with which he concluded our interview, is the desire to recover his too well-beloved grog.

I have reported at such length on Opotiki, as I consider it the place where it is most difficult to form any reliable opinion as to the real temper of the people.

Ohiwa.—I had previously held a small meeting of the Whakatohea at Punawai, on Ohiwa harbour. About 20 men were present. They talked at first in a somewhat similar strain to those of Opotiki, but less violently; finally they admitted that the new tikangas were very good, but said that they should follow the lead of the Opotiki men. So said also Te Teira, for himself and the men of the little "kainga" of Onekawa, Ohiwa heads.

I think that a judicious Commissioner, well acquainted with Maori character, might succeed in carrying out the Governor's plans at Opotiki; but he would certainly meet with much opposition, much hollow support, and at Opotiki more than at most places a single false step might ruin the experiment.

Ngaitai.—The next set of Natives along the coast are the Ngaitais, claiming the coast from the Whakatohea at Tirohanga (see sketch map) to a point between the two Pas of Tunapahore and Pakoriri. Both these boundaries are disputed. Their Chief, Wiremu Kingi, estimates their numbers at 100 men and women. Their chief place, Tunapahore, is a fenced pa, at the edge of the beach, within long rifle shot of Pakoriri, the fenced pa of the Whapauapanui rival "hapu," with whom the Ngaitais have an unsettled dispute as to their common boundary. Some years ago they fought on this subject, but, Maori-like, without deciding it. We made the usual explanations, and were met with the usual difficulties, but temperately stated. They appeared very sore on the prohibition of powder, and rather bewildered that Christianity has not made them the happy people, free from crime, which they seem once to have thought that it would do; also that the Christian people who brought them the Gospel should have found occasion to fight with them so often. They said a little about promises to the "King" party, and why did we not aid W. Thompson? also shewed an honorable distrust of so much money, lest it should be a bribe. But there was not that tone of bitter hostility to the Pakeha and the Queen so remarkable at Opotiki, and they approved very frankly of the scheme. Wiremu Kingi, their chief, and also principal speaker, compared the policy to a net, which, if pulled on one side only, lets the fish easily escape; and applied his simile by exhorting us to pull our net so as not to let that very big fish, W. Thompson, escape us.

Tunapahore Maoris are a very fine set of fellows, and very hospitable to travellers. Their Chief, Wi Kingi, is a quiet gentlemanly young fellow, and apparently a sensible man. His "whare" had far more civilized means and appliances than usual, and he was a perfect model of hospitality.

Ngaitawarere and Whanauapanui.—These cognate tribes are the next Natives eastward along the coast. They are estimated by Ngatawa—a Chief and Native Assessor of the former—at 400 men. They occupy the country from Tunapahore to the east side of Tikirau, or Cape Runaway, with an ill-defined boundary between them at Te Kaha (see sketch-map). From the east side of Cape Runaway, their boundary, striking inland, passes to the north-west of Ikurangi, which belongs to Ngatiporou.

Ngatawa said that the chief difficulties of his place were debts and the high prices of traders. He also complained that they had been much harrassed by reports from the rival parties of "King" and "Queen" Maoris. He was evidently anxious in his mind till he had it explained to him that the Maori Kaiwhakawas were to be really colleagues, and not merely subordinates of the Pakeha Magistrate. In the evening assembly, my explanations were well received, and their objections temperately stated. They asked for time to decide. On my return through their pa, they gave a decided assent. Ngatawa also wrote to the Governor by me. He seems to be a very busy, energetic man, fit for an Assessor. His head is very full of the great trade grievance. Poor fellows—they can't for the life of them understand how the Governor can stop powder and grog, and not cheapen trade!