

itself of regaining their former position, and recovering, if possible, the lands which we have taken from them. F. E. Maning, Esq.—
continued.

It has often been stated by Natives and others that certain acts of ours provoked them to take arms against us, and the same assertions are sometimes made still. No one knows better than the Natives themselves that these assertions are untrue, and that the cause of the war was really the conviction which hung continually like a cloud upon their minds,—that if the influx and power of the Europeans was not checked, and confined to some fixed boundary, we should soon, by mere weight of numbers, trample them under foot, and rob them of their country; to prevent this consummation they decided upon war; but, nevertheless, having in view the possibility of failure, and the consequent advisability of having something in which their advocates might be able to ground a defence, or excuse their conduct, they, both previously and subsequently to the commencement of open hostilities, charged us with many acts which they alleged had provoked them to take arms, and having done this, and fully determined on war, they then commenced a series of insults and aggressions, more or less serious, with the hope of placing us still more apparently in the wrong by provoking us to strike the first blow. In this purpose they failed, and being determined not to procrastinate any longer they took the first life themselves, and commenced the war.

I have already said that I do not expect soon to see a permanent peace established, and I think that even if proposals of peace were to be made to us by the Natives themselves they would be accompanied by demands for the restoration of land and prisoners, and also that any such proposals would be delusive and insincere, and only intended by the Natives to gain time to recover strength and form new combinations against us, but, at the same time, I believe that a cessation of hostilities even for a few years would be more valuable to ourselves than to the Natives, as in a time of peace our capabilities of dealing with future eventualities would increase in a more rapid ratio than those of the Natives.

In only one direction do I see a hopeful influence at work, powerful, if human calculation can be trusted, to produce in the future the permanent pacification of the country, and the dominion of law. I mean the action of the Native Land Courts, which, by giving Natives individual and exclusive property in the soil, stimulates industry, detaches them from tribal or national interests, disposes them to support and strengthen the law from which they have derived their rights, that in turn it may be able to support and protect them in the possession of their properties, and put them in the position of men having much to lose, and nothing to gain by war. These are but a few of the benefits which we may rationally expect to arise from the action of these Courts, already in many parts of the country Natives are in receipt of good incomes for the rent of their lands. I am informed that in one district a not numerous tribe receive in rents as much as forty thousand pounds per annum. Men in this position, we may venture to expect will feel bound by their own interests to keep the peace and do all in their power to perpetuate a state of things by which they are such gainers.

An occurrence took place not long ago in the North which is illustrative of the manner in which the Natives appreciate the benefits to be derived from the action of the Land Courts and the influence for good those Courts have already acquired. A daring burglary had been committed by a Native in the town of Russell, in the Bay of Islands. The Native was subsequently apprehended by the Resident Magistrate at that place, he having returned to the town thinking, no doubt, that no one would dare to arrest him. His tribe hearing that he was a prisoner, came, headed by one of their principal chiefs, and rescued him, not without using some force, taking him away in triumph to the Native village. A Land Court was about to be held in a few days in the neighbourhood and the people who had rescued the offender had several claims coming before the Court for hearing, but having been told by a settler who met them, and who had heard of the rescue of the Native offender, that as they had broken one law they could not expect to receive the benefits conferred by another, and that, therefore, it would be no use for them to go to the Land Court, as their claims would not be heard, they immediately returned home, took the person whom they had rescued, and delivered him up to the Magistrate, and he is now, I believe, undergoing his sentence in Auckland. This man could not have been taken prisoner in his own village, against the will of his tribe, without a serious display of force and a great risk of breaking the peace of the district.

The acquirement of land by settlers from the Natives is also rendered safe and easy by the action of the Land Courts and the settlement of the country proportionally facilitated, and as the Native seller holding a Crown Grant is master of his own property, and can avail himself of competition amongst purchasers, he is sure to get the full market value for his surplus land. This circumstance alone is a source of much satisfaction to the Native people who, many of them, believe that under a former system they did not in selling their land receive a fair value.

From the circumstances I have mentioned, and many others, I believe that "The Native Lands Act, 1865," will prove to be the most beneficial action we have ever attempted in Native affairs, and that the good effects we may expect from it can scarcely be overrated. We must, however, remember that such great changes as this measure may be fairly expected to effect will require time, not probably a long time in proportion to the effects we may hope to see produced, but a few years at least—years to be regarded by the New Zealand statesman as likely to be memorable in the history of the country, for good or for evil, and in which, acting according to the dictates of human wisdom, he trusts to an overruling Providence to control the event.

Auckland, 29th March, 1868.

F. E. MANING.

P.S.—HAUHAUISM.—There is nothing new or particularly worthy of notice in Hauhauism. In all the great wars amongst the Natives themselves the chiefs and leading men have invariably pretended to have had supernatural revelations, and promises of assistance made them. These pretensions were of course made for the purpose of encouraging the people, and men were never wanting who were ready to assume the character of prophets, on account of the temporary personal distinction it gave them. Hauhauism will last, or some other superstition of like nature, until the hopes of Natives of prevailing against us ceases. When the Natives submit mentally to the irresistible course of events, and acknowledge the dominion of the British power and Government, then Hauhauism will disappear as a matter of course.

F. E. M.