

have been, it is true, two large Native meetings held at Tokangamutu without having been followed by any hostile demonstrations against us. The assemblage of King Natives about to be held there differs from the former meetings in one important particular—namely, that whereas hitherto we have had the moral support of the Imperial Government and the presence of Imperial troops, now we are deprived of both, for every British soldier has been withdrawn from the Colony, and Lord Granville has openly recommended the acknowledgment of Maori authority and the restoration of the confiscated lands, or a portion of them.

9. There is the further consideration (which has doubtless had your attention) of the possible defection of a portion of the friendly tribes who have carried on military operations against the enemy on our behalf. It must, I think, always be an element of danger to the Colony, when military operations are mainly carried on by our Native allies. Large bodies of these have been well armed—I may say lavishly armed, and as lavishly supplied with ammunition by us. I do not at all depreciate the services rendered by our Native allies; at the same time, we ought not to forget that at best they are but mercenary soldiers, fighting against their countrymen—the Maori national party. Like all mercenaries to whom the chief defence of a country is committed (and animated therefore by a not unnatural pride and haughtiness), they may be expected from time to time to make demands which Government may find it difficult to grant and dangerous to refuse. Under the present system, the time may not be far off when demands may be made by them which no Government can possibly concede.

10. Whenever that conjuncture arises, we may look for a portion of our allies to join the King party.

11. A ten years' struggle has doubtless reduced the arms and ammunition at the disposal of the King Natives to a low ebb, and it is probably in a great measure due to the circumstance of their having been animated by an intensely national spirit that they have been able, under these and other great disadvantages, to continue the struggle against us so long.

12. Whenever a large portion of our Native allies—armed and trained by us, but devoid, till they desert our cause, of national spirit—go over to the King party (the latter being till then but indifferently supplied with the munitions of war, but animated by an intense patriotism), the words of Tawhiao's proclamation, "The right hand to the right, and the left hand to the left," will have passed from a dreamy aspiration into a well-defined fact, and the Colony will have to face an enemy more desperate and more dangerous than ever. The contest will then have assumed a character which it has not hitherto had—namely, a war of races. There can of course be but one termination to such a struggle. The European population will finally conquer by exterminating their opponents.

13. The extermination of a race which, whatever may be its faults, has undoubtedly displayed great readiness in acquiring many of the arts of civilization, and has, moreover, been so distinguished by the truly noble qualities of valour and patriotism that it has won the respect of the colonists, and will certainly command the admiration of future ages—the extermination of such a race will leave behind it traces of degradation and demoralization in the conquerors which a century will hardly obliterate. If such a direful brand of infamy can be averted by the timely adoption of a magnanimous policy, every wise and good colonist will be deeply solicitous that such a policy should be boldly attempted whilst its adoption is possible.

14. The firm conviction that a generous and magnanimous policy would avert the misery, bloodshed, and degradation towards which the Colony is drifting, has led me to incur, by my acts and writings in connection with Maori affairs, more especially by my visit to Tokangamutu and my interview with Te Kooti, much public odium and not a little personal danger. Neither public odium nor personal danger has weakened in the least my conviction that a merciful and magnanimous policy is the only wise and safe course for the Colony to pursue.

15. I therefore avail myself of this opportunity to recommend for the earnest consideration of Government, as the first step to be taken, the proclamation of a full and general amnesty for all offences arising out of, and committed since, the war began in 1862. It would, of course, be necessary to continue to maintain a strong defensive attitude; but I do not think it would be either necessary or advisable to enter into any negotiations to secure any reciprocal advantages, simply proclaiming the amnesty as an act of grace and good-will. Such questions as the making of roads, and the restoration of a portion of the confiscated lands, might be left for subsequent arrangement.

16. Of course I am well aware that many colonists would recoil from the proposal to grant a general amnesty; but no student of history can be ignorant that the atrocities perpetrated in New Zealand by Kereopa, Titokowaru, and Te Kooti—the true representatives of ancient Maori warriors—have been equalled, perhaps more than equalled, by the frightful crimes committed by almost every European nation. Spain in the Low Countries, Austria in the Tyrol, Russia in the Caucasus, France in the wars of the Jacquerie and the Revolution, and England in the wars of the Roses and in Ireland; these have all exhibited a previous barbarity and a remorseless cruelty which ought to make the civilized colonists of New Zealand judge with mercy and magnanimity the deeds of a race of savages, whom long ages of cruel warfare and heathen darkness have deprived of the holy influences which civilization and Christianity might have produced upon them, but which, nevertheless, they have failed to produce even upon the Natives of Europe until our own times.

I trust, Sir, that the importance of the subjects treated upon in this letter will be accepted by you as an apology for a private citizen like myself thus addressing you.

The Hon. D. McLean, Wellington.

I have, &c.,
J. C. FIRTH.

No. 3.

The UNDER SECRETARY to Mr. J. C. FIRTH.

SIR,—

Wellington, 22nd August, 1870.

I have the honor, by direction of Mr. McLean, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter