

to resort to force in the settlement of their land disputes. It is an evident sign of the pacific disposition of the Natives that during late years many land quarrels have been arranged through the intervention of the Native Assessors (a most useful body of men) and other loyal chiefs; and the Government is to be congratulated upon the hitherto great success which has attended the peace policy adopted by the Parliament of the country. The confidence of the Natives is fast being gained by a Government which, whilst endeavouring to uphold the law, affords ample protection to the aboriginals of the country. Speaking of the Natives of these parts, I feel bound to refer to an oft-expressed satisfaction on their part at the advent to power of the present Premier, Sir George Grey, their former Governor and patron; and of the Hon. Mr. Sheehan, as successor to the late lamented Sir Donald McLean, like whom he is looked up to as their friend and protector. Great disappointment has been felt at their not having as yet paid Wanganui a visit, which is excused upon the ground that other less loyal tribes required looking after first, and that in due course the Wanganuis would receive the attention they deserve as the staunch supporters and allies of the Queen.

Touching the moral and physical condition of the Natives, no improvement has taken place: in fact, they have retrograded, owing to their improvident and lavish expenditure of moneys recently received for their lands, the bulk of the money having been spent in food and drink. Drunkenness, I am sorry to say, is on the increase, and I look forward with apprehension to the consequences to the Native population, owing to their increasing desire and thirst for spirits, which threatens to be their ruin. The example set to them in this respect by certain of our countrymen, combined with their natural propensity for drink, has been attended with sad results; and one of the principal settlements, Iruharama, was lately the scene of frightful drunkenness and immorality. The Natives here are now passing through a fiery trial, out of which they will not come unscathed. A reaction will no doubt take place, but the result to many a poor Maori will be death and destruction without remedy. A very serious part of the business is the poisonous nature of much of the spirits supplied to the Natives in Wanganui; for, on submitting some of it to proof and analysis, it was found to be considerably drugged, and the effect upon the imbibers can well be imagined. Another sad feature of the case is that all, men, women, and children, partake of the strong waters, and show the utmost want of discretion and downright folly in the matter, and are lost to all shame and feelings of decency and propriety. When remonstrated with, the general answer is, "Don't preach to us; you brought the liquor to the country, and it is for you to forbid its importation."

No great improvement can be looked for until the race give up their ancient customs and habits, and the communism of the Maori pa ceases to be one of such debasing, demoralizing, and soul-degrading habits. An individualization and partition of their landed property will be the most effectual remedy for these evils, for the Native is most imitative in his proclivities, and when he begins to find that he is protected in the sole enjoyment of his property he will set a higher value upon it, become more thrifty, and advance in habits of sobriety and cleanliness, and the example of the industrious and enterprising European farmers and settlers will be followed, and a competency secured for the benefit of themselves and their offspring.

In matters of religion, the Wanganui Natives are still deprived of the ministrations of an English missionary, and they are, as described by themselves, "like sheep without a shepherd." Representations have been made to the Bishop of the Anglican Church, and to the Church Missionary Society, but hitherto without avail. A serious responsibility lies at their door, for there is an ample field of usefulness, at present unoccupied, amongst a Maori population of some three thousand souls. The Church of England should either at once send a zealous, indefatigable, and self-sacrificing missionary to these people, or withdraw from the field, which would then soon be occupied by either the Catholic or Wesleyan body. There is but one solitary church now standing on the river, where there used to be more than a dozen: not that the Natives are indisposed to build new ones, for, if looked after and assisted, money and material would be forthcoming for the erection of temples for the worship of the Great Creator; and without which, and the services therein conducted, He may not be propitiated, and wrath and punishment will rest upon the people, as is the case now-a-days, when the race seems to be retrograding and fast dying out.

Anything that can be done for the amelioration and perpetuation of the Maori race is an object well worthy the aim of any Government or Church.

In agricultural pursuits a retrograde movement has taken place, and, owing to the minds of the Natives having been absorbed in land business, the last planting season was almost allowed to slip by without any of the usual crops being put in the ground, except such as were sown at a late period. Fortunately, the season proved an abundant one, and none of the crops were destroyed by drought or flood, and therefore there will be no lack of food. Very little wheat has been sown this year, although two of their flour-mills have been completed, and the services of an excellent miller secured. A number of old wheat-stacks have, however, been threshed out and turned into flour at the Koriniti and Kawana Kerei Mills; and I am hopeful that next season a large quantity of grain will be sown by the Wanganui Natives. Tenders have just been accepted for building the Pipiriki Mill; so that soon there will be three good serviceable iron flour-mills on the Wanganui River. The example of the Natives in this respect has been followed by the European settlers, and several water and steam flour-mills have been erected at Wanganui and the coast settlements. There is nothing to prevent this becoming a grain-growing