

is composed of beautiful rolling downs, covered with grass, with patches of fern here and there, and intersected with belts of forest scrub, which is, curiously enough, composed of five sorts of trees, some of which are not found in New Zealand, while the others only form a part of the impenetrable bush which grows there under the larger timber. Here they grow almost to the size of forest timber, and they have little or no undergrowth beneath them. The scenery is park-like, and in some places I was reminded of parts of the Isle of Wight. Cultivation in the Chatham Islands has only been carried on to a small extent, both on the east and west coasts, but sufficiently so to prove that the soil and climate is well adapted to agriculture. The difficulty experienced in clearing the land from the growth of ferns and bush will not probably be overcome until a closer system of settlement is adopted. The land in the southern part of the island is excellent, but in the extreme north for the most part not so good. Along the coast are low sandhills, which on the west coast are encroaching on the good land. Bent grass, as a "sand-bind," has been introduced by one of the settlers, which, if generally used, will remedy this.

Where we lay, at Waitangi, the harbour is unfortunately too shallow to allow vessels of any draught to lie much inside the head forming the bay. It is, however, well sheltered from the prevailing south-west winds, and there is plenty of shelter round the other side of the island from north-west gales. A landing-pier for boats is very much required, and, I am informed, can be provided at a very small cost.

On landing I received a most hearty welcome, and addresses were read from both the European and the Maori population. The Maoris afterwards received me in their meeting-house. There must have been at least a hundred and fifty people present when I landed, which is a large percentage of the population, which is estimated at nearly four hundred, of whom about half are Maoris and Morioris. I have been given to understand that the Resident Magistrate was much pleased by the manner in which I was received by the Maori chiefs. The Maoris own a great deal of land in the island, and hitherto they have not been very willing to let or lease it. It is to be hoped that they will adopt a different policy in future, as there is yet a considerable quantity of good land available—if let—for settlement, which at present is not utilised at all. It appears to me that some sort of Land Court in the island would in that case become necessary.

On leaving Waitangi I attempted to visit Pitt Island, but heavy weather prevented me landing, so I contented myself with visiting the Moriori settlement at Ohanga. There are only nineteen living there, and there are said to be only from thirty to forty altogether left, most of whom are of mixed blood, and out of that number there are said to be only nine pure Morioris, and only one child of nine years old, so that in a few years none will be left.

Before concluding this despatch I would wish to make a few remarks on the difficult question of protecting the animal life in the outlying islands from destruction by strange vessels not belonging to the colony. At present naturalists are almost the only persons interested, as the fur seal is all but extinct; we did not see more than six during our cruise. Sea-lions are far from numerous, and are fast being destroyed. One vessel would destroy all that are left in a few days; and it is evident that during the last season a good deal has been done in that direction; so that if the seal-fishery is again declared open in these islands the destruction of seal life in them is a matter of a very short time, but at the same time strict preservation would soon cause the numbers to again increase.

As far as the sea-birds are concerned, the albatross and penguins are at present very plentiful, but a systematic destruction of the latter for oil, such as is said to be taking place at the Macquaries, would soon wipe them out altogether.

On the whole, it would appear to be, if only from a sentimental point of view, a pity to see these interesting and valuable animals doomed to extinction; but the recent visit of a Norwegian sealing-vessel to these waters, and certain unexplained circumstances in her career, show how difficult it is to cause laws