

CLOTHES.

It is needless for me to go into this subject, for we all know the many faults which we commonly see in the way of most Maori clothing. Far better had it been if the Maoris had never donned the highly coloured proverbial pakeha blanket. It is not the European clothing, but it is the ignorance concerning the laws of wearing English clothing which does the mischief; and yet so civilised have some Native ladies become, I have actually come across a floating kidney, consequent on wearing the stylish waist-squeezer—the corset. These more personal hygienic matters have not been overlooked in our Maori work.

FOODS.

A thorough knowledge of the gastronomical world is much needed among the Maoris. His food is very simple at present, and, though rotten corn, rotten potato, and shark have been decried by the advanced part of our community, I sometimes think that perhaps the Englishman's gamy cheese and his too gamy pheasant would run a very close second to the corn and the shark. However, the Maori Councils have not been asleep, and as a result of some of the health lectures some of the Councils have passed resolutions concerning the prohibition of eating putrid foods. This result, perhaps, has been due more to the circulars which were sent out concerning the eating of diseased meats (which circulars met with a good hearty reception) than anything else, though foods have had their share in my lectures.

STERILITY.

It is alarming to know that so many Maori women are childless. The principal cause of this is easily traced to the bad home, hygiene, smoking, neglect, bad clothing, irregular meals, bad nourishment, exposure, manual labour, too early marriages, and other causes. We can only remedy this evil when the Maori has advanced to a higher plane. Perhaps the Legislature could help by fixing the marriageable age at not earlier than seventeen. However, this is a debatable question, and I wish not to enter into any controversies.

HARMFUL MAORI CUSTOMS.

The recent by-laws of the Maori Councils have been a great help in suppressing the evils of tangis, hui, and tohungas drinking and smoking. Tangis have been limited, especially in cases of infectious diseases; and in this connection permit me to add that, in order to carry this out perfectly, all deaths occurring among the Maoris ought to be certified by duly qualified medical men. The non-registration of Maori deaths blinds us to all the causes of his decay. Death-certificates will have a wide and far-reaching effect: it will make the deceiving tohunga tremble, the money-seeking *toi-ora* think twice before he practises upon the unsuspecting and simple Maori mind; and, further, it will give us a thorough knowledge of the diseases which are sweeping away the race, and thus enable us to carry on a more perfect warfare in preventing the spread of epidemics and infectious diseases.

All the declared infectious diseases ought to be notifiable among the Maoris as well as the pakehas.

TOHUNGAS.

Tohungaism is in its death-throes; and though it may be compared with the feline of nine lives, yet it is surely dying out.

The strong arm of the law is the only potent medicine that can cure this cancerous malady. A few doses of the lock-up will soon have the desired effect. It is wonderful how superstitious even the most enlightened are. Who has not seen a delicate silk-attired lady of fashion sigh her wishes over her left shoulder at the inconstant moon? Who does not dream of bad luck when there are thirteen at a table? Who has not heard of the mariners refusing to go to sea on a Friday? And who has not seen an old shoe cast at the happy wedded pair? And if these things can happen in the far advanced, we can surely excuse some of the peculiarities of the Maori, who has barely emerged from the dark night of superstition into this blazing sun of civilisation. However, I do not by any means excuse the acts of tohungas. The immersion of the sick in cold rivers, I am glad to say, has been stopped by the Councils; not that a bath, even a cold one, is altogether detrimental, but that the attending risks in exposure, &c., are so enormous, and the result so disastrous, that it has been deemed wise to stop all such treatment.

ALCOHOLISM.

One almost hesitates to give an opinion after the great koreros concerning this bane of civilisation, and yet I am but doing my duty in saying what is the truth. Contrary to many, I am of the opinion—and I speak guardedly after being all around the colony—that drunkenness is practically at low tide with the Maoris. I know some of my worthy friends will differ from me; but, nevertheless, I know that in towns and small country places where there used to be scores of drunkards you never find any now, or hardly ever. In fact, in several places I have visited the publican said to me, "What has happened to the Maoris? They drop in once in a while, but it will only be for a glass. You never find a Maori drunk now; and I respect them more for it."

It is true in one or two places in Taranaki they have been bad, but that has been more for bravado than anything else. Wrong Te Whiti-ism has been to blame—I say wrong Te Whiti-ism because I have heard from Te Whiti's own lips that he did not approve of strong drink. However, the formation of the Native Village Committees under the Council have at least been the best thing that could have happened, as the Committees are empowered to suppress the abuse of liquors in the pas.