

As soon as we can have more Native doctors it will be a wise move to have them appointed as local Health Officers, having similar duties as the present Health Officer to the Maoris, only restricted to certain provinces, and each having a staff of inspectors, so that full justice can be done to each locality. However, we can only go on at the present as we have heretofore done.

THE FAR NORTH.

During the past year I have travelled over every part of the far North, and visited every part of consequence. The usual ignorance and carelessness *re* sanitary and hygienic matters were noticeable; but, though these Natives are still living in the ancient whare, they at least sleep on raised bedsteads, which is a decided advance on their former custom of lying on the bare ground. One is not surprised at the low condition of life amongst some, seeing that they live in the gum regions, where the scum and slush of civilised societies congregate, and teach the poor Natives the evils which in a great many cases have helped to bring themselves down in the scale of civilisation. Yet, on the other hand, one must not conclude hastily, and brand them all with vice and degradation. The influence for evil has verily been there, for evidences are legion; and yet so has the influence for good: evidences of that may be seen also in the ruined churches standing alone on some hills, keeping watch over the memories of a faith which has been.

The general condition of the homes in the far North is fair, compared with that of those in richer districts. Most of the Native land is very poor and unproductive. Almost the only source of income is the gum-digging industry, and that now does not yield much, as the gum is very nearly exhausted. In working with these Natives we have not aimed at too many things, but we have rather endeavoured to improve their present condition with the material found at hand. We have tried to make the Native whare do—only larger, higher, and more roomy, with floors, windows, and chimneys. I do not think it wise to overload these Natives too much at the commencement, but rather to improve upon what they have, and so bring a gradual change for the better in their methods of living. The extreme poverty of some makes it very difficult to do much. However, even this drawback has its benefits, for in order to live at all the Northerner has literally to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, and this is productive of much good. Having no fat rents to collect, as is often the case with our more favoured southern Natives, he has to work.

Now, one must not imagine that the northern Maori is a paragon of virtue, for I have been much grieved to see the way some of the younger Natives hang around the saloons wasting their time and squandering their money at the billiard-tables and revelling in idleness. One would not mind so much if the games were limited to a little after-dinner enjoyment, but when they are being played all day long, and part of the night, they certainly become a curse. We have endeavoured to get the Councils to religiously watch these gaming-tables, for I am certain they have been the cause of much harm.

Gum-digging as an occupation has its disadvantages, for it entails exposure in winter and very hard work to those making a living out of it. It is thus doubly hard for the poor Maori women who have to do the digging. The children are neglected and often taken away from the schools, their associations are not of the most moral type, and the result is disastrous to health, to intellect, and to morality. Knowing, then, these conditions, what can be done to mitigate the evils? After considering these things well, I have come to the conclusion that perhaps if the Government started a grape-farm, employed Natives as workers, and taught them how to tend the grapes, in a comparatively short time they would learn how to manage for themselves, besides helping to start the Government vineyards. I am sure the Maoris would be willing to co-operate in this, and I am certain it would also promote an industry which at the present is much neglected, and would more than pay for the expenditure. The good started would be far-reaching; it would give some Natives constant employment, which is mostly needed, and it would in time make them independent, instead of paupers and a burden and hindrance in the State. What the Maori needs at the present time is constant employment. Vine-growing would in a great measure meet the demand, and thus mitigate many of the existing evils. We need not limit fruit-growing to the grape alone, as I understand that almost any kind of fruit could be remuneratively cultivated. Perhaps if I may be allowed to suggest, the waste barren land of the North could be also utilised for growing wattle for tan, and so, again, more employment could be meted out, in the planting, skinning, and making into tan of these trees. I have had meetings with the great Ngapuhi tribes, and I have been assured of a hearty co-operation in these matters if the Government would only lend a helping hand, and I am sure that unless something of this kind is done to stimulate the Natives to try other work than gum-digging the future of the northern Maori is almost hopeless.

The Natives on the whole are living in very small settlements, and in scattered places, so to visit them I had to do a great deal of horseback riding. The village "Komitis" were taken around, and the needs of each place pointed out. The meetings were all well attended and appreciated, and from the Councillors' and chiefs' speeches, I feel sure there will be a great deal done within the near future. The enthusiasm and willingness to comply with the law in regard to sanitation is phenomenal. I expected this, but I also expected a reaction within a year or two. It is bound to come, but the knowledge we have is a provision for the emergency, and instead of being discouraged we will be stimulated to successfully cope with the difficulties ahead. After they are passed a steady current will set in, and a favourable breeze of industry that will waft the Maori on to progress in perpetuity. To obtain good and lasting results we only need to keep the Maori interested in himself; and this must be done by some one who would constantly guide and advise him.

CHATHAM ISLANDS.

Since 1902 I have made two visits to these Islands. Upon my first arrival I found the Natives in the thralldom of Te Whiti, the great Taranaki prophet. The report of this visit is attached. For years back this tribe has furnished Parihaka with all the delicacies of Maori taste,