

came a fine art.

To judge from the records which have been obtained from those who recollected the old manners and customs under which the race lived there seems to have been a great deal of what might well have been called social and political organization, and in the course of only a few hundred years the native population increased and spread over the greater part of the then available land. From the very first period of their history they seem to have had marked social distinctions and regulations in their previous island homes, and customs which seem to have had a remarkably widespread area over which they were observed.

As far as one can make out, their legends and principal tales seem to have been transferred with them from one temporary resting place to another, and possibly in each they may have gathered local colour. In New Zealand the songs and stories, closely read, show in many cases the foundation of an old story with local adaptations and additions. The general similarity in the genealogies of the leading lines show evidence of contact with other parts of Polynesia. This evidence is not so clear as it might be, owing to the recent conditions which have arisen and which have in some cases led the Maori to doctor his pedigree in a manner not unknown in England and other countries.

THE COMING OF THE WHITES.

It is a long story now to recount the first coming of the white man and to tell of the extraordinary pleasure with which the greater chiefs protected and, for their own purposes, encouraged it. One has only to read that delightful book by Judge Manning called "Old New Zealand" to get a vivid idea of the coming of the Pakeha and the way he was received. I will not quote, as the whole book is well worth a perusal, not being a dry historical record, nor is it a hard and dry description of a traveller's experiences. The man who wrote that book could feel with the Maori, not for him, as so many do—quite unnecessarily. Of course, the inevitable was bound to occur when "civilized" arms and new methods of fighting with the "iron tubes" were introduced by these people and their intestine strife changed from gentlemanly recreation to sanguinary struggles in which the advantage was with the powder and the gun. A Maori who was covering the retreat of his party before another tribe pursuing them with the death-dealing gun jumped upon a rock amid the flying bullets and called out to the pursuing leader, "Shall the Maori weapons never more drink blood?" This appeal had its effect, and down the guns were thrown for a time, and a fierce engagement took place, under cover of which the main party reached safety.

THE MISSIONARIES.

The vital necessity of obtaining these new weapons to a large extent developed the flax trade as a safe and easy way of earning money. Then came the whaling vessels from all countries, and the orgies which took place upon the beaches of the North introduced to the native a swifter and surer method of race destruction than firearms. Probably the rum barrel stands as the most potent factor in the disintegration of the Maori race. Shortly after this, of course, came the missionaries, and the social revolution which took place among the Maori is one of the most marvellous stories in religious enterprise. How much share these three—firearms, rum, and new religion—had in the events which followed would take books to tell and analyse. Sufficient to say that the polity and social organization of the Maori race fell asunder as if a cord had been cut from a bundle of reeds. Neither law nor order availed much. Every man was as good as another, and it is admitted on all hands that the destroying of the organization of a people is to ensure generally their certain disappearance. Their methods of governing went; their chief was only a chief in name

and his authority was negligible. Then came the period of the Maori wars, in which a handful of Europeans had to establish their position by force. Fortunately they were able to take advantage of the internal confusion amongst the natives, and received valuable assistance from the so-called "loyal native." For nearly one hundred years now land has been acquired from the natives by one means or another, just or unjust, and to a certain extent the property of the remaining natives in certain lands has been recognized, but in very few cases comparatively has it been individualized. The tendency of successive Governments has been to acquire from the natives any land that they are willing to part with at a reasonable price, but, speaking generally, it has hampered the acquisition of land direct from the Maori by other people with regulations securing what they considered to be a fair compensation at the time for the native owners, especially those who consented to lease their lands. A very large number of properties are held on lease from Maori owners, who are able to live in luxury from the rentals of their land.

GOVERNMENT POLICY.

The Government's aim has been to ensure some small provision of land for every Maori. Unoccupied land which was never used or cultivated by the Maori is now actually exhausted, and in the interests of the country it seems that something will have to be done to force the Maori owners to make more use of the land still in their possession than they do at present. Amongst fertile fields and pastures may be seen blocks of native land carrying fern, bramble, and briar. Earnest efforts have been made to solve this problem, and the time is now nearly come when the Maori landowners must assume equal responsibilities towards the State with the New Zealanders who are now the dominant race in New Zealand—children of the Empire of Great Britain.

The Maori population of New Zealand is now taken at about forty thousand—a very different proportion from the times we have left behind us. Whilst on this point I should like to quote from a letter written by one who had every opportunity to know the Maori of the war times and the Maori of the present. Sir John Gorst was in the Waikato and was ejected by the Maori of that time, and quite recently he visited New Zealand again. He says:—

New Zealand has the advantage, the peculiar advantage, of the presence of the Maori race. When I left New Zealand I left it in despair. The war was just breaking out in the Waikato, and I thought the Maori, to whom I was greatly attached, were doomed to extermination; but I have come back after 40 years to find the most generous spirit of sympathy on the part of the Pakeha people for the Maori. There is not a trace of the ill-feeling which prevailed in my time and culminated in the great war. I have spoken to people of all classes of society in New Zealand and find no trace whatever of that feeling. On the other hand, amongst the Maori themselves there is much more confidence in the good will, justice, and good feeling of their white neighbours than there was in my time. With the most benevolent intentions we could never get into the feelings of the Maori or get them to believe in the genuineness of what we were doing on their behalf; and you know a technical school was designed at Te Awamutu by Sir George Grey for the Maori, and it was suppressed by violence by Rewi Maniapoto's people, and yet the very same people received me with most extraordinary enthusiasm a few days ago. In that Maori question you have a question which is not completely solved yet, but it is one in which you and your Government have a great opportunity. It is a very distinctive and remarkable feature in your civilization. There is nothing like it in any other country in the world. There are places where less civilized races have been reduced to a kind of servitude, but there is no country in the world where an uncivilized race is treated on equal terms and where more justice and more consideration is shown to them. It is very greatly to the credit of the Dominion, and very greatly to the credit of the people of New Zealand, that they became a nation and set an example to the world, which no people yet has imitated, of the unique position of an uncivilized race living in perfect amity and equality with the civilized race and enjoying all the advantages of civilization.

Numerous efforts have been made to ascertain exactly the present position, so far as numbers are concerned, of the Maori race. It is not an easy matter and is still somewhat doubtful. The most that we can say is that the results of the present system of enumeration show that the numbers have been stationary for some years, but one return of the thirty married couples in the Hawke's Bay district may be interesting as an item which is based on observed facts. These thirty married couples had a total of 113 children. At the time of the return 38 had died and 75 were still living. The

maximum number of children born to one family was 13. On the other hand, there were seven out of the 30 couples who from one cause or another had no children.

INTER-MARRIAGE AND SOCIAL STATUS.

Numerous mixed marriages have taken place and the number of half-castes is large. So far as colour-feeling is concerned, in the sense that it is understood in America or the Cape, there is not the slightest trace of any repugnance or ill-feeling. Numbers of Maoris of both sexes are highly popular in the higher circles, and many of the large estates of the Pakeha have been accumulated by inter-marriage. Those who have more or less native blood in their veins, either as quarter or half castes, and occupy a prominent place in the Dominion are numerous, and the position of Native Minister has been filled by one for more than 20 years. Others have attained to the learned professions and practise as lawyers and doctors and have been associated with the government of the country. So far as education goes, the native colleges turn out young Maoris and half-castes who are well qualified to enter professions and to assist in the business of the country. It must be admitted, however, that there are some Maoris, removed from the immediate effects of education and civilization, who still have a low standard of living and of training the young. It is also true that many of those natives who are trained with considerable care in the European institutions for their benefit drop back in a very short time to the lot of those in the outlying places, and do not, as might be expected, exert a beneficial influence on revisiting their homes. One writer, in treating at length on this subject, says that until means are adopted to help to the betterment of the women, there can be no doubt as to the fate of the native race; but just as the Saxon women at the Conquest managed to save their country and their identity as a people, so will the Maori women save their people if steps are taken to train them in all those aspects of modern domestic and social science, of which they are ignorant and in which progress is essential. Clean living and plain cooking make healthy and happy homes.

Another writer, Archdeacon Walsh, says:—

However humiliating to the self-esteem of the white man, it must be confessed that it is the contact with European civilization that has proved the ruin of the race. From the moment that the Pakeha found a footing in the country, by an inevitable chain of causation the thousands have dwindled into hundreds and the hundreds to tens, until the dying remnant, of lowered physique and declining birth-rate, are the sole representatives of perhaps the finest aboriginal people the world has ever produced.

MAORI ELOQUENCE.

In the olden time the Maori paid very great attention to oratory, and innumerable instances are on record of the effect of great speeches made at a critical moment. The manner in which old-time speeches were made was, of course, somewhat different from those we are accustomed to, but all the rushing up and down and wealth-of-gesture was to fix the attention of the audience. They were not lengthy speeches, but very often drew largely upon the national stock of proverbs, many of which had a meaning well known at the time, but have since lost their appropriateness or their meaning. As speakers and public orators

at the present time, under vastly different circumstances and bound by the rules and customs of European debate, they still make their mark even on the floor of Parliament House. A recent Native Minister, Sir James Carroll, has for many years been noted for the fluency and attractive nature of his speeches and his marvellous command of language. Mr. Ngata, a young lawyer of the native race, has also shown, both in the Courts and in Parliament, that he possesses a pleasing manner of speech even to a modern European audience. In the nature and composition of their formal documents or letters the Maori are often highly poetic and full of appropriate metaphor. The following extract is translated from a letter sent by a highly celebrated chief, Tamahau Mahupuku, now passed away, to the Native Minister on the occasion of the presentation of a carved native house to the Government eight or nine years ago:—

Our hearts were filled with genuine joy, and justly so, when we heard that you had introduced a Bill to Parliament the object of which is to lay down an authoritative law to provide for the collecting, preserving, gathering together, of the art treasures and ensuring the safety of specimens of the handiwork of our ancestors who have passed away from this world—to be kept together in one place, and a barrier placed against their removal oversea. That is a step that will cause the minds of the people to reflect on the past, and to cherish, preserve, and venerate the science of their ancestors who are now sleeping in the bosom of their mother, Papa-tua-Nuku [Mother Earth, wife of Rangi, the sky]. Such a sentiment stirs the soul, and causes even the eyes that are blind to see, strengthens the muscles that have become benumbed, gives strength to arms and fingers; and the dormant mind is awakened so that it may act with determination, caution, and discrimination, bringing back old-time recollections to the heart that has almost forgotten the history of the voyaging hither of the floating vessels of our ancestors—great canoes which brought them from distances great, distances vast, distances stretching far away back to where flushed the first dawn of creation when life first breathed into matter—across ocean's mighty billows, through the raging of winds, the downpour of rains, through mighty tempests. It would have been impossible for the faint-hearted beings of the present day to follow the awe-inspiring path traversed by those canoes when crossing the ocean hitherward. Their safe arrival at last was due to the strength in the hands that wielded the paddles and the keen, observant eye to note the signs in the heavens as they pursued their course through calm and tempest. It was the discretion in their hearts that enabled them successfully to carry out their plans, and their strength of purpose helped them firmly to retain the knowledge which past experience had taught them. Their guides were the secret signs above, going by which they were enabled at length to reach this fair and beautiful land, where they were to become the people of the soil and accord hospitable welcome to subsequent arrivals when the appointed time came for receiving such—fair skin, light brown skin, and dark skin, yet of one common blood, and therefore alike; and now through this gathering together of these several races they have become blended into one, as other people have in other places under the sun. Thus we progress and go on progressing. Protecting care and truth have met together, righteousness and permanent peace have saluted each other. Righteousness looks down from heaven and sees that truth is progressing upon the earth, and that it hath laid its mantle over the two races, who are now living together as brethren in this their fair and beautiful homeland. All these things cover a wide field for the mind to dwell upon and to have put into shape as something to leave to the after-ages, and your Act, O Minister, should cause this to be done. . . .

This is a good example of their modern style of composition, in which original history and mythology are blended with the scriptural metaphors and expressions which at once captivated the imagination of their fathers in what may be called the missionary period.

Whatever may be the ultimate fate of the remnant of the race, their history, manners, and customs will live on in the annals of New Zealand as that of a people who, although isolated from surrounding spheres of development, worked out a complex scheme of social organization and possessed a conception of immaterial things superior, from a European point of view, to the rest of the people of the Pacific.