

"24th.—In this week's paper, we find a letter on the subject, but by whom written we have not the slightest idea. Its statement of the general question, if intended to be such, is, in our opinion, not quite a correct one. It is rather too single-sided to be complete, owing apparently to the subject being viewed at the time of writing only from one direction: whereas it is of so comprehensive a nature as to require to be examined on every side. It is composed of parts, which, though distinct, are not separate; and though what the writer says about the slaughter is quite correct, yet, as to the *final settlement* of the question, it will be found to have as much, if not more, to do with *land* than with *blood*. But we will explain ourselves. The crime itself was *murder*, which stands on its own merits, and about which there can be no two opinions; but the originating *cause* of that crime was the disposal of land to the Government, to which the parties themselves had rightful claims.

"Had the slaughter been inflicted as the punishment of adultery, or any other offence, then the matter could be settled at once, by seizing the person of the transgressor. But the same remedy will not apply to every disease; and in this case the disease is of altogether a different character. It is one of *conspiracy*, a determination on the part of the strong to send the weak to the wall, and to allow of no other interference with their despotic will, not even from the British Government. They have repeatedly declared that no person whatever shall sell any land to the north of "Waitaha" without the forfeiture of his life; and, if you try it to-morrow, you will find the same consequences ensue, whether at Puketapu or Waitara. On the other hand, our Natives hold that they have a positive right to dispose of their waste lands, either to the Government or to some other party, and that they ought to be protected in the exercise of that right.

"As to any arrangement about *land*, as between the conflicting parties—why, that is the very basis on which we have been proceeding all along, ever since the return of Mr. Commissioner McLean. If the relatives themselves submit to a compensation in *banishment* and *property* from the ringleaders, it is not for a minister to cry aloud for *blood*, until every other offer has been made to, and rejected by, the guilty parties. It has hitherto been our duty to attend to this land question, and to endeavour to arrange matters on this ground alone. Therefore, we were quite within our duty when we expressed the opinion that, if Bishop Selwyn could effect some such arrangement as the one alluded to, with his own people, the question might be finally settled.

"There are two principles in the acquisition of Native lands which can never be overlooked in this country—1st, That they be obtained *equitably*: that is, not only in accordance with our English views of equity, but also according to the plans which have hitherto been invariably adopted by the Government, and admitted by themselves. 2ndly, That they be obtained *peaceably*: for, after all shall be said that can be said, and every argument expended, we still maintain with obstinacy (as the settlers well know we ever have done) that, unless the lands of this country are to be obtained by peaceful measures, they are not worth the bare possession. But let us not be misunderstood. We mean peaceful, as towards the real owners of the property. If other parties presume to interfere to prevent the sale and occupancy, having no just right to do so, that is another thing altogether, and is to be dealt with on its own merits. Whilst we act justly towards them, they must be brought to act justly towards each other, otherwise the greatest *tyrant* will soon become the greatest *chief*, and a premium will thus be paid for insubordination and injustice. Here is a party saying "We will not live with Europeans ourselves, neither shall they reside with our relatives: for, though the land is theirs, they shall not be allowed to sell it." *Ihāia* is the greatest landowner of his tribe, and yet for nine years he has been subject to this despotism; until at one time he and his people were getting quite alienated from the Government, and had become so exasperated at not being allowed to bring their own property to the same market as other Natives, that they determined and *endeavoured* to put Europeans in possession, in opposition to the law. This fact will be in the remembrance of everyone, as it was taken into the Resident Magistrate's Court. We do not believe that there are *ten men* in the settlement who would wish to add to its extent by an act of injustice towards the Natives; but at the same time we hope that it will not be forgotten that injustice can be committed towards those who *wish to sell*, as well as towards those who *wish to keep*.

"We are of opinion (so long as the other hostile tribes can be kept away) that this matter of *Native right* may be settled *peaceably*, and with justice to all parties. Unless the cure be entire, there is no confidence to be placed in it; and that cure will not be radically sound which does not embrace this subject in all its parts. Much of the land on this side of the Waitara belongs to the consenting party. What does not, could easily be excluded from the sale (but not in *one block*, as recommended and reserved), to its owners, but under its present *Maori title*, with all its disadvantages, and never hereafter to be bought at a higher price than its present value. The rest could then be properly purchased. *Crown titles* given to the Native occupants for their part of it, and the remainder speedily and thickly settled with steady and industrious farmers, who would at once protect, and be protected by, their Maori neighbours. Thus a bloodless victory would be gained over ignorant and unreasonable men; and thus would they be forced, even against their consent, into immediate contact with civilized life.

"Such are our simple views on this difficult subject, and it will not be required that we refer to them again. There is no occasion to say more, and we could not in *justice to our people* say less. Nor in justice to *ourselves*, since much of what we have written has been grossly perverted by certain parties, and made to bear a meaning which neither its etymology would justify nor our consistent and well-known sentiments support. And these misrepresentations they have retailed to the Natives. We are always ready to be *responsible* for what we *do*, or *write*, or *say*; but, beyond that, we beg to be excused. It has been our unfortunate lot, ever since we came into this settlement, to have had more to do, in reality, with the land question than any other single individual unconnected with the Government. And Mr. Commissioner McLean can testify that though the several blocks have