

The reverse is positively the case, for to our ken they appeared to be as jolly and as self-satisfied of their safety, as persons in their position could possibly be. On descending on to the main deck, we found groups of five or six, here and there, intently engaged in a game of draughts, or a Maori adaptation of the game, the board being the same but the moves different; and it was with great glee that the conqueror cleared his opponent's men off the board,—an example of skill in the game which was readily applauded by the other Maoris crouched down beside the players, and who were carefully watching the game. Well scraped and scrubbed decks and bunks, the orderly arrangement of the various appurtenances of bedding and wardrobe, the clean but simple clothing of the prisoners,—which consists of a pair of duck trowsers, a Scotch twilled shirt, and a waistband,—the thorough ventilation of the vessel by port-holes and wind-sails, and the orderly conduct of the prisoners, was pretty clear evidence that Mr. White's management of them is all that could be wished, and that he has displayed an amount of care in studying their health and comfort which the most fastidious Maori sympathisers could not complain of. A large proportion of the prisoners are young men, who were probably training for warriors, and had only smelt powder in the dangerous sense of the expression, since the present war began. These for the most part seemed utterly careless of their position, and grief at their confinement is certainly not a feeling that one would attribute to them. Others again were middle aged men who had probably seen some service; and one of them, a Chief, an intelligent and we may say a somewhat intellectual looking Maori, was pointed out to us as having carried the King flag to the South when the war began. He now, however, acknowledges the error of his ways, and submits cheerfully to the mild punishment he is receiving, by being prevented from doing further mischief. The Maori custom-house officer, who made himself so conspicuous at the time of the seizure of Mr. Gorst's printing plant, was next brought under our notice. He was playing draughts, and a familiar pat on the back from Mr. White, and the words, "He's a great favourite of mine," made the ex-Maori customs' officer look up from his game, and with a happy-go-easy sort of air recognise his friend; and we may say Mr. White seems to be a true friend to them all. If they turn rusty with the wardens, a kindly word from him is received as law. Several other celebrities were pointed out to us, including the great landed proprietor of Waikato, whose name we have not at present at our tongue's end, and who seemed for the time to be—metaphorically—standing upon his dignity, for he was seated under one of the bunks, and apparently more thoughtful than communicative. With very few exceptions, however, there was a cheerfulness amongst the whole of the prisoners which could only be brought about by comfort and good treatment. One good-looking chief, whose expansive forehead and amiable and thoughtful looking countenance bespoke superior intellectual powers, was anxious to know from Mr. White when he would be set at liberty. That gentleman, of course, exercises his judgment in his replies to their various queries, and in this case we understood his reply to be, that there was no prospect of it at present, as William Thompson still continued to make war against the Queen's authority. Covered with his blanket, and reclining on his rough couch in an easy posture, he conversed for some minutes in an apparently earnest tone with Mr. White. While this was going on we scrutinised more closely what we saw around us. Several Maoris were either seated or reclining in their bunks, the most of them good and intelligent looking fellows, and some of whom recognised the presence of a visitor by a polite nod of the head and an offer of their hands, which was as politely acknowledged. The deck of which we are now speaking was the only one that was occupied by the prisoners until a month or two ago, as the lower part of the vessel was used as coal bunkers. The prisoners, however, were so crowded that all the coal except what was used for the vessel was taken out, and Mr. White planned and fitted up a lower deck apartment, which is much more roomy and commodious than the one above it. This is 25 feet wide by 87 feet long, with rows of bunks on each side, the prisoners lying along the breadth of the vessel, and by this addition, Mr. White informs us, that there is accommodation for 350 Maoris on board. It was upon this lower deck that we next descended, and the height between decks being 7 feet 3 inches instead of 5 feet 9 inches as above, locomotion was much easier. If we had a favourable impression of the comfort and cleanliness of the upper deck apartment, the appearance of the lower one was much more calculated to favourably impress us; in fact, we could not speak too highly of the orderly conduct of the ex-rebels themselves, or the careful management which has induced it. Groups of Maoris were seated here and there, some playing at draughts, others sewing their clothes, others lolling on their bunks, and others at full length peering through the port holes at the objects around them; and one, who for a wonder spoke very good English, as few of them do, said he was looking at the steamer. Smoking is a favourite diversion of such of the prisoners as indulge in the weed, but they are not supplied with it by the Government, but receive it in presents. The General made them a present of a case of tobacco, and Judge Johnston sent them 10 lbs. the other day. We were shown a sample of tobacco in the possession of one of them, of native growth, like the twist negrohead, but lighter in colour and much stronger it is said, in flavour. Very few of the prisoners are maimed. One had his arm amputated at the Queen's Redoubt, and another had his arm so fractured that he has lost the use of it. It appears that the skill of a pakcha surgeon is appreciated by some of the Maoris. One young man who wished to get rid of the inconvenience of the deformity of having one toe too many, asked Dr. Sam, the medical attendant, to amputate it, which the doctor did successfully by putting his patient under the influence of chloroform. There is a great difference in the complexions of the prisoners, some being very dark, and others so light that they might be taken for half-castes. There were only two half-castes, however, amongst them; one an intelligent lad of about 13, who was removed to the Catholic College on the North Shore; and another, about 20, who still remains on board. One prisoner has died since he came to the hulk, and a few are now suffering from simple diseases. There are altogether 197 prisoners on board, and three of these were taken at the siege of Orakau, and were only recently brought down. We now append the following particulars, to give the reader an idea of the daily routine on board the hulk. The prisoners are called up at daylight in the morning, according to their numbers, from 1 to 8. These numbers mean divisions, which are named as follows:—No. 1, Ngatihana, 26; 2, Ngatipuhiawe, 25; 3, Tainui, 26; 4, Nagtiteata, 25; 5, Ngatimahuta, 28; 6, Te Ngaungau, 24; 7, Te Kiriwai, 28; 8, Ngatiapakura, 15; the total being 197. On being called, they wash them-