

## Enclosure to No. 36.

## MR. GRACE'S IMPRISONMENT at OPOTIKI.

Before leaving Auckland for Opotiki and on the passage, Mr Volkner frequently expressed his confidence in the Opotiki Natives. He was rather sorry that Mrs. Volkner was not with him; and fully intended her to follow by the next trip of the vessel.

We arrived off the Opotiki River at about half-past nine p.m. A prophecy, as we afterwards learned had been put forth, that a vessel full of goods would come up the river, and be followed by one of gunpowder.

March 1st.—Immediately on crossing the bar, I observed at a distance a very large body of Natives assembled on the side of the river; I pointed them out to Mr Volkner. In sailing a little further it was evident there was considerable excitement. As we approached the landing place it was clear to me that we were amongst the Pai Marire fanatics. Mr. Levy's brother now in a low voice warned us from the bank to be careful as there was danger.

From the time of crossing the bar return was out of the question; all we could do was to go on to the landing place, and before the anchor was dropped the vessel and all on board were in possession of the Natives. Mr. S. Levy had not been allowed to come down the river to give us any warning. We were told by several not to go on shore. After a while a tall Native, belonging to Taranaki, called Rapata, came on board, and in an authoritative manner, after everything had been examined, stood up and called out to the people on shore of what the cargo consisted.

We remained on board until about three p.m., during which time there was great excitement on shore. Tiwai told us we had come into the "Lion's mouth." We also learned that Mr. Volkner's house had been plundered, and that the European's stores had been examined, and a price fixed by the Natives at which the goods were to be sold.

We were now all ordered on shore; this indeed appeared a dangerous moment. On landing one old fellow made a rush on Mr. Volkner with a rope in his hand, but was pushed on one side. We were all marched off, except the captain, to beside the Roman Catholic chapel. Here we remained standing for about two hours. The Natives in the meantime were holding a meeting; while the women employed themselves in dancing round us and making the most horrid faces and gestures. The greatest excitement in the meantime was going on in the Catholic chapel, the people dancing and shouting. At length the same Taranaki Native before mentioned with others came to us, and after some talk with him about a house to rest in, he had us all taken to one in an enclosure, about 300 yards from where we were standing. It was a miserably dirty place; we could do nothing but make the best of it. The next thing was to procure some food, and our blankets for sleeping.

We now learned that the vessel had been rifled, and everything removed from her by the Natives; that the things had been all bundled into the store, and that the Natives had the key. At this time there were plenty to watch us, but we were not under guard. The sailors had been to the store and had procured a few of their things, but they returned without finding any of ours.

It was now nearly dark. Mr. Volkner and myself with the sailors returned to the store, and found as had been said, that the outer door was locked and the key taken away. We went into the adjoining room; Mr. S. Levy was there. We procured a candle. There was a small door out of this room into the store, and after a good deal of searching, succeeded in finding all our things, and had them conveyed to the house where we were to stay. After partaking of our evening meal in a very rough way, we read the 7th Psalm, the one appointed for this evening, and had prayers. The poor sailors joined us very heartily. After this when we retired to rest, these good-natured fellows gave us the best end of the little room. We did all that we could to comfort one another. We lay down to rest but not to sleep. Again and again did Mr. Volkner and myself congratulate each other on being together. During the night we went out once or twice; we were not locked nor were there any guards about the house. Had preparations been made, escape would have been easy. Until after midnight we could hear the greatest commotion and shouting going on in the Roman Catholic chapel.

March 2nd.—Great excitement going on outside. We had prayers together, and read the 9th Psalm. Heard they were taking Mr. Levy's things out of the store, which had been put in the evening before. We began to think that money would satisfy them, and agreed to go and speak to Captain Levy; our idea was to add something to what the Natives had already taken, and propose it as a ransom for us all. Mr. Volkner spoke and said "we ought not to consider money if we could save life." The captain declined to have anything to do with us in the matter. We went away dejected, when poor dear Volkner said "we must trust in God." We returned to our prison-house and had prayer all together again; we read the 10th Psalm. After this the tall Taranaki Native Rapata and another (a prophet) came to see us; just now some grapes were brought to us. Henare brought also a quantity of bacon and other things belonging to Mr. Volkner, and a kit of potatoes. While eating the grapes with them a long conversation took place, but to no purpose; at the end one of them said to Mr. Volkner in broken English "I see you are frightened." At this time they evidently knew what was to take place.) On leaving they begged two white shirts, and told us we should soon be at liberty. My dear friend gave them a shirt, but I declined. They told us that the meeting for which we had been waiting would take place in a short time; we quite believed that Patara had returned.

After these men had left, another Native named Heremita (apparently known to Mr. Volkner) came and asked us to give him all our things to take care of. He took them and put them into a box and departed.

It was now about one o'clock, when we had prayer and reading for the last time; the portion read was the 14th Psalm. My poor dear friend offered a most earnest prayer. During the morning I could not help noticing the calmness of his manner and the beautiful smile that was on his face. We thought things looked hopeful. Mr. Volkner's last act for his people was one of kindness: he was often the medium of communication to take down the half-yearly amount of a legacy to a Native woman, the relict of a respectable European. About half-an-hour before he was taken I saw him pay