

“starved, and worried by the half heartiness of each tribe with which he sought refuge, he wandered about the land, and was finally captured by one of his own race. He was calmly and deliberately tried, according to all the forms of law; counsel urged every available plea on his behalf, but he was convicted on the clearest possible testimony, and the ordinary course of law has been followed. It is impossible that this example cannot leave some serious impress on the Native mind. It must teach them that the oft-quoted accusation, that the Government of New Zealand does not execute its laws, is unfounded. It must teach them that if we choose to allow justice to slumber for a while, we are only making Time our ally, and waiting patiently for the inevitable retribution. The total absence of all passion or excitement with respect to Kereopa’s trial and execution will argue strongly for the majesty of the law. The Natives will see and understand that there is no wantonness in our actions against them; and they may perhaps discover that we are guided by some principle intelligible even to their minds. The sentence in Kereopa’s case seems to have received the approval of the Natives themselves as to its fairness and justice. He was a mischief-maker and misleader, and the crime he committed had not even the excuse of revenge for some imagined grievance. It was unprovoked and cruel even in Maori eyes, and he does not appear to have had the sympathy of any one of his own race.”

7. The apprehension of Kereopa, and his surrender to justice by his own countrymen, are undoubtedly calculated to convey an impressive warning. They show that any Maoris who may hereafter be guilty of similar crimes, though they may lurk for years in the mountains and forests of the interior, practically inaccessible to Europeans, will, sooner or later, be captured by the clans which are (in their own phrase) “in arms for the Queen and the law.” Again, the circumstances of this case are a strong proof of the influence which the Colonial Government has now acquired over our Maori allies, and of the softened manners of the Native race. As Kereopa had been concerned in the murder of many members of the loyal tribes, he would, when captured by the clansmen of his victims, until lately, have been, according to Maori custom,\* forthwith shot, or hanged on the nearest tree, and with tortures and mutilations similar to those inflicted by himself. But it will be seen that the orders of the Colonial authorities to the Native contingent were strictly obeyed by the immediate surrender of Kereopa to the nearest civil magistrate, to be dealt with by the ordinary civil tribunals in due course of law.

8. It is with much pleasure that I now proceed to inform your Lordship that, since the condemnation of Kereopa, I have, with the advice of my Ministers, determined on remitting the remainder of the punishment of the fifty-eight (58) Maoris who were still (several having been previously released) in confinement at Dunedin, under the sentences passed upon them for rebellion by the Supreme Court in 1869 and 1870, as was fully reported in my Despatches Nos. 113, 141, and 153, of 1869,† and No. 91, of 1870. It will be remembered that these men were convicted of high treason, as having been taken in arms against the Queen; but that, since they were not proved to have been directly concerned in murders or other atrocities, their capital sentences were commuted, according to the measure of the guilt of each individual, to various terms of penal servitude, in no instance exceeding seven years, “on the understanding that there will be, after careful consideration of the special circumstances in each case, a further remission; and that if tranquillity is restored with a reasonable prospect of permanence, and if these prisoners behave well, a mitigation of their sentences will be recommended.”‡ The conduct of these men while in gaol has been good; and when I was last month at Wanganui, Te Kapa (Major Kemp) and the other loyal chiefs who had taken them in action, addressed me to the effect that these prisoners had been sufficiently punished, and that they (the loyal chiefs) would be responsible for their peaceable behaviour for the future if released. Mr. McLean

\* The *utu* of the Maoris corresponds to the *vendetta* of the Corsicans.

† Printed in the Papers on New Zealand presented to the Imperial Parliament in April, 1870, pages 105, 157, and 175.

‡ See Governor of New Zealand to Secretary of State, No. 153, of 24th November, 1869.