

missionary; it is only an adjunct to his—in his opinion, at least—far more important work, and that the operations of the two missionaries alluded to extend from Wellington to the upper part of the Manawatu River (a river from which I may mention, by-the-by, there was last year exported £5,000 of produce in flour, timber, and flax), a distance of 120 or 130 miles, including at least forty villages. The Natives of Otaki probably know what suits their interest better than those who, with very little or no information beyond their own immediate spheres, presume to animadvert on their proceedings. If they find it more to their advantage to rear cattle and pigs, to grow maize and barley and oats, and to prepare flax, which is both shipped in the raw state and in wool-lashing from this place to Sydney, it would not be easy to show why they should abandon these for the purpose of growing wheat as extensively as the Natives of Motueka.

I have found it difficult to ascertain the drift of the paragraph beginning, "Indolence is the besetting vice," &c. Do the writers wish to assert that slothfulness is encouraged by missionaries at Otaki? If so, I can only give a peremptory denial to such an unfounded assertion, and say that, whatever charges can be brought against the people of this place, the very last that could be brought against them, by any one having the slightest knowledge of their habits and the least regard for truth, would be that of indolence. I am not acquainted with half-a-dozen idle persons here. Again, what is intended by such a sentence as this: "We should entertain a better opinion and a better hope of a Native who never entered a chapel, but had his two or three acres of wheat and a good barn, than we should of one who might attend the church service twice a day but spent the rest of his time in lounging in the sun or galloping a broken-down mare about the country." If it proceeded from professed heathens, who knew nothing of Christianity and its effects, one might suppose that such a remark as this had been occasioned by some perverted account of it. Is there any antagonism between Christianity and agriculture? or, if the writers please, between that Christianity taught by the missionaries and the cultivation of wheat? Or does it necessarily follow that, because a man attends the church service twice a day, he must be idle during the rest of it? If the writers had any knowledge of this place, they would be aware that there are here many Natives who "attend the church service twice a day," and, notwithstanding, have "two or three acres of wheat and a good barn." But the remark is contemptible for the ignorance which it manifests on more points than one. Does food grow spontaneously here? Have the Natives of this country nothing to do in order to obtain subsistence that they can afford to lounge in the sun "all day"? Is not the life of both men and women a life of toil? By what figure of speech then can these laborious people be said to pass the "day lounging in the sun"? Is not such language as this the index of some other feeling than anxiety for the improvement of the Natives? Does it not evince such hostility to their real welfare as must throw discredit on the motives which actuate the writers? The Natives of this place, actuated by higher motives than their maligners can appreciate or perhaps even conceive, have, on removing to their new village and providing themselves with hastily-built houses, devoted themselves in the first place to the erection of a church—a building which gives evidence of something more than mere outward profession of religion: a building the labour bestowed on which is estimated by the Government Surveyor—a gentleman who, being a Romanist, can have no object in exaggeration—at what he considered the lowest rate, £2,500. Is such a work as this a confirmation of the truth of the remark, "So long as slothfulness in business continues the prominent feature of their character but little reliance is to be placed in the assurances of the fervency of spirit to which their well-meaning but too often not very judicious patrons are in the habit of appealing as evidence of the success of their tutelage"? But the charge of indolence could never have been brought against the Natives of Otaki except by persons utterly ignorant of them; and the fact of their having raised their crops by manual labour without a plough, if it be a proof of their want of civilisation (and if so, it must prove the same against nearly all the settlers in the vicinity of Wellington who have forest land to contend with), is at least no proof of their indolence and slothfulness.

There are some other remarks contained in the letter to which I must briefly allude. Otaki is described as a "Government village," and under "Government influence." It is difficult to deal with these very vague statements. I am not aware that there has been any Government influence exerted here that has not been exerted elsewhere; indeed, I am quite at a loss to know to what allusion is made. A grant was indeed made last year in aid of the school, but I cannot conceive that that can be supposed to have had any connection with the amount of wheat sown the previous season. Besides this, three or four chiefs of this place, in common with others elsewhere, received a few presents from the Government some years ago for slight services rendered during the war. It is stated that a "ground survey of a village or town has been effected by the Government;" but did not those who made this statement know that the same has been done for several other places, and that Motueka is included among them? Motueka is nearer to the "Government influence," being only seventeen or eighteen miles from Nelson, than Otaki, which is fifty miles from Wellington, although there is a Resident Magistrate twelve miles distant, at Waikanae. What meaning then is to be attached to the expressions, "Government influence" and "Government village"? Surely those who use such expressions must be under some misapprehension; they could not have intended a wilful misrepresentation.

There is now only one subject remaining on which I deem it needful to say a few words more. As an instance of the slight advance made in civilisation, it is said, "The fence which surrounds the pa at Waikanae continues to this day ornamented (if it may be so called) with a series of gigantic figures of the most obscene design, within a mile or so of the missionary's house, within a hundred yards of the church, and not five hundred yards from the habitation of the Resident Magistrate." From this language it would hardly be believed that the missionary's house is twelve miles from the pa; that the pa has long since been deserted and the church likewise (it being their intention to remove the latter and reconstruct it), three-fourths of the Natives having gone to Taranaki, and the remaining fourth having removed to a place two miles distant. The only pa inhabited which at all answers the description given is a small one belonging to a man who is the most extensive grower of wheat on this side of the Strait, but who unfortunately does not attend the church services "twice a day," or at all.