would here remark that the practice of holding sittings of the Native Land Court in European centres is one that very much impairs the health of the Natives, as their manner of life on those occasions, which are frequently protracted, lays the seeds of disease that eventually cut them off at a comparatively early age. The expenses, too, are often ruinous to them through their having to part with their interests in land to meet liabilities they have incurred while waiting for their business to be called on.

The health of the Natives in this county still continues fairly good; the only complaint calling for special notice being that of *la grippe*, which, so far as I could learn, left no evil results. Two leading chiefs—namely, the Hon. Wi Tako Ngatata, M.L.C., and Henare te Puni, died since the last census was taken. The funeral of the former was largely attended by European residents from Wellington and its neighbourhood.

Many of the Maoris in this county live in wooden houses, and, as many of them are in the receipt of rents from their European neighbours, no doubt those of them who have small farms find such receipts a sensible addition to their incomes. Unfortunately, however, the uncertainty of the present season, owing to the continued wet, has done some damage to their oat crops. The communistic habits of these people are a great bar to their social advancement; instances, however, are known where the Maori has freed himself from such habits and occupied his own run or farm with credit and success.

Generally speaking, the diseases the Maoris are subject to are those of the respiratory organs, and, as it has been observed that once attacked they soon succumb, it would appear, therefore, that there was no reserve for Nature to call upon, and would lead to the conclusion that the Maori of the present day does not possess the vigorous constitution of his ancestors. In former times they lived on the tops of the hills and high ground, were clad with mats that protected them from the weather; whereas now they live where they best can get the desired requisites of wood and water with the least exertion, and as such are found in low-lying places, often very damp and wet, and where the drainage is to instead of from the place of abode, the natural result is fever and pulmonary complaints.

Some very valuable and pertinent suggestions in connection with the preceding remarks are to be found in a little work by J. H. Pope, Esq., Inspector of Native Schools, entitled, "Health for the Maori."* The transition of the Maori to the condition of our modern civilisation has been so sudden that a predisposition to pulmonary complaints is induced, and the like effect has already been commented upon in connection with our own race. In a review of Dr. Koch's cure, a writer says, under the heading "The March of Civilisation, and of Consumption:" "My theory is that consumption is the result of certain inducing causes in modern civilisation; as civilisation advances, consumption increases. Fifty years ago there were classes and districts which were practically free from consumption. Butchers, for instance, seldom had it, and the Highlands were exempt. But now consumption is beginning to be at home there—Why? Because the Highlands are becoming more civilised. Look, again, at savage races. Some of the missionary records are very instructive. At one station the missionaries took the 'savages' out of their healthy life and put them into clothes. A tendency to consumption was at once developed. They dropped the clothes, and the tendency disappeared." Seeing, then, the effect of modern civilisation in the savage, how much greater is it intensified when we add to that confinement, such as our native prisoners are subject to, who, while they receive every possible care, kindness, and attention, pine for freedom and droop. Confinement to them means more than it does to their white brethren—the product of modern civilisation, and should, I venture to think, be taken into consideration when sentence is passed on them. It is not punishment in such a case but the infliction of great cruelty. It is through having had opportunities of observing its effects that I have referred to this matter here. When we bear in mind the manner of life of a barbarous people during many centuries, we ought not to expect a sudden change towards civilisation in a short period as is the case with the Maori. I fear that we expect too much from these people in their present transition state, and when we measure them by our own standard, allowances ought to be made in their favour. In this connection we should call to remembrance the slow progress in civilisation which was made by our own forefathers in Britain.

In a recent article on "The African Element in America," which may be taken as treating of a cognate subject, the writer, whose words I quote, says: "In the position of dependent people, they must slowly and painfully win their way to the lessons in the art of self-government and of associated action, which, with like toil and pain, have been won by those peoples who removed their ancestors from the wilds of Africa. It is clear from his past history the negro seems clearly to be capable of winning his way upward in the same lines of advance as have been traversed by the whites. The problem of this advance is one of exceeding difficulty. To accomplish the task it needs more than the helpful good-will, it requires the devoted aid of our own race. It may be well that in this duty, which the sordid and short-sighted action of our forefathers imposed upon us, our people are to find the noblest field for the exercise and development of their highest capacities."

I have, &c.,

The Under-Secretary, Native Department, Wellington. GEORGE H. DAVIES.

*A translation of this work has been supplied to the Native Schools, and it has also been freely circulated amongst the Maoris.—G.H.D.]