

More Light on the Maori Wars

WAITARA! The old word, once so often on our lips, now of the past. To my mind it embodied principles, and still it sounds like a trumpet cry, bursting out of the sepulchre of the past. You must write me a letter on Waitara; I do not ask it upon personal grounds, but that truth may be known.—Sir Frederick Weld to Mr. Justice Richmond, August 4, 1878.

THE Taranaki Wars began at Waitara in 1860 and were not settled for ten years. The fighting spread through the North Island to the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and East Coast, and cost the colony many lives and millions of pounds. The wars were disastrous for the Taranaki settlers. Their homes were burnt down, their crops destroyed, and their cattle and sheep left to wander and starve in the bush. They were equally disastrous for the Maoris, and led to the wholesale confiscation of Maori land by the Government.

A so far unpublished account of the war and its background is contained in the private papers and intimate journals of two of the principal Taranaki families involved—the Richmonds and the Atkinsons. Sir Harry Atkinson later became Prime Minister of New Zealand, and C. W. Richmond became Minister of Native Affairs and a famous judge. These letters and diaries are to be edited by Dr. G. H. Scholefield and published with the aid of a subsidy from the State Literary Fund. The collection should prove of great interest for their detailed picture of conditions at the time, and for the light they throw on one of the most controversial periods of our history. The facts of the cause and outbreak of the war have not yet been discovered, and C. W. Richmond, at the time a member of Stafford's Ministry, has been held partly responsible by some historians for setting off the fighting.

A portion of the correspondence is bound in 40 volumes in the General Assembly Library in Wellington. The letters were collected by Mary and Emily Richmond, the daughters of C. W. Richmond, who hoped that in doing so they would, among other things, help to vindicate the part he had played in the war. The collection includes letters by the Hon. J. C. Richmond, artist, engineer, and statesman, Governor Gore Browne, Alfred Domett, Stafford, and others of the leading figures of the time.

The two families were intermarried, and came to New Zealand between 1849 and 1853. A valuable section of the papers deals with family life in the 'fifties and 'sixties, especially as it is revealed in the journals of Jane Maria Richmond, a highly intelligent and aggressive woman who had a cultivated circle of friends in England to whom she wrote at great length.

The Gentlemen Colonists

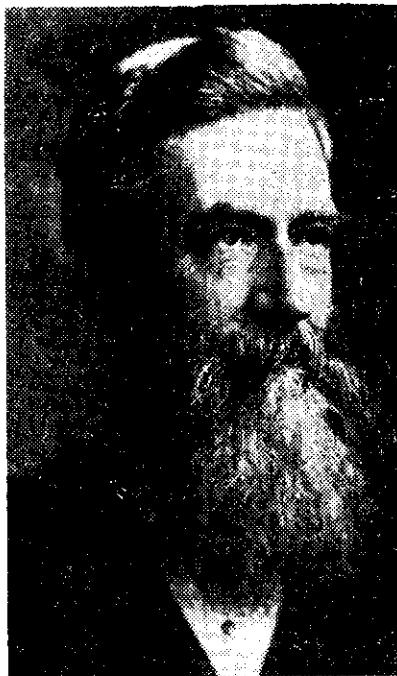
The papers fall into four main groups. The first covers the years 1821 to 1849, and consists of discussion of life in England, where the Richmonds were members of the privileged upper middle class. There were three boys in the family, all trained for professions: Christopher, a lawyer, James, an engineer, and Henry, a scientist who was studying under Faraday. The difficulties of life in the Hungry Forties, even among the well-to-do, are revealed

in their correspondence, and this group of letters also contains references to Carlyle, Wordsworth, Clough, Macaulay and other literary figures.

On the voyage the output of letters and journals continues without a break. We read of James Richmond spending "the great part of the afternoon in the fore-top with Plato," reading Dieffenbach, and studying a Maori dictionary. His reaction to the conditions at Auckland, where they arrived after four months, is contained in this sentence: "The gentlemen colonists (well-dressed men) spit on the carpet as they smoke their filthy little short pipes; they lie in Yankee attitudes on the sofa, one man occupying space meant for four, whilst his neighbours, even ladies, sit on hard, straight-backed chairs."

Dilatory Maoris

The family buy land at New Plymouth for about ten shillings an acre and proceed to cut down the bush, and sow crops and build houses. Maria and the Atkinsons arrive in a later boat and settle near by. This is how Maria describes the Maoris: "The Maoris are like grown-up children in everything; their bargains are very shrewd, and their suspiciousness is I dare say warranted by the conduct of many Europeans. They are most provokingly dilatory. Of course, time is no object to a man that sleeps half his nights in the fern, lives on potatoes, kumara and maize with wild pork once a month." But on the whole they find their life wonderful after



SIR HARRY ATKINSON

"The best captain of militia in New Zealand"

England. They are enraptured with the climate, and enjoy working and building in the wilderness.

The farming proceeds slowly, and the estates are called grandly "Hurworth"

and "Merton." Maria marries Arthur Atkinson in 1854, and by this time, after the accounts of house-warmings, parties, dances and picnics in the bush or at the Sugar Loaves, a warlike note becomes noticeable in the letters. There were less than 3000 settlers occupying 63,000 acres at New Plymouth, and there was not enough land for new arrivals. The Maoris, 1750 of whom held two million acres, were also becoming reluctant to sell.

A Splendid Tract of Land

"I ought to tell of the grand Maori meetings last week, but have no time," Maria notes in her journal. "They terminated most satisfactorily for Taranaki, by the acquisition of a splendid tract of land, as large as the whole of the land before in the possession of the Europeans. There seems nothing now to retard the progress of this settlement. Let no one hesitate coming now from the fear of a want of land. Everyone is in great spirits at the purchase, and I am sure those are glad who did not stop in Auckland."

But by August, 1854, she is writing of those feuds between the Maoris over the sale of land to the settlers which marked the real beginnings of the Taranaki wars.

The men of both families are drawn into public life in the Provincial Council of Taranaki and the General Assembly. C. W. Richmond becomes Minister of Native Affairs and later J. C. Richmond became Colonial Secretary. The disputes over land and Native policy are now accompanied by graphic accounts

(continued on next page)

LORD RUTHERFORD

The Boy from Spring Grove

ONE of Lord Rutherford's brothers is still alive today, and he remembers his childhood in Nelson as a time of rustic poverty, when the only money their father handled was the sixpence he put in the plate on a Sunday. J. G. Rutherford, now 79, lives in New Plymouth, and listeners will hear his voice in the NZBS programme, *The Boy from Spring Grove*, a dramatisation of the famous scientist's boyhood, in which those who knew him as a child and a schoolboy describe their memories of him until he went to university at 17. This programme is being broadcast in connection with the Rutherford Memorial Appeal, and will be heard first from 2YA at 3.30 p.m. this Sunday, June 3.

There were nine children in the Rutherford household. J. G. Rutherford was only 13 months younger than Ernest, and was closer to him than any of the others in the family. He describes their early experiences at Spring Grove and Foxhill, where their father, a Scotsman, had a small farm. They helped to keep the family going by splitting matai stumps for firewood, milking the cows and gathering fruit and honey, which was put down in large stone jars.

He describes Rutherford's early interest in electricity, when on the night of a great storm during which trees were wrenched up and horses and cattle killed by lightning, Ernest stood on the verandah of their old homestead counting the seconds between lightning flashes

and thunder to discover how far away the flashes were. He tells of the tragic drowning of two of their brothers in the Marlborough Sounds, an event which drove Ernest deeper into his studies, and which he never forgot. At school Rutherford was helped by sympathetic masters who recognised his outstanding ability in all his subjects. They helped him to win the scholarships that took him on to Nelson College, where a portrait of him by a famous artist now hangs on a wall above a glass case in which are preserved his report cards and other mementos of his days there.

Rutherford's mother Martha was the daughter of a brilliant mathematician who died in Essex at an early age. From her tolerance of his early experiments with gunpowder and electricity, and from his father's example of persistence and hard work he drew the impetus which made him one of the world's greatest research scholars, president for many years of the Royal Society, winner of the Nobel Prize, and above all an inspired leader of other scientists. His researches established not only the existence of radio-active change, but the electrical structure of matter and the nuclear nature of the atom.

Rutherford at Cambridge

Something of the impact of Rutherford's personality as a research leader when he was Cavendish professor at Cambridge University is described in a talk by Dr. G. T. P. Tarrant, of Canterbury University College, who worked

under him as a student. This, an outstanding talk, will be broadcast from 1YA, 2YA, 4YA, 2YZ, 3YZ and 4YZ at 9.15 p.m. on Friday, June 8.

The Rutherford Memorial Fund was conceived by the Royal Society, London, to provide Rutherford Scholarships for research by British post-graduate students in the natural sciences (preferably experimental physics). The sum of £100,000 is aimed at, and part of the money will be used to provide for a Rutherford Memorial Lecture to be delivered at intervals in British Universities; at least one in three of them in New Zealand.



J. G. RUTHERFORD, who describes the boyhood of his brother, Lord Rutherford of Nelson, in "The Boy from Spring Grove"

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