

times the number of men which the whole neighborhood, for a distance of two or three days' journey, can now produce. And as, in those times of constant war, the natives as a rule slept in their hill-forts with closed gates, the bridges over the trenches removed, and the ladders of the terraces drawn up, it is evident that the inhabitants of each fort, though numerous, consisted only of the population of the country in its close vicinity.

In addition to this proof of a higher former population the following may be briefly mentioned: the large number of houses in those abandoned hill-forts, as evidenced by the fire-places, composed of four flat stones sunk on their edges into the ground; the vast tracts of cultivated lands that are now mere wildernesses, with the draining-ditches and other evidences of former thought and toil; and the great number of large kumara-pits that are found in the centre of extensive tracts of uncultivated country whose natural productions would now scarcely sustain a dozen inhabitants. Density of population or defensive requirements evidently led to the cultivation of inferior lands in the days when the Maori race was strong. The pendulum of Maori life, then and for long afterwards, swung wearily on from offence to reprisal, never reaching an equilibrium. The 'fine old English gentlemen' who perforated each other with bullets from hair-triggered pistols had not a nicer sensibility than had the Maori warrior regarding 'that species of honor which weighs insults rather than injuries'. 'Utu', or the 'lex talionis'—the grim law of revenge—was to the brown-skinned man the 'suprema lex', the highest expression of human wisdom. And, somehow, accounts could never be accurately adjusted between tribe and tribe. War and disease kept the population down. But the great slaughter came with the musket. That was a fateful day for the Maori race when Hongi, a Methodist convert of the Ngapuhi (Bay of Islands), visited England, and returned home by Sydney laden with presents from King George. The presents were sold in Sydney. With the proceeds of the sale, chief Hongi purchased three hundred muskets and a large quantity of ammunition. He then came home and, at the head of three thousand warriors, proceeded to settle accounts with tribesmen near and far. Hongi and his barking Pakeha weapons did unexampled slaughter and struck terror into the heart of Maoridom.

Thereafter, the possession of muskets became a matter of life and death. A frantic competition set up. Every effort was made by the tribesmen to attract ships to the shores of New Zealand, and the villagers toiled and sometimes starved in the swamps for the ton or half-ton of dressed flax—scraped by hand with a shell—that was the price of a cheap firelock in those times. Cultivation was neglected in the desperate rush to stave off extermination. The long hours in the flax-swamps induced disease. And meantime the musket was doing its deadly work all over the Colony. From the introduction of the musket till 1840, New Zealand was one great battlefield. Hongi, Te Wherowhero, Rau-paraha, Te Waharoa, and other fierce raiders swept through the country, leaving swathes of death along their track. When the Pakeha settled in New Zealand, the war fury (says Gudgeon) had 'reached such a climax that a few years more would have seen the depopulation of the island.' Christianity, white control, and the Maori National Movement all tended to make the tribesmen at last less eager for blood-letting; and at the close of the Native wars against England in 1860 the sturdy brown warrior hung up his rifle beside his spear and mere. The hatchet is buried. The Maori has permanently settled down to the arts of peace. New habits, new diseases, and high infant mortality long threatened him with gradual decay. But there is every ground for hope that this valiant and

physically splendid race has at last ceased to tread the path that has led the Tasmanian, and is fast leading the Australian, aboriginal to extinction.

## Notes

### Catholic Schools

According to the current issue of the 'New Zealand Official Year-Book' (p. 135) the Catholic primary schools in the Colony have risen from 114 in 1895 to 149 in 1904. Out of a total of 16,378 white pupils in attendance at all the private schools in New Zealand in 1904, 11,373 received their education in Catholic primary schools. It thus happens that about seven per cent. of the people of New Zealand furnish 69.44 per cent. (or practically 70 per cent.) of the pupils attending private primary schools, or nearly ten times more than their proportion to total population. The figures quoted above also give an impressive idea of the relatively vast extent to which Catholics monopolise religious education in New Zealand. Our separated brethren seem content, as a rule, with a monopoly of talk about religious education. The zeal that moves heart and hand is of a vastly higher order than that which has only just sufficient horse-power to wag the tongue.

### The Wellington Fire

We stand our trials and our joys best in small doses. In the first half of 1901 (the latest period for which we have figures available) there were 187 fires in New Zealand, that cost the insurance companies the tidy little fortune of £241,000. Separated by intervals of time and space, these vast losses made but little impression upon the public mind. The fire-doses were small and oft-repeated. But it is quite different when, as in Wellington this week, the sum of energy of many minor conflagrations is concentrated in one big blaze within two or three acres of ground. Damages amounting to even £100,000 then create a terrible spectacle of moving destruction that sears a mark upon the public memory. In the same way, the loss of life in any three months on American railroads easily surpasses the death-list in any battle of the South African war. But it creates no such impression as the less deadly but more concentrated method of severing the partnership between soul and body. It is the 'one fell swoop' that dazes us, as it dazed Macduff. Happily, the Wellington disaster was not aggravated by loss of life. Even in the midst of urgent peril, those most immediately concerned not alone displayed no trace of panic, but even manifested a sangfroid that was beyond all praise. The wooden cowed in Chicago, and the old wooden tinder-box building in Wellington played, though in different degrees, strangely similar parts. The conflagration is a fresh warning of the perils of allowing old wooden fire-traps to cumber the busy hearts of our cities. One other lesson is this: our architects must revise their ideas of fire-proof buildings and go to San Francisco for instruction in the art of baffling flame.

### 'Undenominationalism'

It has been said of 'Christian Science' that it is neither Christian nor scientific. And in like manner we may say of the 'undenominational Christianity' advocated by the Bible-in-schools party, that it is neither undenominational nor Christian. It has, says a non-Catholic member of the London School Board, 'nothing in common with Historical Christianity or any other form of Christian teaching.' It is, said another non-Catholic writer, a 'lifeless, boiled-down, mechanical, unreal teaching of religion.' The attempts that have been made to introduce this 'undenominational' or 'common-denominator Christianity' into the public

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