

THE CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

Writing to the *Freeman's Journal* from Melbourne on March 14, 1916, Mr. A. T. Dwyer mentioned the following:—

On reading the exceedingly interesting account of the visit of his Excellency the Apostolic Delegate to the Maori settlement in New Zealand, which appeared in your issue of the 9th inst., I was reminded of that excellent and self-sacrificing missionary, the Rev. Father Garavel, who lived and labored amongst them over fifty years ago. The good Father loved and admired the poor Maoris, so much so, indeed, that on account of troubles between the British Government and the Natives he was compelled to leave them. On coming to Sydney he was appointed by his Grace Archbishop Polding to the Newtown district, where he undertook the erection of St. Joseph's Church. Day after day he might be seen on its walls watching the progress of the building. Father Garaval was, I believe, a native of France. He had an attractive personality, with courteous manners, and cheerful disposition. Some years ago he died, as I have heard, beloved and respected by his people.

It may not be out of place to mention that at the termination of the Maori War a very distinguished Catholic British officer, Major-General Strickland, who had been on active service, passed through Sydney en route for England. The Major-General was subsequently knighted. I happened to be a fellow-passenger in the ship by which he and his wife and daughter sailed. On Sundays the Major-General placed a spare cabin of his at the disposal of the few Catholics on board, where the prayers for Mass were read by the youngest of our party. I am under the impression that this excellent Catholic officer was a relative of our present popular and esteemed Governor of New South Wales.

(The facts relating to Father Garavel's withdrawal from the Maori Missions are contained in *The Church in New Zealand—Memoirs of the Early Days*, page 33.)

The following interesting notes regarding the scene of Father Garavel's and others of the early missionary Fathers' labors, and the conditions then obtaining, are extracted from the jubilee number of the *Auckland Herald* (1913):—

The growth of settlement in the Auckland Province during the last 50 years has been too steady and continuous to provide many striking features. There have been no great invasions of immigrants, no fierce land booms, no sudden influxes, and no great exodus. During the trying times of the Maori wars settlement was practically paralysed in nearly every part of the province. Some farmers gave up their holdings, and went elsewhere. Many people who would have settled in the district were prevented by the fear of massacre, and others by the fear of having to fight. Whilst wool production and grain-growing were New Zealand's staple industries, the South Island offered greater attractions than the North, but, in spite of wars and the presence of large bodies of sullen Natives, in spite of land difficulties and all the drawbacks of breaking in bush and scrub country, settlers still flocked to the North. The first little ring of military had in themselves little scope for expansion, settlements encircling Auckland at Onehunga, Otahuhu, Pannure, and Howick. The slender fringe of settlement along the seaboard could not easily spread inland whilst the war against the Maoris continued, and it was not until the last battle had been fought in the Waikato, the last shot fired in the Bay of Plenty, and peace secured that settlement had room to grow.

In 1863 the nearest boundary of the King Country

was only about 20 miles south of Auckland City. After the war these boundaries were thrust back 100 miles to the southward, and a little circle of military settlements which cordoned Auckland with the veteran Fencibles, widened suddenly through the confiscation of Maori territory.

What effect the policy of confiscation of Maori lands had on settlement in the Auckland province can be estimated by the then Colonial Treasurer's speech on the war loan. He said: "If we take the total area of land in the rebel districts, it will be found that it amounts to 8,500,000 acres, and we have obtained information from persons well acquainted with the districts and with the quality of the land, that one half of it will be available for settlement, therefore, we have for settlement 4,250,000 acres." As a matter of fact, fully 8,000,000 acres of this territory was proved fit for settlement.

War and bloodshed opened the great Waikato region to the European farmer, and gradually there grew up about the old military outposts thriving towns and villages. Along the noble valley where in the early sixties a British army of 15,000 men had forced a way by new-made military roads, there spread peaceful farms and snug homesteads, and military outposts grew into centres like Hamilton, Cambridge, Te Awamutu, Ohaupo, and Pirongia, whilst the capital of the Maori king—Potatau—became the peaceful and picturesque town of Ngaurawahia.

For years after the boundaries of Maoridom had been thrust back by force of arms to beyond the Punui, there lay to the southward of that famous stream a territory nearly as large and fully as rich as that included in the confiscation areas. This was still the King Country, which the Maoris held in sullen seclusion. But, just as the British army opened the way to European occupation in the Waikato, so did the Main Trunk railway open the way into the King Country. The construction of this line was in reality as important as a prolonged and successful war, for, although the King Country even of to-day is handicapped by Maori landlordism, it is proving one of the most magnificent fields for settlement that has ever been known in New Zealand.

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