

prosper together. This is the archetypal plot of the emigrant tale, a form first used with a New Zealand setting by Mrs Isabella Aylmer in her novel *Distant Homes*, published in 1862.<sup>9</sup>

In a manual, *How to Emigrate*,<sup>10</sup> issued several years before *Holmwood* or *Waihoua*, Kingston makes reference to Charles Hursthouse's book, *The Settlement of New Plymouth*.<sup>11</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, to find that his two novels are set in a thinly disguised Taranaki. In *Waihoua*, describing the new settlers' first view of their adopted land, he modifies and rearranges the elements of Hursthouse's own description of New Plymouth from the sea: the roadstead becomes a port, extra mountains are added to the scenery. But later, in describing the New Zealand bush, he modifies little. Waihoua, the Maori princess, is here pointing out to her English friend, Lucy, its beauties:

The most beautiful tree was the rimu, which rose without a branch to sixty or seventy feet, with a graceful drooping foliage of a beautiful green, resembling clusters of feathers, then there was the kahikatea, or white pine, resembling the rimu, but with a light coloured bark . . . the best fruit was the poroporo, which had a taste between that of apple peel and a bad strawberry . . .<sup>12</sup>

The above extract is taken from one of several paragraphs bearing a remarkable similarity to Hursthouse's account:

The Rimu, called Red Pine . . . is frequently sixty to seventy feet high without a branch . . . Its foliage is remarkably graceful, drooping like clusters of feathers, and of a beautiful green . . . The Kahikatea, or White Pine, is occasionally seen ninety feet high without a branch. In foliage and manner of growth it resembles the Rimu, but it has a lighter coloured bark . . . The Poroporo . . . produces the finest berry: when quite ripe its flavour is something between that of apple-peel and a bad strawberry . . .<sup>13</sup>

Kingston, however, did not copy quite every detail slavishly. The plot of *Waihoua* calls for a swift pursuit through the bush, therefore the undergrowth is described rather as open like that of the English forest than as its tangled reality. One of the settlers observes that 'although the foliage is so dense overhead, there is no jungle or underwood to obstruct our passage'.<sup>14</sup>

*Holmwood*, written with a more practical bias than *Waihoua*, offers its readers advice on farming in the new lands. The best land is wooded. American axes, crosscut saws, and fire are useful in clearing it. Fern land is less fruitful, but is easier to clean up:

To prepare fern land, it is necessary to choose dry weather, when a gentle breeze is blowing, and to fire the fern. The thick, matted, dead stuff at the bottom, with the leafy part of the fern, is first consumed, leaving only the shrivels of 'tuke'; and the cane-like fern stalks, which being softened by the fire, should be cut down at once with a hook or short scythe . . .<sup>15</sup>

This is all good Hursthouse: