

that he was instantly put to death . . . 'We must not let those fellows keep us back, cried Jack, dashing forward at the head of his men, when all at once flames burst forth so furiously from every part of the building that no one could approach it . . . the door opened and a tall Maori stalked forth, his blanket over his head to defend himself from the flames. With a dignified step he advanced towards Jack, and presenting his war axe, he yielded himself up as a prisoner. No others came out, and the roof of the hut directly afterwards fell in . . . for an instant a blackened head rose amidst the burning embers, and in another place an arm and shoulder appeared, but directly after sank down. Not a groan, not a sound proceeded from the building. All within it had perished . . .<sup>26</sup>

A piece of comic relief follows—a simple Irish fellow falls in love at first sight with a beautiful Maori girl taken prisoner in the village. Kingston obviously wrote with his sources very close at hand, but he did not hesitate to embroider them for the sake of dramatic colour.

The majority of Kingston's books are fiction for boys. His aim was always to entertain, but equally it was to persuade. His heroes were examples of manliness and decency (and high spirits) for youthful readers to emulate. Kingston himself never did less than what he considered his duty. His obituarist in the *Athenaeum* could state:

English speaking boys throughout the world will learn with sorrow that W. H. G. Kingston is no more. For nearly thirty years he enjoyed a remarkable popularity as a writer for boys, and he achieved this popularity without having recourse to any . . . pernicious methods . . . There is not a page in any of his books which the most scrupulous parent would wish to take out, or a sentiment inculcated that is not thoroughly honest, upright, manly and true.<sup>27</sup>

There are, however, many pages which are not his own.

## REFERENCES

- 1 *Peter the Whaler: His Early Life and Adventures in the Arctic Regions*, (London, 1851). Trans. Tongakilo, *Ko Pita ko e Tagata Hoka Tafua* (Wellington, 1969).
- 2 Rev. Maurice Rooke Kingsford, *The Life, Work and Influence of William Henry Giles Kingston* (Toronto, 1947) p.174.
- 3 He was succeeded to the editorship of the *Union Jack: Tales for British Boys*, which he had founded only a year before his death, by G. A. Henty, another children's author with an occasional interest in New Zealand.
- 4 *The Times*, 10 August, 1880.
- 5 He contributed, for instance, to *Emigrant Tracts* (London, 1850). His aim was to assist the poor and unfortunate to emigrate, not just to New Zealand, but to any likely field of settlement: Canada, the United States, Australia, the Cape Colonies.
- 6 *The Cruise of the Mary Rose*, new edition (London, 1903) p.248.
- 7 William Scoresby, *The Arctic Regions and the Northern Whale Fishery* (Edinburgh, 1820) 2v. This work another, finer, writer of fiction also found useful: Herman Melville in *Moby Dick*.