

The White Ribbon

For God, and Home, and Humanity.

Thought for the Month.

"Human rights and interdependence of peoples are connected aims. Freedom is based on the realisation that we are all members one of another."—Aims of "Trusteeship," U.N.A.

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THE MAORI AS HE IS TODAY

Address given at a public gathering by a
representative Maori

The subject on which I have been asked to speak, namely, "The Maori as he is today," is indeed a difficult one to present. It is exceedingly so, because it encompasses unlimited horizons of conjectures and hypotheses, yet, in turn, imparts so very little. But, in dealing with it, I shall accept one of the many liberties it offers, and speak of the Maori, not as an individual, but as a race.

You, who are assembled here must realise foremost and first, that to understand the Maori of today, you must, with him, shed your cloak of reservedness, and understand the Maori of "yesterday." Familiarity with his yesteryears fits you to understand him today. Without this knowledge, we are merely the bond-servant of conjecture. To avoid such conflicting and disturbing thoughts, I shall in part devote myself to those years wherein he moved, unfettered, in this land of the Christmas trees.

Let it be remembered, in this assembly, that the Maori of "yesteryears" bore upon his shoulders the ancestral greatness of his people. It was a sacred mantle.

Civilisation had not touched him. He moved with that certain freedom that only the heart enjoys. He held his beliefs, and bowed his head in acknowledgment of the wisdom of his ancestral gods.

And in the course of time, the Maori of yesterday passed on. But the years continued, and into these years stalked the silent shadow of civilisation. Out of the flitting shadows of his proud past, from the depths of his ancient, but proud history, he was born anew. He is the Maori you know of "today." But he is also a sad relic of his ancestral greatness.

He shares with you your generation; but, unlike you, he lives always in the glimpses of his yesteryears, for in those years lay his greatness.

Today, he travels with you, and the civilisation you introduced, its roads and byways, which are alien to his nature. It traced for him, irretrievably, the death of his gods and inherited beliefs, and now he shares with you, your reverence in the crucifixion of the Christ. In his new history, of only 107 years, he had pledged himself to honour the belief you manifested in him.

If of the common mould, wherein in Christian or moral teachings, we are cast, and truly exist, the Maori holds out his aged hand to you for guidance. He cannot stand alone. He needs, as the least of your offerings, your help; but much more, your understanding. To guide him should be the simple action of you who know the story of the Good Samaritan.

The Maori walks with, though not always in step with you. He faces a world, a civilisation, new and promising.

And so, the Maori as he is today, stands before you, stripped of his ancestral greatness. He explores, with obvious timidity, the greatest citadel of your civilisation. He views it, not with misgivings, but with apprehension. He realises that he must accept this citadel, if only to survive. He questions not as to whether it will survive the ravages of a thousand years. He sees only that it spelt the doom of his freedom and his greatness. He finds himself precipitated suddenly into a world of science, and realises that he must go on. He stands in silence, perplexed, perhaps lending an ear to the voices of his ancestral gods, reiterating the deeds of his younger years. But their voices are dimmed by the span of time.

And so, the Maori of today looks wistfully at you, asking you to take his aged hand. He asks only one thing from you, and that is the gift to understand.

To give of this gift would be a noble gesture, but it would only be his just reward. His outstretched hand gropes for guidance. You can give him that. It rests with you to offer so unmistakable an action.

"You are not pledged." Then "Neither is he." But you are both pledged by the finer instincts of your natures, which need the best both can offer.

It needs you and the "Maori of Today."

MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY, QUEEN ELIZABETH

One of our members, after reading the November "W.R." last year, sent a copy to Her Majesty, calling her attention to the little article on the front page which referred to the Royal Wedding.

The following letter has been received by the member, Mrs. T. Allely, of the Devonport Union:

Holyroodpalace House,
July, 1948.

Dear Mrs. Allely,—Her Majesty the Queen has read the article with much pleasure, and desires me to thank you.

Her Majesty desires me to say that she is much looking forward to visiting New Zealand next year, and sends her very good wishes.

Yours truly,

JEAN RANKIN, Lady-in-Waiting.

This is a truly queenly courtesy for which we are all grateful.

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