

merged in stronger passions, and that a facility of combination exists which should "bid us pause." *Obsta principiis* is a maxim always safe, and rarely difficult.

(2.) There is a second class who suppose that the substitution of the title "Governor" for that of King, would avoid most of the objections connected with the former, and might possibly meet with the approval and support of His Excellency. Their idea is, that a Maori Chief should be named by them, and, having been instituted into office by the European authorities, should be a sort of second consul, specially charged with the supervision of the Maori interests—that he and his secretaries should be supported by the revenues of the country, alleging as a ground for this claim to support, that the Maoris are large contributors thereto—that he should have power to summon a "runanga resembling the General Assembly which meets annually to adjust the European interests, which "runanga" should, with his consent, make laws and appoint officers—that he should be charged with the peace of the country, and the execution of justice therein—and that when he died, or became incapable to act, his successor should be appointed according to their custom, by the voices of an assembly of themselves.

The number of Maori politicians attached to this creed is few, and may be easily enlisted either amongst number 1 or number 3. Wiremu, the old fighting chief of this place, professed himself a partial adherent, but hearing that it was objectionable, and would not meet with the approbation of the Governor, he abandoned it, and transferred his support to class 3. In fact, the few individuals who entertain these opinions, state them with doubt, and abandon them (apparently) without defence. The Maoris seem aware that there is no middle course between the total recognition and the entire disavowal of the British sovereignty.

(3.) The third class appears to me to comprise the great bulk of the community; and I attach so much importance to the ideas which compose this political creed, that I shall venture to state them at some length. The active part of the agitation is principally in the hands of the most intelligent of the middle-aged men, though the old chiefs, without much actual interference, lend their influence, and approve of the proceedings.

The plan is, to establish in each large village, by popular election, a "runanga," or council, consisting of about 12 men, the duties of which council shall be to make laws for the government of the village. These laws will touch the Maori race only, and will deal with such subjects as women, cattle, trespass, fencing, growth of noxious weeds, adultery, theft, slander, pigs, canoes, tauas, tauman, and spirituous liquors. When some simple regulations are made by the "runanga," the whole village is to be assembled, the laws explained, and their sanction obtained. In case any individual refuses to consent to the regulations, he is to be denied the benefit of their interference in case he suffers an injury. The "runanga" then select two or three of their own number to act as magistrates or wardens, whose duty it will be to assess damages by trespass, &c., to make awards between litigant parties, and generally to settle disputes, and direct the internal economy of the village. If their award is not obeyed, they propose that obedience shall be enforced after the European fashion. If no sufficient personal property is possessed by a defendant to satisfy a judgment, they propose to transfer a portion of his land, or to diminish his tribal right of commonage; and if he has no land, or interest in land, they propose to take him to the prison in Auckland. In cases of difficulty, they wish the European magistrate to assist them and direct their judgment; and they propose that this officer, instead of remaining stationary and merely holding periodical courts, shall make circuits, and visit each village at frequent stated periods, and after adjudicating on the matters that may be awaiting his arrival, shall instruct them in law, and advise with them on the general affairs of the village. For intertribal matters, an assessor or warden from each tribe is to hear and determine, with a European magistrate presiding, if one can be obtained. If a law proves to be insufficient or unjust in its operation, the "runanga" is to be assembled by the wardens and a new law made.

They further propose that one of the Wardens from each village shall be deputed to attend a general meeting to be held once a year, where the laws of each village shall be discussed, and made to assimilate through the whole district, except such as are purely local, as for example a law regulating an eel-pond, or a pig run. Over this greater assembly is to preside one man, chosen by themselves, but what are to be his functions, they scarcely seem to know, "Kai whakahaere tikanga" (one who makes things go) has been suggested as a name for this officer, and it partly explains his duties, but their idea seems simply to be, a person who may be regarded as an embodiment of the "mana" or sovereignty of the people.

When they understand the English language, and are sufficiently advanced in other respects, they propose to enter the European assembly, and in all respects identify themselves with the white people.

Such is a general sketch of the plan of government which the Maoris have invented, and to the accomplishment of which they are now devoting every energy. The traveller meets frequent horsemen on his road, and is struck with the universal answer, "I am going to the runanga." These assemblies are being held constantly, to-day at this settlement, to-morrow at another, and the union of both at a fresh village on the third. I have attended several, and have everywhere observed the utmost decorum and regularity. Always solicited to assist them in the work they had undertaken, and direct the proceedings, I have given but one answer, that I had no instructions from the Governor on the subject, but that I would communicate to His Excellency what their wishes were, adding at the same time a few general remarks on the advantages of law, and explaining the leading principles of the English system.

The better to enable His Excellency to realize the exact character of the movement, I will briefly advert to the proceedings that take place at the meetings. At one place I found written in a book, as a sort of record, a memorandum of which the following is a translation;—