

tions did not deter a complete exploration or a systematic attack on the wild pigs, the enemy of the islands. "We succeeded," he states, "in destroying 19 pigs. It is possible, however, that one or two pigs may have escaped during the hunt, but these will be secured about the end of the year, when I intend visiting the islands again with a couple of Natives and their dogs. An interesting example of the depredations of the wild pig came to our notice. We caught an old boar in a small cave, which was littered with the wings and bills, etc., of the young Buller's Shearwater (*Thyellodroma Bulleri*), one of the rarest known sea birds. The birds nest on a steep rocky face, and the pig evidently scaled along the rocky ledges, rooting the birds out of their burrows and dragging them back to his lair. I am of opinion that with the removal of the wild pigs, the sea birds will again make the island their breeding place, and that the tuatara will increase in numbers.

Mr. Fraser wrote interestingly of the formation, historic value, and bird-life of the Poor Knights Islands.

"The Poor Knights," he says, "consists of two main islands having an area of roughly 600 acres and 400 acres respectively, together with several small islets and rocks, all being of a volcanic formation. The larger island is covered principally with scrubby bush with heavier mixed forest in the basins. On this island there does not appear to have been any settlement, and the native flora and fauna are in a very healthy state, the latter including tuataras, parakeets, tuis, etc.; and the peculiar rock formation there provides a very secure resting-place for certain sea birds.

"The smaller island of the two, now covered with fairly heavy bush, bears unmistakable evidence of having once been thickly populated. It might here be noted that on 25th November, 1759, when Captain Cook discovered and named the Poor Knights, he recorded that 'there were cultivated lands and a few towns that appeared to be fortified.' According to the oldest Maoris on this coast, it is over 100 years since the Natives lived there, and it is believed that the original inhabitants were massacred by Hongi Hika, the notorious murderer, who first used flintlock rifles in tribal warfare, about 1820.

"I have made a fairly close exploration of this island, and saw the remains of fortifications, and many habitations, the sides of which were built of stone. In many instances the stone walls are still intact, with weather-worn totara woodwork scattered about. The bush

is just alive with bellbirds that sing continuously from daybreak till dusk. Pigs, the only living remnant of the old settlement, are met with, and, strange to say, they show little fear of man. The island, being very fertile, produces a luxuriant growth of forest trees and shrubs, but in the absence of the kareka and taraire berry and fern root, the pig must depend on grubs and worms, etc., for its living, with the result that the surface is being continually turned over and many delicate plants destroyed."

Mr. Bollard spoke appreciatively of the honorary services rendered by Mr. Fraser in assisting in the protection of the Crown's sanctuaries, and remarked that the Dominion fortunately possessed several such gentlemen whose work was invaluable.

A letter received by a Timaru family from Canada (states the "Post") bore the following inscription used by a Canadian post office to cancel the postage stamp:—"Protect the birds, and help the crops."

STEWART ISLAND.

A correspondent, writing as to the suitability of Stewart Island as a bird sanctuary, remarks: I think the whole island and the surrounding islets should be as quickly as possible proclaimed a sanctuary. Being an island and sufficiently far away from the mainland to make it safe from the myriads of vermin, it is ideal. It is well stocked with birds on the southern portion, i.e., the country south of Paterson's Islet. The big kiwi (*kiwi roa*) is found in considerable numbers, probably some thousands. There are a few kakapo, which should soon increase with proper protection, while the beautiful South Island crow, kokako, is not uncommon, though never seen near the settlements. This crow is one of the first birds to fall a victim to the weasel on the mainland. Then there are pigeons, tuis, bellbirds, robins, and other birds, such as black teal, some of which are nearly shot out, but which would soon rapidly increase. The islets surrounding the main island are in many cases breeding places for all manner of sea birds. On the whole, this island and its surrounding islands are practically useless except for their wonderful scenic and bird protection facilities, and they would, if properly handled, be a glory to New Zealand and a resort, under efficient restriction, for all time.