

# A Dilemma in White and Brown.

By AWAKIMO.

**T**O begin with, he had been struck on the white girl—Mabel Denton her name was—three or four years previously, and had found her by no means unwilling to reciprocate, *pour passer le temps*. But when he had suggested more lasting relations, he found there was an easy-going, but permanent opposition in the background, against whom he hadn't the slightest chance. So he took the only possible course—backed out gracefully, and tried to cure himself as quickly as possible.

They still remained on fairly intimate terms, however, and I think he called her his Mother Confessor. Things were at this stage when the brown girl came into the matter.

She was decidedly pretty for a Maori, but with that rather sensual type of face not uncommon to her race; likewise intelligent and remarkably clean—which is rare.

He had first noticed her on a yachting cruise in the harbour, when he had been storm-bound for a night at the kainga, where her father was head man. The village schoolmaster there told him all he knew of her, which did not amount to much, and he did not include any mention of a lover. (It wouldn't have mattered to Freddy if he had, because he meant business).

Freddy's visits to the kainga became frequent, and he made no secret of their object. He was really head over heels in love. So on the whole it was not surprising that he began talking of Ngaia one day to Mabel. He was telling her how superior to every white girl she was, and where he was sending her

to be educated and learn European etiquette. He was also going to have her voice trained; she sang hymns in a fine, clear voice. What was surprising, though, was that Miss Denton suddenly interrupted him by starting to cry hysterically.

Freddy's an impulsive sort of youth, and the next thing was that he was kissing her tears away and calling her "dear old chum" and "little sister"—words which are pretty harmless as far as the meaning goes, but depend a good deal for their force on the tone in which they're spoken.

By the time she was rational again, he was feeling ashamed and anxious; but she was not—took it all as a matter of course. And then he gathered the news that the permanent was permanent no longer (this was the first he'd heard of it), and—well, as I've said, he was an impulsive youth—lost no time in getting himself hopelessly complicated—"well in," he termed it.

It was about this time that he came to me to talk about his troubles.

"You see," began his request for guidance, "I'm fairly in love with both of them, and I honestly believe, without egoism, that they're both in love with me—Ngaia is at any rate, and so is Mabel, too!"

It was then also I learned something of his courtship of the former. The old chief had at first not looked on his suit with favour—being only too well acquainted with the ways of white men—but after Freddy had pulled the heir-presumptive to the village sovereignty, Ngaia's juvenile nephew, out of the harbour, and gained a couple of