

The Native Schools of Auckland.

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PART I.—PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

THE process of turning a Maori into a Pakeha can be seen to best advantage in the Native Schools of the Colony. In the far North, in the gumfields, in districts so lonely that master and mistress can get no help, but must both teach and housekeep for themselves, in spots like Kokako, near Waikare moana, where the tribes still keep to old Maori ways, and where only at rare intervals an adventurous white man comes to explore, earnest men and women are devoting themselves to the task of raising the natives to the level of European civilization, and saving at least a remnant of the race. They are beset by harassing difficulties. In many places parents are suspicious or even openly hostile, in others they are quite apathetic, while in yet others there are feuds still surviving between different tribes and families. Sometimes, in consequence of the heedless way of living from hand to mouth, food becomes so scarce that there is almost a famine. Often there are epidemics raging unchecked in the kaingas. Often the pupils find other attractions like the poi dancing at the Royal visit, or else parents and pupils simply get bored by the slow business of learning. Then the whole school dwindles away. There is no truant officer to recall truants, no means of enforcing attendance, and a half-civilised people cannot be expected to understand the benefits, the necessity of education. Nothing but the teacher's personal influence can awaken them from ignorance and indifference. School

after school flickers out into darkness. In 1900, four were closed in the Colony, owing to rigorous climate, want of appreciation, or failure of the natives to keep up the promised attendance.

But still the greater number hold on their way, battling year by year with difficulties that a townsman can hardly understand. There is a genuine missionary spirit amongst these teachers. They have more freedom than the average State school-masters and mistresses, and an added interest in their work. Many of them contrive some special means of interesting their half-civilised pupils, constructing implements and appliances for manual work, or for object lessons, or making model gardens out of school hours. In Pamapurua the master tried to introduce European methods of farming and gardening. Kawhia has a workshop built by master and pupils together, and well furnished with tools. The teacher must do more than fulfil the instructions of the Code. No mechanical teaching is sufficient. The work requires sympathy with the race, an understanding of its views of life, an earnest desire to raise and to save it, and above all, the power of managing it. It wants not just the bare sense of duty, but enthusiasm. Fortunately that has not been wanting. Of one who died last year, the Inspector says that he was the friend of the Maoris as well as the faithful instructor of their children. This remark applies to many others. Mrs. Barnett, the daughter of Mr. Haszard, of Tarawera, one of the survivors of his family on the night of the eruption