

THE CHURCH IN NEW ZEALAND

MEMOIRS OF THE EARLY DAYS

TARANAKI.

(Continued.)

Over a wide area of this same district a quarter of a century later, the splendid efforts of the early missionaries, which promised such a rich reward, were paralysed, and much of the good results of the missionaries' work were almost obliterated, in the fanatical wave of Hauhausism, which swept over the land with unrelenting force and with such dire consequences. In this connection it is well to refer to a deplorable happening, and if not entirely refute the allegations at least furnish trustworthy expressions of opinion which may tend to disprove the accusations levelled at one of the devoted early missionaries, and given prominence in several books written by Protestant missionaries.

Among the atrocities perpetrated by the Hauhaus was the murder of the Rev. Mr. Volckner, a Protestant missionary at Opotiki. This incident of those troublous times is mentioned by the Rev. R. Taylor in his book, 'New Zealand: Past, Present, and Future,' published in 1868. The statements therein contained were evidently copied by the Rev. J. Buller (Wesleyan) into his book, 'Forty Years in New Zealand,' published in 1878, with additional embellishments. The cause these writers ascribed for the deed of violence was that letters brought by the Catholic missionary from the Natives of Waikato, then in open revolt, to those at Opotiki, then presumably peaceably disposed, were of such a nature as to cause the attitude of the latter to at once change. An outcry was immediately raised for the removal of the Catholic missionary. In the interests of peaceful relations all round, the Father did leave the scene of strife, and it was then stated by those writers that his going was the work of the Protestant missionaries as understood by the Maoris—to whom he was a very dear friend. This so enraged them that the murder was the consequence. All this appearing to the present writer so improbable a story, and so unlike any possible action of a priest of the Catholic Church, that every effort was made to collect information on the subject. Such a long period having elapsed since the incident happened, this task proved a most difficult one. The following letter, however, which I received from an officer of the colonial forces (who was very close by at the time), and who now holds a prominent position under the Dominion Government, throws considerable light on the subject, and as an expression of opinion will undoubtedly carry much weight:—'Let me say at once (he writes) that the fact of the murderers of Volckner having been Hauhaus would alone account for the deed. Just think of the massacre of the crew of the Kate and other things about the same time. I may say that I never heard the name of Father Garavel in connection with the matter until after the sixties, and then only from Mr. Grace. At the time of the murder I did hear that it was caused by the fact that Bishop Selwyn accompanied the troops through the Waikato, and did not warn the Natives of the Sunday attack on Rangiaohia. There may be something in this. Numerous parties had been sent out by the prophet Te Teato to convert all New Zealand. In one act they converted Opotiki, and prevented backsliding by killing the pastor. I think very little of these tales, for I know the Maori down to his boots. You want information (as an example), and your Maori friend will in a few moments find out the bias, if any, in your mind, and the information he gives will be suitable.' As showing the force of this argument, the writer gives a probable dialogue as follows:—'Protestant missionary: "For what reason was the Rev. Mr. Volckner murdered?" Maori friend: "Truly, truly for what reason?" Protestant missionary: "Could the action of that Catholic priest have had anything to do with it?" Maori friend: "Ah! the man of brains; the man who sees into the secret of the heart; you have discovered it!"' Now, these Maoris had never heard a word of this, but who were they that they should refute the suggestion of their clergyman? This would be the Maori argument. If, therefore, you want real information from a Maori, offer no suggestion and doubt everything when he extols your sagacity. Anyone having the knowledge of the Maori tohunga would not be humbugged by the people because of his wizard powers.'

In the introductory chapter to McDonnell's history of the war the author states:—'In the following pages I have endeavored to give a history of the Native wars, gathered from a Maori chief, who was an eye-witness of many of the events recorded, and had learned from others on good authority. In every instance I have strictly adhered to the facts related, and have allowed my Maori historian to draw his own inferences

from them.' Relating the capture of Opotiki by the colonial forces the following appears, and, having never been questioned, must be accepted as a true narrative of events:—'Just before this time we discovered, or thought we had (it was all the same to us after we had made up our minds), that the Rev. Mr. Grace, who used to live at Taupo, and the Rev. Mr. Volckner, of Opotiki, had been acting treacherously to us; so their death was resolved upon by Kereopa, who was then our high priest of Hauhausism, and the tribes of the Bay of Plenty met at Opotiki to decide how the sentence should be carried out. We had at this time boiled quantities of peaches, and letting the juice ferment we drank it, and it made us brave to act, and filled us with energy. We intended to hang the Rev. Mr. Grace, too, but somehow we let him escape. Kereopa said it was a great mistake.' Kereopa was subsequently captured, tried at Napier for the murder, and executed. Not a word was given in evidence (as recorded in the work before-mentioned) to bear out the statements in the writings of the Revs. Taylor and Buller; in fact, the statements made by them as leading to the trouble was not even alluded to in any connection. The evidence given would also lead one to understand that certain barbarities, stated by these writers to have been perpetrated by the fanatical Maoris in the Catholic Church at Opotiki, were in reality perpetrated in Mr. Volckner's own church on the occasion. As additional proof that the crime was no afterthought of the Maoris, we have it recorded in McDonnell's history that an attempt was made to massacre the priest at Whakatane, Father Grange, but was resisted by the Maoris there. This was prior to Mr. Volckner's death, and at once disposes of the absurd story which, like many similar ones, had been persistently circulated and left uncontradicted.

(To be continued.)

History as it is Generally Written

In the course of an interesting review of Ranke's 'History of the Popes,' in the London 'Daily Chronicle,' Mr. George Sampson writes:—'I am beginning to believe that English history has been written chiefly by Orangemen, so narrowly and exclusively Protestant is its outlook. It puts forward Protestantism not as one view of things, but as the right view of things. The other day I found an elaborate review of Lord Acton's latest published essays gravely assuring the world that of course this Catholic historian writes with bias, and cannot pretend to a Protestant candor of judgment—a charmingly ingenuous assumption in any case, but especially fatuous in the case of Acton, surely the most fair of all historians. Reduced to its elements, the statement comes to this: In a Catholic historian you will find Catholic views; in a Protestant historian you will find the Truth. Most Englishmen read and write history upon this assumption; and thus grotesque sectarianism is taught and studied in almost every school. The only thing that children seem to learn about the parent Church of their native land is that wicked Catholic Mary habitually burnt good Protestants at Smithfield. In every school manual of history there is shameful unfairness to Catholics—unfairness of silence, and unfairness of accusation, unfairness that is only matched by an equal unfairness to Ireland. To me (a complete Englishman, and as far from being a Catholic as I am from adopting the Ulster creed) the English historical attitude to Rome is ridiculous and irritating. What has history to do with Protestantism, or Catholicism, or any other ism, save phenomenally? When I read history I do not want apologetics worthy of that pleasing body the Protestant Alliance. I want adequate recognition of fact, and it is simple fact that in the history of Europe the Church of Rome; for it gave us our cathedrals, set the form of our merely provincial institutions. The Church of history is not the Church of England, nor the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, nor the Society of Friends, nor the Union of Ethical Societies. The Church of history is the Church of Rome, as Newman asserts in the passage where he sadly admits that the "unbeliever Gibbon" is our only worthy ecclesiastical historian. But I will go further, and say that the Church of English history is the Church of Rome; for it gave us our cathedrals, set the form of our prayers, marked out our parishes, taught us our duty to the poor, nursed our laws and our learning, won us much of our liberty, and laid the foundation of our last four centuries of progress. Without knowing something of this great Church, you can understand very little of English history, and to minimise the historic importance of the Papacy because you happen to be a Protestant is as stupid as to minimise the historic importance of the House of Austria because you happen to be an Englishman.'