

Te Hua land had begun before Cooke went to Auckland, at least as early as 1843.<sup>11</sup> Cooke's own story of the 'dusky bride' however confirms part of the accusation. In this context, one of his comments concerning Maori women is relevant. 'When these women took up and became the wife "*par amour*" to a European without the ceremony, they were true and faithful and some of them good housewives.' Ngapei Ngatata seems to have regarded herself as a true wife, but Cooke abandoned her. Perhaps this is among the 'wrongdoings' of which he speaks in the Reminiscences of 1876.

He returned to England in 1850, bearing oddly enough, a letter for personal delivery to Thackeray from Edward Jerningham Wakefield, who had been friendly with the novelist in London. On arrival he paid a round of visits to the relatives of New Zealand friends, and made a vain attempt to explain the realities of colonial affairs to Gibbon Wakefield and the Canterbury Association.

His sister Elizabeth was by this time the wife of Sir John Easthope, whom Cooke disliked as 'illiterate and perfectly unscrupulous . . . as thorough a rascal as ever lived', an opinion in which he was not alone. The Easthopes had of course a wide range of literary and political friends. So did Cooke's sister Emily and her husband Frederick Torrens. Cooke did not approve of them, either, for, 'from intimate acquaintance with the Dickens', he wrote, they 'came to know many Bohemians, foreign and home productions, who were not so desirable'.

Cooke also records that he visited his 'relations at Danny, the Campions, and all the Austens in Kent'. The Campions, as has been noted, were related to the Heathcotes, in a branch collateral to that of Sir William, 5th Baronet, who was a founding member of the Canterbury Association. The Heathcotes have another Austen association also, for Sir William's mother, Elizabeth Bigg (-Wither) of Manydown, was the sister of that Harris Bigg-Wither who, one evening in November 1802, had proposed to Jane Austen, and been accepted. But she changed her mind the next morning.<sup>12</sup> (See Tables.)

The Reminiscences cease abruptly at the end of 1850, and Cooke's trail is lost until 1856, when he appears once more on the literary fringe, this time as a constant visitor in the Carlyle household at Cheyne Row, Chelsea. Jane Carlyle's letters soon begin to mention him regularly, and he appears also in the letters of her protegee, the minor novelist Geraldine Jewsbury. From 1856 to 1859 Geraldine was in hot pursuit of Cooke's friend Walter Mantell, who was then in London.

Mantell escaped from her, however, much to the relief of the Carlyles, who regarded him as 'far too clever and *substantial* a man to be thrown away on a *flimsy tatter* of a creature like Geraldine Jewsbury'.<sup>13</sup>

The Jewsbury-Mantell correspondence went on however until her death in 1880, enriching the Mantell Collection in the Alexander