

Te Hua, where in 1847 his friend Walter Mantell joined him. Before this, he had become a leader in the colony, being made a magistrate in 1842, and often acting as spokesman for the settlers. In January 1844 he went overland to Auckland to place their grievances before Governor FitzRoy, passing on the way through the Wesleyan mission at Kawhia, where he found the Reverend Whiteley to be a 'kind and excellent man'.

Cooke's notes on his acquaintances give enlightening glimpses of our pioneers; these will do as a sample.

—of Charles Samuel Niblett, at Wanganui, 'a very gentleman-like, active fellow . . . he was going to the dogs with drink' (but he was safely back in Gloucestershire by 1845).

— of William Ernest Wilkinson, at Nelson, 'a wild young fellow . . . a young surveyor whom I knew very well in after life and his family who were half Quakers and half Jews. The mother was a Ricardo and all on the Stock Exchange in London'. (Son of William Arthur Wilkinson and Esther Ricardo, sister of David.)

— of Edward Jerningham Wakefield, at Wanganui, 'pranks . . . riots and debaucheries . . . plurality of wives and concubines'.

This last accusation must be read in the light of Cooke's own conduct, for he was in no position to throw stones. In his *Reminiscences*, he records that he lingered at Tarawera on his return journey from Auckland in 1844 and took 'a dusky bride' whom he never saw again. The Reverend Whiteley in a letter to Clarke the Protector of Aborigines, complained of Cooke as follows:

'His practice has been to cohabit with one [Maori woman] until she was in the family way, and then to turn her adrift — he has played this part with 3 or 4, and his last lady was from another tribe, which with his former conduct so exasperated the natives that they resolved to avenge themselves and commenced operations on his land.'

To this, W. H. Skinner, who copied out the passage for Horace Fildes in 1934,<sup>9</sup> added a footnote:

'One of Cooke's "lady" was niece of Wi Tako, her child was known as Mary Cooke. She married one of our settlers and has left a numerous, industrious and greatly respected family, but no credit to Cooke, who left the child to the care of the tribe.'

The Taranaki Museum at New Plymouth has a portrait of this Maori 'wife', which carries an inscription identifying her as Ngapei Ngatata, 'youngest sister of the Hon. Wi Tako Ngatata', *ie* Wiremu Tako Ngatata,<sup>10</sup> paramount chief of Ngati-Awa, and Maori leader at Wellington until his death in 1887. The portrait was painted in Wellington in 1888.

One cannot, of course, accept without question evidence of this type. Whiteley's letter is dated July 1844, but the Maori depredations on the