

nor did he give the slightest hint that anyone had preceded him. By 1883 there had been at least a dozen ascents of Ngauruhoe, two of the high peak of Ruapehu and at least four of Te Heuheu which he ascended and named Point Victoria! His ignorance of this alpine prehistory during his journey can be accepted in view of the communication difficulties already mentioned but it is equally certain that he must have been fully enlightened on some of these points by the time he was preparing the text for the book. The assumption that the Ruapehu summit he surmounted was the highest point is a pardonable error; his passing over of the work of others *anywhere* in the three volcanoes through three editions was a degree of public deception which was not ignored, when compounded by stylistic extravagance.

His climb on Te Heuheu was clearly made after the first winter snow flurries when there would have been icing on the upper rocks but the route by any standard is easy. References to 'cutting away the enormous icicles that impeded our progress', the summit view where 'peak rose above peak in colossal proportions'—surely an implicit doubt about his own bump—led on to ecstatic raptures about 'This wondrous Elysium . . . Nature . . . awful in grandeur', tailing off into dutiful references to the omnipotence of the Creator, did little to advance geography. Certainly it was five years before the next known climber, T. Thatcher of Wanganui, found a quite substantial cairn of stones from which emerged the pole to which a flag had been attached. Buried beneath it was a bottle with a damp-stained note enclosed: 'This mountain was ascended on the 20th April, 1883, by James Henry Kerry Nicholls and John Turner—altitude by aneroid barometer, 10,000 [ft.]. This point is named Point Victoria. Finder please forward this with relics to the Auckland Museum. "God save the Queen"'.<sup>23</sup> Thatcher duly obliged but Mr Cheeseman's successors could be pardoned if they could not produce the evidence today.

His last eight months were spent in working up the articles for the book. In February 1884 he told Grey that he had arranged publication with Messrs Sampson, Low and Marston.<sup>24</sup> On the advice of F. J. Moss, member for Parnell, with whom he had climbed Pirongia, he submitted a copy of the manuscript to Government and was pleased to tell Grey that on the recommendation of the Minister of Lands, William Rolleston, and the Surveyor-General, the Ministry had agreed to purchase copies. Before looking more closely at this decision and its consequences the relationship between the two texts may be noted. Apart from a number of minor changes the *Herald* series, as already stated, was essentially the book. A significant omission from the first version were the paragraphs describing the descent of Ruapehu, (Instal-