

historical Buddha (the Gautama) taught that he was one of a long series of Buddhas who appear at intervals in the world, and all teach the same doctrines. After the death of each Buddha his religion flourishes for a time and then decays, and is at last completely forgotten, until a new Buddha appears, who again preaches the lost truth (or Dharma). The next Buddha will be Maitraya Buddha, "the Buddha of Kindness." In many he is holding the urn of wisdom. At a future time I would like to have more to say on the subject; I would only observe now that it seems somewhat strange in all cases I have come across the urn is made of a different piece of metal, and fits into the hands by a pin. It cannot be on account of the difficulty of casting, for I have seen some far more intricate; in fact, I have some bronzes myself from Japan that are so beautifully made that the idea of its being beyond the skill of the old Chinese masters to make the urn in one piece with the Buddha is not to be thought of. Probably it was done so that the urn may be taken out on certain occasions and something else put in. All the ornamentation has its uses and reasons, in the same way as the prescribed dress of the Jewish priesthood, or our Catholic and Episcopal clergy.

Some day a paper might be read on the Buddhist dress; but this present paper was merely intended to be a few notes on the making of an image of Buddha and the methods of casting.

ART. XI.—Notes on Marsland Hill.

By W. H. SKINNER, New Plymouth.

[Read before the Manawatu Philosophical Society, 15th September, 1904.]

PREFATORY REMARKS.

THERE is probably no spot in New Plymouth and its neighbourhood that the memories of the earlier pioneer and his children so universally cling to as Marsland Hill, as in the days of the fierce struggle, when British supremacy practically hung in the balance, this spot was their city of refuge: hallowed in no small degree by the old stone church at its base, which for nearly sixty years has been the silent witness of the din of battle as well as the blessings of peace, whilst on its sombre walls inside are hung mementoes of regiments taking part in the turmoil of those stormy days of long ago. Here also sleep many of the heroes who fell, and the lonely graves of these brave men bring back to mind deeds of valour, many of which are almost forgotten, or at any rate find no place in the pages of history.

NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF MARSLAND HILL.

During the stirring times and incidents of the early colonial days, especially whilst the interracial wars were in active progress, several localities became noted or remarkable from various causes.

After the first period of immediate activity and excitement terminated, all thoughts and energies were directed towards settling down and resuming in peace and quietness the previously interrupted pursuits and occupations. Among the actual participants, the elders who had again turned the sword into the ploughshare willingly and rapidly allowed the "sponge of oblivion" to wipe from the "slate of memory" the prominence of localities and incidents. Years have rolled on, and now that the second or third generations would like to have a complete history of the doings of those times it is found difficult to obtain reliable information—death and changes of location having removed so many of those who were its contemporaries—whilst documentary evidence is scarce, scattered, and meagre in detail. In this relation it is deemed advisable when definite information becomes available to take advantage of the same, and put it on actual record for the benefit of the rising generation and future historians.

The subject-matter of the present notes—namely, Marsland Hill, but originally called by the Maori inhabitants Pu-kaka—is a prominent hill in the heart of the town, situated immediately at the back of the Anglican Church of St. Mary's, and formerly rising to an altitude of about 220 ft. above sea-level.

During searches in the strong-room of the District Lands and Survey Office at New Plymouth, a plan, drawn from surveys by one of the Royal Engineer officers, delineating the old stockade, barracks, &c., erected on top of the said hill by Her Majesty's regular forces, was discovered.

Pu-kaka was an ancient Maori *pa*, and by oral evidence collected from the older Maoris is stated to have been first partly constructed by the Potiki-taua people, a branch of the Taranaki Tribe, for the purpose of resisting a threatened attack from the north. After the Potiki-taua were driven out of this part of Taranaki by the Ngatiawa, these latter completed the works, and occupied for a time this splendid specimen of an old Maori stronghold, as it existed prior to 1855. There is no account extant of Pu-kaka having been attacked or of its occupants sending parties forth on warlike expeditions, and it has therefore but little historical record previous to the military occupation in 1856. Puke-ariki, or Mount Eliot (also within the boundaries of New Plymouth Town), although of far less commanding position, seems to have quite overshadowed it in importance as a

“fighting” Maori stronghold. We are told that in or about the year 1806 scouts posted on Pu-kaka warned the people in Pukeariki of the approaching war-party of Taranaki, which resulted in a sanguinary fight around the south-western base of this hill. (See “Journal of Polynesian Society,” vol. ii., p. 179.) The *pa* was abandoned as a fortified spot by the Maoris about 1830. This seems to cover its pre-European-occupation history.

When the surveyors of the Plymouth Company, Messrs. F. A. and G. Carrington, started the survey of the Town of New Plymouth in 1841, Pu-kaka was covered with a beautiful growth of karaka, rewarewa, rangiora, kohekohe, and similar native trees; and they state that at its northern base (where now stands the church before mentioned) flourished one of the most beautiful karaka groves it was possible to imagine. Such was the condition of the hill up till the time the Imperial authorities cleared its slopes, levelled its summit, and occupied it as a military post.

The present name of “Marsland Hill” has no historical meaning or application. At the urgent request of Captain Liardet, R.N., who was the first resident agent of the Plymouth Company in New Plymouth, the then Chief Surveyor, Mr. F. A. Carrington, gave it the name “Marsland” after a great personal friend of Captain Liardet’s.

One of the earliest pioneers of this district, Mr. Charles Brown, sen. (a friend and contemporary of Lord Byron and Mr. Keats), was buried on the northern slope of the hill in June, 1842, a large slab of stone being placed over his grave. This site was a favourite resort, but when the hill was escarped and fortified this rude memorial was covered with earth, and its exact locality is now lost.

In September, 1854, owing to the unsettled state of the district caused by the Puketapu feud and intertribal native war raging at Bell Block, detachments of the 58th and 65th Line Regiments were sent to New Plymouth from Auckland and Wellington, and in the following year barracks of strong galvanised iron were erected upon Marsland Hill. These barracks were brought over from Melbourne, Victoria, in which colony they had been used for the accommodation of the troops assisting in the repressive measures taken at the time of the Ballarat riots.

To provide the necessary room for erection of the barracks and stockade round same the top and several other parts of the hill were excavated and levelled, thus decreasing the altitude of the hill some 40 ft. While these works were in progress a coffin was found containing a human skeleton with portions of fair hair adhering to the skull; from the buttons and fragments of

clothing the remains were considered to be those of some naval officer who had been brought ashore for burial, but no record seems to exist of any such incident. From apparent age of the coffin it was judged that the interment took place long previous to the advent of the earliest settlers, or probably even to that of the desultory residence of the few whalers who occasionally frequented the district.

After the erection of the barracks they were first occupied in 1856 by a detachment of the 65th Regiment. A copy of the *Herald*, published on 22nd March, 1856, says: "The whole of the troops in New Plymouth now occupy the barracks on Marsland Hill, where the magazine has also been removed. A strong stockade, which is intended to surround the barracks, is in course of erection, and will add materially to the defensive capabilities of the position, although it is to be regretted that the view of the building from the surrounding neighbourhood will be in a great measure destroyed by it." An extract from the same paper published on the 12th January, 1856, says: "On Friday evening, the 28th December, the sergeants of the 65th gave a farewell ball to their brothers of the 58th in the barracks on Marsland Hill. The room was gaily decorated with military trophies, the colours of Britain and France waving amicably side by side. Several inhabitants of New Plymouth were present, and the evident cordiality existing between them and the military gave a zest to the entertainment of the evening."

The 65th occupied the barracks until the outbreak of the war between the colonists and the Maoris in March, 1860. From that date to January, 1870, they were occupied by detachments of the following regiments: Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, 40th, 12th, 14th, 43rd, 57th, 50th, 68th, 70th, and 18th Line Regiments and Land Transport Corps. The Royal Marine L.I. were stationed at Fort Niger and Mount Eliot.

During this time, in the event of a threatened attack on the town or its neighbourhood, it was arranged that warning should be given by the firing of two rounds from the 32-pounders in a position on Marsland Hill; at this signal, like a hen gathering her chickens, so all the non-combatants, women, and children were to take refuge in the barracks, whilst the Militia and Volunteers within a circle of two miles were to rush into town and hold themselves in readiness to meet any such attack. Many of the now middle-aged residents relate how, when little children, and the alarm was thus sounded, they, with a gathering of the most valuable and portable of the Lares and Penates of their parents' homes, were bodily carried to their refuge. In a little work published in 1861, called "Settlers and Soldiers," the author thus describes such a scene: "Immediately after the dreadful boom-

ing of the report a stream of women and children were to be seen hurrying up the steep path into the barracks, for full ten minutes. Some women with a child under each arm, without either hat, bonnet, or shawl, some with a bundle hastily thrown together, and many seemed utterly bewildered amidst the confusion and noise of women crying, children screaming, and the eager, anxious questions to know what it was all about." Luckily, though "wolf" was often cried, the wolf, different from the one in the fable, never came, as no definite attack was ever made upon the town itself.

In 1874 the barracks were converted into an immigration depot, and continued to be used in this capacity for some years. In 1891 this historic building was condemned by the Defence Department as being no longer required. One wing was given to the North Egmont Forest Board, with a view to its being erected on the northern slope of Mount Egmont for the accommodation of tourists and others visiting the mountain. This has been done, and the house now stands at an elevation of about 3,140 ft., and is annually visited by hundreds of people from all parts of New Zealand and elsewhere. The main portions of the barracks were sold in lots to farmers.
