

It may be asked, how comes it then that they have succumbed to the influence and power of Maori tohungas?

Doubtless there are other reasons which could be given—and we ourselves could give some of them—but the Maoris themselves invariably give the following:—

1. There is much sickness and disease—especially among the children, even where the parents seem strong and healthy—and they are dying off in great numbers every year.

We have never in all our experience seen so much sickness and disease as came under our notice in the four weeks we were amongst them.

In case after case families are in danger of becoming extinct. Out of nine and ten children several families have only three or four left alive, and of these generally two are diseased, or ill. Out of seven and fifteen children in a family only one is still living; while in yet another twenty have died of a family of twenty-two.

And the parents say they cannot get medical attention. The Government does supply a district nurse, who does splendid work, but there seems to be no doctor available for the Maoris.

2. The tohungas teach the people that God has in His mercy, under these trying circumstances, permitted the spirits of their ancestors to return to teach them what to do for the sick, and that they (the tohungas) are in direct communication with these spirits, and that they can therefore cure all "the ills that flesh is heir to."

Further, they say (and sometimes we believe truly) that the cause of the illness is an evil spirit, and that this is the reason why European doctors cannot cure the patient, and cannot even diagnose the case.

It will be easily seen how strong an appeal is thus made to the parents, or other relations, of the invalids both through the supposed love of God, and also through that of their dear dead ones—just as in the case of spiritualism (spiritism) amongst Europeans at the present day. Tohungaism is spiritism. The tohungas are the mediums of the spirits.

Can we blame our Maori fellow Christians, when so many intelligent Europeans and professedly Christian people are falling under the spell of "spiritualism" in these days?

We found a good many who, before the missions began, had already become convinced that the spirits were not sent of God, and were not good spirits, because the results were al-

ways ultimately evil, and generally ended in death, and often in lunacy.

Some had already returned to the tohunga the charm, or embodiment of the spirit power, which he had left in their home; others had thrown them away into the scrub; while others still had them in their homes, and did not know what to do with them, and handed them over to us.

They said they felt they had opened a door for the approach of spirits, which they had found to be evil spirits and could not shut out again. No matter what they did, they could not get free again from what they firmly believed to be evil spirits, or demons, who seemed to be bent on destroying them and their children.

In one case, an educated young man, from one of our Church schools, told us that as many as seven evil spirits took possession of him, causing him to flee into the bush and to try and kill himself. What saved him from lunacy and suicide was the remembrance and love of his wife and children; and also what he remembered of the teaching and prayers in his Maori Prayer Book.

In another case a young man, his wife, and five young children all went out of their minds, and wandered into the bush without any means of sustenance. In both these cases they are now free again, and in their right minds, and they have done with tohungaism.

In the case of the Victoria Valley murder, the principal tohunga concerned has since died apparently raving mad, and we were told that every one of her children has died in the same way—two of them within a week of each other, and while we were in another part of the district.

We believe nothing will convince these people, and those connected with them, that these were not cases of demon possession, or the work of evil spirits in some form. We were solemnly told by one who has suffered, and knows experimentally, that some of the possessed behave like pigs, others like dogs, cats, rats, etc., and we met with two young children who did behave in every way like little pigs, and who became quite normal immediately when the evil spirits were exorcised in the name of Jesus Christ. And it may be mentioned here that the experience of the Rev. H. W. Wainohu, C.F., of Wairoa, Hawke's Bay, has been similar to our own both in his own parish and elsewhere.

(To be Continued)

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NEWS ITEMS.

We regret that owing to heavy demands on our space a large amount of matter has been crowded out of this issue, including "parochial notes" which arrived late.

An open-air fete was recently held at Wairoa, from which raffles and similar devices were rigorously barred. The fete realised considerably over £300.

Resolutions were carried at both Standing Committee and Chapter meetings appreciative of the faithful services to the Church of the late Archdeacon Ruddock, and expressing sympathy with Mrs Ruddock and family.

We regret exceedingly to learn that the friends of Mrs K. E. Maclean have little hope of her recovery. Our readers will join with us in expressing our deep sympathy with her relatives and with Canon K. E. Maclean.

Mr Justice Bailhache, at Cardiff, in passing a lenient sentence upon a girl guilty of murdering her illegitimate child, said: "It is only the influence of Christ Himself that can turn you from the girl you have been into the woman I hope you will be."

Mere teaching of formulas has extraordinarily little permanent religious effect. The atmosphere of the school is all important. The atmosphere depends on the teacher and no teaching or learning of formulas is of value without the atmosphere.—Bishop Gore.

The special appeal for £1000 for Melanesia has reached the sum of £800; at the same time the ordinary receipts from this diocese towards the mission are larger than in any previous year. Three pupils of the Napier Boys' High School have promised to support one Melanesian "boy."

On Fridays in Lent addresses are being given in the Athenaeum by ministers of various denominations on "The Need of the Spiritual in the Reconstruction of the World." The addresses commence at 1.25 p.m. and end at 1.55 p.m. The leaflet announcing the addresses says:—"Materialism spells disaster; spiritual principles alone ensure solidarity and endurance. The world must get big ideas. All great statesmen and thinkers of the day emphasise this. We urge you to go to some trouble to show your patriotism and come along."