



*Kerikeri Central.*

James Kemp's old house you pass one more historic spot before you find yourself back again in the centre of the modern Kerikeri. This is a sloping field on your right, where, it is said, the plough first turned the soil of New Zealand. One of the Kerikeri missionaries, the Rev. J. G. Butler, has left an account of this event.

"On the morning of the 3rd of May, 1820," he wrote, "the agricultural plough was for the first time put into the land of New Zealand at the Kiddi Kiddi (Kerikeri), and I felt much pleasure in holding it, after a Team of six Bullocks, brought down by the Dromedary. I think that this auspicious day will be remembered with gratitude and its anniversary kept by ages yet unborn."

To-day this field is being turned into a citrus orchard. In a few years, no doubt, it will be hidden from sight, like so much of the rest of Kerikeri, by the trees of the citrus shelter-belts.

When you leave these relics of the Kerikeri of missionary days and get back past the group of shops that form the township, you are very quickly reminded that there is a story of the modern Kerikeri that is vastly different from that of the old. You visit the modern post-office in Hobson Avenue, and opposite the post-office, the ultramodern theatre. The name on the theatre surprises you—Cathay. It seems out of tune with the spirit of a place, where even the names of the streets emphasize

its connection with our earliest national history. But it is less surprising when you know that some of the settlers have spent many years of their lives in the East and remember those years with pleasure and affection. They came to Kerikeri, which they heard of through a holiday visit by one of their number, to live in active retirement. Most of them will cheerfully tell you that the emphasis has been on the "active" part of the phrase rather than the "retirement"; their work has kept them busy over long hours with, at first, only meagre returns. But, though there is often a nostalgic note in their conversation about the East, you leave them feeling that they have no real regrets about Kerikeri after all.

People from many occupations and many places within and beyond New Zealand have joined the community in the last fifteen years. Some of them, like the missionaries, have built their own homes as well as converting the gorse-covered land to fruit-production, and the variety in size and design of their houses is one of the things you can't help noticing in a walk round Kerikeri to-day. Some of their homes have cost up to £3,000; others have cost a few hundreds.

When the citrus orchards were first planted the average holdings of land were about 23 acres, but the standard