

Europeans, has become the seat of a large settlement, with nearly 5000 inhabitants. Where a few hundred natives then lived in rude villages, fearful of their neighbours, but desirous of intercourse with Europeans, and just beginning to be initiated into the forms of Christian worship by a native missionary, there is now a town, with warehouses, wharfs, club-houses, horticultural and scientific societies, race courses—in short, with all the mechanism of a civilized and commercial community; at this very place, where I then enjoyed in all its fulness the wild aspect of nature, and where the inhabitants, wild and untamed, accorded well with their native scenery, there is now the restless European, spreading around all the advantages and disadvantages of civilization and trade."

The populousness of Wellington, in Port Nicholson, proves the success of the New Zealand Company, but not the prosperity of the settlement. It is true that a large number of settlers, possessing capital, is an important element of success in a new colony, but it is not all-sufficient; and the numerousness of the emigrants is no proof that their hopes have been realized. On the important question here suggested we find no satisfactory information. Our author tells us that, among the hills around Port Nicholson there is a sufficiency of good land for the support of a town, "although (he adds) connexion with a larger agricultural district would be indispensable." For this larger agricultural district he points to Taranaki, 100 miles distant, and lying along a coast which has no harbours! The sale of Port Nicholson to the Company was temperately opposed by a chief named Puakawa, who warned his people of the cupidity and usurping temper of Europeans: he was outvoted however; and, though joining reluctantly in the engagement, he observed it faithfully. For this fidelity he was sacrificed not long after. His mangled body was found in the woods, his head cut off, and heart taken out. The murderer was supposed to have been one of a tribe which, having been recently driven from Port Nicholson, thus avenged the alienation of territories to which, though dispossessed, it still maintained a right. Several districts in New Zealand have been sold, again and again, to different individuals, by its successive native possessors, and it is hard to say how the right of property can be settled among the different claimants.

In the neighbourhood of Port Nicholson, our author discovered a tree, which yielded a well-flavoured milk, though he was unable to decide whether it belonged to the same family as the famous cow-tree of Guyana. He informs us, also, that shocks of earthquake are frequent, though not very violent, in Port Nicholson and Cook's Straits; proceeding, as he supposes, from Tongariro, in the centre of the Island. The volcanic peak of Taranaki, or Mount Egmont, is quite extinct, nor have the natives any tradition of its activity. Our author was the first traveller who ascended this mountain, which rises from a perfectly level plain to an elevation of 8,839 feet, or about 1,600 feet above the limits of perpetual snow. He approached it through a thick forest, which at night assumed a beautiful appearance, the fallen trees, and the whole ground glittering with a phosphorescent matter. His native attendants on reaching the limits of perpetual snow, squatted down, took out their books, and began to pray. No native had ever ascended so high before, and in addition to the awe with which the scene inspired them, their bare feet suffered severely from the cold. Our author, however, cutting steps in the snow, which was every step continued the ascent, and found on the summit a snowy plain, of a mile in extent. This, we presume, is a crater filled with snow. Here he found also, what might have very naturally recalled to his mind the Horatian jeer, "parturiunt montes;" having toiled, in fact, to the summit of Mount Egmont, he there discovered nothing but—the skeleton of a rat!

At a subsequent period, Dr. Dieffenbach visited the northern portion of the Island, and found it not so uniformly barren as it has been recently represented. Of the country and people at Wanganui he gives a favourable description:—

"The natives form the tribe of the Rarewa, and their whole number is about 8000, including all those who inhabit the valley of the Awaroa. Of all the natives, who are under the influence of the missionaries, this tribe is the most advanced in the arts of civilization. This must be ascribed partly to the endeavours of the missionaries, and partly to the comparative isolation of the natives, resulting from their having been powerful enough to resist the aggressions of E'ongi from the Bay of Islands, and of the neighbouring tribes. The traveller does not meet here with that begging and grasping behaviour which renders the natives on the coast so importunate; on the contrary, they are a quiet hard working people, and they have, for a very small payment, cut a road thirty two miles long through the primitive forest, between Kaitia and Waimate, in the neighbourhood of the Bay of Islands; they have also cut roads in the neighbourhood of their own village. During my stay I saw them reap wheat, and plough several acres of land, and the missionaries encourage them to exchange their former unwholesome food of decayed maize and potatoes for bread. Several of the natives have one or two head of cattle and horses; and I have every reason to believe that here at least the missionaries will encourage their acquiring them, in order to dispose of the increase of their own stock.

"The village has quite an English appearance; a large church, with a steeple of kauri boards, has been constructed almost entirely by the natives; gardens with roses are before the houses, and at the foot of the hill wheat alternates with vines, with hops, which

thrive extremely well, and with various fruit trees and vegetables: there are also several patches planted with tobacco."

The chief, E'ongi, here alluded to, was the same distinguished New Zealander who visited this country some thirty years ago, and received so much attention from the Prince Regent. He received, at the same time, presents of guns and sabres, and complete suits of armour, which decided the wavering tendency of his spirit. While appearing to imbibed the politeness and humanity of Europe, he was meditating a career which should outdo the much vaunted victories of Napoleon or of Wellington. On returning to his native country, E'ongi (whose name is, we believe, an attempt at George) commenced a series of exterminating wars, which have ended in the almost total extinction of the native power. He had the satisfaction, however, of being able to say to his family, on his death bed, "who will desire to eat you all? none!"

Our author's approbation of the site of Auckland is an important admission in favor of that settlement; we shall therefore extract his opinion at length:—

"The government town of Auckland, considering the short time it has existed, has made considerable progress. Its population, which amounts to more than 2000, has been drawn together from all parts of the island. A bank has been formed, fine barracks have been built of scoriae; and were it not for a general spirit of over speculation in land, without any attempt to explore the home resources of the island, there would be every ground for hoping that the place would gradually and steadily rise into importance. The thing that chiefly recommends the situation of this place for the central town of the northern island, is its easy communication with the coast, both to the north and to the southward. An inland communication through Kaipara with the Bay of Islands can be effected in five days, even with the present insufficient means of communication. With the western coast, and with the interior, over Manukao and the river Waikato, nothing interrupts the water communication but two small portages; and even with Cook's Straits relations can be easily established, either by the river Thames, or the Waikato and Waipa, and the river Wanganui. The coast trade particularly is of the greatest importance, as the nature of the country will cause its colonization at many different points at once: and already a great number of small coasting vessels communicate with Auckland. We must not forget that the Thames and the Piako form an extensive agricultural valley, and that, as their natural harbour, Waitenata is preferable to Coromandel Harbour. In short, it appears to me that there can be no question but that the place has been very judiciously chosen for the site of a town, as commanding a great extent of cultivable land in its neighbourhood, great facility of communication with the coast and the interior of the northern island, and as being a central point for the most powerful native tribes, the Nga-pui to the northward, the Waikato to the southward, and the Nga-te-hauwa to the eastward, separating them in a military point of view, but uniting them for the purposes of civilization and commerce."

To the south of Auckland there is much fine country, through which our author passed on his way to Waikato. From this place he set off on a long journey into the interior, to Lake Taupo and the mountain of Tongariro. After passing numerous fearful boiling ponds, he reached the shores of Lake Taupo, which is the largest of several Lakes scattered over a country in which volcanic action is still going on. The account of the boiling springs, on its southern shore, is thus summed up:—

"The whole of this assemblage of springs covers an extent of about two square miles. Many of them are difficult and dangerous to approach, as the whole arena seems to be only a thin crust over subterranean and volcanic caverns. The surface is hard, white, and thin; below this is a whitish, pumiceous, and friable earth; then a yellowish earth, containing sulphate of iron or sulphur; then a chalcodony, perfect in some places, in others in process of formation. The whole is about a foot in thickness; and below this is a grey, soft, and generally hot mud. It often happens that this crust breaks in, and dreadful scaldings not unfrequently occur. Near one of the springs beautiful saucer shaped aggregations of silex shoot up, not unlike fungi on a moist surface."

The mountain of Tongariro, an active volcano, about twelve miles south of the lake, was "tapu," or sacred, and consequently the ascent of it was forbidden to our indefatigable traveller. The tapu was placed on the mountain in consequence of the audacity of an English traveller, who ventured to climb it, and who narrowly escaped being caught by a flood of melted lava—(see *Athen.* No. 731.) We have described Mr. Bidwell's ascent of this remarkable mountain, and imagined that he had satisfied the scruples of the territorial chieftain, by a present of tobacco; but we were deceived, as it appears; it is strictly forbidden to disturb the genius of the mountain, and our author found, that in the absence of the chief himself, no presents of tobacco could prevail over the sense of duty or the superstition of his followers. He therefore re-crossed Lake Taupo, and proceeding northeastward, in the line of the volcanic action, he arrived, after some days, at a scene which he thus describes:—

"Towards evening we reached the hills which surrounded on all sides the Rotu-Mahana (warm Lake.) When we arrived on the crest of these hills, the view which opened was one of the grandest I had ever beheld. Let the reader imagine a deep Lake of a blue colour, surrounded by verdant hills; in the Lake several islets, some showing the bare rock, others covered with shrubs, while on