

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper.

DISTANT MAORIDOM.

A year has elapsed since the NEWS published an account of the labors of Elders from the Manawatu district, in the province of Marlborough. At that time all the South Island was included in the above named district, and hence the few scattered Saints were seldom visited. When vigorous efforts were made to push the work there the enemy was aroused, and a venerable arch-deacon of the Church of England endeavored to counteract the work by slanderous reports and strong denunciations from the pulpit. This had the effect of scattering the seed, and the Elders succeeded in establishing a good branch at Rangitoto, and the nucleus of another at Whangarae. Inquiries from the extreme south indicated that there was an opening in that vicinity amongst the Europeans, which ultimately resulted in the organization of the district of Otago, where Elder T. L. Cox presides, assisted by Elders C. Peterson and John G. Young. A branch of the church was established at Otago Owake, and the good work is progressing satisfactorily.

At the annual conference of the Australasian mission held last April, the Wairau district was formed and Elder R. G. Meikle was called to preside, assisted by Elder J. W. Linford. In connection with the semi-annual conference of this new district, a second visit was paid to the South Island. After a few hours' pleasant sail across the straits, Picton was reached and an eighteen mile evening drive was made through the valley of Tua Marina. After a night's rest at the Maori village, Wairau, the journey was continued from Blenheim to Te Hora, a distance of thirty-eight miles.

The river Wairau was flooded, rendering it impossible to ford, and hence ten miles additional travel was necessary to cross the bridge at Tua Marina.

This little village marks the scene of one of the most appalling massacres in Maori history. In the early forties, unscrupulous Europeans endeavored, by force, to obtain possession of Maori lands and the natives naturally resented their advance. Captain Wakefield, and other influential Europeans, with a strong force, sailed up the Wairau river and disembarked near the Tua Marina creek. Two brave Ngatitua chiefs, Te Rauparaha and Rangihaueta, with a large band of natives, met them. An altercation took place, which increased in violence till both natives and Europeans lost their tempers. Magistrate Thompson called for the troops to advance, upon which Puaha, a young native chief, advanced with Bible in hand, and pleaded for peace. The Maori had received the word of God many years before, and the young warrior probably thought that the "Pakehas" would be governed by its teachings. He soon realized, however, that it was a dead letter to them. His intercessions were unheeded. The Maoris quickly returned the shots of their enemies, and finally slaughtered all

the leaders, and nearly all their followers. A large monument, containing the names of the distinguished victims and about twenty of their followers, now marks the scene of this sanguinary conflict, which was precipitated by the imprudent and aggressive policy of influential land-grabbers.

A visit was paid to the cemetery, containing the above named monument and the graves of the soldiery, and, from the summit of the hill, a beautiful view was obtained of the Wairau valley with its adjacent green-clad hills. No wonder it attracted the covetous eyes of speculators, who ultimately paid so dearly for their rash folly!

After a pleasant journey through the Waituna valley, the placid waters of the Pelorus sound were reached, and the town of Havelock was passed. Six miles further the travelers arrive at the Maori Pah, Te Hora, near the little village of Canvas town.

A large number of Maoris had assembled from Rangitoto Island, Whangarae, Wairau and the surrounding country. Some had traveled for two days in small boats, rowing nearly all the way. The Whangarae members walked through dense brush for eighteen miles, as there is no wagon road to this village, but this did not deter the members from attending and nearly all the branch was present.

As the travelers approached the Pah, they were received with lusty shouts of welcome, "Nau mai," "Haere mai," etc.

Elder Goddard had not visited them since he officiated at the baptism of those present, who indicated their joy by numerous and prolonged "hongs." While others greeted him as their "Matua," (father). Quite a change had taken place at Te Hora, since the previous visit, when only a few scattered members were present. A large dining room, 60 feet long, had been specially erected, and the numerous sheep and slaughtered beever, hanging in the vicinity, clearly proved that ample preparations had been made to accommodate the visitors. The meeting house was comfortably seated and a neat stand had been made, near to which was a piano, obtained for the occasion. The merry laughter of the children, the incessant chatter of the dear sisters' tongues and the earnest and animated conversation of the Maori brethren, all testified to the happy influence of the Gospel upon the hearts of the people.

According to custom in Maoridom the usual weekly testimony meeting was held on Thursday evening. Thirty-four members bore their testimonies, and the presiding Elder had some difficulty in finding an opening for closing ceremonies.

The conference commenced on Saturday morning, Nov. 25th, at 10 a. m., though the usual morning Karakis, or prayer meeting, was held at 7 a. m.

On the stand were the following Elders from Zion, viz, Elders R. G. Meikle, B. Goddard, J. W. Linford and J. Johnson.

Elder Meikle delivered the opening

address, welcoming all the Saints, who had assembled to worship God. He reported the condition of the district, which was very encouraging. Four branches were in good running order, three of which also had flourishing Sunday schools connected therewith. He briefly exhorted the Saints to diligence in the discharge of their duties, and showed the importance of living exemplary lives.

Hoere te Ruruku, a native Elder, greeted the members who had gathered together in the love of the Gospel. He reported the Rangitoto branch as in a prosperous condition, and then spoke earnestly and at some length on the precious truths of the Gospel restored in the latter days and now brought by true servants of God to this branch of the house of Israel. After commenting intelligently on various principles he closed by exhorting the members to observe the counsel of the Elders of Israel and exercise faith in the ordinances of the Gospel.

Renata te Morehu, the aged president of Whangarae branch, stated that his members were very diligent in performing their various duties. He bore a faithful testimony to the blessings received personally through the ministrations of the Elders, as he had been restored to health by faith in the ordinances, and therefore urged all to be faithful to their covenants.

Hanikamu Te Hiko, a visiting member from the Manawatu district, delivered an interesting address, and congratulated the members on the good condition of the district. He dwelt principally upon the subject of the gathering of Israel, quoting extensively from the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Micah to show that God had clearly revealed this important event and their prophecies are now literally fulfilled. He urged the members to overcome the weaknesses of the flesh and prove themselves worthy of the name of Saints.

After a favorable report of the Wairau branch by the President, Mehaka Waters, the meeting was closed with singing and prayer.

In the afternoon meeting Rewi Maaka, a native Elder from Parirua, spoke, with native eloquence, on the organization of the Church of Christ in the latter days. He showed how the principles of the true Gospel had been delivered to the Maori people, a remnant of the house of Israel. He commented upon the laws given by Christ, which were restored and in force today. The fruits of the Gospel were now seen amongst the people. He quoted from 1 Corinthians 12th chapter to show the gifts and blessings and true organization of the Church, and dwelt at some length on the subject. He exhorted all the members to live righteous lives, reminding them that all would be judged according to their works.

Te Watene Hemi gave a good report of the Hora branch and Sunday school, both of which were flourishing. He also addressed the Saints on obedience to the laws of God.

Elder Joseph W. Linford spoke of his pleasure in meeting with the members in a conference capacity, and especially rejoiced to listen to the faithful testimonies of the members in the testimony meeting. He showed how the faithful Saints would be saved in the Kingdom of God, and exhorted all to