IN DISTANT NEW ZEALAND.

Interesting Letter from a Young Elder Thereon a Mission.

A Year Gone the Island—Hospitality of the People—Spring is Just Opening—The Elders Are Doing a Good Work.

A private letter from Elder L. G. Hoagland, now on a mission in New Zealand, contains much that is interesting for publication. The News is permitted to make the following extracts:

CANTERBURY, New Zealand, Sept. 4, 1893.—* * * I have been here in the Waitarapa valley all my time since coming to New Zealand. The Waitarapa district includes all of the Waitarapa valley and the valley averages a width of nearly ten miles, by sixty miles long, with the lower of south and ending at Cook's Strait, which is between the North and South islands. Towards the lower end of the valley is situated the beautiful Waitarapa lake, which abounds with fish of different kinds, and a great many eels, which the natives are very fond of. These are caught by the ton, in fine wire baskets, which are placed in the channel that connects the water to the sea when the water is let out in the winter.

After being on my mission for eight months, I was called to preside over the Waitarapa district by the president of the mission, Elder W. T. Stewart. Shortly after this call Elder Geo. Bowles, who came direct from Zion, joined me as traveling Elder and companion.

On the morning of Aug. 24th Elder Bowles and I left Greytown (a small European city) to visit all the branches of the Church in the Waitarapa. After a ride of 15 miles by horse we came to the native branch called Te Waitapu, and on hearing the "ia," (village) we were greeted by the old sounds which are familiar to New Zealand Elders, "Tena korua, e hoa tau, haere mai, haere mai." (Good day, friends, come, come). After the usual greeting of "hongi," or nose rubbing, we turned our horses to the paddock, after which we spent the remainder of the afternoon in talking with the native saints. The "pa" is composed of eight or ten houses (built Maori-fashion) with roofs thatched with long grass or straw, and bark side-walls. On a little rise a few rods east of the "pa" stands the "whare karakia" (or meeting house), a neat little church built by the natives (this was built European style) for the Church of England, of which all natives were members at that time. But when our Elders made an appearance in the "pa" and preached the Gospel of Christ, the natives were converted and became members of the Church of Jesus Christ after baptism. So of course the Church of England minister lost his salary and position amongst the natives of Te Waitapu.

We spent the evening of the day of our arrival in holding "karakia" (prayer meeting), which is held by natives every morning and evening, and consists of a song, reading a chapter from the Bible or Book of Mormon, and closes by prayer, lasting for about twenty minutes.

The following day, Aug. 25th, we continued onto Kohanui, a village of twenty-five native houses, and which is the home of Piri, Te Maori, one of the most influential Maori chiefs on the island, and also one of our best saints. We were warmly greeted by them and shown to our room, as they call it, a room fitted up for the Elders in European style. We remained here over Sunday and held Sunday School, reading from the first chapter of the Book of Mormon (the Father of Moroni). We held sacrament meeting at 2:30 p. m., Elder Bowles and myself administering. Elder Bowles then spoke on the personality of the Godhead, and referred to the Bible to substantiate his words, closing by encouraging the Saints to press on in their good works. I followed, speaking on the Gospel and its powers, referring to Paul's words, Romans I, 16-17, also that there was only one faith (church) Ephesians, IV, 5, and to the words of Jesus, John X, 8. Piripi Te Maori followed, speaking on sacrament and its institution by the Savior.

Sunday evening we spent telling the natives of the destination of the great Salt Lake Temple and translating to them the dedicatory prayer as offered by President Woodruff. The native were much pleased and asked us a great many questions on the same.

On awakening from our slumbers on Monday, the 28th, we heard a beautiful spring morning and birds singing sweetly. After breakfast we took a ride to the sea beach at Cook's Strait to gather sea shells, and after remaining there for a few hours, we commenced our return to Kohanui. On passing through Turaingaroi, a small Maori village, we were hailed by a native woman, saying "Tena korua e hoa tau, haere mai i mata whare ki te kai." (good day, friends, come into our house and have something to eat). We gladly complied as we were quite hungry after our cop's ride. After eating and talking with the native awhile (we were Saints) we continued on to Kohanui where we arrived shortly after sunset.

We remained here Mr Tuesday morning, Sept. 5, when we moved on our return trip to Greytown. We had a fine day for traveling, and when passing the outskirts of Greytown we saw a number of tai-hoichoi, men and women, in boats with their hooks ready for a haul, as is done very often in England. It was a New Zealand half-holiday (as is every Tuesday), so there was a great number of spectators in the grounds to witness the sport.

Arriving at Greytown about 4 p.m. we turned our horses out and walked to Papawai, a branch of our Church about two miles out. We continued here over night at Richard Rawiri Nahi's residence (who is a member of our Church). At this place is our headquarters, where we keep our books, etc.

We left here early on Friday for Carterton, where we had resolved to spend the following Sunday. Carterton has a European branch of 40 members. On arriving here we spent a few hours at Hubert J. O. Paterson's, and from there we went to Mr Hughes', where we spent the night. We were kindly received by Mr Hughes and family, who is president of the Carterton branch, and remained all night.

On Sunday, September 3rd, we held a theological council the residence of Brother J. O. Paterson, and at 2 p.m. we held a sacrament meeting at the same place. Elder Bowles was the first speaker, and spoke on the Kingdom of God, comparing it with other kingdoms. I followed, comparing the commandments of men, and showed how the doctrine of Jesus had been changed by men who had not the power to preach the Gospel. There were a number of strangers in attendance, and they held great attention to what we said; three tracts applied for baptism. We held a meeting again in the evening, and had a fair attendance. People seem to take more interest in the Mormon Elders now than they have done in the past, at least it is the case in a great many places in New Zealand, and we hope we will be able to do a good deal of good in spreading the Gospel of life and salvation before we leave this land.

It will be one year on the 28th of this month since I left home, but the time has gone so fast that I can hardly realize I have been here so long. Spring is now coming and the grass is growing slowly, and the trees are in blossom, while fall is drawing nigh in the land of Zion.

We have been in a few days for Greytown, to spend a week there, and wait to get our home mail, which should arrive this week. The mail steamers only arrive and leave here every two weeks, so you see we appreciate our news from home when it does come. The News comes to hand regularly and is read by the Elders and Saints with much interest. * * *

L. G. HOAGLAND.

P. S.—Mailing address—Greytown N., Wairarapa, New Zealand.

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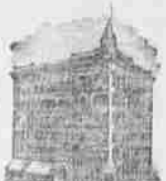

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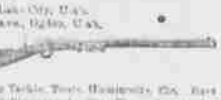

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