

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

JENSON'S TRAVELS.

LETTER NO. XXXVI.

Tuesday, October 15th 1895. For the purpose of visiting the two districts of the New Zealand mission which embrace the branches of the church on the north end of the North island, Elder William Gardner and myself boarded the small steamer Wellington, and sailed from Auckland at 8 p. m., bound for Whangarei, about ninety miles away; we spent the night upon the ocean sailing along the east coast.

Wednesday, October 16th. Having had a pleasant voyage during the night, the ship stopped at Marsden Point at daylight, and soon after leaving that place we were enveloped in a dense fog, which made it necessary to cast anchor between Grahams town and Limestone island. In a short time, however, the fog lifted, and the voyage was continued. At 6:30 a. m., the Wellington landed her passengers at Opau, or the railway wharf, about two miles below the town of Whangarei. We now traveled six miles by rail to Kamo, a small coal mining town, where Elder J. H. Willard Goff, who presides over the Whangarei district, met us with two extra horses, on which we rode about four miles inland to the residence of Brother Percy S. C. Going, who lives in a very hilly district of country known as Ruatangata. Here we received a most hearty welcome by Brother Going and family, who are the only members of the Church in the neighborhood and constitute a part of what is called the Opuawhanga branch. Here we also met Elder Hial B. Hales, who is Elder Goff's missionary companion in the Whangarei district. We spent the afternoon perusing records, and in the evening we held a cottage meeting in Brother Going's house. Besides his family and the Elders, four non-members were present.

Thursday, October 17th. We spent the day at Brother Goings, I being busily engaged in perusing the district and branch records of the Whangarei district, assisted by Elder Goff.

Friday, October 18th. Brother Going furnished Elder Gardner and myself with a horse each; and, Elder Goff having one of his own to ride, the three of us set out on a twenty-five mile horseback ride to the native village of Te Hore, where a conference for the Bay of Islands district had been appointed for the following Saturday and Sunday. This day's ride gave me a fair introduction to the clay hills of New Zealand. There are only a few wagon roads through this sparsely populated part of the island; and hence only a few vehicles cross the country; most of the traveling is done on horseback. The face of the country consists chiefly of hills and mountains, the slopes of which generally presents a somewhat scary appearance through having been dug again and again in search of kauri gum. Gum digging has in times past been a very profitable occupation in this part of the country, and according to government reports there are still 7,000 persons employed in the business. Since 1853, 169,378 tons of kauri gum have been gain-

ered, most of which has been sent abroad, where it is used in the manufacture of varnish, etc. The gum is mostly dug out of the ground in tracts of country where extensive kauri forests once stood. The gum digger prospects the ground armed with a long sharp spear which he sticks into the ground where it is sufficiently soft for him to do so, and when he strikes a lump of gum, he digs down for it. This gum or resin is simply the solidified turpentine of the kauri tree, and occurs in great abundance in a fossil condition in the northern part of the North Island; it is dug up alike on the driest fern hills and the deepest swamps. The purest samples are found on the Cape Colville Peninsula east of Auckland. A large quantity is also obtained from the forks of living trees; but this is considered of inferior quality and fetches a lower price. In the fossil state kauri resin occurs in lumps varying from the size of a walnut to that of a man's head. Pieces have been found weighing upwards of 100 pounds. When scraped the best specimens are of a rich brown color, varying greatly in depth of tint. Sometimes translucent or even transparent specimens are found occasionally with leaves, seeds or small insects inclosed. When obtained from swamps, the resin is very dark colored, or even almost black, and brings a low price. Transparent or semi-transparent specimens fetch very high prices, being used as a substitute for amber in the manufacture of mouth pieces for cigar holders, pipes, etc. The great bulk is used in the manufacture of oil varnishes, and in all countries where much varnish is made it holds the chief place in the market. It is exported chiefly to England and to the United States. The diggers' equipment is of a simple character; a gum spear consists of a light pointed iron rod fixed in a convenient handle; the gum is dug out with a spade and carried home in a sack. In many cases the spear is dispensed with, and the entire area is dug over to such a depth as the digger thinks likely to prove profitable. An old knife is used to scrape the gum, the scrapings being utilized in the manufacture of fire kindlers. Diggers generally pay a small fee for the privilege of digging on Crown lands. Gum digging in New Zealand is a standing resource for the industrious unemployed. The average price for kauri gum in 1894 was about £48 per ton, when exported.

We arrived at the village of Te Hore, situated in the heavy woodland on the Hikurangi river, about the middle of the afternoon, and was welcomed by Elder Charles B. Bartlett, president of, and Thomas J. Morgan, Joseph Markham and Milo B. Andrus, traveling Elders in the Bay of Islands district. There being a flourishing branch of the Church at Te Hore, about thirty native Saints, were there to receive us. As soon as we emerged from the timber they commenced to call out "haere mai, haeri mai" (come, come;) and after we had forded the river they strung themselves out in a long line in front of the meeting house to receive our undivided greeting which meant both shaking hands and rubbing noses. This certainly was a new and novel experience for me. I had learned a great number of

new departures and native ways during my sojourn among the Hawaiians, Fijians, Tongans and Samoans; but none of these indulge in that particular mode of greeting which the Maoris call "hongi," (nose rubbing.) Well I made a failure of the first attempt. Elder Gardner, evidently forgetting that I was a new hand, started out in such good earnest for himself that he was half way down the line before I had unsaddled my horse and was ready to commence. I was just getting my nose ready to start in when my courage failed me. All at once I seemed to forget the verbal instructions I had received about this same "hongi" business. Was I to press with the top of the nose, or the left or right side, or all around? I had forgotten all. The president of the branch, who is also a chief, stood at the head of the line; and he was the first to be greeted as a matter of course. There he stood with his large Grecian nose all ready for action. No, I could not, I had forgotten how! or rather, I had not learned yet. I simply gave him a hearty regular Mormon hand shaking and passed on to the next, while he gave me a sympathizing look. He seemed to take in the situation; but this was not the case with all the rest. What was the matter with the new Elder, or the "kaitiwhitu" (writer,) as they called me from the beginning. Did I feel above "hongi"ng with them; else why didn't I do like the rest of the Elders. Well I made a public confession before conference was through, and in the absence of a better excuse I tried to make them believe that I was a hashful young man who feared that I would be laughed at, if I should not do it just right; and so I had postponed the experiment till I could learn it in a more private way. But I assured them that as I had been practising with the president of the branch and others between meetings that I would "hongi" with all of them before I left them. That was satisfactory, and according to latest accounts none of the Te Hore Saints have apostetized through my neglect of duty.

Our first official act after arriving was to administer to a sick woman, who suffered with female weakness. We were then conducted through the fallen timber and up a steep hill about a quarter of a mile to a neat little farm house owned by Brother Ern Rewell, second counselor to the president of the branch, who vacated the house with his family in order to let us occupy it during our visit. We had only been occupying our new temporary home a short time, when the bell rang and soon afterwards a message in the shape of an open-faced little native boy came running up the hill and called to the top of his voice, "Haere mai ki te kai" which meant, come to the food, or in plainer English, come to supper. All right; we had come twenty-five miles over a rough, muddy, hilly, dangerous road, and were hungry; so we responded cheerfully. Our horses were already provided for and were feeding in the green grass of early spring which abounded on the hill side. This sounds strange perhaps to some of the readers of the News to speak of early spring in October; but such it was; and in coming through the country from Kamo to Te Hore, the green pastures and the young and tender wheat, oats, barley, potatoes, as it had commenced to grow, looked beautiful indeed. Octo-