Jenson's Travels.

LETTER NO. XXIV.

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 inside 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 Graframs town and Limestone island. In a short time, however, the fog lifted, and the voyage was continued. At 9 a. m., the Wellington landed her passengers at Opua, or the railway wharf, about two miles below the town of Whangarei. We now traversed 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 lofty district of country known as Rustangata. Here we received 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 Ocuakehaga branch. Here we also met Elder Hiel B. Hawes, who is Elder Goff's companion-in-labor. We spent the afternoon pursuing research, 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 Going's, I being busily engaged in perusing the district and branch records of the Whangarei district, as left by Elder Goff.

Friday, October 18th. Brother Going favored 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 in the valley of Te Hore, where a conference for the Bay of Islands district had been appointed for the following Saturday and Sunday. The day's ride gave me a fair introduction to the gay hills of New Zealand. There are scarcely 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 cost of the country, consists chiefly of hills and mountains, the slopes of which generally presents a somewhat scarry appearance through having been dug again and again in search of hard 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, 69,229 tons of kauri gum have been gathered, 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 around 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 to it. This gum or resin is simply the solidified turpentine of the kauri tree, and occurs in great abundance in a level condition in the northern part of the North island, lying sometimes at the direct first 14ft. and the deepest sounds. 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 first 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 hue. Sometimes translucent or even transparent specimens are found, occasionally with leaves, seeds or small insects included. When obtained from swamps, the resin is very dark colored, or even almost black, and brings a low price. Translucent or semi-transparent specimens fetch very high prices, being used as a substitute for amber in the manufacture of smoking pieces for aged gentlemen, etc. The great task is used in the manufacture of all varnishes, and in all countries where much varnish is used it holds the chief place in the market. It is exported chiefly to England and to the United States. The diggers, as a rule, must be 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 operator 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 inferior kauri. 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 1892 was about £40 per ton, when exported.

We arrived at the village of Te Hore, situated in the heavy woodland on the Hauraroa river, about the middle of the afternoon, and was welcomed by Elder Charles R. Bartlett, president of, and Thomas L. 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 we commenced to call out "Tenaku mai, kari mai" (come, come) and after we had ridden the river they strung themselves out in a long line in front of the meeting house to receive our accoladed greeting, which set both smoking hands and raining noses. This certainly was a new and novel experience for us. I had learned a great number of new departures and native ways during my sojourn among the Hawaiians, Samoans, Tongans and Samoans, but none of them indulge in that particular mode of greeting which the Maoris call "hongi," (nose rubbing). Well I will 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 very few words I had received about the same "hongi" business. We met in the middle of the line, and I guess we met right side or all around. I had forgotten (?). The president of the church, who is also a chief, stood at the end of the line, and he was the first to be greeted as a matter of course. There stood with his large Gladstone collar and shirt bosom, and I