

uniformly clothed as before with fern. On our right hand we had a serpentine river, the banks of which were fringed with trees, and here and there on the hillsides there was a clump of wood. The whole scene, in spite of its green color, had rather a desolate aspect. The sight of so much fern impresses the mind with an idea of sterility: this, however, is not correct; for wherever the fern grows thick and breast-high, the land by tillage becomes productive. Some of the residents think that all this extensive open country originally was covered with forests, and that it has been cleared by fire. It is said that by digging in the barest spots lumps of the kind of resin which flows from the kauri pine are frequently found. The natives had an evident motive in clearing the country; for the fern, formerly a staple article of food, flourishes only in the open cleared tracts. The almost entire absence of associated grasses, which forms so remarkable a feature in the vegetation of this island, may perhaps be accounted for by the land having been aboriginally covered with forest-trees.

The soil is volcanic; in several parts we passed over slaggy lavas, and craters could clearly be distinguished on several of the neighboring hills. Although the scenery is nowhere beautiful, and only occasionally pretty, I enjoyed my walk. I should have enjoyed it more if my companion, the chief, had not possessed extraordinary conversational powers. I knew only three words; "good," "bad," and "yes": and with these I answered all his remarks, without of course having understood one word he said. This, however, was quite sufficient: I was a good listener, an agreeable person, and he never ceased talking to me.

At length we reached Waimate. After having passed over so many miles of an uninhabited useless country, the sudden appearance of an English farmhouse, and its well-dressed fields, placed there as if by an enchanter's wand, was exceedingly pleasant. Mr. Williams not being at home, I received in Mr. Davies' house a cordial welcome. After drinking tea with his family party we took a stroll about the