

OUR MAORIS

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Our Maoris by Catherine Martin

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CATHERINE MARTIN

OUR MAORIS

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JUDGE'S BAY AND ST. STEPHEN'S CHAPEL, AUCKLAND.

Frontispiece.

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John T. Newson
OUR MAORIS,

BY


LADY MARTIN.

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PREFACE.

REAT interest was excited in England in many quarters by the arrival, some little time ago, of three Maori Chiefs from New Zealand. They came over to present a petition to their Mother the Queen, and to bring presents of native workmanship to her. Those who entertained them found these men intelligent and well-mannered, and keenly interested in the welfare of their countrymen whom they represented. It may not, therefore, be an unfitting time to bring before the public some notice of the Maori people, gathered from diaries kept by the writer during a residence of thirty-four years in New Zealand. There are no adventures to relate, nor stirring events to record; only a faint but strictly faithful attempt to describe them as they

were,—a people just emerging from barbarism, with many faults, but also with great capabilities. It is sometimes astounding in Christian England to hear the question asked, whether there have ever been any cases of true conversion among savages.


To doubt this is to doubt the power of the Gospel, which can raise barbarians now, as it once raised our forefathers, to the condition of Christian citizens.

OUR MAORIS.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE MAORIS.

1842-3.

E sailed from Plymouth on St. Stephen's Day, December 26, 1841. People nowadays, who make the Grand Tour round the world in four months, can have little notion what a serious undertaking the voyage to New Zealand seemed to us forty years ago. The land itself was a *terra incognita*. My own notions were extremely hazy. It was in the Pacific, and might have semi-tropical fruits and flowers. Some years later, a great man, preaching in London on the wants of the Colonial Church, talked of the coral reefs in New Zealand! One thing, however, had been clearly impressed on my mind by my husband, the first Chief Justice, who had sailed nine months before, namely, that the aborigines of our new country were to be cared for and worked for, and this lesson was by example as well as by precept daily brought before all of us on board by Bishop Selwyn. A year or two before, a book had been lent to me, called "Missionary Enterprise in the South Seas," which

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told of the great work done by one brave-hearted man, John Williams, who was afterwards killed by the heathen in Erromanga. I little thought when I read it, and my heart burned within me, that for more than thirty years I was to live in daily intercourse with another branch of the Polynesian race.

We had a quiet, prosperous voyage in a small barque, which would be thought very squeezy nowadays. We had none of the modern luxuries required in steamers,—no fresh bread, no stewardess to wait on us, no delicate fare. But we had compensation of an unusual kind. If we had plain living, we certainly had the opportunity of high thinking. Our party consisted of the Bishop of New Zealand, his two chaplains, both men of great gifts, and other clergymen and students. There were daily classes, after breakfast, for all who wished to learn the native language. There was no printed Maori grammar, only a manuscript grammar and vocabulary, and copies of St. Matthew's Gospel, just printed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. But we had a walking dictionary in a Maori boy, who had been brought to England by a gentleman, and sent to school for two years. He was not a favourable specimen, for he had been the plaything of the servants' hall in holiday time, and had little more than superficial civilisation. He left off English habits, with his English clothes, on landing, and