

To explore a most interesting and important, though very distant, part of your Majesty's dominions

Hochstetter, F. von Neu-Seeland. 1863.

Hochstetter, F. von New Zealand, its physical geography, geology and natural history. 1867.

Why is it that the German and Austrian visitors were the ones who were the scientists? Georg Forster, friend of Alexander von Humboldt, along with his father on Cook's second voyage, were naturalists and great observers and recorders of the new natural world around them. Johann Karl Ernst Dieffenbach, acquaintance of Darwin, Lyell and Owen, was the New Zealand Company's naturalist on board the *Tory* in 1839, and then in the 1860s two geologists, Ferdinand von Hochstetter and Julius von Haast met in New Zealand, arriving a day apart, and became good friends, exploring, surveying, collecting and travelling together, becoming founders of New Zealand geology, and more broadly, science at large.

Christian Gottlieb Ferdinand Ritter von Hochstetter (1829 – 1884) was an Austrian who was largely educated in Tübingen where he took to geology, and in 1852 was employed by the Imperial Austrian Geological Survey. His survey work, particularly in Bohemia, led to him being engaged as a geologist on the *Novara* expedition¹ that left Europe in 1857. On December 22, 1858, the *Novara* arrived at Auckland, and in the home of a Dr Fischer², a leading physician practising homeopathy in the town, Hochstetter met another German geologist who had arrived a day earlier. Julius von Haast was born in Bonn in 1833. He studied geology and mineralogy, but there is not a lot of information on his early life in Germany.³ In 1858 he was commissioned by the British shipowners Willis, Gann & Co, to record the prospects for a large-scale scheme for German immigration. He met Charles Hursthouse at the shipowner's offices in London, and on December 21 of the same year he arrived in Auckland on the *Evening Star*. The meeting of the two scientists at Fischer's house proved momentous for both of them. Hochstetter records '*meeting such as true and*



Ferdinand von Hochstetter, in Vienna, c. 1865. Naturhistorisches Museum Wien



Julius von Haast, c1867. NSW State Library

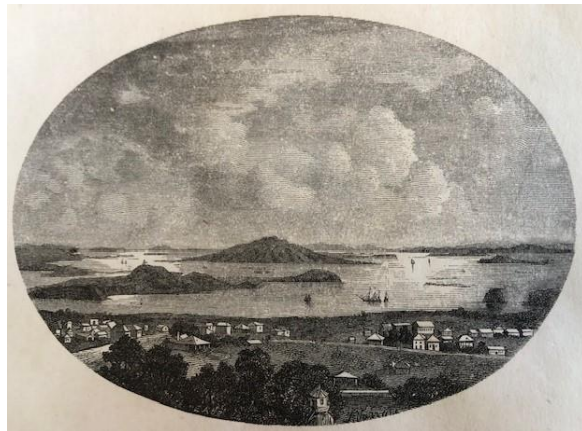
¹ The *Novara* expedition was organised by the Imperial Academy of Science in Vienna, the *Novara* being a frigate of the Royal Austrian Navy. The expedition had 7 scientists led by Hochstetter and the zoologist George von Frauenfeld, and covered oceanography, natural history, geology, and hydrology. The reports were provided to the Viennese Academy and published by Karl Scherzer, 1861-1862, with an English translation issued by Saunders, Otley & Co in 1861.

² Fischer arrived in Auckland in about 1853 or 1854 and established a successful homeopathic practice. He had fluctuating fortunes over the years, troubled by his free-flowing expenditure. He met up with Hochstetter again in 1887 in Vienna, and died of a fever in China while visiting his daughter in 1893. Michael Belgrave. 'Fischer, Carl Frank', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1f8/fischer-carl-frank> (accessed 1 October 2023)

³ Von Haast, H.E., The Life and Times of Sir Julius von Haast, K.C.M.G., Ph.D., D.Sc., F.R.S, Explorer, Geologist, Museum Builder. Wellington, 1948.

trusty German who became henceforth my inseparable travelling companion....' And von Haast, equally enamoured, said that *'We soon met and understood each other, and gradually became united together by the warmest friendship, never clouded for a single moment, and only severed by death.'*⁴

Over the next year, Hochstetter laid the foundations for New Zealand geology. He was initially asked by the Auckland Provincial Government to survey the Drury coalfield, and was then persuaded to stay on to make geological surveys of the North Island and Nelson. The *Novara* left Auckland in January 1859 without him. His Auckland survey included recording more than sixty sites of previous eruptions on the Auckland Isthmus, along with *'fossils, botanical and zoological treasures'*.⁵ Hochstetter then set out in March to survey the central North Island. Von Haast went with him



Entrance to Auckland Harbour. After a sketch by Charles Heaphy. Hochstetter, title page and p.4 of the German edition Neu-Seeland, p.5 of the English edition New-Zealand.

cementing their life-long friendship, as later expressed by Haast in a memoriam⁶, but it was not just the pair, the expedition included an expedition manager and interpreter, surveyor and artist, photographer, meteorological assistant, two servants, a cook and 16 Māori to carry the equipment and baggage, becoming something more heroic than a couple of scientists clamouring over the rocks.

The party travelled through the Waikato, to Taupo then the Rotorua thermal region, back north through Thames, returning to Auckland on May 24. The route is given in the fold-out map in both the German and English editions of his book. They stayed with missionaries such as the Rev. Grace at Waipa, and the German missionary C S Volkner at Tauranga, the latter just prior to his departure to Opotiki and his later murder in 1865. They lived on pork and potatoes, and Hochstetter already had in mind the book he was to write, and the future display of his specimens in the Imperial Museum in Vienna. Although the country traversed had long been the home of Māori, and frequently traversed by missionaries, and more recently, militia and settlers, there had never been made such a detailed topographical and geological survey of the central North Island. In June he visited the Coromandel goldfields, and the copper deposits on Great Barrier and Kawau islands. It seems he was the man of the hour in Auckland, and the day after giving a lecture on the geology of the Auckland district at the Mechanic's Institute, the good citizens presented him with an inscription and a very mediaeval-sounding velvet purse containing £150.

Upon the invitation of the Superintendent of Nelson and the local Chamber of Commerce, Hochstetter and Haast sailed from Auckland on July 28th arriving in Nelson on August 3. Over the next couple of months they explored the region, particularly the gold and coal fields, and moa bones in Collingwood, which Haast and a surveyor companion, Maling⁷,

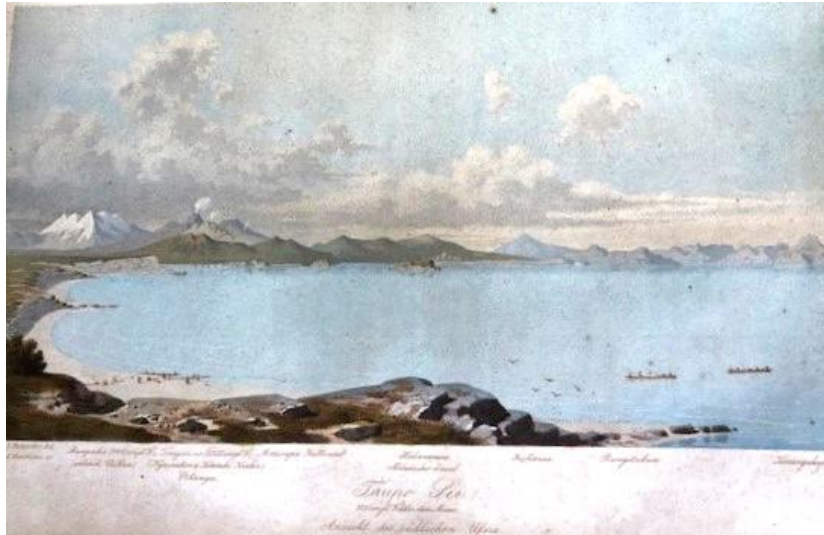
⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

⁵ Ibid., p. 21

⁶ Von Haast, J.F.J., In Memoriam: Ferdinand R. von Hochstetter. Dunedin, John Mackay, 1884

⁷ Christopher Maling (1843-1917) soldier, surveyor and artist. His father was killed at Wairau in 1843, and Maling was taken to Auckland by Bishop Selwyn and brought up by Capt. David Rough and his wife.

dug up and cleaned for Hochstetter to eventually take with him back to Vienna. Hochstetter was a celebrity in Nelson laying the foundation stone for the Nelson Institute, guest of honour at a dinner where the chair, a Dr Munro, stated that '*...as a scientific man, Dr Hochstetter has no country in particular. Science has no boundaries. Its worshippers are co-extensive with nature and form a nation by themselves. Among them, I am happy to say, there is little jealousy and no paltry distinction. There is rivalry of course. But it is a rivalry in an honourable race, and the winning post is truth.*'⁸ How little he knew scientists, and for that matter, Hochstetter himself, who showed he indeed had a country, leaving on October 2 to return to Vienna via Australia.



Lake Taupo North Island; view of the volcanic mountains (Tongariro and Ruapehu) on the southern shore. From a sketch by the author. Hochstetter, German Edition p. 228, English edition p. 365.

Over the next ten years Hochstetter worked through his specimens, records and writing geological reports. He found time to marry in 1861, a union resulting in four sons and four daughters.⁹ The first major result was his publication of *Neu-Seeland* in 1863. An English translation was issued by the same publisher in 1867.

Hochstetter, F. von *Neu-Seeland*. Stuttgart. Cotta'scher Verlag. 1863.

xx, 555 pp, frontispiece plus 5 coloured plates, 9 woodcuts, illustrations in the text, 2 folding maps at back. Bagnall 2626, Hocken 224

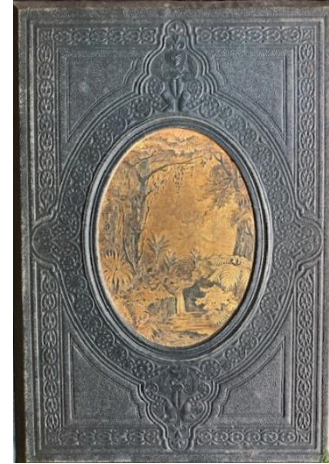
_____ *New Zealand, its physical geography, geology and natural history, with special reference to the results of Government expeditions in the provinces of Auckland and Nelson. Stuttgart, J.G Cotta, 1867. xvi, 515 pp, with 2 folding maps, frontispiece plus 6 colour plates, 10 woodcuts, illustrations in the text.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-32.

⁹ C. A. Fleming. 'Hochstetter, Christian Gottlieb Ferdinand von', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990, updated July, 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1h30/hochstetter-christian-gottlieb-ferdinand-von> (accessed 25 October 2023)

My copy of the first German edition has been rebound, sadly in blue cloth, making it look like a PhD thesis. The internals are very good however. My English edition is in the original embossed, green cloth covers with the gilt illustration on the front cover.

Two of the chromolithographs are from sketches by Charles Heaphy, one by Dr Fischer, Hochstetter's party host in Auckland, one by A Campbell¹⁰ (Motueka valley), one from a sketch by Hochstetter himself (Lake Taupo), and one from a photograph of the Rotomahana terraces by Hamel. In the English edition there is a further plate from a sketch of the Mt Cook and Mt Tasman Glaciers done by Julius von Haast in 1866, obviously too late for the original German edition. In the English edition, the Fischer sketch of the forest at Papakura, near Auckland is placed earlier (p. 134) than in the German (p. 416). Bruno Hamel was the photographer on Hochstetter's expedition, and took the first photographs of the famous pink and white terraces, in 1859, destroyed by the Tarawera eruption in 1886.¹¹ The woodcuts are from a wide range of sources, including Heaphy, Hamel's photographs, sketches by Hochstetter, photographs by a Mr Stork¹², and sketches by Augustus Koch¹³, an artist on Hochstetter's expedition.



There is a dedication: *'To His Imperial Majesty, the Most Serene Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian is dedicated this work, the results of the Novara Expedition. With deepest respect, thank you, the author.'* In the English edition, Hochstetter is more fulsome, devoting a page of text as a dedication to Queen Victoria. It is dated Vienna, January 1868, and almost looks as though it has been tipped in, with the page size slightly smaller and a darker shade. The book's publication date is 1867. Was this an afterthought? In the German preface, translated in the English edition, Hochstetter points out that he was able to publish both a scientific work, backed by the Government, and this more popular book, where he is *'indebted to the kindness of Baron von Cotta, for the publication of the Book of Travels in a form worthy to stand side by side with the Narrative of the Novara-Expedition as published by the Imperial Printing Office at Vienna.'* The von Cotta publishing house, originally in Tubingen and then moving to Stuttgart in 1810, was one of Germany's most notable houses. Why did Hochstetter use a German and not a Viennese publisher? In his English preface, Hochstetter thanks the General Assembly and Government of New Zealand for undertaking to purchase 500 copies, so underwriting the English edition. He also thanks Edward Sauter, principal of the Little Rock Academy in Arkansas for translating the work during a stay in Germany in 1865. There are letters from 1868 in the Arkansas State archives regarding Sauter's gift of

¹⁰ Alexander Le Grand Campbell (1819-1890) arrived in New Zealand in 1842, was largely Nelson-based, and travelled and sketched with Thomas Brunner during his explorations of the West Coast, South Island, in the 1840s.

¹¹ An album of 32 expedition photographs was published in 1859: **Hamel, Bruno**, An album of photographic views, taken during the Government Scientific Exploring Expedition conducted by Dr Ferdinand Hochstetter, Geologist, of the Imperial Austrian Expedition, of the Province of Auckland. Auckland, 1859. Bagnall 2444, Hocken 195.

¹² To date, a 'Mr Stork' has not been identified. He is not in the usual list of early NZ photographers.

¹³ Augustus Karl Frederik Koch (1835-1901) was already in Auckland when Hochstetter arrived, and joined the company. He remained afterwards, pioneering photography, and developing a career in surveying and draftsmanship (see Una Platts, p. 148).

a copy of his translation of Hochstetter.¹⁴ The publishing of the English translation was not without its worries. It seems from correspondence among Hochstetter, Haast and James Hector in New Zealand, that Haast was a little hasty in writing to Hochstetter that the NZ Government had granted the £525¹⁵ for publication and Hochstetter had accordingly given the go-ahead. However, there was in the meantime a change in Government in NZ, with the incoming Edward Stafford administration, and the money was not necessarily guaranteed. Hochstetter and Cotta stopped the printing and the former, concerned about having to carry the cost, wrote to Stafford to try to get the grant guaranteed. However, in the end all was fine, and the NZ Government belatedly approved the grant and got its 500 copies.¹⁶ Hochstetter made nothing from the publication.



Forest in the Papakura District near Auckland. From a sketch by Dr. C. Fischer. Hochstetter Neu-Seeland p. 416; New Zealand p. 134.

The English translation is not an exact copy of the original. As Hochstetter points out in his preface, it *'is not a mere translation of the German original.'* The chapters on colonisation, the Māori war, Māori poetry and statistics, he says, were intended for German readers, and he replaces them with chapters on physical geology and geography, and has rewritten that on the Southern Alps to take account of recent discoveries, and otherwise updated the original. The sequence of chapters is also different, with general chapters in the first part and more specific accounts of travels and regions in the second. He also begs his readers to be easy on him with regard to *'manner of expression and style'*, given *'neither author nor translator have written in their native language.'*

Both editions start with a chapter describing his 9 months in New Zealand. He doesn't seem to have arrived well prepared. While he enjoys the views of all the dead volcanic cones, *'...the first view of Auckland, I must confess, equalled by no means my brilliant anticipations*

¹⁴ <https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3444&context=finding-aids> There is little information found to date about Edward Sauter, aside from some letters.

¹⁵ About \$NZ150,000 in today's currency.

¹⁶ **Nolden, Sascha**, The Letters of Ferdinand von Hochstetter to Julius von Haast. Geoscience Society of New Zealand, Miscellaneous Publication 133K, 2013. pp. 123-130.

of New Zealand. Is that Auckland? I said to myself, the far famed capital of the “Great Britain of the South Sea?” Where is the New Zealand Thames? Where the steaming, seething geysers and boiling springs? Where are all the volcanic cones of which I had read, the ever - steaming Tongariro; the Ruapahu covered with perpetual snow and ice; the Taranaki rearing its lofty head to the very clouds; where the New Zealand Alps? The picture my imagination had created of New Zealand was quite different to that now presented to my view. The stupendous conical mountains in reality seemed to me shrunk up into little insignificant conical eruptions from 500 to 600 feet high.’¹⁷ He briefly describes his time in the country, and on the next page is worried that his negative first impression of Auckland might not go down too well. ‘Should my friends in Auckland require any further apology after this my candid avowal....I can only assure them that, as Auckland and New Zealand live in my memory at present, all my former expectations and anticipations have been surpassed by far, and should I live to be permitted second view of that panorama, and to greet Rangitoto, my heart would leap for joy.’ And indeed, there is a genuine enthusiasm throughout the work, that seems to match his reception by the New Zealanders. His liking for the country, and its natural history particularly, is carried over into his later European years. The books contain chapters on geography and palaeontology, minerals, gold, flora, kauri and harakeke, fauna, kiwi and moa, Māori, and the regions where he travelled, including a large part of the North Island, Nelson and the West Coast and the Southern Alps. The book was the most comprehensive study of New Zealand geology, geography and natural history at that time, particularly his geological maps of Auckland and Nelson, ‘establishing a tradition of systematic geological mapping.’¹⁸ The Geoscience Society of New Zealand has the Hochstetter Lecturer. His name pops up in geography and attached to organisms.

In that regard, what is the Hochstetter’s frog? It is one (*Leiopelma hochstetteri*) of four rare and primitive New Zealand species of the Leiopelmatidae family.¹⁹ Hochstetter describes it,²⁰ with its first European ‘discovery’ in 1852; it was long known to Māori. Hochstetter took specimens back to Europe where they were taxonomically described by L J Fitzinger in 1862 in Vienna.

Back in Vienna, Hochstetter kept close contact with New Zealand. He corresponded with Haast for many years, including responding to a claim that Charles Heaphy had used Hochstetter’s geological map in a production of his own. Hochstetter in 1865 wrote ‘*The last letters brought me Heaphy’s despicable actions...*’²¹, though in the end it seemed a relatively minor issue, one of Heaphy using Hochstetter’s geological information to add to his own earlier map, without due acknowledgement.

In 1872, Hochstetter was President of the Austrian Imperial Geographical Society, undertaking surveys in the Urals and as far east as Siberia. His links with New Zealand came



Hochstetter’s frog, image taken by Nick Harker, in the Waitakere Ranges, Auckland.

<https://www.reptiles.org.nz/herpetofauna/native/leiopelma-hochstetteri>

¹⁷ **Hochstetter, F. von** New Zealand, its physical geography, geology and natural history, with special reference to the results of Government expeditions in the provinces of Auckland and Nelson. Stuttgart, J.G Cotta, 1867. p. 5.

¹⁸ C A Fleming op. cit.

¹⁹ <https://www.reptiles.org.nz/herpetofauna/native/leiopelma-hochstetteri>

²⁰ Hochstetter, F von, op cit. pp. 163-164. (English 1867 edition)

²¹ Ibid., p. 364.

to the fore as a member of the Imperial Commission for the International Industrial Exhibition held in Vienna in 1873. There was a New Zealand Court, and Hochstetter assembled moa skeletons and four stuffed kiwis, *'The Wingless Birds of New Zealand, The Extinct Moas and the still living Kiwis, Exhibited by the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch N.Z., Dr Julius Haast Director'* and the display, after a Hochstetter intervention, was eventually awarded a Medal of Merit.²² He published more than 20 papers on New Zealand between 1859 and 1875, and was a European leader and pioneer in geological engineering. He died in 1884, from diabetes and only 55, much lauded and honoured.



Georgiana von Hochstetter and her four children, 30 April 1867 by Heinrich Harmsen of Vienna. Alexander Turnbull Library, /records/23192000. Four more children were yet to come.

²² Ibid., p. 674.

Plain truths alone compose the substance

Thomson C. Twelve years in Canterbury, New Zealand. 1867

It's a change to have the husband present as only a ghost, even if not resident in New Zealand, giving his name and nothing else to an early account of life in New Zealand. So often it is the wives who are drifting somewhere in the background. Maria Thomson (1807-1875) was 43 when she emigrated to New Zealand, sailing on the *Hampshire*, one of the Canterbury Company's last ships. She boarded at Gravesend in December 1852 and arrived in Lyttleton in May the following year after a lengthy voyage. She was a widow and there is no mention anywhere of her husband Charles Thomson, whose name she used for the rest of her life: Mrs Charles Thomson.²³

Maria was well-off, genteel and had experience teaching young girls, an ideal Canterbury immigrant. She was also, more unusually, a businesswoman, purchasing property in Christchurch and establishing the 'Christchurch Ladies School' on Oxford Terrace. Towards the end of the 1850s, she bought more property in Antigua and Salisbury streets, running the school there on a one acre site. In the early 1860s she was running a school at Avonside, more for working class children, partly funded by the provincial Government.²³ By the end of some 12 years in Christchurch, she decided to return to England, but first wished to see more of New Zealand and Australia, and then take the overland route home via Suez.

Back in England she wrote up her account, with its misleading title, since she describes nothing of her 12 years in Canterbury. It was published in 1867.

Thomson C. Twelve years in Canterbury, New Zealand: With visits to the other provinces and reminiscences of the route home through Australia, etc. (From a lady's journal). London: Sampson Low. [1867]. Bagnall 5539, Hocken 252. xiv, 262 pp. Frontispiece, verse on verso of short title page, original maroon decorated boards with gilt title and gilt title on spine, all edges gilt.

The copy I have is the first edition, but neither Hocken nor Bagnall include the frontispiece. This might be a re-issue, perhaps a slightly more deluxe issue with the gilt edges, without the advertisements cited by Bagnall, though Bagnall does cite a re-issue of the same year that has green boards, but again no frontispiece engraving. This is a drawing



Maria Thomson. *Weekly press*, 15 December 1900, p. 98.
<https://christchurchcitylibraries.com/heritage/publications/richmanpoorman/mariathomson/>

²³ <https://christchurchcitylibraries.com/heritage/publications/richmanpoorman/mariathomson/>

by Henry Gastineau²⁴, engraved by E Linden²⁵. Oddly the landscape depicted is that of an English or Scottish lake scene with a ruin in the background, nothing to do with New Zealand. The verse printed on the preliminaries (*"Tis Greece where Greeks do dwell" so spake and thought the ancient race.....*) can be found in a book *'The Book of Canterbury Rhymes'*²⁶, an anthology published later in 1896 in Christchurch in aid of a charity, comprising mainly humorous verse previously published in Canterbury. The poets are only identified by initials, and this one (in the 1896 book) has the letter 'J', dated November 1853. It turns out it was written by Henry Jacobs, (1824-1901), who emigrated to Canterbury on the Sir George Seymour, one of the first four ships arriving in 1850. He had been appointed Classics Professor of the proposed Christ's College and opened Christ's College Grammar School in 1852. He later became Archdeacon of Canterbury.²⁷ The poem is all about England, and helps shift the whole tone of the book away from New Zealand and the absence of any account of the 12 years Canterbury residence, to 'home'.

The publisher, in the Preface says that *'Having been in the habit of noting down in her journal all that struck her as interesting or peculiar in the course of her travels, and finding, on her return to England, how imperfect was the knowledge possessed by the public of the bright and sunny lands so far away, she has been induced to publish extracts from those notes, which, as a discerning eye may perceive, were originally intended only for the amusement of private friends.'* Thomson reiterates this in the opening pages where she goes to some length to exclaim how little people knew, and what naïve and uninformed questions they asked: *'Does not living with the Maoris make people become savage?', 'Did you come all the way by land?', 'I thought you all knew each other there. Is it not all one town'.* This despite the large number of books that repeatedly described life in New Zealand, available to the English public.

In her own Introduction, a little of the Maria comes through. Having boarded and cast off, *'We were six weeks wind-bound off the coast of England...'* But she enjoyed it, and enjoyed the sea: *'In the placid beauty of the calm weather, and the awful grandeur of the storm.....I feel an intense worshipful admiration and a peaceful enjoyment far more perfect than usually falls to the lot of any on the busy land.'**'It is refreshing and invigorating and you can leave your cares behind you...'* She doesn't say how carefree and invigorated the folk down below in steerage are during a 5 month voyage, but does say *'that there are two sides to the picture, and it cannot be denied that there are also temptations that beset the inmates of these little floating worlds, and that sin finds its way in there as readily as elsewhere.'*

We get no record of her time in Christchurch, The first Chapter is a history and description of Canterbury and Christchurch, and then in Chapter 2 *'Having at length made up my mind to leave Canterbury, my adopted home, which had been endeared to me by a twelve years residence, and yield to the solicitations of my friends in England to return to my native land I resolved before my final departure from the Antipodes, to visit the other settlements of New Zealand...'* She sets off in a Cobb's coach to Lyttleton, then takes a return ticket to Dunedin on a screw steamer. These may have been the latest thing, but: *'You lean backward in your seat on deck, and thump, thump, thump, continually goes on at your back until you can bear it no longer; you lie*

²⁴ Henry Gastineau (1791-1876) was a water-colourist, mainly of numerous romantic landscapes in England, Wales and Scotland.

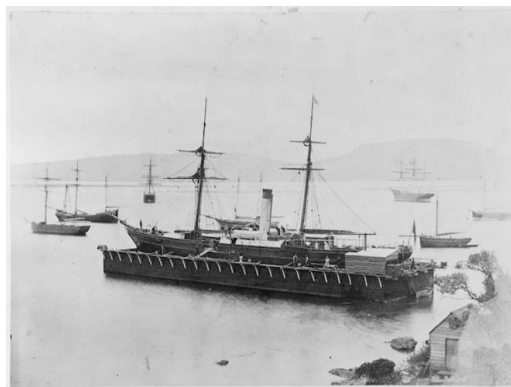
²⁵ Probably Edward Linden (1791-1857), who while dead by the time of this publication may well have engraved the original. However, he was mainly known for his portraits, including that in Richard Cruise's 1823 NZ account.

²⁶ The Book of Canterbury Rhymes, Ward and Reeves, Christchurch, New Zealand, MDCCCLXVI. The book is in neither Hocken nor Bagnall.

²⁷ McQueen, H., (ed), The New Place. The Poetry of Settlement in New Zealand, 1852-1914. Wellington, Victoria University Press, 1993. P. 21.

down exhausted in your berth, and find it even worse – thump, rattle, crank at your brain, and the screw itself seems working into your side to your very heart.’ She spent a few days in Dunedin, pavements were bad with asphalt scarcely having made its way south from Christchurch, local unchaperoned girls disapproved of, she liked St Pauls, and visited the exhibition, then took the same steamer back to Christchurch. The boat, the ‘Airedale’, she points out used to be Lord Cardigan’s yacht that he slept in at the Crimea, presumably not with the screw in action. It was then sent out to provide a coastal service for New Zealand.²⁸

After a month in Christchurch, she finally leaves, on the same steamer, heading north. She walks over the hill to Lyttleton, passing on her way Bishop Selwyn and assorted clergymen ‘wending their way wearily over the hill’ to attend the General Synod, and embarks for the Manukau, sharing a cabin of 6 berths, one with a squalling baby, and the stewardess on a mattress on the floor between. They call in at Wellington, ‘...nothing remarkable as a town’, visits the Hutt, and then they sail for Picton, picking up ‘...a very fat old Scotch widow and her great, strapping grand-daughter’ who, to her horror, were to sleep in the cabin as well. They



The Airedale, Port Chalmers, Dunedin, c. 1870 Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22706681

occupied the floor and the stewardess sat up all night. They then sailed for Nelson, Taranaki, and then crossing the bar, where the Captain helpfully pointed out where the *Orpheus*²⁹ had been wrecked not long ago, they landed at Onehunga. There she finds a bus leaving for Auckland every hour (not much different from today). And eventually, in the rain, gets put down in the middle of Auckland, and has to walk to a boarding house, where she finds ‘Worse accommodation, worse attendance, and less civil servants could scarcely be found.’ The food is bad and has to be shared at table with horrid other people, and the bed worse. It continues to rain for some days, there are mosquitos, and ‘There is something indescribably oppressive in the climate of this place, producing a sensation of languor...and damp, clammy heat’. Nothing like the buoyancy produced by the Canterbury climate.

Mrs Thomson is forced to stay a month before she can get a passage to Australia ‘Here is am, doomed to stay a month in the dullest place on earth.’ But she manages, and the rest of the book is a mix of diary, direct speech, and usually entertaining observations. It covers her travels on from Australia to Ceylon, Suez and Alexandria, Malta and then to Marseillaise, where to her frustration the ship is held in quarantine for some days, because it came from Egypt. She makes the most of it with a lively account. And then lands at last with a view towards Paris and home.

At the end of the book Thomson inserts a ‘*The Stewardess’s Story*’, a dramatic and tragic story told to her by a stewardess on the ship at Sydney. The woman and her husband

²⁸ The *Airedale* was built in South Stockton in 1857, to be used for a coastal mail service between Nelson, Picton, Wellington, Lyttleton and Port Chalmers. She arrived in Nelson in August 1859. The story is that this ship was first used by Lord Cardigan in the Crimean War (1853-1856) and then used to cruise in the Mediterranean until 1859. She was wrecked off Taranaki in 1871. <https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22371034>; <https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/features/9725891/Airedale-exposed-by-low-tides> ; <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH18710306.2.59>

²⁹ The Royal Navy steamer the HMS *Orpheus* ran aground on the bar on 7 February, 1863, losing 189 men of a complement of 259, still New Zealand’s worst maritime disaster.

and the their two small children sailed and traded in the Pacific, quite happily, until one day at an unnamed island, there were attacked by the local people. She and her husband fought them off, but the attacking men leapt into the sea with the two children. The daughter was retrieved but her 6 year-old son was never seen again, though reportedly was alive. They settled in Sydney and her husband sailed later to New Zealand to try gold digging, but was drowned crossing a river. She was left with her girl and a job as a stewardess on the Sydney passage. To lighten the mood there then follows some humorous and religious (separately) verse that had appeared variously in the *Lyttleton Times* during her Canterbury stay. So she never gives any details of her *Twelve years in Canterbury*.

Maria Thomson stayed in England to publish her book, and then a year later was back in Christchurch, starting up a school again, and over the next few years, until her death in 1875, she was, unusually, an active business woman in Christchurch, forming business partnerships with prominent families, and active in the church, bequeathing it a considerable sum, and finally being buried in the Barbadoes Street Cemetery. Even there, she carries her identity with her rather mysterious husband to her grave, with the epitaph saying '*Here lieth all that was mortal of Maria, relict of Charles Thomson...*'²³.

We had stayed till the end of an opera

Meade H. A ride through the disturbed districts of New Zealand. 1870

If you were the fourth son of an earl, then unless your brothers were particularly unlucky with disease and warfare, you were unlikely to inherit the title and estates. So the usual course was to become dissolute, or head for a career in the church or the armed forces. Herbert George Phillip Meade (1842-1868), was the fourth son of the 3rd Earl of Clanwilliam. The Earl was a prominent diplomat and Foreign Office Under-Secretary, moving in the highest political and diplomatic circles³⁰. His three elder brothers did rather well. The eldest, Richard (1832-1907), initially Lord Gifford, eventually succeeded to the title as the 4th Earl after a career in the Royal Navy, becoming Admiral and serving in China, the Pacific, North America, and the East and West Indies. The second brother, Sir Robert Henry Meade, (1835-1898) followed his father in becoming Permanent Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office, and the third, Sidney Meade (1839-1917) appropriately went into the church, though didn't seem to rise very high, becoming the Perpetual Curate of Christ Church in Bradford on Avon and later Canon of Salisbury Cathedral.

Herbert Meade joined the navy, and according to a comment in the early pages of his book, had served first in the West Indies. At the age of 22 we find him, a lieutenant, in New Zealand, having arrived with the gentleman naturalist and explorer Julius Brenchley (1816-1873) on board the HMS *Curaçoa*. This wood screw frigate was the flagship of the Australia Station during the 1860 wars in New Zealand. She later cruised extensively through the Pacific with Brenchley as naturalist; his account of the cruise was published in 1873³¹.

HMS *Curaçoa* provided naval support in Auckland, October 1863, for the Waikato invasion. Meade is reported to have also served on HMS *Esk*, again from the Australia Station, and which took part in the battle of Gate Pā. In 1864, Meade travelled through the Waikato on a Government mission, reaching Taupo, Rotorua and Tauranga before returning to Auckland. As Governor George Grey says in a letter in the introduction to Meade's book, cited by the editor Richard Meade, *'During the period of the war in New Zealand, no Europeans had visited the great Lake, and the friendly chiefs and tribes of that part of the island complained of their having been quite deserted by the Government. A cessation of hostilities had taken place, and I thought, as your brother states in his journal, that the confidence I should show, by sending Europeans again amongst them, would be productive of much good amongst those who had recently joined the Government, as well as amongst the tribes who had always been friendly to it. You, who know so well how great was your brother's courage and love of enterprise, how winning was his*



The Hon Herbert Meade, taken in 1863 by Camille Silvy, here described as a British naval officer and entomologist.

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw195820/Hon-Herbert-George-Phillip-Meade>

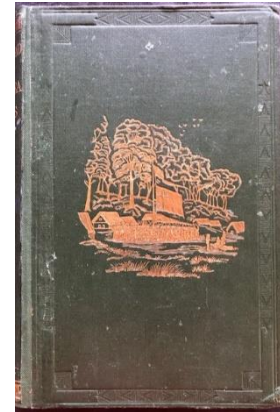
³⁰ <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/clanwilliam-meade-d3044.pdf>

³¹ **Brenchley Julius L.**, *Jottings During the Cruise of H.M.S. Curacoa Amongst the South Sea Islands in 1865 with Numerous Illustrations and Natural History Notices*. London, Longmans Green, 1873.

manner, and how good his heart was, will understand what were the qualities in him which drew me to him, and made me think him the fittest person to undertake such as journey.'

At one stage, with just a guide Hemipo as companion, Meade was captured by Pai Mārire (Hauhau) supporters at Tataroa in the Waikato, and only through the intervention of Hemipo and Ahumai, a woman already known to Meade, was he let go to continue his journey. Grey considered the expedition a success and later in 1865, Meade left to return to England.

It was the same brother, who published Meade's journal four years later in 1870.



Meade H. *A ride through the disturbed districts of New Zealand; together with some account of the South Sea Islands. Being selections from the journals and letters of Lieut. The Hon. Herbert Meade, R.N. Edited by his brother. London, John Murray, 1870. x, 375 pp, 1 ed, 4 chromolith plates (frontis.) and 2 maps (1 folding). Original green illustrated (gilt) boards, spine relaid. Bagnall 3477, Hocken 269.*

There are 4 chromolithographs, produced from Meade's own sketches, according to his brother. They include the frontispiece, *Geysers, Boiling cataracts, and Steam-jets on the Waikato*, a rather moody, broad depiction of *Gate Pa, Tauranga*, an extraordinary sketch of *Ohinemutu geyser, Mokoia Island, and Lake Rotorua*, with naked wahine frolicking in the water like classical water nymphs, and *Exit of the Waikato from Lake Taupo*. There are numerous black and white etchings throughout the book and 2 maps. One is a fold-out of the The Lake Districts in the Province of Auckland, which includes a trace of Meade's route. The other is a map of the South Sea Islands.



Ohinemutu geyser, Mokoia Island, and Lake Rotorua. Meade, 1870, p. 39.

At midnight, December 16 1864, Meade and his party steamed out of Auckland on the 'war-steamer Sandfly' provided by Governor Grey. They left with the 'last strains of *Maritana*'³² in their heads, having delayed their departure until the end of the opera produced by a visiting American company. The opera had been well reviewed at the end of November, though the meagre audience was noted.³³ The attendance presumably increased for the season to continue to mid December. Meade was accompanied by Brenchley and Gilbert Mair³⁴, and a prominent chief Te Poihipi Tukairangi, whose first name, according to Meade meant Mr Busby. As a young man, Poihipi had signed te Tiriti on behalf of his father, who had remained ill at Taupo. The party also included, among others, three warriors who fought at Rangiriri, but had been captured after the fall of the Orakau. Mair seemed to have played a role in protecting them, they took oaths of allegiance, and now were going to prove useful to Grey. Meade later comments on a paragraph published in an Auckland paper, referring to the mission of the Sandfly, saying it had been despatched with 'Mr Mair and an officer from the *Curaçoa*, who have been sent to find out what the Kingites are doing'³⁵. Thus, to Meades' consternation, they were spies.

They landed at Tauranga, stayed with a Colonel H_____³⁶, a friend from the West Indies, and rode out to see Gate Pa. They attend a Runanga at Maketu, which ended after some days with Māori toasts to the Queen (lawgiver and publican) '*...She is the fountain of all good – before her reign all things went wrong, but now we have good laws. It is she who gives us this brandy. May she send us plenty of powder, plenty of rum, and may they both be strong. And may she send and open a public house here.*' A voice: '*And a jail.*' '*Yes, and a jail too, for that is good for some.*'³⁷

The party, now some 30 strong, heads off for Taupo, first reaching Rotorua, where they hear that an apostle of Pai Marire or Te Hau³⁸ was at Taupo, making a stir. Meade enjoys bathing in the hot springs, the young women, and the geysers, and records it all in his rather troubling sketch. They continue to Tarawera and Rotomahana where Meade marvels at Te Tarata and describes it in some detail.³⁹ They cross the Waikato, and meet up with Dr Hooper, a government surgeon who lived in the region, and Meade and his party are the first Europeans he has seen in two years⁴⁰. Hooper is so isolated that '*with the exception of an occasional pigeon, he does not taste meat more than two or three times a year*'. Meade moves on a few miles to the pa of Hohepa Tamamutu, whose substantial whare contains '*a standing bedstead, glass windows, neatly matted floors, and on the table in his bedroom two glass tumblers full of fresh-plucked flowers.*' The party are welcomed with fresh pork, potatoes, coffee and milk, and presumably Dr Hooper got his full share of the meat.

³² *Maritana* (1845) is an opera by the Irish composer and musician William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865). The Auckland performance succeed one by Verdi, to the former's disadvantage.

³³ *New Zealand Herald*, Volume ii, Issue 321, 22 November 1864, P. 5

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH18641122.2.15>

³⁴ Gilbert Mair (1843-1923) took part in the Waikato war, spoke te reo fluently, and had a career as a soldier, surveyor and public servant.

³⁵ **Meade H.** A ride through the disturbed districts of New Zealand; together with some account of the South Sea Islands. Being selections from the journals and letters of Lieut. The Hon. Herbert Meade, R.N. Edited by his brother. London, John Murray, 1870. p. 82.

³⁶ Possible Col. Henry Greer, who arrived at Tauranga in 1864 and commanded the 68th Regiment at Gate Pa.

³⁷ **Meade H.** Op. cit.. p. 26.

³⁸ More commonly known as Hau Hau, the rather violent religious sect that Meade comes across later.

³⁹ The Pink and White Terraces, destroyed in the Tarawera eruption in 1886. Meade gives a very detailed description.

⁴⁰ Robert Richardson Hooper (1833-1886), Native Medical officer in the Waikato.

Meade eventually reaches Taupo, at the point where the Waikato exits, and he does a sketch which provides a good feeling of the wide open land of the plateau. At the other end of the lake is the Pukawa Pa in the vicinity of Tokānu, all held by the hostile chief Te Heu-heu, for whom Meade has a letter from Grey. He doubts whether he'll be able to deliver it. They paddle round the edge of the lake to Waihaha where there are a number of escapes from Orakau, among them a young woman, Ahumai, with scars from bayonet and gunshot wounds on the breast, arm and hand. She appears later in the story, to Meades' great good fortune.

Meade and his party find themselves trapped. Te Heu-heu has come back from a war meeting in the Waikato, and it is clear that he would not welcome Meade and any correspondence with Grey. There is rapidly increasing Hau-Hau activity and movement of Kingites from Hawkes Bay, also blocking a return route to Tauranga. The original intention had been for Meade to return through the central Waikato, connecting up with militia posts, and in the end he decide to do this himself, leaving Mair and Brenchley in the friendly pa to await news of an open route to Napier. Mead has trouble finding a guide, but eventually finds Hemipo, a stalwart young man, a Queenite (Government supporter), and with good horses. He is aiming for the redoubt at Cambridge and it will involve rapid travel at night, swimming the Waikato holding his horse's tail, and at least three or four days in hostile territory.

It wasn't long before Meade and Hemipo, thinking they had bypassed a traveling group of Hau-Hau warriors, cantered up a hill and down into the pa at Tataroa to find themselves in the midst of about 150 hostile, heavily armed warriors. They were commanded to dismount, remove saddles, were threatened and then surprised to see the men form into a square to hold a karakia, which they latter learned was held to determine whether to kill them or not. The crowd surrounded a flagpole with the red war banner at the top and two other flags, as in Meade's watercolour, and after a 'gabbled' speech by their leader the crowd started walking round the flags singing. It wasn't looking good, with cries, according to Meade, of "*Let the pigs be stuck!*" *Let the calf (te kūao) be killed!*" The latter referred to Hemipo. Then Hemipo himself spoke, explaining that Meade was a harmless civilian just wanting to walk back to Auckland, but there were more speeches calling for their deaths. Meade says that since he didn't understand it all, he pulled out his pipe for a smoke, which does suggest that perhaps not everyone took all this seriously. Then a young wahine appeared, and it was Ahumai, who they had encountered back at the lake. She intervened, there was more talk, and eventually they were allowed to get back on their horses and return the way they had come. It is a significant and vivid account, with Meade's English nonchalance appearing through the account, ending with: '*The writer was the first white man who fell into the hands of these fanatics. The second was a most excellent missionary – him they hanged and ate his eyes and brains.*'⁴¹

The sketch made by Meade shows him and Hemipo sitting bound to the side of the Runanga, with a guard and possibly the messenger Ihaka who was protected by his role and helped interpret for Meade. The red flag is that of the war god Riki, there are about 8 whare and the crowd is waving taiaha above their heads.⁴²

⁴¹ Meade, H., op. cit. p. 137. The missionary was Carl Sylvius Völkner, who was captured and killed at his mission in Ōpōtiki in, March 1865.

⁴² https://natlib.govt.nz/records/22664963?search%5Bi%5D%5Bname_authority_id%5D=-106253&search%5Bpath%5D=items



Tataroa, New Zealand, to determine the fate of their prisoners. Jany 27th, 1865. Watercolour by Herbert Meade depicting his capture by Hau Hau along with his guide Hemipo. Similar to illustration p.128 in Meade's 'A Ride...' Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. /records/22664963

Meade and Hemipo returned to their previous base on the shores of Taupo, finding Mair still there, but Brenchley already on the way to Napier. They eventually followed, and overtook him, reached Napier and then arrived back at Auckland by sea on February 9th. The last 7 chapters of the book cover Meade's return through the Pacific during 1865, also covered in Brenchley's book on the cruise of *HMS Curaçoa*. Back in England, he continued with the Royal Navy, but on July 24 1868, while loading an experimental shell or torpedo at Portsmouth, Meade was killed alongside a companion worker, when it exploded. His eldest brother, Lord Gifford, rushed to his side by special train, but was too late and it only remained for him to identify the body.⁴³

Meade is not totally forgotten. In Rotorua he is remembered with Meade St⁴⁴, and the watercolour of the Pai Māraire Runanga has been reproduced in the book *Tangata Whenua*⁴⁵. There is something engaging about Meade and his account. That youth and well-bred Englishness that appears in his reversed pose on the chair in the photograph of him, comes through on almost every page.

⁴³ <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/DSC18681008.2.21>

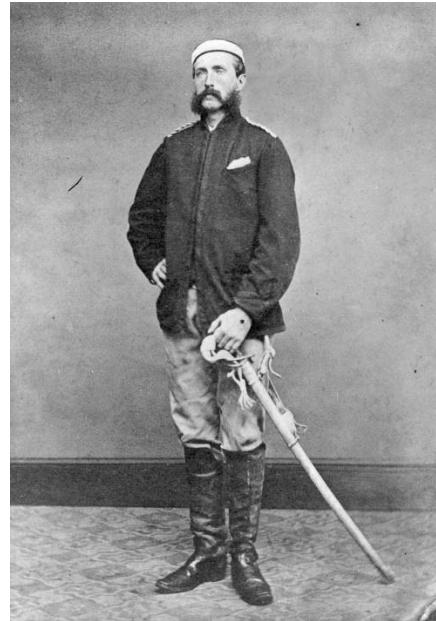
⁴⁴ <https://rotorua-district-library.blogspot.com/2015/02/discover-rotorua-heritage-meade-street.html>

⁴⁵ **Atholl, A., Binney, J. & Harris, A.**, *Tangata Whenua: an illustrated history*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2014..

Glittering bayonets in the bright moonlight

McDonnell, T An explanation of the principal causes which led to the present war on the west coast of New Zealand. 1869.

Thomas McDonnell (1831?-1899) unusually for military men of his time, had a New Zealand background.⁴⁶ He was probably born in Manila where his father was trading, and the family moved to Sydney in the 1830s. His father bought a timber and ship building business at Hōreke in the Hokianga and McDonnell lived there in his younger years through the 1840s. The father was particularly noted for quarrelling with almost everyone and having flights of fancy about his past, some characteristics which the son inherited. Thomas spent a couple of years in the Sydney goldfields and in 1855 he was back, drifting through some short-lived Government appointments under the patronage of Alfred Domett, (he was fluent in te reo), a failed stint at sheep farming and in 1863 came into his own with the Waikato war. It seems that military training was not needed to join the army, and he took part in action in the Waikato in October 1863, with Gustavus von Tempsky with whom he became friendly, and the following February, his actions were sufficient for him to be promoted Captain.



*Thomas McDonnell In the 1860s.
Alexander Turnbull Library
Reference: PA2-2601*

Through to 1866, McDonnell served with some success, leading kūpapa⁴⁷ forces on the East Coast and Taranaki, under the notable generals Cameron and Chute. He seemed to have charisma and military skill, obviously learning on the job, and in June 1866, promoted to major, was posted to take command of the Pātea district on the west coast, north of Whanganui. This proved to be his most controversial posting. He was charged with ensuring that surveying took place on land confiscated from Ngāti Ruanui. This iwi was keen for peace, but, according to whom you believe, McDonnell attacked a peaceful village, his troops were largely drunk, and a woman was raped. The action provoked a series of successful, hard-nosed actions, approved by the local colonists, to put down Māori resistance. McDonnell was cleared, two to one, by a Commission of Inquiry a couple of years later. He went on to campaign in Rotorua and Hokitika, was promoted Lt Colonel in July 1867, and was back in charge in the Pātea district in 1868 in the war against Titokowaru. After some three expeditions he was defeated by the Māori military genius, and lost von Tempsky in battle. McDonnell was dismissed, bitterly complaining to the Government about his treatment, superiors, blaming others for his loses, this a feature of his whole military career. He apologised, returned to serve under George Whitmore, whom he hated, suffered another defeat, and resigned in February 1869. It was now that he wrote his pamphlet, giving his version of his actions, and exposing his bitterness

⁴⁶ **James Belich.** 'McDonnell, Thomas', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1m33/mcdonnell-thomas> (accessed 1 April 2024)

⁴⁷ Māori forces fighting for the British.

against those, particularly civilians, under whom he had to serve. Everything was someone else's fault.

McDonnell, T *An explanation of the principal causes which led to the present war on the west coast of New Zealand; in defence of the action taken by Lieut.-Col., Thos. McDonnell, whilst commanding the Patea Field Force, with a suggestion as to future operations.* Wanganui: New Zealand, Times, 1869. 48 pp. Original orange paper wrappers, 1 folding map. 1 edition. Bagnall 3251, Hocken 261.

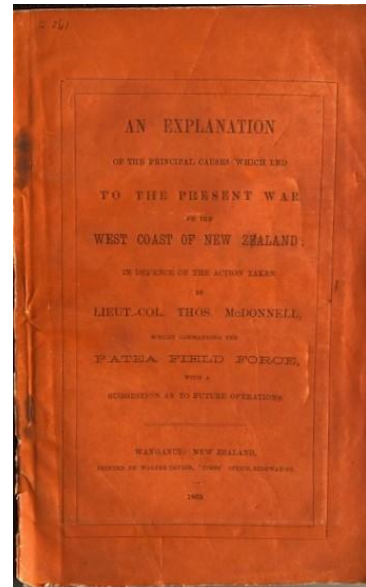
The folding map charts the North island West coast from just north of New Plymouth south to Whanganui. This is the theatre of McDonnell's activity. The lithographer and printer was Doyle & Co, who had offices in Christchurch and Wellington.

The nub of McDonnell's complaint and self-defence is given in his introductory remarks. This publication '*...is a duty which I owe to myself on retiring from active service, because in a portion of the press in the colony I have been censured, and even accused of being in some measure the cause of the disasters on the West Coast which never would have occurred had my plans of operations been carried out in such a manner as my own common sense, experience in colonial warfare, and thorough knowledge of the language, habits, customs and prejudices of the natives with whom I had to deal dictated, without the interference of the native department. I wish to show, in justice to myself, that if armed with the authority subsequently conferred upon my successor, I could have crushed the disturbance in the Patea district in the bud, and thus preventing them assuming the shape of a formidable rebellion under the leadership of Titoko Waru.*'

He may well have been right, though at what cost. Some flavour of the man and his writing is given at the opening chapter. '*To take the field and encounter a savage foe; to face the rifle and the tomahawk of a portion of the infatuated natives of this colony, and fight them in their own fashion whilst contending for the right of my fellow colonists, and the establishment of British supremacy in New Zealand, was to me a comparatively pleasant task, because accustomed to it from my youth upwards.*'

He mentions '*fellow colonists*' and this is an important issue. His troops and he himself as part of their contract with the Government, were to be given land at the end of the campaign, so providing an incentive for success in protecting the surveyance of the land. But the Government had a strange idea of what an incentive was, as McDonnell noted. He was paid as a Lt Colonel, but was informed '*that as soon as peace was restored, the surveys completed, and the settlers located on their land, I should cease to draw the pay.....which was £630 a year, and after that any pay and allowances would be reduced to £400 a year, which left the impression on my mind that high pay and allowances were entirely dependent on prolongation of the contest.....success would be followed by a reduction of salary...*'⁴⁸

McDonnell gives details of his campaigns, both on the West, and briefly on the East Coast, dealings with authorities, usually poor, and even a rare instance of humour. He sets



⁴⁸ **McDonnell, T.** *An explanation of the principal causes which led to the present war on the west coast of New Zealand; in defence of the action taken by Lieut.-Col., Thos. McDonnell, whilst commanding the Patea Field Force, with a suggestion as to future operations.* Wanganui: New Zealand, Times, 1869. p. 19.

out to confront the hapu of the Pakakohi iwi in Pātea who had driven out the surveyors. In a village he meets them, finding Titokawaru amongst them. He told them *'that their wisest plan was to submit and give no further trouble, as even my patience had a limit. They were bouncable; insisted that they would not let the surveys go on, and set me at defiance.'* He signals his men, and *'instantly their glittering bayonets in the bright moonlight had a wonderful effect.'* There was much discussion ending with an agreement *'...not again to molest the surveyors, and as proof of their sincerity presented me with a fat goose, and requested me to return with my men to Patea. As a prognostication of coming events this unfortunate gander shortly afterwards, in my absence, committed suicide by tumbling over the Patea cliff, but subsequently had the honour of supplying my friend Mr Booth and a few others with material for a hearty dinner.'*⁴⁹

On the 6th of March 1868, a Commission was set up to enquire into *'...certain alleged acts of cruelty, stated to have been committed into the attack upon Pokaikai in August 1866...'* This is the enquiry into McDonnell's surprise attack, two years before, on a village which had made its peace with the Government, and was concerned with the excesses of his drunken troops. McDonnell is scathing of the commission, particularly of the civil commissioner Robert Parris⁵⁰ who was the main prosecutor.

McDonnell's own account rejects any act of cruelty, noting that he treated the prisoners kindly, and the only reprehensible act was that of a volunteer who tried, unsuccessfully, to remove a shark's tooth ornament from a woman's ear. He was exonerated by the Commission, two to one, and he includes the main findings in his pamphlet. McDonnell went on to defeat the Ngāti Ruanui in the following months, well supported in his ruthless operations by the settlers.⁸³⁰

The final pages of McDonnell's pamphlet cover his campaign in Taranaki over the rest of the year, including the loss of von Tempsky, and he ends with a list of the factors which contributed to what he calls *'the disasters on the West coast'* and on his final page is still quoting favourable comments on his performance from Governor George Grey and General Chute⁵¹.

McDonnell served further in the campaign against Te Kooti at Taupō, but eventually lost his command in 1870. Gudgeon provides a hugely supportive entry for McDonnell, managing in four pages to not once mention the Commission of Enquiry, but provides a bewildering list of McDonnell's achievements and actions; *'under fire upwards of forty times...wounded on four separate occasions....risked his life continually...'*⁵²

McDonnell married Henerietta Lomax and had four children, but his life after the army was not one of any great success. He eventually, after much lobbying, was awarded the New Zealand Cross in 1886, and died at Whanganui in 1899. He doesn't get a good press



Thomas McDonnell in later life. Te Papa Tongarewa, # O.013426

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁰ Robert Parris (1816-1904) had a history of government and military appointments before becoming Civil Commissioner for Taranaki from 1865 to 1875.

⁵¹ General Trevor Chute (1816-1886) was the general in charge of British Troops in Taranaki at the time, his ruthless way of operating akin to that of his Major, Thomas McDonnell.

⁵² **Gudgeon, T.W.**, *The Defenders of New Zealand*, being a short biography of colonists who distinguished themselves in upholding Her Majesty's supremacy in these islands. Auckland, H. Brett, 1987. p. 182-186.

these days. He was clearly a brave, strong and resolute soldier, but the flavour of his legacy can be seen in this summing up: *'From 1866 to 1868 'Fighting Mac' was the colony's leading soldier, and was regarded as the embodiment of Pākehā determination. This reputation was founded on his talent for self-aggrandisement and his widely approved lack of scruple as much as his courage, energy, and resourcefulness.'*⁸³⁰

A partiality for the Waikato District.

St. John, J.H.H. (Lt Col.) Pakeha rambles through Maori lands. 1873

Most of my childhood was spent in the family home on Redoubt Rd in Manukau, although then part of Papatoetoe. I never thought too much about the name, though knew that on the knoll before the road descended to the Great South Rd, there were the remains of a redoubt, which I took to be a fort of some kind, and the remains of earthworks were still visible.

With the Government initiating the Waikato War, on the 23rd June, 1863, all available men in Auckland were called up to serve in the militia, unmarried men were drafted into the first class, married men into the second, and older men into the third. There were many hurried marriages and shirkers could be named in anonymous letters to be received by the military; scores were settled. The first forces, the



St John's Redoubt, Papatoetoe, 1863. Drawn by Col. Arthur Morrow. Auckland museum Object #996874

65th Regiment followed by Capt. Mercer's artillery battery set off on the Great South Rd. The St John's redoubt began life as a bivouac where the soldiers pitched their tents in the rain on the top of the hill. Then *'some men were employed in erecting a flagstaff....and arrangements were made under Captain Heaphy to complete the redoubt as soon as the engineers furnished their plan.'*⁵³ The redoubt was named after the officer in charge.⁵⁴

John Henry Herbert St. John (1835-1876) was born in France, his father the illegitimate offspring of a dubious love match between Viscount Bolingbroke and his half-sister. St John joined the army at the age of 19, saw some action in the Crimea, and then in 1862, he sold his captain's commission, resigned from the army and sailed off to New Zealand. In 1863 he joined the militia, just at the start of the Waikato war. He joined Pitt's 400⁵⁵, or more officially known as the Waikato Regiment, as captain and then, as Gudgeon says, received his majority, meaning being promoted to major⁵⁶. He served throughout the war, in the Waikato, Tauranga and Opotiki, under Whitmore at Pātea, and against Te Kooti in Poverty Bay.

St John joined the Field Force of Armed Constabulary in 1868, as inspector, fighting in Te Urewera in 1869. With the end of the almost decade of conflict, he took up a position as private secretary to Donald Mclean, Minister for Defense and Native Affairs. During this time he wrote his account of his travels, particularly through the Waikato, up until 1873.

⁵³ **Lennard, M.**, The road to war. The Great South Road 1862-64. Whakatane & District Historical Society, Monograph 16, 1986. pp. 28-37.

⁵⁴ **Cowan, J.**, The New Zealand wars. A history of the Maori campaigns and pioneering period. Wellington, Government Printer, 1922. Vol 1. p. 239.

⁵⁵ Lt. Col. George Dean Pitt, at the request of the Government, raised a militia of mainly volunteers, known as Pitt's Militia or Pitt's 400, based at Otahuhu. In 1863, he travelled to Victoria with Francis Dillon Bell and John Gorst to raise a force of volunteers for the Waikato war.

⁵⁶ **Gudgeon, T.W.**, op. cit. p. 463

St. John, J.H.H. (Lt Col.) *Pakeha rambles through Maori lands*. Wellington: Robert Burrett. 1873. [4], 212 pp, frontispiece map. Original red cloth boards, gilt title. 1 edition. Bagnall 4985, Hocken 287.

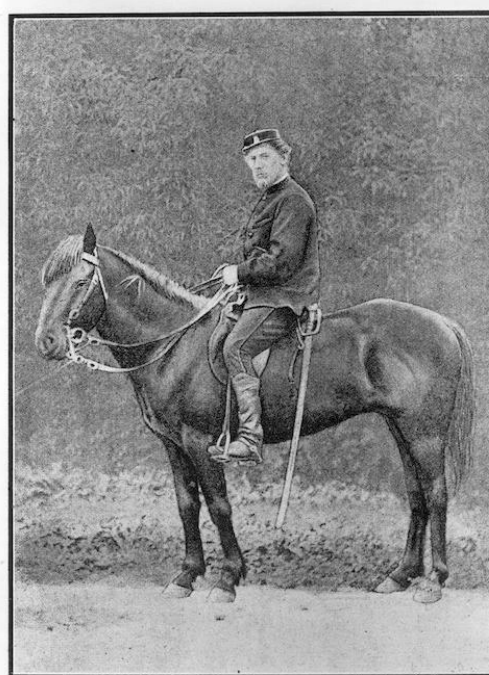
The map is a fairly crude sketch of the central part of the North Island, particularly showing the theatres of action in the west coast between Wellington and Taranaki, the Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Ureweras and Hawke's Bay.

Not all of the book is St John's. Part I, pp 5-64, is a hitherto unpublished memoir of an anonymous settler and flax trader in the Waikato who arrived in New Zealand from Sydney in 1830. St John in his preface notes that in publishing this account, there was a proviso that the author's name should not appear: '*I had to respect his wishes, and I have consequently assumed a degree of authorship to which I am not entitled, reserving to myself the right of confession*'. The author was in fact a Charles Marshall, who arrived at the Waikato Heads, trading flax for muskets. He lived in the lower Waikato region through to his death at Port Waikato in 1892. His reminiscences, including an extract, were referred to in his obituary⁵⁷ and have been covered in a more recent publication.⁵⁸

Marshall gives a lively account of life, often alone, amongst Māori in the lower Waikato region, trading flax, befriending, defending and providing an intimate view of the incessant conflicts within the iwi, and with Ngāpuhi raiding parties. He was physically tough, bringing to mind Frederick Manning, his exact contemporary up north, with his ability, and propensity, to wrestle to settle differences, and portraying the very physicality of existence at the time.

Right at the start of his account, there is an evocative little glimpse of a seaman. We don't often hear of the sailors on the ships carrying travel narrators. But here is Charles Marshall heading for the Waikato Heads from Sydney. '*The approach to the coast was predicted before land was sighted, by a strong-nosed sailor, who swore he could smell the peculiar fragrance of the New Zealand soil, etc. Four hours after Jack's assertion, land was seen, but I never could manage to train my olfactory nerves to such perfection.*'

Incidentally, Marshall uses the word 'bounce' as in '*Captain Payne attempted to carry things with a high hand, but the master of the "Samuel" was not to be intimidated, and after a great deal of bounce on their part, we shipped the flax on board our vessel and prepared for sea.*'⁵⁹



LIEUT.-COLONEL ST. JOHN.

Lt Col St John, c. 1870, unknown photographer. Alexander Turnbull Library/records/23006942. Also published in Featon, The Waikato War, Auckland, 1923, p. 198.

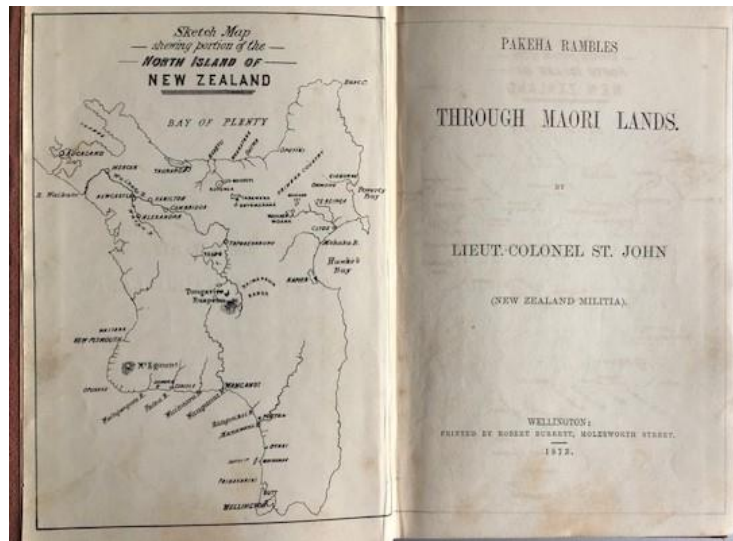
⁵⁷ Reminiscences of the late Mr. C. Marshall. New Zealand Herald, Volume xxix, Issue 8974, 3 September 1892, Page 1 (Supplement).

⁵⁸ Morris, N., Auckland-Waikato Historical Journal, No 16 Apr 1970 & No 17 Sep 1970.

⁵⁹ St. John, J.H.H. (Lt Col.) *Pakeha rambles through Maori lands*. Wellington: Robert Burrett. 1873. p.33.

Thomas McDonnell uses the noun ‘bounceable’ as in: ‘They were bounceable; insisted that they would not let the surveys go on, and set me at defiance.’ (see the previous entry). The word, listed in Victorian slang dictionaries, was used in the 19th C to denote bluster, swagger and boasting.⁶⁰

Part II, pp 65-212, is St John’s account, as in the title, rambling across time and the North Island, providing him with the chance to contrast his own experiences with those of 40 years earlier in Marshall’s memoir. He starts with an account of the Waikato, for which ‘I must confess to a partiality for the Waikato District, at least that portion of it south of Ngāruawāhia..’, and compares what he sees with the account of Marshall 40 years before: where



Marshall ‘found a country inhabited by thousands of natives, I saw cultivated farms occupied by thriving European population: where he wandered through difficult bush tracks I drove along a metalled road; ...’⁶¹ There are four of them riding in a buggy, horses furnished by Cobb & Co, passing ‘Otahuhu, a quiet and dreamy-looking little village...’, reaching the Waikato river after crossing the Mangatawhiri, taking a swim in the river at Mercer, visiting the battle sites, and on to Hamilton, and then to Taupo. It is a leisurely ramble, with anecdotes from earlier times, and a sometimes lyrical view of the surroundings.

At Tapuaeharuru on the shores of Lake Taupo, he misses meeting his friend Poihipi Tukairangi, noting that the chief helped Herbert Meade in his mission to Taupo. While riding to the Huka Falls, he pats himself on the back for being able to quote Virgil in such circumstances: ‘The hollow sound elicited by the hoofs of the horses when put to a quiet trot brought up classical ideas, and actually elicited a quotation as a proof that Virgil knew what it was to canter over a volcanic country. The line “Quadrupetante sonu putrem petit ungula campuna”⁶² does give the sort of idea of the queer reverberation under foot. But Latin at Taupo! With a Maori chief at ones side! And quoted by an Armed Constable too! “Quousque tandem”⁶³’⁶⁴

Every now and the St John comes across a memory of the conflicts. On the road to Napier he comes to Ōpepe, ‘...a place of bitter memories for me, and never can I visit it without the most painful of reminiscences of the tragic fate of the party of cavalry volunteers.’ St John’s men had been surprised by Te Kooti’s men, and with St John failing to have set sentries, 9 men were killed, five escaping naked and eventually reaching Galatea. Then there is a chapter on the Bay of Plenty, which he says can be reached by road from Thames or by 17 h at sea. He foolishly takes the latter, with a drunken captain, but survives. The text is now even more that of a travel guide. He doesn’t find much to see at Tauranga, visits Gate pa where we got ‘whipped’, and on the small island of Kawera finds tuatara, though doesn’t

⁶⁰ E.g. **Hotten, John Camden**, *The Slang Dictionary, Etymological, Historical and Anecdotal*. London, Chatto & Windus, 1913.

⁶¹ **St. John, J.H.H. (Lt Col.)**, op. cit. pp. 65-66.

⁶² “With a rattling sound the rotten hooves call out over the field”

⁶³ “Finally how long”

⁶⁴ **St. John, J.H.H. (Lt Col.)**, op. cit. pp. p. 110

name them as such. *'They are not handsome beasts these lizards, but they are tenacious of life. One was sent a long distance by post, and arrived safe at his journey's end; another, I was assured, had eaten nothing for three weeks,when the box was opened, the brute was as dead as Julius Caesar.'*

The Hot Lakes follow. He says at the start of the Chapter *'Mr Trollope mentions the fact that before him, two hundred writers have had their say about New Zealand; and as it is presumable that more than nine-tenths of them would not lose the opportunity of bringing in such curiosities as the Hot Lakes, and as he has followed suit,[there is] little of nothing new to say about them'*.⁶⁵ Then of course St John goes on to say quite a lot about them. He duly describes them and swims in the thermal water (swimming is often recorded throughout his travels), as did Meade and Trollop, admiring the *'dusky beauties of the pa'*. There is more on the Bay of Plenty, then a chapter where he is the voice of an old acquaintance who had become a Māori trader, selling tobacco, prints, hair oil, and blankets for pigs, corn and potatoes to sell in Auckland. As with the early pages from Charles Marshall, this account is more lively and interesting than St John's travelogue, although the trader (or St John) ends with *'..our existence since our start in the Maori trade has been like Cowper's traveller - "remote, melancholy, slow".'*

They sail round to Poverty Bay and here his military experiences in the area in 1869⁶⁶ burst out: *'Poverty Bay indeed! Not even when scathed by fire and sword as I first saw it; its settlers slain; its houses burnt, blackened stacks of chimneys only remaining to indicate the sites of once happy homes; its orchards and gardens ravaged; its cattle slaughtered, and indices of murder and rapine meeting the eye to right and left; not even then did it deserve the name.'*⁶⁷ And he goes on to record the luxurious vegetation, fruit trees laden with plums and apples, and swards of rye grass. The book ends, abruptly, with St John travelling on the West Coast, through Pātea north to Hawera, revisiting the sites of the campaigns lead by General Chute and Lt. Col McDonnell.

In all its not a very engaging account; the one we wanted St John to write was that of his military experiences, and the most interesting part of the book is the first 60 pages from George Marshall, with its raw account of life in the Waikato amongst Māori.

St John died in the last year of Donald Mclean's term in Government. The latter resigned in December 1867, and died the next month. Gudgeon says that St John survived Mclean, but only for a short time. However, St John's death was earlier than that, from pneumonia in April 1876, and he is buried in Wellington's Bolton St cemetery.⁶⁸ St John St in Tauranga is named after him, and there are differing versions of how Mt St John, Te Kōpuke or Tītīkōpuke, in Auckland, got its name. A. W. Reed in 1975⁶⁹ notes that it was named after the Lt Colonel, but later authorities on Auckland's volcanoes⁷⁰ say it was named by the churchmen in Auckland in 1840, for whom St John was their patron saint, hence also St John's college in what is now Meadowbank in Auckland. The volcano is one of the oldest of Auckland's maunga, with remnants of a pa and gardens, and a lovely intact crater.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 135.

⁶⁶ St John was involved in the conflicts with Te Kooti who, along with 300 fellow prisoners, had escaped from the Chatham Islands to Poverty Bay in June 1868.

⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 176-177.

⁶⁸ <https://www.aucklandmuseum.com/war-memorial/online-cenotaph/record/C36252>

⁶⁹ Reed, A.W., Place names of New Zealand. Wellington, A H & A W Reed, 1975. p.45.

⁷⁰ Hayward, B W, Murdoch, G., Maitland, G., Volcanoes of Auckland. The essential guide. Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2011. p. 134.