



THE MAORIES.

NEW ZEALAND lies in the Pacific Ocean, to the south-west of Australia. It consists of two large islands and a third one of moderate size, together with numerous small islets.

The whole put together would be of the same extent as England and Scotland. "It may be called a wooded, highland country, having some noble plains and thousands of brook-watered valleys, dells, and dales. In fine scenery no country surpasses New Zealand. There are noble forests, snow-capped mountains, shooting up ten thousand feet above a sea of green, and wooded up to the line of snow; tracts of rolling grass-land; rivers and rivulets almost without number; and three thousand miles of bay and ocean coast. The plants and trees are evergreens; there is no autumnal fall; the country is always verdant; and the soil is generally fertile. Every English grain, grass, fruit, and flower will here obtain full perfection; and the climate is one of the best in the world." Such is the glowing sketch of one who resided in the country. These beautiful islands are the homes of the Maories.

The Maories, or *natives*, as the word means, are a stout, strong, and active race, of a dark olive complexion, and of rather agreeable expression of face. They are a mixed race. Some have black woolly hair; others brown or even flaxen. Some are many shades darker in skin than others. They form twenty-three principal tribes, besides the fragments of others which are fast dying out.

Captain Cook first made known to us this people, though they had been, before his time, visited by a Dutch captain, named Tasman, from whom the country

known as Tasmania is called. Cook gave a striking account of the New Zealanders—of their persons, habits, and customs. He found them possessed of canoes eighty feet long, and finely carved. He described the men as tattooing their faces and bodies, and smearing them with oil and red ochre, which gave to them a strange and frightful appearance. Both sexes ornamented their flowing hair with feathers, flowers, shells, and the teeth of animals.

The Maories lived an idle life, without rule or any regard to time. If any one of them had work in hand, he probably did it; or, which is more likely, he lay down to sleep for many hours.

Before the English colonists went among them, they lived in *pahs*, fortified stockades, or stout fences, placed on the sides of hills. These consisted of strong posts fixed in the ground, and behind which they would fight to desperation. But their old manners are fast passing away in favour of those which they see among the English, and which they readily imitate.

The Maories are said to have many qualities superior to those found among savage nations in general. "They show forethought and vigour of mind; are hospitable, kind, and generous, and keenly alive in points of honour. But they still have some of the vices of the savage; their passions are easily aroused, and they are revengeful and cruel. When first visited by Cook, they used to eat their enemies who were taken in battle; but this vile practice is now at an end."

In a few districts the New Zealanders continue to live after the ways of their forefathers—in huts made of boughs of trees; and their only clothing consists of a dirty blanket; but in the neighbourhood of English settlers they quickly



MAORIES IN NATIVE COSTUME.

conform to their ways. They now possess farms and flour-mills; they unite together in villages, and bring under cultivation a large extent of land. Trad-

ing vessels are also owned by some of the chiefs.

Women are better treated than is mostly the case in savage life. They

are the constant companions of their husbands, and share their domestic duties with them. The wife takes care of the house and children, and weaves mats and clothing, while the man builds the hut and goes forth to fish. Their affection one to another is very strong.

The old religion of this people was confined to a belief in the influence of spirits, who sometimes were friendly, and at other times, in their anger, afflicting the bodies of men with diseases. They followed many superstitious ceremonies, and their priests were a sort of conjurers. But in 1814 the Rev. Samuel Marsden, colonial chaplain in New South Wales, commenced the first Christian mission to these people. Most of the evil customs of their pagan state have been given up; and wars among the tribes have nearly ceased. The missionaries have introduced the plough and the useful arts of civilized life. They have also reduced the language into writing, compiled school-books, and translated the Bible and other works into the tongue of the people, most of whom can now read and write.

In his recent work on New Guinea, Signor D'Albertis thus describes the Papuan Maories:—"The most perfect

harmony seems to reign in families, and rare, indeed, are cases of quarrel among members of one household. They live in communities, sometimes of more than a thousand inhabitants, in well-built villages, worthy to be called small towns, both for their order and cleanliness. They are under the rule of the chiefs or landowners. The chief is looked upon as father of the family. He is called Pacao, and his servant or subject is called Irine. From all I could learn, slavery does not exist, and the sale of human beings is unknown. Their natural disposition is gentle and placid. They like to spend their time in talking and games, in which men and women take an equal share. Playful and free of speech, they nevertheless do not transgress the bounds of modesty, either in word or deed. Women and children are included in every conversation, and often take part in public discussions, which are usually held in the evening. Women are always respected, and in some villages they enjoy a certain supremacy, although the government of the house belongs to the husband. Labour may be said to be fairly divided between the two sexes, and they are accustomed to work from their earliest childhood"

