

# CHAPTER I.

THE NEW ZEALAND COMPANY, AND OTHER MATTERS.

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**N**EW ZEALAND as a Colony and as a nation owes an eternal debt of gratitude to the late Edward Gibbon Wakefield, who, in 1829, published pamphlets on colonisation, and who, in 1837, formed a New Zealand Association. For a time his schemes were held in abeyance, but in December, 1838, on returning from Canada to England, he again set to work, and, during 1839, succeeded in forming a new Company, known as the New Zealand Land Company.

Land was purchased in various parts of the North Island of New Zealand, but disputes arose with the Maoris and the authorities, and, considerably discouraged with the progress of the scheme in the North, the Company turned its attention to the South Island, where the whaling trade was being carried on with considerable success, without molestation by the Maoris.

As early as 1829 a whaling station was established at Preservation Inlet by a Captain Williams, who, at the time of the arrival of the first settlers, was a familiar figure in Otago. Pilot Driver often got the immigrants into trouble by telling them, when inquiries were made whether wild pigs were plentiful, that Williams's pigs were wild. Some of these were shot, and Williams made the surprised delinquents pay up rather smartly.

Other whaling stations were established here and there along the east coast of Otago, chiefly at Waikouaiti; at the Taieri Mouth, where the Palmers had established themselves; and at Tautuku, where Tommy Chaslands was a well-known figure. Tommy was one of the bravest of a race famous for their contempt of danger. For some time he was manager for Johnny Jones, and no one killed more whales or got more oil than he did. It is related of him that, on one occasion, getting into too close quarters with a whale, his boat was cut in two by the whale's flukes. Chasland saw the danger, and jumped overboard. Three of his mates were never seen again, but Sam Perkins, another man, and Chasland clung to

the stern half of the boat. As a thick fog was coming on, Chasland offered to swim to the shore for help. Some time after he started his perilous journey the others were picked up by a passing boat and taken ashore. They failed to find Chasland, but the spy-glass revealed him coming to the station, utterly devoid of clothing, after swimming six miles to land.

The Palmers were noted for their skill and daring, and knew all the harbours of the east and south coast well. When Mr. Tuckett visited Otago, it was Edward Palmer who piloted the vessel into the harbour from Waikouaiti. In common with many other early whalers, both the Palmers took to themselves Maori wives, and many of their descendants are still in Otago. At the time of the founding of the settlement, a tall, fine-looking man, well dressed, and wearing a high silk hat, was often seen visiting Dunedin. That was Edward Palmer, who had purchased land at Otakia, where he lived to a ripe old age. William Palmer also settled at the Taieri, and one of his sons afterwards distinguished himself by his bravery at the wreck of the "Wairarapa," on board of which ill-fated vessel he was a seaman.

Mr. John Jones (Johnny) was the first who saw the likelihood of the whaling industry being a probable source of profit, and soon he had practical control of nearly the whole of the whaling stations. As the profits were enormous, Jones soon became very rich. He purchased land at Waikouaiti, and it speaks well for his general shrewdness that all the land was of the very best description. At one time he laid claim to a large block, extending from the Waikouaiti River to Pleasant River, one large estate being purchased. It is said, for a bag of black sugar. When the Treaty of Waitangi was enforced, Jones had to part with a lot of his too easily acquired acres. At the time of the settlement he was a well-known personage, with his black cloth coat and silk hat. He had a most violent temper, and could brook no interference with his will. To him the early settlers were much indebted for assistance; in fact, in those days of hard toil and little money he was the bank, his shin-plasters or blisters, as they were called, being the cheques current. He married a Miss Sizemore, and left a family of eleven children.

Willeher and Russell were settled at Port Molyneux, or Molyneux Bay. They were not whalers, but were

the representatives of a Sydney firm, who were desirous of establishing large cattle stations.

Such, in brief, was the position in Otago when, in 1843, a settlement was projected by the Free Church of Scotland to be founded in the territory, and under the auspices of the New Zealand Land Company. Mr. Wakefield was the life and soul of the Company, and to him must be attributed the honour of proposing, and ultimately carrying into practical effect, the Otago scheme. Looking at the Disruption of the Established Church in Scotland with the eye of a statesman, Wakefield perceived the very thing he wanted—enthusiasm, which, in the words of Chalmers, “flourishes in adversity, is fearless in danger, and awakens to deeds of renown.” It was such enthusiasm that Wakefield sought to enlist in the great movement to which he had devoted his life, and well did he succeed in his efforts.

When Captain Fitzroy was appointed Governor of New Zealand, he carried out instructions from Lord Stanley to assign Port Cooper, on Banks’ Peninsula, as the site for the Scotch Colony, provided a better site could not be found on the same Middle Island. When the arrangements with the Company were completed, Mr. Frederick Tuckett was appointed to conduct the preliminary steps, and he suggested the advisability of previously exploring the south-eastern and southern coasts, in order to determine the best site. Mr. Wakefield endorsed these suggestions, and accordingly on March 31st, 1844, the brigantine “Deborah” (Captain Wing) was chartered for the purpose. Besides Mr. Tuckett and Mr. Symonds, the officer appointed by Captain Fitzroy to assist in effecting a valid purchase of the land, the party consisted of Dr. Monro, Messrs. Wither, Wilkinson, Barnicoat, and Davidson. The Rev. Mr. Wohlers, a German missionary, also accompanied the party, seeking a suitable scene for his missionary labours amongst the Maoris.

The “Deborah” proceeded to Wellington, thence to Port Cooper, where exhaustive examinations of the land were made. Not satisfied, Tuckett proceeded to Wai-kouaiti and Otakou Harbour, being piloted in by Edward Palmer, already mentioned. Tuckett climbed the hills, and had a good look on every hand. He was so pleased that he ordered the “Deborah” to proceed to Molyneux Bay, while he made his way overland. From Molyneux Bay he proceeded to the Bluff, the survey party

meantime carrying on their explorations inland. Having made an exhaustive examination, Tuckett fixed upon the Otago Block as being the most suitable place for the settlement, and made lengthy reports thereon. Colonel Wakefield gave an able report, while Captain Mein Smith, R.A., who had examined the coast and adjoining lands in 1842, also on the authority of Mr. Wakefield, reported as to the best site for the settlement.

After these reports had reached the Head Office, the final arrangements were made, the purchase of 400,000 acres from the natives was completed, and subsequently conveyed to the Land Company by grant from the Crown, under the Public Seal of the Colony, dated 13th of April, 1846.

Meanwhile the Otago Association had been proceeding with its arrangements, but progress was slow. Mr. Wakefield had appointed Mr. Geo. Rennie, afterwards Governor of the Falkland Islands, as a suitable agent to negotiate with the Free Church leaders; but, through some misunderstanding, he retired, and Captain William Cargill was appointed. Negotiations were successful, and an Association of influential laymen was formed, with a paid secretary and officers in both Edinburgh and Glasgow—Mr. John McGlashan for the former, and Dr. Alcorn for the latter.

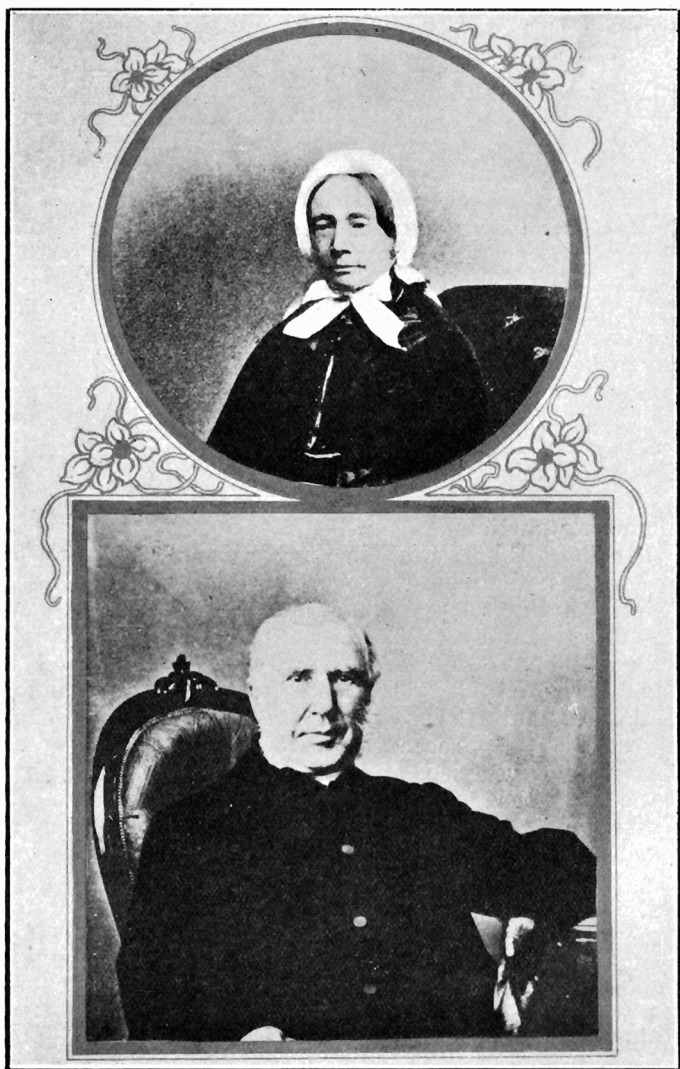
The agreement with the Company was finally ratified, and the Association was recognised as the party authorised to promote the settlement of Otago, and to carry on the business for five years. The Association was to have the right to 2,400 properties, including an area of 144,600 acres; 2,000 properties, or 120,500 acres, were for sale to private individuals; 100 properties, or 6,025 acres, were to be purchased by the trustees for educational and religious purposes; 100 properties, or 6,025 acres, were to be purchased by the local Municipal Government; and 200 properties, or 12,050 acres, were to be purchased by the Land Company. The price of the land was to be £2 per acre, and the purchase money allotted as follows:—Three-eighths towards emigration, two-eighths to civil uses, one-eighth to educational and religious uses, and two-eighths to the Company; deductions for the cost of the land, however, were to be made. The Municipal Government had to pay separately, and, until payment was made, the land was to be retained by the trustees, who had the power to dispose of the same should payment

not be made within one year of the disposal of the remaining 2,000 properties. These the Association had to dispose of within five years, but it had also the right of refusal of the remainder of the block of 400,000 acres.

The Company retained power to exclude lands containing in considerable quantities coal or other minerals from the allotments for sale. Lands so reserved were to be disposed of as from time to time agreed upon by the Company and the Association. This was done to prevent a coal or other mineral field from falling into the hands of private individuals, who would form monopolies injurious to the public interests. Due provision was to be made in the chief town for land for public purposes. If the Association failed to sell its 2,000 properties, they, or such portions as remained, were to revert to the Company, which would dispose of them to other individuals. Each purchaser was to receive three separate land orders—a quarter-acre town section, 10 acres of suburban land, and 50 acres of rural land, the same to be selected by ballot. Other provisions suitable for the settlement were agreed on, and the whole agreement was signed and sealed by the contracting parties.

During 1845-6-7 Captain Cargill and Dr. Burns were unwearied in their efforts to promote the settlement. In 1846 the preliminary work of surveying the allotments was carried out by C. H. Kettle, the principal surveyor of the Company, and the surveys were completed about June, 1847. Maps were then forwarded to London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and the business of securing emigrants was proceeded with. The scheme was extensively advertised, and great prominence was given to the fact that ample provision would be made for religious and educational institutions. But in spite of all the scheme still hung fire. The Land Company required more tangible evidence of public interest, and to the exertions of Captain Cargill and Dr. Burns the successful issue was due. Dr. Burns spent two years travelling through Scotland, canvassing among his friends and acquaintances, and succeeded in inducing many of them to become purchasers to the extent required by the Company.

Very glowing reports were distributed broadcast by the Association, and cogent reasons advanced to induce people to embark in the enterprise. The following extracts from some of the reports may be given, as it is unques-



DR. AND MRS. BURNS—1848, "*Philip Laing*."

tionable that they had a good deal to do with the final success of the undertaking. From Dr. Monro's report:—"On the whole the east coast of the Middle Island exceeded my anticipations. It offers a large extent of level and undulating land, while the circumstance of it being covered with grass is of vast importance. There is a great field for the production of wool, and there is abundance of water. The climate is particularly favourable for this industry. The summers are warm, with abundance of warm and bright weather, and less rain than might be expected. The frosts in winter are sharp, but in the month of April we found potatoes still green and flourishing. Of the Block proposed for the settlement, the most remarkable feature is the facility for water communication, and no section will be far from a navigable river or lagoon. The southernmost portion is watered by the rivers Puerua, Koau, and Clutha, besides many smaller streams, the fertile shores of which will furnish an admirable series of sections. The plain of Tokomairiro is of large extent, and grass-covered, while from it there is an almost level pass to the Taieri, which is somewhat swampy, but will be a valuable district. The Clutha, with its valley, is one of the most valuable in the Block, and runs from Molyneux Bay back inland as far as the eye can reach.

"On landing from our craft, in front of us we saw the long, low beach at the bottom of the bay, with a large extent of almost level country behind it. On mounting to the top of some low sandhills, we came in view of the Molyneux River, a majestic stream about a-quarter of a mile broad, deep, clear as crystal, and with well-defined banks, flowing with a steady, gentle current. To our eyes it was a magnificent stream, quite capable of being navigated by fairly large boats. Looking up, we could trace its course through a large extent of alluvial land, by the fringe of ti-trees on its banks, and by the numerous groves of trees, all of which produced a most picturesque effect. Immense quantities of flax were to be seen growing in profusion in its neighbourhood.

"At a distance inland were gentle slopes, apparently covered with grass and fern, and rising to a moderate height; behind these no mountains were visible, except away to the north-west, where the white tops of a far distant range showed themselves. The country was altogether one of great beauty and unusually rich softness.

The Clutha Plain turned out to be of large extent, and had a fine growth of grass, immensely tall flax, and in many parts were dense tracts of bush, brilliantly green in colour, and echoing with the song of native birds. In every direction were extensive tracts of valuable looking land, although signs were not wanting that some parts were liable to floods. Away to the east, connected with each other and with the Clutha River by navigable streams were two shallow lakes of considerable size. The shores of these embraced long strips of fertile land, which gladdened the eyes of the beholders. This part of the country was more grassy, only parts of the hills showing any bush, while indications of the presence of coal were found by some of our party.

“Away to the south of the Molyneux was a densely wooded line of hills, gorgeous in their beauty, and fringed with open spaces of a greenness to which our eyes had long been strangers. Here and there were patches of corn and potatoes, grown by the only white settlers, Willeher and Russell—a conclusive proof of the fertility of the soil. Up the river and to the west were beautiful slopes, some wooded, some ferny, and others covered with grass and flax. At their base flowed a stream, the Puerua, through what we considered a vast swamp, but the growth of vegetation was so abundant and varied that it was impossible to say without a closer view how correct was our opinion. However, on topping the hills mentioned some time afterwards, we saw that the country to the west divided itself into two distinct blocks—one rather hilly, extending in the same direction as the coast line; and the other, all undulating land, stretching as far as the eye could reach. This latter was covered with great white tussocks, interspersed with flax and fern, but in no case was there any bush to be seen. The whole of this vast tract was well watered, but not a sign of habitation or the presence of man could be seen, and it appeared as if the traveller had been suddenly transported into a vast land of silence and loveliness indescribable.”

Another extract about this part of the district from a different source:—“The sight of the district was the forest-clad hills, and to the eyes of the weary traveller they appeared as a veritable Garden of Eden. The upper parts were covered with fern, the lower by a dense forest of gigantic trees of immense height and of varieties unknown—kowhais with their golden bell-like flowers, ratas



with bright crimson flowers, long, waving, feathery, palm-like fern trees, pines with crown-like tops, and, stretching above all, the glittering white clematis, like stars of night, added to the beauty of the scene."

Extract from Mr. Tuckett's reports:—"The harbour (i.e., Otakou or Otago Harbour) is thirteen miles long, with an average breadth of two miles, with six fathoms of water for seven miles up, and three fathoms for the remainder. On either side the forest remains unbroken; good timber is abundant, and the soil appears to be fertile. A space of less than a quarter of a mile intervenes between the head of the harbour and the ocean; here is a water frontage of unwooded land, rising gently inland. It offers an ornamental and commodious site for a town, most suitable in every way."

Colonel Wakefield reported:—"My first impressions of the harbour were extremely favourable. Lying open to the north, it is entered with a fair wind, and this also prevents delay when leaving the port. Its northern aspect renders Otago much more agreeable than any other site. The sandbanks within the harbour are of inconsiderable extent, and would not impede shipping. The shores of the harbour are densely wooded, while the soil is well adapted for husbandry. For picturesque effect, Otago yields only to Akaroa among the harbours of New Zealand. At the head of the harbour the land lies in long slopes, the west side being covered to the water's edge with beautiful timber and copsewood, and offering space for several hundred sections. The site of the town abounds in wood and fresh water, while the harbour teems with fish. Beyond the first ridges lies an undulating country, the worst of which would afford food for sheep. Communication with the whole of the surrounding country would be extremely easy from Dunedin, as water carriage could be employed in many parts, while good roads could be made without much expense."

These reports were continually supplemented with those supplied by the surveyors and others, and the results were commensurate with the expense of publication. Many inquiries were made by intending colonists, and to these Mr. McGlashan pictured the place in glowing colours, and impressed upon all that New Zealand was a land flowing with milk and honey. "They had," said he, "only to put forth the hand to gather the fruits." The disgust of those who believed his tales, when, on

reaching the Colony, they found the fruits to be a myth, may be imagined.

The pilgrim fathers, however, were prepared to face danger and hardships for the sake of religious freedom, and such a prospect was to them a great inducement to emigrate. Many, no doubt, left with the idea of gaining great riches easily, and some did attain good positions, and became well-to-do: others left with the hope of securing land, which was not procurable in the Old Land; but the majority knew they were coming to a life of toil and hardship even greater than that of the life they had left behind, and so acted accordingly.

Everything being now ready, the Company advertised for tenders for two vessels to convey the passengers, stipulating that one was to sail from London, the other from Glasgow. The ships "John Wickliffe" and "Philip Laing" were selected, and preparations went on apace. On the 10th November, 1847, the first ballot for order of choice of land took place at New Zealand House, London, when 104 properties were purchased and balloted for. The "John Wickliffe," 662 tons, sailed from Gravesend on the 24th November, 1847, and from Portsmouth on 14th December, with 97 passengers, of whom ten were bound for Wellington and other settlements. Captain Cargill, the leader of the colony, with his family, went in this ship, which arrived in Otago, all well, in March, 1848, after a fast passage of 93 days, or 116 from the time of her first departure from Gravesend.

The "Philip Laing," 547 tons, sailed from Greenock at the end of November, and from Milford Haven early in December, 1847. She carried 246 passengers, all for Otago. Dr. Burns was on board, and the emigrants received a hearty send-off from the authorities. Both ships encountered severe gales at the commencement of their voyages, hence the reason of the "Wickliffe" sheltering in Portsmouth, and the "Philip Laing" in Milford Haven. Their first experience of sea life was not such as to impress the passengers with the delights of a sea voyage, and did not augur well for the many happy days that would be spent at sea.

Incidents on the voyage out were numerous and interesting, and an account of some of them from these and succeeding ships will be of interest, and well worth relating.