

**Mr Jenkins and the New Zealand Chiefs**  
Birmingham Daily Post 26 March 1864

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To the Editor of the Daily Post

Sir, According to promise I continue my reply to Mr Kynnersley's letter of the 17<sup>th</sup> inst. But since I last wrote letters from five of the Chiefs have appeared in your columns, containing ambiguous insinuations but not a single definite charge and I am really at a loss to know what they mean, as also are the two Chiefs who remain with me. More especially so, as Paratene and Hirini, also Tere, Hariata, and Julia have assured me in the presence of witnesses that they never had anything whatever to say against me, and I have several letters confirming this statement. And I further state what I before stated, that Reihana and I have always lived on the most friendly terms, and only a few days before I signed their release he assured me that he had never said nor could he say anything disrespectful with reference to my treatment of himself and party, but that as Miss Weale had wished them to go back as speedily as possible, he hoped I would give my assent. So also said Paratene – and then both these Chiefs enquired, "Will you not go up to London and see us off?" and on my replying in the affirmative, they said "That is right; come and take leave of your children, and let our love to each other continue." In pursuance of this I wrote to Miss Weale, giving my full assent, and offering to assist her in any way I could. And I venture to declare it to be my solemn conviction that had this offer of mine been accepted by that lady, and had nothing been said calculated to arouse the suspicions of the Chiefs, this rupture would never have taken place.

I think the whole matter is so very transparent that I need not waste time by going into explanation on that part of the subject. I have in my possession positive proof that money would have prevented any unpleasantness between us; and if those persons who have interfered had only been sufficiently "benevolent" to have tried to keep peace on this head, the public would never have heard of that "scorn" and "contempt" &c., &c., of which so much has been made.

But we are told Wharepapa and Reihana "felt themselves bound in honour to abide by the original agreement." Can they show any infringement, on my part, of that agreement? How could they feel "bound to abide" by it if they "did not understand it?"

Mr Kynnersley declares that I do "not understand their character," &c., &c. I think every one will at once say that after twenty-two years' close acquaintance with a people, a man must be an idiot if he does not understand their character. And while I would give that gentleman credit for the best of motives, I cannot admit his knowledge of Maori "character" to be worth much. His own words show that his acquaintance with Maori history is very scant, especially when he speaks of those in the neighbourhood of Nelson. Does he know that nearly all the natives of that district are from the North Island; and that they are the conquerors of the original native tribe, of whom only a few remain?

Although Ngapuhi are a "proud" people, they do not "entertain the most sovereign contempt," for the tribes above referred to, who are equally "refined"! and warlike with any other tribes in the north of New Zealand; and then as for "caste," I am happy to say there is no such a word in the Maori vocabulary.

The next expression I notice is "they are cooped up in small rooms, dispirited, gloomy, miserable." In reply to this, I refer the public to the parties in whose houses we have lived

both in Birmingham and elsewhere, and also to those who have so frequently visited us, for a refutation of this silly charge. No person who has ever known us will for a moment believe it.

Then, "They detest public meetings." Who will credit this statement that has seen and heard them on such occasions?

Again. What is said about wearing mats requires a remark. I such a practice was so very improper, why did the Queen wish them to wear mats in her presence? Or the Prince and Princess, the Duke of Cambridge, and others? Any why have so many highly-respectable persons, including the clergy, invariably requested them to wear their native clothing at the public meetings? The first time I heard any one of them object to wear a mat was after they had been visited by some ladies in Birmingham, and were by them told that it was improper, whereupon exclaiming, "Dr Miller says the mats make us look like monkeys, therefore I will not wear one any more." And yet even this worthy clergyman wished to see them in their "mats" at Nock's Assembly Room. And further, if it was such a revolting practice, why did Miss Weale and Miss Selwyn request them, when paying a visit to Sandwell Park, to bring all their "mats," and weapons and paddles, for the entertainment of the friends who were invited to meet them?

But again, Mr Kynnersley still declares that it was I, and not the Maoris, who refused to return when Lord Shaftesbury formerly wished them to do so. For a refutation of this, I refer the public to a translation of the document I mentioned in my last letter, and which is in the possession of Mr Pumphrey. We all refused to accept what we then considered an ill-timed and premature offer; and Miss Weale herself declared, in the presence of witnesses, that we "did right in refusing the offer at that time."

Then as to their "flatly refusing to accede" to "attend public meetings as before," I beg to reply it is simply incorrect, for even after Miss Weale's arrangements were accepted they did willingly attend meetings at Rugby and Coventry, and declared that they were the best meetings we had held. And as to "refusing to go in any ship in which" I "should have any authority over them" – a few words of explanation is necessary. Wharepapa's first reply to Miss Weale – through Mrs Colenso, of London – shows that no objection was entertained at that period. He was simply ready to return by the "first canoe he saw afloat," but "Jenkins says he is able to provide a canoe. If he does so, well; but I will go in the first that is afloat," &c., &c. And further, when we all met at Mr Kynnersley's house, and that question was put by Miss Weale, Wharepapa replied that he would go in that lady's ship, and I had better go in mine. But that was not the decision of them all, for when Paratene was asked the same question he warmly replied, pointing to me, "Here is my father, who brought me to England, and I will return with him." And so said others, but Paratene was afterwards entreated to join the rest and go in Miss Weale's ship, to which he consented. When all the chieftainesses wished to go back with me, and after Julia had declared her intention of doing so, she received a letter from Mr Maunsel, which she showed to me, containing expressions like the following:- If Mr Jenkins does not give you the money he promised to give, why do you stay with him? How is it that you, who were the most anxious to return, now refuse to do so? &c., &c.

One more reference, sir, and I have done; for I see the public do not want to be puzzled any longer by this correspondence.

I give the following extract from the *New Zealander* published in Auckland, October 3, 1863. In reference to our visit to England the editor says:- "How fares it with the New Zealand Chief, at present on a visit to the land of our fathers? Well and proudly, we rejoice to learn, not through the reports of strangers, not through the channels of an approving press, but

from the gratified pens of men known to many of us, and who in consequence of the well-considered arrangements of a judicious tour, have been greeted not as interesting mummers and mountebanks, but welcomed as honoured guests of the Queen of England, her ministers and nobility. The visit and the spirit in which it has been acknowledged are worthy of each other, and will, we hope, yet be productive of beneficial results on both sides of the equator.”

I quote this to show what the authorities in New Zealand think about the position of these chiefs, and the character and tendency of our undertaking. They did not think it such an “ill-judged scheme” as some persons have thought fit to designate it; and I am sure they will say, when they hear of the interference between us, “If the English people had let them alone they would have got through with this project.”

As for all the other minor charges or insinuations contained in Mr Kynnersley’s letter, I dare not venture to claim space for replying to them, but hope to have an opportunity afforded me shortly of throwing a little more light on this subject.

May I ask you kindly to insert the following letter from the ex-Mayor of Bristol, as it refers to some of the grave charges which have been circulated. I am, sir, your obedient servant, W. Jenkins, Interpreter to the New Zealand Government, Birmingham, March 23.

[To W. Jenkins, Esq., Post Office, Worcester]

Council House, Bristol, November 12, 1863. My dear Sir – In reply to your note of yesterday, I had many opportunities of seeing the New Zealand Chiefs (both in your presence and absence) when in this city, in public as well as in private, and was much pleased with the kind care and affection you manifested for them, and with the esteem and regard they appeared to have for you.

The meetings you held in Bristol, at two of which I presided as Mayor, were well and respectably attended. The Chiefs seemed to be much pleased at them, whilst the audience, especially at the last, appeared deeply interested; and, as you know, the farewell was of the most affectionate character on both sides.

You treated the Chiefs in a far different manner to anything I had before witnessed of the kind. We have had Indians, Aztecs, and other rare visitors of the human race here; whereas, besides the public meetings, at which the charges were on so moderate a scale, as if intended only to cover expenses, you took them about with you everywhere, with the desire of making them acquainted with our residents, and of showing them everything interesting.

I trust that I may be permitted to express a hope that the Aborigines Protection Society will strengthen your hands and further your wishes, now that the Chiefs are in this country, to show them everything worth seeing, the tendency of which, in my opinion, will be that they will return to New Zealand highly gratified, and will inform their friends and relatives of their cordial welcome, and impress upon them that Englishmen have every desire to render them contented and happy. I remain, my dear sir, in haste, yours truly, “Sholto Vere Hare, ex-Mayor.

[Having given up more space to this subject than we were justified in doing, we must now decline to publish any more letters, excepting as advertisements – Ed. Daily Post.]