

Mr Jenkins' Visit to England

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A meeting was held in the Provincial Hall, on Tuesday evening last, called by Mr Jenkins, to enable him to give an account of his visit to England with the Maori chiefs.

The meeting was kept waiting some considerable time for the chairman, who, however, did not arrive, and Mr Jenkins' appeal to "any one who was willing to preside," being unsuccessful, the business was conducted without a chairman.

Mr Jenkins premised his "rambling, round about statements" (to quote his own words), by saying that his Excellency Sir George Grey had expressed deep interest in his trip to England, had invited several ladies to meet him (Mr Jenkins) at dinner, had expressed his full concurrence in all he had done, and had advised him to hold a public meeting and lay before it the detailed result of his visit.

"Many," said Mr Jenkins, "thought I was going to England on a wild-goose chase, they ridiculed my idea, but I had calculated to a fraction what the result *ought* to be." Disappointment, however, followed him, and, throughout the visit, Mr Jenkins seems, to use a mild phrase as possible, to have been a kinsman of "The unfortunate man." His Grace the Duke of Newcastle did not behave well, Lord Shaftesbury behaved worse, though Mr Jenkins thought it was because he had been deceived; Mr Ridgway, who welcomed him with a slap on the back, turned out a veritable vampire in the way of the Maori troupe. He did all (so said Mr Jenkins) that spite, malevolence, and undeviating course of misrepresentation could achieve.

Some quakers defended Mr Jenkins, others issued letters defaming him; newspapers misreported him; one gentleman offered to place £2,000 at his disposal if he would proceed at law against Mr Ridgway, but he did not accept it, because his quaker friends said, "Thou must not go to law, we will see thee through it."

A lady offered to send the Maoris back to New Zealand, but, if we are to believe Mr Jenkins, she behaved very ill, and induced Lord Shaftesbury to put his name to an untruth, and to issue circulars and an advertisement calling for subscriptions to send the natives back to New Zealand because they were destitute. This, said Mr Jenkins, was a "vile calumny" of the Earl of Shaftesbury.

At length a letter arrived in England from Sir George Grey, which was a panacea for every suffering, as it at length obtained for him a testimonial of his worth from a "Defence Committee," who had sat in Birmingham, and who presented him with an address and a writing desk, having some words engraved on a tablet, made, we think, of suitable metal – brass.

In concluding, Mr Jenkins said he hoped, if he had erred, that charity would prevail, that the people of Nelson would look charitably on his efforts. This they did, for no observation was made and the meeting concluded without any vote being proposed by any one.