

CHAPTER 1.

SETTLERS AND OUTSTANDING EVENTS OF THE 1840S.

Joseph Newman

The very first Europeans to settle anywhere in the vicinity of Mission Bay or Kohimarama were Joseph Newman and his sister Elizabeth, natives of Willoughby, Lincolnshire. Joseph (1815-1892) was brought up on his father's farm and educated at the Alford Grammar School. Before coming to New Zealand in 1840, he was employed, first at his brother's flour mill buying grain, and later as the manager of a provision business; he had offered his services to the London Missionary Society, but they were rejected. He arrived in Auckland in the barque "James", in April 1841 accompanied by two sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, later the wives of the Revs. George Buttle and W.T. Fairburn. Early in 1842, he joined a survey party under Mr. Ligar, Surveyor-General, who was then completing the survey of the Tamaki land which Felton Mathew had begun.

In March, with the intention of starting a business, he bought a town allotment of 21 perches for £33.12.0; but the business was not founded until many years later as, before the second sale of Tamaki land on June 20th 1842, Joseph had decided to become a farmer and to bid at the auction for allotment 31, the only available land at Mission Bay. This district attracted him because of its comparatively easy access to Auckland by boat, a factor which had to be considered in a land of no formed roads. He succeeded in obtaining the desired allotment for £108.16.0, i.e. at £1 per acre. The property extended from Pipimea Point to the Orakei Road now called Kapa Road. (See plans on pages 18 and 87).

At the end of June, Joseph and his sister Elizabeth went down to live on the farm in a native built raupo hut and began working from dawn till dark without help of any kind, either native or pakeha. As they were the first Europeans to settle in the Mission Bay or Kohimarama districts, for some months they had no company other than that of visiting natives who made the bay a landing place on their way from the Thames to Auckland. Though there would sometimes be as many as twenty canoes of Maoris in the bay, neither of these pioneers ever suffered any molestation. On Sundays the couple would go up to Auckland in their own whaleboat to attend a Church service. These occasions and other week day trips to Auckland to buy stores afforded them their only opportunity of intercourse with pakehas until, in the spring, workmen were sent down to Kohimarama to break in the land owned by Captain Porter, the pioneer of that bay. In about October, however, Joseph and Elizabeth were joined by a sister, Ann, and in November by William Atkin, Ann's fiancé, a couple who soon married and lived in another raupo house on the estate.

In January 1844, Joseph sold two small portions of his farm, 5 acres to Robert Hayward for £20 and 6 acres to Thomas

Kemp for £30. Later that year, as the result of Governor Fitzroy's proclamation waiving the pre-emptive right of the Crown to native land, Mr. Newman was able to buy from Te Moana of Orakei 100 acres of Remuera land in the vicinity of the present Remuera Public Library. He then sold a further 21 acres of his Mission Bay property for £84, the buyer on this occasion being his brother-in-law, William Atkin.

During that year, 1844, both Joseph who was a Congregationalist, and William Atkin, an Anglican, took part with other settlers in the construction of St. Thomas's Anglican Church, the first place of public worship in Tamaki. The first wedding to be celebrated in it was that of Elizabeth Newman, who was married on February 25th 1845 to the Rev. William Thomas Fairburn, a widower of Otahuhu. An entry in the old register states that the officiating clergyman was the Rev. W.C. Cotton of St. John's College and that the witnesses were Joseph Newman and William Atkin. The bride's address was entered as "Wanganui in the district of St. Thomas's Tamaki". Evidently the first settlers used the correct Maori name of the district. Unfortunately, Elizabeth Fairburn died after giving birth to a daughter, only two and a half years later. Her grave may still be seen in the Grafton Cemetery, a little below that of Governor Hobson.

After Elizabeth's marriage, her brother, too, decided to marry and became engaged to Caroline Ewen of Cambridgeshire, England. He decided to live, after his marriage, on his Remuera land and so, before leaving New Zealand for his wedding, sold all but 31 acres of his Tamaki land. The buyers were William Atkin who bought a further 42 acres for £200 and Captain Porter, the pioneer of Kohimarama who purchased a small area of 3 acres which was below the cliff and had a frontage to Kohimarama Beach.

In 1846 Joseph returned with his bride and again began breaking in an estate. His first Remuera home was a weather board room, the only pakeha home in the district. Once more he worked from dawn till dark felling dense bush, breaking in the land, fencing and cultivating. On this estate he used the first portable threshing machine to be brought to the colony - he had brought it with him from England in 1846. Mr. Newman was also one of the first to import stud Lincoln sheep into New Zealand.

In 1849 he disposed of the remainder of his Tamaki land, 311 acres to Thomas Kemp for £99.15.6. Though his career after this does not concern Mission Bay, many present-day settlers may be interested to hear what the first pioneer of their district made of his life.

In 1850 he founded an auctioneering business where for several years he conducted successful stock sales, and in 1851 began to take an active part in politics and public affairs in which field "his quiet and reasonable style of expressing himself" carried great weight. That year he was elected to the first Auckland Municipal Council and the following year to the Auckland Provincial Council.

The following notice published in the Cross" prior to the Provincial Council elections of 1852 illustrates Mr. Newman's independent attitude as regards conducting electioneering campaigns:

"Having full confidence in the judgment of my fellow constituents that they will return none but proper men to represent them in Council, I do not consider it necessary to canvass for votes, resting assured, if I am not returned, a more efficient person will be selected."

Mr. Newman stood for Parliament without success in 1855 but continued as member of the Provincial Council until 1857.

Between 1855 and 1857 he allowed the Methodists of Remuera, and probably the Congregationalists, to hold services in his home, but in 1857 had a Congregational Church built on his property in Remuera Road. This he allowed the Methodists to use also until they were able to build their own church two years later. Because of his interest in and practice of religion, he soon became known Auckland businessmen as "Holy Joe".

In 1857 Mr. Newman sold his auctioneering business to Frank Buckland and visited the Bathurst goldfields. Thence he proceeded to England where he acted on behalf of the Auckland Province in securing settlers on a 40 acre system of immigration. After lecturing with success in England, Scotland and the Isle of Man, he returned to Auckland in 1862.

After his return he resumed his seat in the Auckland Provincial Council and founded another business in which he was partnered by his wife's brother, Walter Ewen. In 1866 he was elected M.P. for Raglan, but retained his seat for only one year. In 1870 he founded a sharebroker's business which is still in existence, but under the name of G.A. Buttle & Co.

Mr. Newman became a visiting Justice and director of the Auckland Gas Company and devoted a great deal of time to Y.M.C.A. work. He was particularly interested in the work of the Prohibition Party as he had become interested in temperance movement as a very young man and had pledged himself life long teetotaler. By strange twist of fate, he died as the result of being knocked down by a falling hoarding which was advertising Dewar's whiskey. His death occurred on January 4th 1892 and he was interred in the cemetery of St. Andrew's, Epsom. Remuera home still standing behind the Remuera Public Library. Unfortunately, Mr. and Newman had no family.

Robert Hayward, to whom Mr. Newman sold 5 acres of his Mission Bay land in 1844, was a native of Wiltshire who had arrived in the colony in 1842. He probably did not remain in the Mission Bay district very long for, between December 1845 and 1849, he bought a larger farm of 27 acres near the Tamaki River where he probably resided. After selling his land at Mission Bay in

1853 and the rest of his Tamaki land in 1855, he bought a far in the Rodney district. I have been able to find no further trace of him until his death in Ponsonby in 1888, at the age of 82. He died a bachelor.

Thomas Belton Kemp. (1803-1873) came to Auckland in 1842 with his wife, Ann, and three sons, Charles aged 18, William aged 11 and Thomas aged 8, and a daughter Mary Ann aged 6. They were a Nottinghamshire family who left the Old Country in March 1841 and arrived in Australia four months later. After a year in that country, they crossed to New Zealand in the "Duchess of Argyle" arriving in Auckland on October 9th 1842. Very soon afterwards he was employed by Captain Porter of Kohimarama, who was then breaking in his newly acquired estate. It is probable that Mr. Kemp continued to work for the Captain until he bought land from Joseph Newman in 1844, and erected his own home. This was situated on the southern extremity of their 6 acre farm on the site which is now 11 Kapa Rd. As previous stated, Mr. Kemp bought a further 31 acres from Mr. Newman in 1849.

While they resided in Tamaki, the family attended St. Thomas's Church and Thomas junior, Mary Ann and possibly John, who was born in November 1843, attended the day school at St. John's College.

In 1851 Mr. Kemp sold his 37 ½ acre farm to Bishop Selwyn and bought quite extensively in Mt. Albert where he is said to have owned the mountain.

After retirement, Mr. and Mrs. Kemp lived in Wood Street, Ponsonby and died there in 1873 and 1874 respectively. They and their two sons, Charles and William, were interred in the Grafton Cemetery but there is no trace of their graves now, as they were interfered with when the concrete bridge was constructed.

Mary Ann became Mrs. John Lord and ended her days in Eltham, while John died in Karangahake, Waihi, in 1920. Most interesting of the family was Thomas junior, who took up farming in Brookby where he brought up a large family of sixteen. His life offered excellent proof of the old adage "Necessity is the mother of invention" for he showed great ingenuity in making for himself labour devices which were beyond his means, such as a machine for grinding his wheat and a threshing machine for

which he made his own parts. This threshing machine was used throughout the district and travelled as far as Bombay and Drury. He died in Otahuhu in 1911.

The Atkin Family.

The best known and the best loved of the Mission Bay pioneers were the Atkin family. It was in November 1842 that 28 year old William Atkin, a native of Toynton, Lincolnshire, landed from the barque "Tuscan" on Mission Bay beach to be welcomed by his waiting fiancée, Ann Newman, a sister of Joseph and Elizabeth. The couple were married soon after their reunion and lived on Joseph's land in a raupo whare, thatched with toitoi. Whether William worked for his brother-in-law or leased land from him, is uncertain, but he certainly threw himself heart and soul into his new work, both he and Ann showing themselves very adaptable to colonial conditions.

Records show that when William came from the Old Country in 1842 he brought with him the first two ploughs to be used in the Auckland district. One was for his own use and the other for the Kohimarama pioneer, Captain Porter.

On October 7th 1843, their daughter, Mary, was born and a year later their son, Joseph. It must have been with great pride and pleasure that William and Ann took their son to be baptised on March 2nd 1845: for his baptism the first in the new St. Thomas's which William had helped to build, and which they both intended to serve in the years to come. And serve it they did, he as Church Warden and she in other ways until 1859 when the stonework began to crack and the building was condemned for public worship. Then, in an attempt to prolong its life, their son Joe planted ivy beside it to help hold together the slowly crumbling walls - the ivy which a century later gave the ruins such a picturesque appearance.

During the 1840s and even later, a pioneer church such as St. Thomas's must have meant a tremendous lot to isolated and lonely farmers, for the Sunday services gave them, not only spiritual help, but the opportunity of relieving the monotony of farm routine. Probably for months on end this weekly outing was the only one for Ann Atkin, but William did have some variation in the routine or farm life. At intervals he made trips to town in his boat to buy stores and market his produce: sometimes he attended public functions - his name is mentioned in early papers as a guest at the first levee at Government House on December 23rd 1843, the day of Governor Fitzroy's arrival and again at a ball there after the arrival of Sir George and Lady Grey in 1845. He attended, too, the agricultural shows where he was often a prize winner for wheat, English flax and other products. His duties as a Warden and later as a Synodsmen also called him from home and once in 1859 he actually went as far as Wellington to attend a meeting of the first General Synod.

In May 1844 William was able to buy 21 acres of his

brother-in-law's land and the following year, when Joseph Newman decided to marry and make his home in Remuera, he bought a further 42 acres which stretched down to the sea. then replaced his raupo house with a two gabled weatherboard one which he erected on the sunny eastern slope of his estate. As his wife was fond of flowers, William, to lighten the soil around the house, brought up loads of shell from the beach, which they mixed with the heavy clay loam. Then Ann planted an old world garden of crocus, lavender, Sweet William and other English perennials and shrubs which flourished for years to come. Beyond the garden, they planted fruit and ornamental trees, some of which, giant oaks and pears, became magnificent century old specimens. A rather quaint paragraph concerning one of these pear trees appeared years later in the "N.Z.Herald" (March 4th, 1876). It ran as follows: -

"Mr. Atkin possesses an orchard at the Tamaki and Mr. Atkin has lately lost a considerable quantity of fruit from the orchard, which he cannot bring his mind to believe has been taken by the sparrows. A few days ago, whilst walking round his orchard, he espied, lying on the ground, a packet of writings and documents which on inspection convinced him that their owner was a gentleman standing very high in the Good Templar Order. The papers were lying immediately beneath a fine pear tree, the fruit of which, though improved in quality, had decreased in quantity. Two wrongs do not make a right and Mr. A. has returned the papers to their lawful owner. Now, Mr. Atkin would be the last man in the world to accuse the Good Templar gentleman in question of having robbed his pear tree, nor would he compound a felony, but Mr. A. says that he has lost his pears and has found under the tree the papers belonging to the party who claims ownership to them. He therefore suggests that if this party will hand over a sum of one pound sterling to one of our local charities, he will keep the secret within his breast regarding the ownership of the tell tale papers. We believe the money will be paid."

In the late 'forties William cleared a half mile track up his eastern boundary and past the Kemp's property so as to be able to travel to town in his dray. This road was along the boundary between allotments 30 and 31. Later it was called Mains Road. (See Section on Kohi). Later the greater part of it became the straight central portion of Kohi Road. This road emerged on to the "Orakei" road, or, as it is now called, Kepa Road, at the corner of the present Godden Crescent. As it became a favourite "shortcut" for settlers to and from the beaches, it enabled the Atkins to see far more of other Tamaki settlers who loved to have a talk at the farmhouse as they passed by and to wander for a while through the picturesque garden. Others who frequently passed through were Bishop Selwyn and, later, Bishop Patteson and the Melanesian boys on their way from St. John's College to Mission Bay.

William evidently met with success as a farmer for in

1849 he was able to purchase 69 acres further afield, Mr. Kempthorne's property, part of allotment 37, opposite the present entrance to Purewa Cemetery. He did not retain it long, however, for he was able to sell it at a profit of £250 to Bishop Selwyn. At the same time, 1853, Robert Hayward's five acres adjacent to William's Mission Bay land, became available and he bought that.

In 1850, when ploughs were more common but still a "new toy", ploughing matches became a favourite sport and afforded farmers a congenial social gathering. It was no doubt a very profitable pastime, too, to the farmers on whose estates the competitions were held. We are told that the first annual match took place on 22nd April 1850 on William Atkin's farm where two events were staged, one ploughing with a pair of horses and the other with bullocks. The first prize in each event was £3 and the second £2. The two winners were Tamaki men, Richard Taylor of Glendowie and John Wallace of Point England, while the runners-up were from Epsom and Manurewa.

That same year, 1850, brought Mary one of the most thrilling experiences of her secluded young life. This was her first visit to Auckland, which was made in a dray driven by a Maori. All went well until they reached Mt. Hobson when they became deeply bogged in the flax roots at the foot of the hill. At length they reached their destination, the ropeworks shed in Mechanic's Bay where an agricultural show was being held. According to Mary, the chief exhibits were vegetables, butter, cheese, bread and fruit. Much to her delight, her Mother won two prizes, one for her Orleans plums and another for her beeswax. At that time, Mrs. Atkin had become interested in bee-keeping in which she had been instructed by the Rev. Cotton who had given her two hives and some bees.

In the early 'fifties, Joe was sent to board at the Scotch School in Taranaki. As Mary and Joe had been solely dependent on each other for young companionship and had become very devoted to each other, this must have been a sad parting for them both. Where Mary received her education is uncertain, but probably it was at the St. John's College day school, which was run by Mrs. Selwyn for settlers' children.

After several years at the Taranaki School, Joe was transferred to the Church of England Grammar School, Parnell, where his ability was so outstanding, that he was given a scholarship to St. John's College to study for the ministry.

Early in 1863, with the willing consent and co-operation of both parents, he joined the staff of the Melanesian Mission. Bishop Patteson told him that he could offer "but a small and that an uncertain salary, should he be ordained five years hence and that he ought to think of that - that there was nothing worldly in his wanting to secure a maintenance for a wife and child.... But this did not at all shake either his father or him."

The Bishop thought highly of Joe's capabilities and soon became very attached to him; in many of his letters he spoke of his enjoyment in conversing with him and in giving him Hebrew lessons. Captain Tilly, the master of the "Southern Cross", had also a great admiration for him. He said:

"Mr. Atkin was a fearless boatman and the knowledge of boating he gained with us at sea was well supplemented when in Auckland where he had a boat of his own which he managed in the most thorough manner..... He pulled a good and strong oar and understood well how to manage a boat under sail.... His energy and the amount of work he did himself were remarkable; his manner was quiet and undemonstrative. He took all charge - it may in a manner be said - of the boys on board the vessel, regulated everything concerning meals, sleeping arrangements etc., how much food had to be bought for then at the different islands, what "trade" (1.e. hatchets, beads etc.) it was necessary to get before starting on a voyage, calculated how long our supply of water would last, and in fact did so much on board as left the master of the vessel little to do but navigate."

For four years after he joined the Mission, Joe saw his family frequently throughout the spring and summer but in 1867, when the Mission headquarters were transferred to Norfolk Island, he had to part with them for an indefinite period.

We are told that when Joe departed from Mission Bay beach with the first instalment of scholars for Norfolk Island, his sister Mary could not restrain her tears as she watched the Southern Cross" fade away into the distance; whereupon Bishop Patteson's "tender heart went out to her in understanding sympathy... and he told her of the anguish of his own heart in the day of uprooting when he went out from the old home never to return."

The Atkins were sad, too, at having to farewell a little eleven year old Melanesian boy to whom they had become very attached during the summer, and regarded almost as their own child. This little boy, Wate, the son of a chief of Malanta, had left his own home during the previous winter to join the Mission party. During the voyage on the Southern Cross", he had fallen overboard and had been rescued by Joe, whose devoted follower he then became. While at Mission Bay he was frequently at the Atkin home where he became very attached, too, to Joe's sister whom he called "Mother Mary".

Joe, after his departure, wrote regularly to his family telling of the progress of the missionary work and his personal experiences. He kept a private journal, too, which has since served as a valuable record of the work in Melanesia at that period. When the little Waté learned to write he, too, began a correspondence with Joe's people, especially with "Mother Mary" with whom he kept in touch for many years to come.

Joe's first two years from March 1867 until June 1869 were spent entirely at Norfolk Island where he took his share in the establishment of the new station and in teaching the Melanesian scholars.

The first highlight of personal interest during this time was his ordination as a deacon in the new chapel of "St. Barnabas" a few days before the Christmas of 1867. Just before the event, the Bishop wrote to Mr. Atkin to tell him of his great satisfaction and comfort in having Joe with him and to thank the family for giving him to this work. The letter ran thus:

"Joe, as usual is foremost in all work; fencing, well-sinking etc. And he proves the truth of the old saying the head does not suffer by the work of the hand. His knowledge of Scripture truth, of what I may fairly call the beginning of theological studies, gives me great comfort. I am quite sure that in all essentials, in all which by God's blessing tends to qualify man for teaching faithfully, and with sufficient learning and knowledge of the Word of God, he is above the average of candidates for ordination in England.... I feel the greatest possible thankful ness and happiness as I think of his ordination and of what, by the grace of God, he may become to very many, both heathens and Christians if his life be spared. Once again, my dear friends, I thank you for giving him to this work. He is the greatest conceivable comfort and help to me. I always feel when he is walking or working with others that there is one on whose steadiness and strong sense of duty I can always rely."

Early in 1869, the Atkins received a letter from Joe telling them of the baptism of his charge, the little Wete. "While we were standing round the font," he wrote, "I thought of you at home, and half wished that you could have seen us there. I was witness for my son, Waté; he was called Joseph, so that I shall lose my name that I have kept so long."

By this time, Mrs. Atkin, as was only natural, was pining to see her son again and expressed her longings in her letters to him. This is how he answered her:

"My dear Mother, You must not think about my coming back; I may have to do it, but if I do, it will seem like giving up the object of my life. I did not enter upon this work with any enthusiasm, and it is perhaps partly from that cause that I am now so attached to it that little short of necessity would take me away: my own choice, I think, never. I know it is much harder for you than for me. I wish I could lighten it to you, but it cannot be. It is a great deal more self-denial for you to spare me to come away than for me to come away. You must think, like David, 'I will not offer unto the Lord my God of

that which doth cost me nothing.' If you willingly give Him what you prize most, however worthless the gift may be, He will prize it for the willingness with which it is given. If it had been of my own choosing that I came away, I should often blame myself for having made a selfish choice in not taking harder and more irksome work nearer home, but it came to me without choosing. I can only be thankful that God has been so good to me."

During the winter of 1869, Joe assisted in the establishment of a new Mission village on the island of Mota, which, in compliance with the wishes of the former St. Andrew's scholars, was called "Kohimarama" after the bay they loved (Mission Bay).

From now on, however, Joe's special work was to be on the island of Bauro in the Southern Solomon Islands. He was to stay there for a period each winter, specialise in its language and be responsible for the Bauro scholars who were to be taken to Norfolk Island each summer. His companions on this 1869 visit were Stephen Taroniara, who had spent many summers at Mission Bay, his godson Joseph Waté, and two other Christian boys. Here they spent nineteen days making their headquarters at the village of Wango where Bishop Patteson had stayed two years previously. The work was difficult and he says that he suffered a little loss of popularity when it was found that he was not "a perpetual fountain of beads, hatchets and tobacco", but he achieved two objects: he effected a reconciliation between Wango and another village called Hané and made a selection of the most promising lads to take back to Norfolk Island.

At the end of the year, on December 4th, Joe was ordained a priest, in company with his fellow worker, Charles Brooke, who had also been ordained deacon at the same time as Joe in 1867. On his second visit to Bauro, the following winter, Joe was delighted to find the peace unbroken between Wango and Hané and was given an excellent reception by the chief of Wango. "In the chief's house", he says, "I was presented with a piece of pork, about two pounds, and a dish of tauma (their favourite), a pudding made of yams, nuts, and cocoa-nut milk, and cooked by steaming. Fortunately, good manners allowed me to take it away. Before we left the village, it took two women to carry our provisions."

Joe found that on this island the people were more interested in feasts than in the message of the Gospel. On this, his second visit, their attention was distracted by festivities and again the following year he found it hard to gain their attention because of lengthy preparations for a feast. Bishop Patteson commented on this in a letter to Joe's people in August 1871. It ran thus:

"You may imagine my joy at finding Joe looking really well when we reached this part of the world on the 23rd. I thought him looking unwell when he spent an hour or two with me at Mota, about ten weeks since, and I begged him

to be careful, to use quinine freely, etc..... Nearly all the time of the people here has been spent - wasted, perhaps, we should say - in making preparations for a great feast: so that Joe found it very hard to gain the attention of the people, when he tried to point out to them better things to think of than pigs, native money, tobacco and pipes. Such advance as has been made is rather in the direction of gaining the confidence and good will of the people all about, and in becoming very popular among all the young folks. Nearly all the young people would come away with him if the elders would allow them to do so. I have no doubt that much more has been really effected than is apparent to us now. Words have been said that have not been lost, and seed sown that will spring up some day... Meanwhile, I tell him what I fully believe, that no one hearty effort of his to benefit these poor people is thrown away. Already they allow us to take boys, and perhaps this very day we may go off with two young girls also. And all this will result in some great change for the better some day."

This letter was written on the "Southern Cross" in Bauro Bay where it had called to collect Joe's party to take them home to Norfolk Island; but the homeward trip was not to be a direct one for the Bishop intended to call first at the Santa Cruz Islands where he hoped to do "some little work among the very wild but vigorous energetic islanders." The Bishop was suspicious that an outrage had recently been committed here by visiting "blackbirders"*, and realised that, if his suspicions were correct, any white man visiting the islands might meet with violence; but he was not to be diverted from his purpose. When some twenty miles distant from the group, he wrote:

"I trust that all may be well; that if it be His will that any trouble should come upon us, dear Joseph Atkin, his father and mother's only son, may be spared. But I don't think there is very much cause for fear because at these small reef islands they know me pretty well though they don't understand as yet our object in coming to them."

There was very much more cause for fear than the Bishop anticipated; twelve days later he and Joseph Atkin and Stephen Taroniara had all departed from this life, martyrs to the cause of Christianity.**

The first intimation the Atkin family had disaster had befallen the Mission was on October 31st when they saw the "Southern Cross" sailing up the harbour with the flag at half mast. Immediately Mary and a neighbour, Mrs. Cutler, drove

* See next chapter.

** For the story of their martyrdom, see next chapter.

into town to find out the reason for mourning and were told of the threefold tragedy. How the family were affected by their loss we can only imagine: their grief must have been great but they would certainly have been proud that their son had died nobly in the cause of the great work to which they had willingly sacrificed him.

After the removal of the Mission headquarters to Norfolk Island, Mr. Atkin had increased his farming activities by working the vacated Mission land which he leased for several years. After Joe's death, however, he devoted less and less time to his estate. In 1871 he leased part of it to William Speakman, who had previously worked for him as a labourer, and in 1881 sold all but 4 acres around his house to an Auckland syndicate. Other duties and interests kept him occupied, however, for now he was not only a churchwarden and a member of the Diocesan Synod, but also a trustee of St. John's College and a member of the Melanesian Mission Trust Board. He took an active interest, too, in the education and welfare of the native race, for a time contributing articles on the subject to the Auckland press. He had an intimate knowledge of the Maoris through having had many in his employ and also as a result of his friendship with the Orakei chiefs, Paora Tuhaere in particular, who was keenly interested in the advancement of his people and often discussed his problems with his pakeha friend.

In 1880, the year before Mr. Atkin sold his farm, he and his wife and Mary were invited by Bishop John Selwyn and his staff at Norfolk Island to attend the consecration of a new chapel built as a memorial to all those who had perished at Santa Cruz in the cause of Christianity. Mr. and Mrs. Atkin did not accept but sent their daughter to represent the family. She left on the "Southern Cross" with a party of 47 other visitors and arrived her destination on December 2nd. Six memorable days were spent on the beautiful island seeing its natural attractions and attending festivities which the Bishop and his staff had organised for their entertainment picnics, a horticultural show, cricket matches, fireworks and above all beautiful services, one of which particularly impressed the visitors as it was taken entirely by dark skinned people. The memorial chapel was consecrated on Monday December 7th by Bishop John Selwyn, Bishop Patteson's successor, and on the following day the visitors left on the Mission vessel.

This trip must have been one of the greatest and most moving experiences of Mary's life: seeing the station which her brother had helped to establish, the chapel where he was consecrated deacon and priest and the schoolroom in which he had taught his native pupils; meeting old friends, both European and Melanesian who had frequented her Mission Bay home; and witnessing the wonderful growth of the organisation whose birth she had witnessed with the arrival of the first few native boys and at St. John's in 1849 and to whose upkeep she and her family had contributed ever since.

The next twenty years of Mary's life were spent in caring for her ageing parents. Her mother died in 1891 at the age of

80 and her father ten years later after a long illness. Until his health failed, Mr. Atkin had continued to serve on the St. John's College and Melanesian Mission Trust Boards, to both of which he was a great asset because of his long experience and his shrewd judgments. He had served as Church Warden, too, as long as his health would permit. This latter office he had held continuously for about fifty years since wardens had first been appointed for the parish of St. Thomas's, and throughout the period after the closing of that Church, when the parishioners worshipped in St. John's College Chapel.

The large numbers of both Maoris and Europeans who attended his funeral service in the College Chapel and afterwards followed the hearse to Purewa Cemetery testified to the great respect in which he was held by both races. His funeral took place on January 31st 1901, the same day as that of Queen Victoria.

A short time before his death, Mr. Atkin told Mary that he was leaving her all his property and asked her what she would do with it. She answered "Build a Church" and he was quite satisfied, but expressed the wish that it should be in the orchard. Some of the money, however, had to be spent on a new house as the old one was in such a bad state of repair, that it had to be demolished. The new one was built on the original site and was as similar as possible to the old one with a gable each side and a verandah between. However, it lacked the large central vestibule in which the family had kept their numerous relics of Melanesia, many of which are now in the Museum at Mission Bay. While her new home was being built, Mary went for a trip to England, as it had been one of her father's dying requests that she should return to his homeland to visit old friends and relations.

At the time of her father's death, Mary was 58 and still hale and hearty with many years ahead of her. Though she was now the only survivor of her family, she was probably seldom lonely, as she was loved by her relatives and had many devoted friends in the district. She was happy too in working around her home and garden and enjoyed riding round the district on her pony. She had also many outside interests which kept her occupied. The chief of these was still the Melanesian Mission for which she worked to raise funds and to which she herself contributed regularly. She kept up a correspondence with members of the Mission staff and welcomed to her home any who were in Auckland on furlough or on business. She took a personal interest, too, in the crew of the "Southern Cross" to whom she took gifts of home-made jam and preserves whenever the vessel came to Auckland.

Like her father, Mary took an active interest in the work of the Anglican Church, especially in that of her own parish of Tamaki West. Between 1898 and 1912, she was a regular worshipper in the Church of St. Philip's at St. Heliers Bay to which she had given the first font - a large shell from one of the Melanesian Isles mounted on a stand. Between 1912 and 1927, she attended the afternoon services in the partly

ruined dining hall of the old Mission building and, from 1927 to the end of her life, in St. Andrew's Church Hall which catered for the residents of Mission Bay and Kohimarama. In this she was particularly interested, as she had given the land, about 1 ½ acres, on which it stood. This allotment which was behind her home had been sold with the greater part of the farm in 1881 but in 1911, when the estate was subdivided, she had bought it back with the idea of taking a strip for a right of-way from Selwyn Road to her home and of giving the remainder as a site for a Church. She wished the Church to be built as a memorial to Bishop Patteson, her brother, and other Missionaries who had lost their lives in the service of the Melanesian Mission. Though it had been her father's wish to have the proposed Church erected in his orchard which lay on the northern side of the house, Mary now thought that site quite unsuitable owing to the layout of the roads in the recent subdivisions of her father's former estate and the neighbouring one on the eastern side. She did not transfer the allotment to the Diocesan Trust Board until January 1922 when she thought the population of the district warranted a local Church. But the building of a permanent Church could not be undertaken at the time; so it was agreed to erect wooden hall which could be used as a temporary church. The building was consecrated on March 1st 1927 and was called "St. Andrews" after the old Mission College. (See also Chapter 7, page 93.)

Three years before St. Andrews was erected Mary, who was then 81, was chosen as president of the first Kohimarama Ladies Guild which from 1924 onwards, for many years, held its annual sale of work in the old fashioned Atkin garden.

The building of the Memorial Church was one of the most cherished desires of her life; she mentioned it in all her wills and actually had plans prepared for it. Only six weeks before she died in 1938 she wrote to the Rev. Cartridge, then Vicar of Tamaki West, telling him of her father's wishes concerning it and why she considered it could not be erected in the orchard – "because there was no public road left when the farm was sold." Then she continued thus:

"Now the time seems to be drawing near for the building of the Martyrs' Memorial Church and the Church people of New Zealand and others should feel honoured by being invited to contribute towards its cost. Some time ago, Mr. Arthur Palmer, son of the late Archdeacon Palmer, architect of the Paihia Church in the Bay of Islands, gave me a sketch plan of a church to hold 200 people costing £2000, to be built of stone with a shingle roof..... I do not expect to see the building completed during my life, but if a beginning were made soon I should feel very contented..... I leave this work in your hands now to complete, and with God's blessing to carry it to a successful close. When the time comes, I hope to contribute to the cost in addition to the gift of land about £600 value.... Yours sincerely, Mary Atkin."*

*The Church was not built until 20 years after this letter was written. See Chapter 7, page 100.

Another interest which Mary had during her later years was in watching the development of the district into a popular residential suburb. She took more than a passive interest, too, for the Tamaki West Road Board often received letters from her in which she gave suggestions or drew their attention to matters which required remedying. One of these letters which was written in 1913, just after water had been laid on in the district, showed her love of horses which she disliked to see being ill-treated or overworked. In it she suggested the erection of a drinking trough at the corner of Selwyn and Kohimarama Roads and offered to pay half the cost; evidently it distressed her to see horses pulling heavy loads up the steep hill just below her house.

On October 7th 1933, Mary's 90th birthday, a function was held in her honour in St. Andrew's Church Hall. The Church Gazette of November 1st 1933 states that the children of the Sunday School formed a guard of honour, between whose lines the "much beloved little lady passed up to the end of the hall". A birthday cake with 90 candles was a special feature of the gathering. We are told that all people near and far came to pay their respects to Miss Atkin and that she was the recipient of many bouquets.

She lived to the great age of 94. With her passing in 1938, Tamaki lost the only one of its residents who had lived in the district ever since the early 'forties. One other person who was born in Tamaki a few months before Mary survived her, however, - Mrs. Fred Carter, née Martha Embling. But the latter had not resided in Tamaki after she was eleven years old.

On her death Miss Atkin bequeathed to the Diocesan Trust Board a further piece of land adjoining the Church site already given for the erection of a vicarage. To the Melanesian Mission she left £1000 in memory of her brother and set aside a further sum of £300 to provide bursaries at St. John's College to assist Melanesian or Maori students in their studies. An area of 19 acres below her house, and with a frontage to Kohimarama Road, was bequeathed by her for a children's playground, while her home and furniture with its adjoining garden was left in trust as a hostel for Anglican and Wesleyan Missionaries, aged or infirm, or on furlough. It was to be known as "St. John's Hostel". Her interest in Wesleyan Missionaries sprang from an early family tie. It has been mentioned previously that an aunt of Mary's, Jane Newman, who came out with Mission Bay's first settlers, Joseph and Elizabeth Newman, married the Rev. George Buttle; he was one of New Zealand's pioneer Wesleyan Missionaries. One of his grandsons, the late Mr. G.R. Buttle, who was for many years a resident of St. Heliers, was one of Mary's Trustees and, incidentally, it was he who, in recent years, ran the Share Broker's business founded in 1870 by Joseph Newman. The residue of Mary's estate is held in trust for the maintenance of St. John's Hostel.

Though most of the Atkin relics are now in the Museum at Mission Bay, the small sitting room of the hostel contained until quite recently, a few of her books and pictures and some

photos - one of herself, one of her brother, and an early painting of Mission Bay, showing the Mission buildings and several small craft on the calm waters.

Commissioner Spain and his Family.

William Spain was the first European owner of allotments 32 and 40A, an area of 1573 acres which stretched almost the entire length of Mission Bay beach and up to the present Kapa Road. He bought allotment 32 for £116.1.0 - about £1.1.3 per acre - at the first sale of Tamaki land on the 1st of February 1842, his Crown Grant being dated 30th September 1842. In August 1845 he acquired allotment 40A, also by Crown Grant for £47 at £1 per acre.

Mr. Spain who was born in 1803 at Cowes, in the Isle of Wight, trained for a legal career and practised for a while in England. Being an ardent supporter of the Liberal Party, he was active during the passing of the Reform Bill, as Central Secretary for Hampshire. Then, after serving for two years on the New Zealand Committee, he was appointed by Lord John Russell, then Colonial Secretary, sole Commissioner to investigate land claims of the New Zealand Company in various parts of this colony. The Commissioner and his family, accompanied by Mrs. Spain's mother, Lady Ann White, an elderly lady of 74, left England in the "Prince Rupert" which was wrecked off the Cape of Good Hope. After very harrowing experiences, they continued their journey in the "Antilla" and arrived at Port Nicholson on the 8th December 1841.

The "Auckland Police Census 1842 - 1846" reveals that in 1842 the Spain family were living in Fore St., Auckland (now called Fort St.); also that Mr. Spain was the owner of a raupo house in Tamaki (no doubt in Mission Bay) in which four single men between the ages of 21 and 45 were living. These men were evidently farmworkers or perhaps carpenters who had been sent down to build a wooden building, apparently a large one, in which the Spains are recorded as living in 1843. Their household is stated to have consisted of fifteen persons - nine males including four under 14, and six females, two of whom were under 14. Probably this listing included servants

Picture

The Second Atkin Home, now 73 Kohimarama Road, which was built in 1902 on the same site as, and almost identical with, the original one. The photo, which shows the aged Mary standing on the steps, was taken during the 1920s. Mona Gordon, the author of "Fame Passes By", who visited Mary during that decade, described the cottage as being surrounded with a garden and orchard in which medlars and old fruit trees grew. Of Mary herself she wrote: "Miss Atkin was not unlike one of her own apples with rosy cheeks and wrinkled skin from which her blue eyes faced an inquiring world with evident disapprobation."

Picture

The Mission Buildings in 1863.

Reproduced from a sketch by J... Hoyte by courtesy of the Auckland Public Library.

and their children.

According to the Rev. G.A. Kissling this wooden dwelling which was "originally intended for a barn, consisted of materials from a vessel, the pitch and tar of which still adhered to the planks enclosing the frame of the house." The raupo house was roofed with thatch and all the other buildings - the wooden dwelling, sheds, storerooms etc. - with shingles,

Mr. Spain was unable to reside for long periods at his Mission Bay home as his work called him constantly to distant parts of the colony but when he was working in and around Auckland his sons used to take him to and from the town each day in a whaleboat. His choice of a residence so far from the town seems rather a strange one but it was probably influenced by a love of his childhood home at the famous yachting centre at Cowes. One of his sons, too, appears to have inherited this love of the sea for he later became a Rear Admiral in the Royal Navy. As far as can be ascertained the homestead was situated almost in front of the present "Garden Court" flats but a little further to the west.

Mission Bay in those early days must have been very picturesque. Crimson pohutukawas lined the cliffs and the hills around were covered with luxuriant native bush in which the tree ferns were so large that their fronds resembled the branches of Norfolk pines. The previously mentioned tidal creek (page 1) which swept into the golden shelly beach at its western end was quite a deep one and terminated in a large lagoon in the vicinity of what is now Marau Crescent. The lagoon extended eastward until it met a stream which flowed down from the southern hills; thus it cut off an area of about 20 acres along the whole width of the bay. Records show that the land south of the lagoon was left untouched by the Spains but it is probable that they cleared and cultivated most of the area between the lagoon and the sea. An account of the Auckland Agricultural Show of March 1844 names Mr. Spain as winner of three exhibits - kidney potatoes, English potatoes and wool - but whether any of these were produced at Mission Bay is uncertain as during 1843 Mr. Spain had bought nearly 180 acres near the Tamaki River (allotment 3, half of allotment 2 and 5 acres of allotment 1 See plan on opposite page.)

Mr. Spain subscribed towards the building of St. Thomas's Church and also provided it with a very strongly compacted door 9 inches in thickness and containing loop holes. His sons, too, contributed their share by taking up to the church site from Mission Bay all the sand required for the mortar.

In the "Journal" of the Rev. Cotton* the Spains are frequently referred to jokingly as "the Spaniards" and Mission Bay

*The Rev. W.C. Cotton was the Bishop's Domestic Chaplain and the minister of St. Thomas's Church from 1844 to 1847. He was also Acting-Head of the College during the Bishop's frequent absences from it. For further information see Section 3, "Meadowbank- St. Johns".

as "the Spanish Coast". The family are described as being "such amiable neighbours" and Mrs. Spain and her daughter as "patty and agreeable". The latter who is said to have "captured the heart of poor Fisher"*, one of the College students, was invariably accompanied, even to church, by a Portuguese pup.

Until the 1950s there could be seen in the St. Thomas's cemetery a stone slab which marked the resting place of Mrs. Spain's mother who was described as "Dame Annie White, widow of Sir Henry White of Portsmouth and mother-in-law of Mr. Commissioner Spain. Her burial, at which Bishop Selwyn officiated, was the first internment in that early cemetery. It took place on October 16th 1845 which was apparently a very wet day for that night T.B. Hutton, one of the divinity students at St. John's College, made the following entry in the "Journal" of the Rev. Cotton who was out of Auckland:

"Happy the corpse the rain rains on', saith the old distich - ergo supposing there to be truth in the same saying, the old lady buried today will be happy - but poor thing she has not known anyone of her friends for some months back 78 years old her last birthday.... Entre nous, Tudor**, Fisher and your humble servant were the most respectably, mourningly dressed in the whole procession. The mourning for the Spains not having come home yet the Ladies did not appear."

The "New Zealander" of October 18th 1845 paid tribute to Lady White for the way in which she faced colonial life and for her courage during the shipwreck of the "Prince Rupert" when she is said to have shown the "greatest coolness and resignation amidst the most appalling dangers."

Although Mr. Spain did his utmost to give just judgments on disputed land claims, his decisions which were seldom favourable to the New Zealand Company and their clients, led unavoidably to dissatisfaction and disputes. As a result, he resigned from his position late in 1845, sold his Mission Bay property to the Bishop for £600, (the transfer was registered in June 1846) and left New Zealand to practice as a lawyer in Sydney. In 1861 he returned to New Zealand where he became the first Inspector-General of Police and a nominee member of the Legislature. After his retirement he lived in the suburb of Waverley where he died in April 1876.

The "Kohimarama Feast" of 1846

On 28th December 1846, six months or so after Bishop Selwyn had acquired legal ownership of allotments 32 and 40A, what was known as the "Kohimarama Feast" was held at Mission Bay in the vicinity of Mr. Spain's former home. This event

* Frederic Fishher was the student in charge of farm operations and of the "lay associates", i.e, those who worked at or were being trained in some useful trade or occupation.

** Tudor and Hutton were masters in the Collegiate School.

*** Waverley is a suburb of Dunedin.

was a festivity organised by the Bishop and his St. John's College staff to commemorate the founding of the schools attached to the various Anglican churches of Auckland. Although it was primarily an affair for children adults also were catered for, attractions such as ploughing and digging competitions being included in the programme.

Detailed descriptions of the event which was probably the first pakeha-organised celebration to be held at Mission Bay, are given in the journals of the Rev. Cotton and William Bambridge, Deputy-Registrar of St. John's College. The account which follows is compiled from information gathered from both these early journals, but mainly from that of Mr. Bambridge.

The event necessitated an early rise for the St. John's personnel. On the evening of the great day Mr. Bambridge who resided at Purewa, about a mile from the College, recorded that he rose at 3 a.m. as he and his colleagues had decided "upon rousing the members long before sunrise that they might have all possible opportunity for completing arrangements for the day's pleasures." To continue in the words of Mr. Bambridge:

"The sky looked lowering and we began to have our doubts and fears. However, Mr. Fisher obtained an audience with the Bishop who promptly quitted bed and went out to inspect the weather and a favourable opinion was the result. At 4 ½* I succeeded in getting the Maori boys out of their beds and bringing them to the Singing Room where I gave them 2 hours' drilling in those songs they knew least about.** At 7 the dray started for the Epsom school children. The Marianne*** started for Auckland and other early preparations were made. At 7 the rain began but it blew over in an hour."

At this juncture the Rev. Cotton and two or three others went down to Mission Bay "to prepare for the ploughing and digging match, by staking out the different parts of an acre to be ploughed and dug." The "Great Tent" which had served the College as a temporary church, hall and schoolroom in 1844 and 1845 had already been erected; it was pitched on the afternoon of Saturday 26th in the clover paddock" near Mr. Spain's former home.

At about 8 a.m. the rain began again and continued with little intermission till 12.30 p.m. Mr. Bambridge then went down to the bay and did what he could to decorate the tent. But the time was too short," he tells us, "to allow of anything more than a few bunches of the pohutukawa flower fastened to the 3 main poles."

*That is 4.30 a.m.

** Mr. Bambridge, besides being Deputy-Registrar, was one of the singing teachers. He gave this "two hours' drilling" to the Maori boys as the Bishop was very anxious that they should create a good impression on the visiting pakehas.

***"Marian" is the usual spelling. It was one of the College schooners.

Mr. Bambridge's account continues as follows:

"The Bishop Boon arrived with the Epsom and Tamaki children. Various vehicles were employed in conveying ladies und children. Some for provisions. In a few minutes the Marianne came sailing up with her cargo of Town children. The weather by this time having cleared up, sports were begun amongst the young folk - Cricketing, Thread the Needle Etc. Etc. till the Bishop called all into the Tent to arrange them so that each might know his place when dinner was ready. By this time all the servants from the College and the Judges* had arrived and all hands were immediately engaged in cutting up Plum Cake and Pudding, Ham, Pork, Duck, Chickens Etc. and the tables were set out in excellent style. A large basket of buns was distributed before all went out. In about 2 hours the Bishop had the Children ranged in order before him (a la Militaire). The Collegiate and Maori scholars were divided into 4 parts and were marched off to the tent singing "Home to dinner", Champion** ringing the bell. In a few minutes all were seated. The Bishop asked a blessing and operation began. All the children that were in the tent could not sit at the table which already contained 168 and several lady visitors. First of all they were served to Bread and Roast Pork, Ham etc. with Tea. Then to Plum Cake and Pudding at which they worked so hard that many began to flag. For their encouragement I proposed that the Native Boys should sing their song called 'Perseverance' or 'Try Again'. They did so with considerable spirit and I shouldn't be surprised if it had the effect of renewing the energies of many. During the feast other songs went off very well.... We had 'Hey-ho! to the green wood', 'He that would thrive', 'Plough Deep', and crowned them with 'God Save the Queen'. All rose and went out in order. The Native Boys struck then up with 'Come Let us March and Sing' and continued till they were fairly outside the tent where I collected them to sing out the remainder of their stock. The Collegiate School joining we sang some Canons in 3 or 4 voices in excellent style at which some who are accustomed to regard the Native Race with no little contempt expressed their satisfaction. Whilst this was going on many plans of amusement for the young and old were concocted. The waiters at table, the cooks etc. were enjoying themselves in the Tent with the Bishop at their head."

"They had no ploughing or digging matches after all," wrote Mr. Cotton, "as a shower which came time enough to drench a cargo of ladies in Mr. Kissling's boat, delayed preparations so long that it was too late, but there were some regular romps - cricket - blindman's buff - touched you last, and a host of

*From Judge Martin's home at Taurarua (Judge's Bay).

**The Captain of the College schooners.

others which the smaller fry very much enjoyed."

Others besides the "smaller fry" appear to have enjoyed the cricket; some of the men, including Mr. Bambridge, played on until 7.45 p.m. Most of the guests, however, left at about 5.30 p.m. The Bishop took Mrs. Selwyn and a few others in his pony cart and lastly went the dray filled with College servants."

Mr. Cotton estimated that there were about 400 present at the gathering. "All seemed to enjoy themselves," he wrote, but many of the men were probably disappointed that there was no ploughing match. Had this eventuated it would probably have been Auckland's first. (See page 9.)

Some of the guests who attended the fête with their wives and families were men who played a prominent part in the life of early Auckland. Among those mentioned by Mr. Cotton were: The Rev. Churton who was the first vicar of St. Paul's, Auckland's first church; Captain Powditch, a farmer of Epsom who in 1851 became one of Auckland's first aldermen; Captain Field Porter, the Crown grantee of most of the district now called Kohimarama, who later became a member of the first Provincial Council and of the first New Zealand Parliament; and the Rev. G.A. Kissling (later Archdeacon) who became the first vicar of St. Mary's Parnell, and who, at the time of this fête was living in the Spains' former home.

The Rev. George Adam Kissling.

During the winter of 1846 Bishop Selwyn became very concerned over the health of the Rev. G.A. Kissling, one of his most able mission workers who had been in charge of the Kawakawa Mission Station for about four years; and so, thinking that Mission Bay would be an ideal place for Mr. Kissling to recuperate, he offered him the use of Mr. Spain's former home. Thus it was that the Kissling family, later to become permanent citizens of Auckland, became identified with the early history of the bay.

The Rev. Kissling, a German, was born at Murr, Wurtemberg, and was ordained in his own country as a minister of the Reformed Lutheran United Church. In 1827, as a young man of 22, he was sent to West Africa by the Basle Missionary Society to translate the Bible into the Bassu language and, while engaged on this task, conducted a native school. In 1833 he was appointed to Sierra Leone by the Church Missionary Society but, owing to ill health, he had to leave Africa a few years later. He then went to England where he was ordained a deacon of the Anglican Church in 1839, and a priest in 1841. In 1842 he and his wife, Margaret, a native of Hull, Yorkshire, came with two children to New Zealand in the "Louisa Campbell" which arrived in Auckland on 25th October 1842. It was then that he was appointed to the Mission Station at Kawakawa at which he worked among the Maoris until his second breakdown in health in 1846. At that time the Rev. Kissling was 41 and his wife 38,

and they were the parents of four small boys whose ages ranged from seven downwards - John, George Schwartz, Theophilus and Charles Frederick.

In February 1847, when Mr. Kissling was well enough to resume his work, his home became a native girls' school which was conducted by himself and his wife, probably with some assistance from their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sampson Kempthorne*, who were then the occupants of the first house built by William Spain - the raupo building which, by this time, was separated from the wooden dwelling by a plantation of acacias.

The following excerpt from a letter written by the Rev. Kissling in 1847 is of interest:

"Our home is at Kohimarama ("Assembly of Light") on Bishop Selwyn's estate of St. John's College. I have now charge of the Maoris in Auckland. We are an hour's journey from Auckland, and can travel by land or sea. Our household consists of 14 native girls under my wife's charge and 6 youths I brought from East Cape, in addition to our own young sons. We have a good doctor** near us. I lecture to the students at St. John's College. The Bishop is a strong truth-loving, most industrious man who has shown me much kindness. The Governor, Sir George Grey, is an upright honest man, who has the welfare of the Maoris at heart; his plans are worthy of respect."

On Tuesday 28th December 1847, exactly one year after the previously described Kohimarama Feast was held, a similar gathering was held at Mission Bay on the same site. It is described as follows in the "New Zealander" of Saturday January 1st 1848:

"On Tuesday last the annual feast of the schools in connection with the Episcopalian Church was held on the grounds of the Rev. Kissling at the Tamaki. The day was most propitious, and excellent arrangements having been made for the entertainment of the scholars, nothing occurred to interrupt the flow of rational enjoyment, which both the teachers and visitors participated with the children. About five hundred sat down to dinner in in two long tents, tastefully ornamented with flowers, and the rapid manner in which one ox, three sheep and five pigs, with the etceteras, disappeared, speaks well for the healthy state of the gastronomic and digestive powers of the rising generation. The afternoon was agreeably passed in exhilarating amusements, in which we were pleased to see the natives heartily participate :

• Mr. Kempthorne was an architect who had, for a while, been employed by the Bishop. At one time he also ran and owned private boarding school in Parnell. See Section 3.

**He is probably referring to Dr A.G. Purchase who was then resident medical officer in charge of the St. John's College Hospital. See Section 3.

and in enjoying the refreshing sea breeze of the beautiful beach which fronts Mr. Kissling's residence. Another mustering having taken place to participate in 'the feast of plumcake and the flow of tea', the meeting separated; some proceeded to Auckland by water, some to the interior by various conveyances, but all to the conclusion that the exhibition of so much decorum and harmonious feeling among so many children, must have been the result more or less of the schools, the anniversary of which they had that day met to celebrate."

On Sunday January 2nd 1848, five days after this event and when the native school had been in existence for only eleven months, both the Kiissling's abode and the raupo house were destroyed by fire. In a letter to a friend written on January 6th 1848 the Rev. Kissling gave the following account of the disaster:

"A calamity has befallen us, hitherto unparalleled in my Missionary life. On last Sunday, the 2nd instant, while I was engaged in performing Divine Service at Orakei and just as Mrs. Kissling and Mrs. Kempthorne had returned home from the English Church, our houses at Kohimarama were consumed by fire, with all our earthly possessions, except one tin box and my letters testimonial, which Mrs. Kissling snatched from the devouring element. Mrs. Kempthorne was enabled to save a few of her things, principally clothing; but her loss also is very heavy. The cause of this truly distressing event is still hidden and will probably remain so. On Mrs. Kissling's return from Church there was no fire in the house, and the very place - the store room - where the calamity commenced, was only 10 minutes previously in its ordinary state. About half past three o'clock in the afternoon, Mrs. Kissling and Mrs. Kempthorne, with two native girls, discovered in the eaves of the roof in the store room a round spot of fire, and, a high wind blowing from that direction, our dwelling house was within 10 minutes of the first discovery in a mass of flame; and within half an hour the houses in which we, our school children and Mrs. Kempthorne resided, presented nothing more than a black heap of smouldering ashes. Our furniture, clothing, bedding, stores, provisions, earthenware and stationery: my library, in collection for 25 years: my Sermons and correspondence during a Missionary life of 20 years, intended as a family remembrance to my children; my accounts; some mathematical instruments in one word as I have said above all our possessions in this world, except the clothes we wore and a single tin box, became a prey to the devouring flame, and we were thus within half an hour stripped and destitute. How frail is man, how precarious all things here."

This letter was written at Purewa where the Kisslings and

the inmates of the school were housed temporarily in a building on the St. John's College farm. An account of the catastrophe was published in the "New Zealander" of January 5th. As some of the statement it contained were inaccurate it drew forth from the Rev. Kissling the following letter to the Editor.

Mr. Kipling wrote:

"Sir, - In your paper of Wednesday, you noticed the distressing occurrence of Sunday afternoon when our residence and effects were consumed by an unaccountable fire. There are two statements in that notice which I beg you will do me the favour to correct.

"It is there stated that the whole range of buildings was thatched. This is a mistake; the various buildings were shingled, except Mrs. Kempthorne's which, as you rightly observe, was detached from the rest. In reality it does not alter the case, since old shingles on a flat veranda at this season, ignite as readily and burn as rapidly, as thatch.

"2nd. Your statement that 'the Natives present showed no disposition to exert themselves in putting out the fire' &c., &c., can only apply to a few individuals who, standing on the opposite hill, as they say, observed the commencement of the fire: the great bulk of the native manifested every disposition of kindness, though most of them came too late to render assistance, having been assembled with me for Divine Service at Orakei, when the calamity took place.

"It is worthy to relate that on Tuesday last a great body of natives came to my present abode in order to express their sympathy and to present me with 100 large ketes of potatoes, as a token of their affection.

I am, Sir, Yours &c. &c,
G.A. Kissling.

The above letter was published in the "New Zealander" on Saturday 8th January, the same day as the "Southern Cross" published its first account of the fire. This account, also contained inaccuracies and went as far as to state, "Mr. Kissling's family suspect the natives as being the incendiaries, we know not upon what particular grounds."

Mr. Kissling then felt obliged to write an explanatory letter to the Editor of the "Southern Cross". This letter, which was published on January 15th 1848, is a very informative one and is therefore reproduced here almost in its entirety, only those passages being omitted which contain information already given in the preceding pages. It runs as follows:

"Sir, - A simple statement of occurrences during the day on which the Lord Bishop's premises at Kohimarama.... were destroyed by fire, may not be unacceptable to your

readers, as the published notices of the disaster are in several particulars in-accurate.

"The buildings at Kohimarama were erected by Wm. Spain Esquire..... On Mr. Spain's removal, the property was secured for a benevolent purpose in connection with the College of St. John. In order to give that benevolent purpose a practical effect, as well as to take advantage of the eligibility of its situation for the establishment of a Native Girls' School, his Lordship the Bishop allowed me to occupy the premises at a low rental. Eighteen native girls from various districts of N.Z. had been admitted into our school; they availed themselves cheerfully of a study course of instruction and industrial improvement; holding forth us the distant hope of seeing them one day prepared to carry useful knowledge to their respective homes, and especially to train up the next generation in the fear of God as well as in habits of industry, peace and cleanliness.

"In the midst of this hopeful prospect, we were visited by a most distressing event, the immediate cause of which is still enveloped in mystery.

"On Sunday 2nd instant, the orders of our establishment were as follows:

9 o'clock A.M. I attempted to proceed to Auckland by boat for the purpose of performing Divine Service, but in consequence of high wind and the ebbing of the tide, I had to return to Kohimarama.

10 o'clock A.M. The natives belonging to our establishment were sent to Orakei to attend church and school, from which they did not return until the fire was over.

11 o'clock A.M. The European portion of our establishment went to St. Thomas at the Tamaki where I performed Divine Worship for the Rev. T.B. Hutton who had gone to Auckland to do my duties....

"During the morning service, the premises at Kohimarama were left in charge of Mrs. Kempthorne's nurse and two native girls.... Another girl, being ill, was left in the girls bedroom, and that part of the building standing separate from the rest, altogether escaped the fire. At this part of the day, a stranger (native) was observed by one of the girls, standing at the western gate of the garden amongst the trees. The girl became frightened at his appearance and went to inform her companion of the circumstance. The other girl saw two natives on the beach, but not this stranger. This circumstance seems to have taken place just before 2 o'clock P.M. when Mrs. Kissling and Mrs. Kempthorne with their children returned from Church. My duties called me from St. Thomas to Orakei, for Divine Service amongst the natives, including the girls of our school.

"Mrs. Kissling and Mrs. Kempthorne on their return, found

that there was no fire in the kitchen nor was there any fire in any other part of the house, At 2 ½ o'clock P.M. both Mrs. Kissling and an English servant went twice into the storeroom for provisions, when everything appeared in usual order, and not the slightest suspicion or alarm was excited on either occasion. No fire ever came to that part of the house: and yet in less than half an hour after Mrs. Kissling and Mrs. Kempthorne's servant had been there, the fire broke out in that very storeroom. Mrs. Kissling and well as Mrs. Kempthorne describe its first appearance as having been like a red ball about the size of the crown of a man's hat, blazing into the house immediately from beneath the eaves of the roof. This part of the building being to the wind Ward of the dwelling house and connected with it by a veranda communicated the flames to the rest.... Such was the rapidity of the devouring element as to baffle every attempt to save even a few of the most valuable articles in our house. Mrs. Kissling, in her anxiety to rescue a tin box and my letters testimonial, narrowly escaped with her life.

"But her greatest distress was the disappearance of our second little boy, about six years old, who on seeing the house in flames, set out for Orakei, in order to call me and to bring me the welcome information that no lives had been lost. He was indeed a little messenger of peace to my mind, harassed as it was with most gloomy anticipations: God's mercies, even in this visitation, were greater than my fears.

"Mrs. Kempthorne, although her loss is heavy and severe, had a little time to snatch some of her property from the black columns of smoke, but soon her house also burst into a blaze consuming almost every article of her valuable furniture, part of which had been at our house.

"Our kind neighbours, as well as a great number of natives, hastened to our assistance: but the ravages of the fire had left them little more to do than to condole with us, and to remove the few things of Mrs. Kempthorne's to the house of our kind friend Mr. Porter.*

"There were indeed a few natives who stated that they had seen the fire when it first broke out, and of them I should have taken it more kindly had they given us that help which, from their own statement, seemed to have been in their power: still, as they are not within the sphere of my ministerial duties, I can only say that I over estimated my claim on their sympathy and timely aid. At the same time it would be uncharitable to cast any reflections on those individuals. My occasional intercourse with them was never attended with unpleasantness nor unkindly feelings: hence there is no ground

*Of Waiparera (now Kohimarama). See Section 5, Chapter 1.

for entertaining suspicion.

"The pleasing conduct and testimony of affection from those natives to whom my labours are directed, have been previously noticed, so that I need to say nothing more on that subject.

"The above statement may therefore suffice to place the distressing subject in as clear a light before the public as we can at present obtain, in order to prevent mis-statements and false impressions, and while we cannot unravel its mystery, we bow in submission under its effects.

I am &c.

G.A. Kissling.

Purewa, January 12, 1848."

After a short stay at Purewa the Kisslings and their school girls were transferred to Orakei where they occupied St. James's Chapel, the native church which had been consecrated in January 1847. This church stood on the southern heights of Orakei about 300 yards due west of the present St. James's. Here the school remained until December 1850 when it was transferred to permanent quarters in a new building in Parnell.

This new school, "St. Stephen's", which catered for both Maori and Melanesian girls, was built on the site of the present Parnell Primary School. The Rev. Kissling was its headmaster until his death in 1865 and was at the same time vicar of the Parish Church, "St. Mary's", and Archdeacon of Waitemata. The girls' school was later transferred to a building in Lichfield St., a road off St. Stephen's Avenue, and the building they vacated became a school for Maori boys. The boys' school, St. Stephen's, retained its name and the girls' school was renamed the "Queen Victoria School."

