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LECTURE.

Friday, April 11th, 1862.

MAJOR-GENERAL the HON. JAMES LINDSAY, M.P., in the Chair.

THE WAR IN NEW ZEALAND.

By CAPTAIN C. PASLEY, R.E.

PART II.

IN a paper which I had the honour to read before this Institution a few weeks since, I gave a short account of the history of New Zealand down to the conclusion of the recent war. I propose on the present occasion to offer a few observations on the character of warfare in that country, on the kind of arms that the natives use, with their reasons for adopting them, and on the peculiarities of their defensive works, which, although inapplicable to European warfare, are well deserving of consideration as evincing a natural aptitude for war on the part of the Maories which would be remarkable in any nation, and the existence of which amongst a people so recently rescued from total barbarism is probably unparalleled.

A great deal has been said of the apparent absurdity of a considerable number of troops being kept as it were at bay by a not very numerous body of semi-savages. In a leading article dated the 20th December, 1860, "The Times" contrasts the two pictures of British prowess presented on the one hand by the small allied force (chiefly British) dictating terms of peace to the Chinese Emperor "on the very walls of a capital containing 2,000,000 of inhabitants," and on the other, by "a force of 3,000 effective men commanded by a veteran general, and with an unusually large number of colonels and other officers amply equipped with artillery and with all the munitions of war, drawing its supplies by sea, and backed by a British fleet of six ships of war, which can hardly hold its own against a horde of naked savages never exceeding 600, and now probably reduced to some 120; armed with wretched flint and steel muskets and tomahawks, unprovided with the scantiest apparatus of warfare, and almost destitute of subsistence." The writer goes on to say that a force of 1,000 men under General Pratt "had already declined the siege of a pa of somewhat more than average strength."

As an evidence of the recklessness of assertion which characterised the article in question, I will simply observe, that the number of effective troops (including Naval Brigade) at the disposal of General Pratt at the period referred to was just one-half of the number stated; that, so far from there being "an unusually large number of colonels and other officers," the force laboured under the disadvantage of possessing unusually few officers of all ranks; and finally that the force under General Pratt,

which was 800 (not 1,000) strong, so far from declining the attack of a pa, had both attacked and captured it, and an account of the capture had actually been published in "The Times" itself two days before the leading article appeared.

I need not continue the quotation. If any of my hearers wish to learn how the honour of our troops, and consequently of our nation, may be vilified in the eyes of the world on the authority of obscure and unscrupulous colonial newspapers, I would refer them to that article, and to some others which appeared in "The Times" about the same period. Did time admit of it, it would not be difficult to show the utter fallacy of the comparison between China and New Zealand, and it would be equally easy to show on the present occasion that the statements of comparative force, arms, &c.—in short, the whole of the supposed facts mentioned in the extract which I have just quoted, as well as nearly all those which follow, are founded entirely on false information.* I readily acquit "The Times" of any wilful falsification of facts; I only say, that, before giving the weight of its great name and influence to statements affecting the credit of the British arms, it ought to take at least as much trouble to ascertain the truth as it generally does before commenting on matters affecting the character of an individual.

In this particular case "The Times" had, in the monthly letters of its Melbourne correspondent, which were regularly published without being noticed, and apparently without being read, by the writers of the leading articles, the means of correcting many of the falsehoods to which, no doubt unconsciously, it gave a world-wide currency.

I have alluded to "The Times," not only on account of its great circulation and influence, but because it happens to have been the only daily London paper that I had an opportunity of seeing during the period in question. What sort of remarks may have been made by others I do not know.

I ought, perhaps, to apologise for offering these few remarks, which may seem to have no direct bearing upon the subject of which I have now to treat; my excuse must rest on the peculiarity of the case. New Zealand is sixteen thousand miles away, and nearly all the officers and men who were engaged in the war are still either there or in Australia, too far off to make themselves heard with effect. General Pratt, it is true, has received what I may be permitted to call a well-merited mark of honour from our Sovereign; but the public does not form its opinions from an announcement in the Gazette, but rather from what it reads in the daily papers, in which, as far as I am aware, no recantation or apology for the unfounded calumnies formerly published against the troops has ever appeared; nor has justice been done by the press in England, either to the gallantry and perseverance with which the troops carried on operations of the most harassing kind, under extraordinary difficulties, or to the conduct of the general, who, disregarding the ignorant clamour of newspaper writers, went steadily on his way, without turning to the right or left, until he had carried the war to a successful conclusion, in such a manner as to gain for himself, and for the troops under his command, the respect of the enemy.

* For strength of troops &c. at various periods during the war, see Appendix A

Before entering upon a description of the arms and mode of warfare of the New Zealanders, I must observe, that one of the most fallacious opinions ever entertained by reasonable men, is, that because savages have often been able to offer a serious resistance to regular troops, under favourable circumstances, therefore any other force, no matter what, colonists, sailors, gold-diggers from Australia or California, men of any kind in short, provided they have not been trained as soldiers, would be much more efficient, owing to some imaginary power that every man *not* brought up as a soldier seems to be supposed to possess of getting through dense scrub and "supple jack," and of doing without supplies of provisions, clothing, and ammunition. In short, discipline is imagined to be a mistake, and organised movements worse than useless. Nothing can be more unfounded than such a notion. The Maories are infinitely more formidable enemies than the North American Indians, or any other savages with whom the English nation has had to deal, with the single exception of the Kaffirs, because they possess discipline and military organisation in a very high degree. On the other hand, the Naval Brigade, formed of detachments from the crews of Her Majesty's ships on the station (with a contingent from the steam-sloop *Victoria*, which was lent to General Pratt by the government of the colony of *Victoria*), constituted a very valuable reinforcement to the troops, not because they were less under discipline than the soldiers, but because they combined that discipline with that readiness at handling tools, and turning their hands to any kind of unusual work, for which seamen generally are justly celebrated.

I mentioned the Kaffirs just now, as an exception to the rule that the Maories are the most formidable race of savages that we have met. They were undoubtedly, before the recent breaking up and dispersion of their tribes, much more numerous than the Maories, and quite as warlike in their habits. I have heard that a distinguished officer, who served in the last war at the Cape, considered the Kaffirs to be "perfect light troops," and I can easily believe that they were so, without supposing them to have been superior to the Maories in skirmishing, whilst they were certainly inferior to them in the art of constructing works of defence; indeed I believe the Kaffirs never attempted anything of the kind. Our troops had also much greater facilities for carrying on war in South Africa than in New Zealand. They had there a definite frontier, either to defend or to advance from, as they thought proper; and all the great centres of population in the colony were far removed from any danger. They were able also to penetrate the country in all directions without much difficulty, and even to employ cavalry. The absence of all attempt at fortification also on the part of the enemy made our artillery only useful as an auxiliary, instead of being indispensable as a primary part of our field force.

All these conditions are reversed in New Zealand. Cavalry cannot be employed. Artillery, indispensable as it is, is transported with the greatest difficulty, even near the coast, and cannot be conveyed at all to any distance in the interior. Instead of having a well-marked frontier, all our settlements are dotted along the interminable coast line of a large island, the whole of the almost inaccessible interior of which is occupied by the Maories. These settlements have no communication with each other by

land, and but a very uncertain and precarious one by sea. We occupy detached spots on the circumference of the circle, whilst the natives have possession of the whole of the interior, and are able to throw themselves in force at any time upon whichever of our settlements may appear to be the most vulnerable.

I conceive, therefore, that in what I hope is the improbable event of a general war with the Maories, a large proportion of our settlements in the northern island will be untenable, and must be abandoned. It was this consideration, I believe, which induced General Pratt readily to acquiesce in the peculiar conditions under which the recent war was carried on. These were certainly very peculiar, and to my mind worthy of more than a passing remark, as evincing a sort of chivalrous feeling on the part of the Maories, which is, I think, deserving of our respect, and which ought not to be forgotten in carrying on negotiations with them.

The Waikato nation, the most powerful, numerous, and warlike of the Maori tribes, and the promoters of the native King movement, decreed that there should be war at Taranaki, and nowhere else; that any of their young men who chose to do so might go and fight against the soldiers at New Plymouth, but that no settlers anywhere else were to be disturbed or molested in any way. Their decision was strictly carried out. There was war at Taranaki, and peace everywhere else in the colony. Although the friendly intercourse between the settlers and the Maories was occasionally a little interrupted by suspicions and even threats on both sides, it never ceased, except at the actual seat of war. Some two thousand Waikato warriors came down to the Waitara to drive the troops into the sea. They left about one-fifth of their number dead, and carried away (by permission of General Pratt) a ship-load of wounded, without having succeeded in killing or wounding amongst the soldiers anything approaching to the number they had lost themselves; and all this occurred in a position, or rather a series of positions, chosen and defended with admirable skill by themselves.

The war was a kind of tournament, or combat, by champions; and if we except some outrages committed by the southern natives, and which were condemned not less strongly by W. Kingi and the Waikatos than by ourselves, it must be admitted that it was conducted on both sides with a humanity and consideration most unusual in civil wars, and which the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies (Mr. Chichester Fortescue) justly characterized in the House of Commons as being almost without parallel in the history of war.

The arms generally used by the Maories are double-barrelled guns (not "wretched flint and steel muskets," as stated by "The Times," but good percussion guns), and, for close quarters, tomahawks with long flexible handles, which enable them to reach an adversary's head over his guard. They are not ignorant of the value of the rifle, which is used by some of their marksmen, but as a general rule they prefer the double-barrelled sporting gun to any other arm.

In order to understand their reasons for this preference, it is only necessary to consider for one moment the peculiarities of their position. The interior of the island is very broken and mountainous, intersected by swamps, for the most part covered with dense forest, and entirely destitute

of roads or tracks practicable for wheeled carriages of any kind. It would, therefore, be impossible for them to employ artillery without losing all the advantages they possess in being able to move freely through the forest, and to advance from or retreat on their almost inaccessible fastnesses at pleasure. The absence of this important arm renders it necessary for them, when they meet the troops under circumstances in which our artillery is available against them, to keep as much as possible under cover. Even the use of long-range rifles, requiring a steady and prolonged aim, would expose them to some extent, not only to the fire of our own rifles, but to the destructive effect of shells.

They therefore trust to the closeness and rapidity of their fire, rather than to accuracy at a distance, and their plan usually is to invite and await an attack in rifle-pits, covered from distant fire and protected in front either by natural obstacles or by the double stockade of a pa.

Against an attack by *vive force*, probably no system of defence and no kind of arms could be more thoroughly effective than those adopted by the Maories. It is exceedingly difficult to make a serious breach in the stockades of a pa by artillery fire, even at a short range;* and any attempt to climb over or cut them down must be made at a distance of only a few feet from the muzzles of the guns of the defenders, who, being themselves well under cover, are able to overwhelm the storming party by a close and destructive fire, to which no effectual reply can be given.

Owing to the rapidity with which they can be loaded and fired, double-barrelled guns are much more effective at close quarters than rifles.

It has often been suggested that pas might easily be breached by means of powder bags, and several experiments have been tried at the Royal Engineer establishment at Chatham to prove the facility with which this can be done. The operation would no doubt be simple and effective enough if the pa to be breached were unprovided with flank defence, but such is never the case in fact. No military engineer in Europe understands better than the Maories the importance of flanking fire, and none could show greater judgment in securing that advantage, or in arranging works with reference to the formation of the ground, in such a manner as to afford each other mutual support.

Such being the case, the chance of a bag of powder being successfully placed and fired against the stockade would be extremely remote.

There remained then two modes of attacking these works, viz. shelling them, and approaching them by sap.

The former mode was adopted with so much success against the Kaihihi pas in October 1860, that the Maories resolved no longer to trust to pas, which they began to regard as mere "shell-traps," but for the future to construct their rifle-pits for the most part in spots difficult of access from the front, but with a retreat always open, and concealed in such a manner as to be pretty safe against distant fire, whether of artillery or rifles. They carried out this design with remarkable skill in their successive lines of defence at the Waitara, in the latter part of the war.

An assault upon these lines must have resulted either in a repulse or, at the best, in the capture of a few empty rifle-pits, with great loss to the troops and little or none to the enemy.

* I believe it has never yet been done.

Such a success as this would have done nothing towards bringing the war to a termination, but would, on the contrary, have been regarded by the Maories as a victory on their part.

It was then that the approach by sap was adopted, with what complete success we have already seen. Their want of artillery rendered it impossible for the Maories to offer any effectual resistance to this mode of attack. Any attempt to check it obliged them to expose themselves to the fire of troops under cover; and the result of this reversal of their usual tactics was, that, whilst the casualties amongst the troops were few, the enemy suffered severe daily losses in killed and wounded, and eventually gave up the contest in despair.

A short description of the position before which the troops under Major Nelson were repulsed in June, 1860, may perhaps be of some interest, as that was the last occasion on which a pa was successfully defended. It comprised two pas, Onukukaitara and Puketakauere, about 200 yards apart, crowning the two highest points of a hill about two miles from the mouth of the river, and 2,000 yards from the British camp.

Like nearly every commanding height in the neighbourhood, these two points had been formerly occupied by native pas, which however had been deserted, and allowed to fall into decay.

Soon after the commencement of the war, the enemy having been driven off the disputed land, took possession of Onukukaitara, which they restored, and greatly strengthened. They subsequently commenced working at Puketakauere, but two 8-inch guns having been in the mean time landed from H.M.S. "Iris," and placed in position in the camp, the garrison were enabled, by occasionally throwing shells into the pa, to prevent them from carrying out their design, and, beyond placing a single line of palisading on the parapet, they were unable to effect any material restoration of the old work, which consisted of a redoubt surrounded by a double ditch.

At the period of its abandonment by the enemy, Onukukaitara (commonly but incorrectly called Puketakauere) contained a quadrangular earthen redoubt about 22 yards by 18, with a command of 14 feet obtained by scarping the sides of the highest portion of the hill. This redoubt formed a sort of citadel to the pa. At the foot of the escarp, and surrounding the redoubt on three sides, was a trench for musketry (usually termed rifle-pits), about 4 feet in depth, and varying in width from 3 feet to 20, with traverses. Outside of the trench was a line of palisades partly double and partly single, but always sufficiently open to allow musketry fire from the trench to pass through it. At the northern angle was a palisaded outwork 26 yards by 10, containing a series of covered splinter-proof rifle-pits, connected by semicircular underground passages. A similar underground passage under the palisade of the main work connected the rifle-pits of the pa with the outwork.

At the south-east angle was an unfinished outwork, consisting of a breastwork and rifle-pits without palisading. From the south-western side of the redoubt an outwork, broken into flanks, and divided into several portions by interior palisading, extended for about 60 yards along the crest of the hill, surrounded by a double palisade with covered rifle-pits, some of which were incomplete. Beyond this again, towards the south, were a series of covered rifle-pits without palisading.

The design of the work was well adapted to the site, the strongest and best flanked defences being on the south-western side, where the hill rises from the plain by a gentle ascent. On the north-west and south-east sides the pa was protected by deep gullies, and on the north-east it was covered by Puketakauere pa, which was also in the occupation of the enemy, and which, notwithstanding its defective palisading, was capable of offering a serious resistance to an assault, and was so well covered by swampy and almost impassable gullies, that it would have been scarcely possible to attack it at all until Onukukaitara should have fallen. Both the pas contained several native huts, or "wharres," which were generally covered from distant fire.

On the 27th June, 1860, when the pa was attacked, 46 shells were fired from two 24-pounder howitzers at a range of about 400 yards without effecting a breach in the palisading. The rifle-pits were constructed in a very simple manner. A series of pits 4 feet wide, 4 feet deep, and 8 or 10 feet in length, were dug 3 feet back from the line of palisades. These were covered for about three-fourths of their width with split timber, over which was laid a covering of earth and fern 3 or 4 feet in thickness, leaving openings for musketry 1 foot or 15 inches wide along the whole length of

the pits. Posted in these pits, the enemy were perfectly protected from horizontal fire, and in a great measure even from vertical fire, unless heavy mortars were brought against them.* The difficulty experienced in effecting a practicable breach in a pa is chiefly due to the mode of fastening adopted for the palisading. The inner line is a regular stockade consisting of unhewn timbers, of dimensions varying according to the nature of the neighbouring forest, sunk several feet into the ground, and further strengthened by two or three horizontal ribands, to which every timber is firmly tied with a peculiar tough fibrous grass. Intervals of a few inches are left between the timbers, to serve as loopholes for musketry. The outer line is not so solid as the inner. It consists of strong posts firmly planted in the ground at intervals of 8 or 10 feet, and connected by two ribands, which carry a row of palisades raised about 2 feet from the ground, in order to enable the fire from the rifle-pits to pass under

* Vertical fire from heavy mortars would soon render any pa untenable but there were none available until a few days before the termination of hostilities. Before their arrival the Maories had, as before stated, adopted a new system of defence, against which vertical fire was comparatively ineffective.

them. The whole is so firmly bound together by the tough grass before alluded to, that shot and shell pass freely through both lines, often cutting completely through the timbers without causing any portion to fall.

When an attack is expected it is the custom of the Maories to cover the outer palisades with bundles of the long leaves of the New Zealand flax,* which offers some resistance to musketry, and serves in a great measure to conceal any damage that may be done to the palisades or stockade by artillery.

The above may serve as a general description of the mode of construction adopted in all pas, but the ground plan varies very considerably according to the features of the country.

The plan of the attack on the Kaihihi Pas (Plate II.) shows some of these varieties. It will be observed, that, whilst Orongomaihangai, occupying a bend of the river, was traced in a manner somewhat resembling a bastioned front, with the faces of the ravelin prolonged to meet those of the bastions, Pukekakariki was almost a perfect square unbroken into flanks (see Plate III.). Nevertheless, flank defence was far from being neglected. Owing to the extreme difficulty of moving artillery across the gullies on the right of the enemy's position, the attack was necessarily made upon Orongomaihangai first, the ground in front of which was swept by the fire of rifle-pits dug in the patch of bush on the right, and cut out of the crest of the precipitous river bank.

The same remark applies to Pukekakariki, which was well flanked by detached rifle-pits. Only a portion of the rifle-pits in these two pas were provided with splinter-proof covering, probably owing to want of time. Had the whole of them been protected in that manner, it is probable that the artillery fire which rendered Orongomaihangai untenable, and led to the evacuation of all the pas, would not have sufficed for that purpose, and that they must have been taken by sap.

The nature of the soil at Taranaki is very favourable to the construction of earthworks, whether for attack or defence, as the sides of an excavation, even if vertical, will stand without any revetment.

The redoubts, eight in number, which were thrown up by the troops during the attack on the Waikato position at the Waitara, had ditches eight feet in depth, vertical and unrevetted. The parapets, about eight feet thick, and seven feet six inches in height, were formed of layers of fern mixed with earth. The advantage of this mode of construction was seen during the attack on No. 3 Redoubt, where the enemy's storming party, after gaining access to the ditch unperceived in the darkness, found themselves unable to clamber over the parapet, in consequence of the yielding nature of the mixture of earth and fern, in which they could not get a foothold. They then endeavoured to demolish it by pulling out the fern, but the interlacing of its branches inside the parapet, with the weight of the superincumbent earth, frustrated their efforts.

The accompanying map (Plate I.) shows the lines of sap and the positions of the various redoubts.

The sap, both double and single, was constructed in the usual manner with sap rollers and gabions, but, the supply of the latter being limited,

* *Phormium tenax*. The leaves are five or six feet long and two or three inches wide, containing a great quantity of very strong fibre.

the gabions were removed from the rear as the work advanced, and a revetment of fern and earth substituted. Thus, whilst the whole of the work remained secure, a sufficient stock of gabions was always kept on hand to push forward the head of the sap.

The opinion has often been expressed that the settlers, if left to themselves, would be able to defend themselves better than the troops could do it for them. This opinion appears to be founded on the example of the old Dutch settlers at the Cape, and the English in North America.

In both these cases the colonists had in the first instance the immense advantage of using firearms against tomahawks, spears, or bows and arrows. Every house was a little fort, and every man's rifle his constant companion. Thus, before the introduction of fire-arms amongst the natives made the terms more equal, the settlers had gained a prestige and a sense of superiority which they never entirely lost.

In New Zealand the case is entirely different. It is true that the whalers, sealers, and runaway sailors of former days, men accustomed to a life of vicissitude and hardship, prompt to strike on small provocation, and endowed with means of offence and defence which the Maories did not then possess, were able to make themselves respected. But the present race of European settlers in New Zealand is altogether different in character. At the close of Heke's war the European population of the islands was barely 13,000, of whom but a very small number had taken any part in the military operations. At the commencement of the recent war the number had increased to about 60,000,* almost wholly by immigration from the United Kingdom.

During this interval of more than twenty years, many of the Maori tribes had been engaged in constant wars amongst themselves, whilst the settlers had enjoyed profound peace. The result was, that the Maories never lost their knowledge of the art of war, whilst the Europeans, who were originally ignorant of it, never learned it. In short, they were very like people of their class in England, excellent material for soldiers, fine "food for powder," but altogether destitute, generally speaking, of the special qualifications for guerilla warfare which they were commonly supposed to possess. Game is scarce in New Zealand, and there is little inducement for men to acquire the habit of using firearms. At New Plymouth consequently, where the adult male population was scanty, the women and children comparatively numerous, where no facilities for defence existed, where there was not even a port by which communication by sea with the other settlements could be secured, and where the people, who were generally quiet peaceable agriculturists or tradesmen unaccustomed to war, were surrounded by half-savage enemies brought up from childhood to skirmishing and the use of fire-arms, I have no hesitation in saying that the place could not have been held without the presence of a large body of troops.

There can be no doubt that the military qualities of the Maories, whilst they have been greatly overrated by themselves, have been equally underrated by Europeans. It was a generally received opinion among the settlers, not only before the recent war, but for some time after its commencement, that, however expert the Maories might be in building pas

* See Appendix (B).

and constructing other works of defence, they were too timid to adopt offensive operations, and that they would never venture to attack a military post. I cannot find that there ever was any ground for such a supposition. On the first occasion on which the Maories met the troops (the attack on Korarareka in 1845) the former were the assailants. In the war near Wellington they were almost always so, and at Wanganui in 1847 they repeatedly attacked the stockades in which troops were posted.

In the recent war also, their well-planned and most gallant assault of No. 3 Redoubt, as well as their repeated attacks upon the head of the sap, have shown that when occasion requires it they want neither courage nor capacity to undertake offensive operations even upon a considerable scale.

Their habitually defensive tactics, instead of being due to timidity, are really proofs of sound judgment and good generalship.

The attack on No. 3 Redoubt was caused by their finding themselves in the presence of a commander whose tactics were superior to their own, and whom they could not induce to fall into their trap, or to lead his men up to their fastnesses to be shot down helplessly and unavailingly, as had been done on more than one previous occasion.

The enemy were much more ready than the British public to acknowledge the ability with which the attack against them was conducted. In the former war, whilst admiring the bravery of the troops, they regarded the tactics of our commanders with contempt and derision. They now say that General Pratt is "*tohunga*," which means a master of his art or calling; and they confess that they were confounded by the operation of the sap, and that its slow, but certain and irresistible advance, wearied, depressed, and disheartened them.

Towards the close of the operations an altered tone began to be perceptible even in the colonial press, which had previously been loud in vituperation of the general and troops, and, as I am not aware that any answer has been given in England to the ignorant and unfounded depreciation with which "*The Times*" was in the habit of speaking of the behaviour of the troops, perhaps I may be permitted to quote one or two short extracts from colonial papers. The correspondent of the "*Taranaki News*," writing from the Waitara on the 21st February, 1861, speaking of the country about "*Te Arai*" pa, says—

Beyond is a grand semi-circle of hills and tremendous gullies. One noble hill, which commands the whole on our extreme left, sloping off thence to the valley, is partly cleared; but the remainder is clothed in a beautifully variegated skirt of dwarf bush, amongst which the graceful *mamaku* is very prominent. The fern and dwarf bush on the other hills have been partially burned by the retreating enemy, that it might not afford a cover to our approach; and the summit of every hill from left to right, a distance of not much less than a mile, appears to be one range of rifle-pits. If I have succeeded in conveying any idea of our position, it will be seen that the vantage-ground still belongs to our pertinacious and resolute enemy. Under a desultory fire, which happily has not yet much harmed us, although continued with but small intermission from daybreak to dusk, our brave fellows have been labouring somewhat slowly from the last week's bad weather, but surely approaching the fastness of the Maori; but there is no hope of our being able to move with the celerity, promptitude, and all-subduing energy of those gentlemen who conduct their warlike operations in theory from an easy chair. The more we see and learn of the obstinate enemy in our front, the greater the difficulties appear in the prosecution of the struggle in which we are engaged to a

successful issue. Do not misunderstand me. I write not this in a desponding spirit; for with the above assurance increases our confidence in the master spirit directing matters here.

A Melbourne newspaper in April, 1861, published the following very just observations:

It is most instructive to observe that the forces in New Zealand have gained their successes just by the very means which have been ridiculed by our colonial amateurs and by "The Times." The general was slow and regular in his movements,—the amateurs were all for energy and dash. According to "The Times" and his imitators, savages, forsooth, have learnt "to despise regular warfare;" and it appears that we have the best weapons, but do not know so well as the savage how to put them to the best use. "The consequence is," says "The Times," "that we retire in discomfiture before foes whose superiority, although they are savages, actually lies less in numbers than in wisdom. If the Maories had borrowed our shakoes and pipeclay, and drawn themselves up in line to receive our attacks, we should laugh at their folly. Unluckily it is we who show ignorance of the conditions of fighting, and the laugh is on the savages' side." We question whether there is, even in the lucubrations of the colonial press, anything so excessively absurd as the above, which in fact is probably unsurpassed in the annals of literary or military criticism.

The self-evident folly of the statements renders all commentary superfluous; but it is only justice to the gallant general to quote the following remarks by one of the repentant sinners who wrote some of the reports which doubtless misled "The Times." The remarks are those of the correspondent of a Taranaki newspaper, and refer to the attack on the last Maori stronghold:—

"It is only when one has seen this position that he can appreciate the cautious manner in which the general has approached it. Most of the troops have often expressed it as their ardent wish to take it by a charge, and your correspondent always thought it the best and safest plan till to-day; but I now perceive, that, to have charged this position, would have been like ordering brave men to commit self-destruction. Even the natives, before they could find footing on it, were obliged to dig away a narrow strip from the brink, thus forming a ledge for themselves to stand on; and even this shelf is so narrow that not more than one row of men in single file can occupy it. Therefore a line of soldiers charging it must, in their eagerness to meet their foes, either fall over the precipice and be dashed to pieces in the shallow river beneath, or, what would be as bad, they would have to retire defeated before the destructive fire of an exulting foe. Neither could an attack in flank be ventured upon along this ridge, as only one man could advance at a time. It follows, therefore, that whatever might be won by charging an enemy on ground presenting but ordinary difficulties, to order a rush on such a position as this would be universally denounced as wilful murder, for the result could only be a terrible catastrophe. I make this statement, because truth prescribes it, in justice to a general whose plans have been too hastily censured."

All honour to General Pratt for the skill with which he has routed out the savages from a line of defence of such unparalleled strength; but, in our humble opinion, his greatest glory consists in the firmness of mind he displayed, in disregarding the vituperations of his "civil" critics, and his perseverance in spite of all calumny in the despised system of regular warfare—a system which it is now clearly demonstrated could alone have been successful.

On a former occasion I expressed an opinion that the complete subjugation of the Maories would be a task little inferior in magnitude and difficulty to that of the Conquest of Britain by the Romans. In some respects it would be even more arduous. The difficulty of communication and transport, owing to the natural features of the country, would be infinitely greater than they can at any time have been in England, which nevertheless cost the Romans many a long year of hard work and hard fighting to subdue.

From the mountains of Scotland they retired baffled, and were even compelled to protect their territory in the south by immense entrenchments from the attacks of the wild tribes inhabiting the Caledonian Hills.

Moreover, the introduction of fire-arms has greatly diminished the superiority of regular troops over savages in a difficult country. The power which fire-arms have given them of projecting deadly missiles from invisible hiding places has immensely increased their facilities for resistance, and, as the country in the North Island of New Zealand becomes more and more impassable as you advance towards the interior, it would require extraordinary care and precaution to prevent an invading force from finding itself in a position from which to advance would be impossible, and to retreat disastrous.

Let us hope that it may never be necessary to undertake anything of the kind, not only on account of the enormous difficulty and expense which must attend military operations on a great scale in that country, but for the sake of the brave, high-spirited, and interesting race whose destruction would in all probability follow.

The British Government is now in a far better position to promote a durable pacification than it was at the close of the former war. At that time the Maories considered themselves with much show of reason to have been the victors in the contest, and they believed then, and continued to believe until very recently, that it was in their power if they chose to drive the whole of the European population into the sea.

The idea, once prevalent in England, of our superiority to the French, which found expression in the old saying,—“On every pair of English legs do march three Frenchmen,” fell short of the opinion of their own prowess entertained by the Maories, who made no secret of their conviction that one Maori was equal to three soldiers in the fern and to nine in the bush. This flattering notion has now been rudely dispelled. They have learned by bitter experience the superiority of a comparatively small number of troops, when skilfully handled, even in positions peculiarly favourable to native tactics.

The Waikatos, the proudest and most powerful of the native tribes, now acknowledge the utter hopelessness of a contest with the power of England; but they would probably not shrink from war, even to the death, rather than abandon their rights of property in the soil.

It is easy to point out the absurdity of some 50,000 semi-savages requiring a fertile territory as large as Ireland for their support, but we can hardly blame the Maories if they take a different view of the question. They have much pride of race, combined with a full knowledge of the superiority in arts and civilisation of the Europeans. Although they probably do not suspect the British Government of any deliberate intention to treat them with injustice, they are very naturally alarmed by the rapidly increasing numbers and power of the colonists, which they cannot help associating in their minds with an impression of the impending downfall and dispossession of their own race. The possession of the land is the only means of safety that they see before them, and it is, perhaps, to be expected that they will cling to it with desperate pertinacity.

We are fortunately now in a position to practise conciliation towards them without being suspected of timidity, and we may treat with gentleness and consideration a high-spirited people, suffering under the humiliation of unwonted and unexpected defeat.

APPENDIX (A).

MILITARY FORCE in the province of TARANAKI, including Naval Brigade, Militia, and Volunteers, from June, 1860, to January, 1861.

Date.	Troops and Naval Brigade.	Militia and Volunteers.	Total.	Effective (about)	Remarks.
20th June, 1860 . . .	1188	578	1761	1500	
11th August, 1860 . .	1786	532	2318	2000	
10th September, 1860 .	1786	502	2288	2000	
3rd October, 1860 . . .	1634	527	2161	1800	Half the Naval Brigade ordered to Auckland since last return.
12th November, 1860 .	1253	493	1743	1500	400 troops sent to Auckland:
10th December, 1860 .	1718	474	2192	1900	The troops sent to Auckland had returned.
1st January, 1861 . . .	1726	477	2203	1900	
28th January, 1861 . .	2460	522	2982	2000	Reinforcements of 14th and 57th Regiments arrived.
		Troops and Naval Brigade.	Militia and Volunteers.	Total.	
12th November, 1860, Garrison of New Plymouth, in all, amounted to . . .	530	377	907		Non-Effectives included 126 Militia employed as boatmen, carters, butchers, and bakers, in New Plymouth alone.
Of whom Effective, about	455	226	681		
Non-Effective	75	151	226		

APPENDIX (B).

NEW ZEALAND.

APPROXIMATE POPULATION IN 1858.

EUROPEAN.					
Northern Island	.	.	.	.	35,000
Middle Island	.	.	.	.	25,000
					<hr/> 60,000
MAORI.					
Northern Island	.	.	.	.	55,000
Middle Island	.	.	.	.	2,500
					<hr/> 57,500

Since that date the European population has probably increased to about 100,000; but this increase is mostly due to the development of Canterbury as a pastoral or "squatting" country, in competition with Australia, and to the discovery of the great goldfields of Otago, which have already drawn off many thousands of gold-diggers from Victoria and New South Wales. The increase therefore is chiefly confined to the Middle Island, where the Maories are insignificant in number.—C. P.