

# *eColenso*

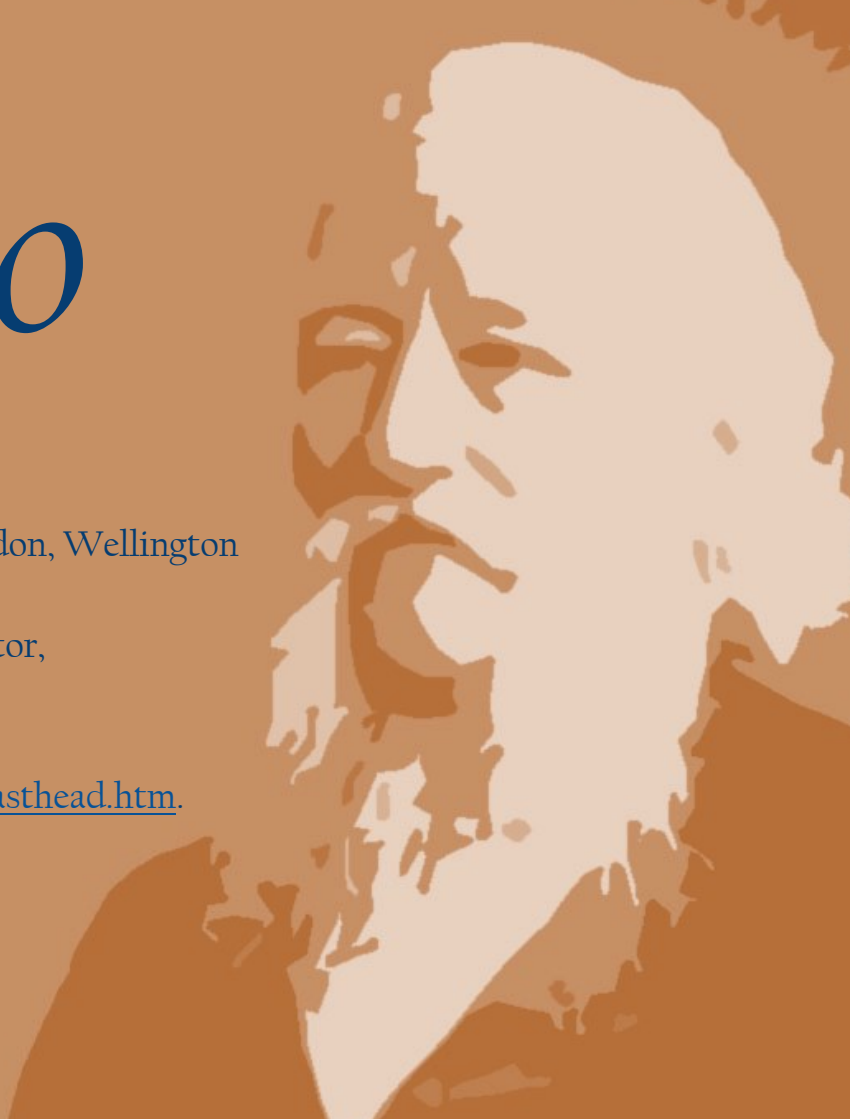
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## The NZ polymath: Colenso and his contemporaries

Wellington 17–19 November 2016

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# William Colenso's Maori Lexicon

In his eulogy for his old friend and mentor William Colenso, Coupland Harding would write (in the *Press* of 27 February 1899),

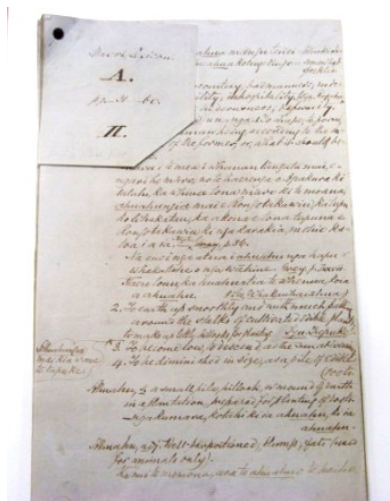
On the painful subject of the Maori Lexicon I will not dwell. Its history could not be even briefly told in a column of the paper. In 1861 (his first session) he moved a resolution to the effect that the time had come for the state to make an organised attempt to rescue the dying language of New Zealand from oblivion; and the resolution was carried. At that time he was not in a position to undertake the work, and it was his intention to hand over all his thirty years' collection of words, proverbs, songs, &c., gratis, as a nucleus. Numerous old chiefs and tohungas, possessing vast stores of legendary lore—some of them men who had seen Captain Cook—were then living, and could have assisted. In 1865 the Government, urged by Mr. Mantell, took up the subject, and in 1866 Mr. Colenso, then to some extent at liberty, was urged, as the one man in New Zealand best qualified for the task, to take it up. Seven years was fixed for the completion of the work, the remuneration to be £300 a year. A change of Government took place, and the petty jealousies which are the curse of party politics, came into play. First, the free postal facilities were withdrawn. A circular requesting the co-operation of officers in native districts was so framed as to imply very clearly that the Government were quite indifferent on the subject. Then, before half the appointed time had passed, the

author was notified that it was time that a large portion of the work should be in the press! Replying that this was impossible as he had not so much as begun his fair copy for the printer, he was notified that payments were stopped, pending investigation. The manuscript was examined by qualified persons, who reported that a vast amount of work had been done; that thousands of pages had been written, from the first letter to the last, involving, as such work does, much cross-reference; that seven years was altogether too short for a work of such magnitude, and that the author had more than performed his part during the time he had been engaged.

All this was withheld from Parliament, and the House and country were officially informed that the author had undertaken the work three and a half years ago, had regularly drawn his money, amounting to over a thousand pounds, and had not a single page ready for the printer. Supplies were stopped, and all remonstrances and suggestions from the author were unheeded. He had retired from his salaried public offices, cut down his correspondence, dropped all his favourite scientific pursuits, and now found the work thrown back on his hands. The breach of faith was monstrous, and a litigious man would certainly have recovered heavy damages. Then a sample portion, in completed form, was demanded, to be laid before the House. The A portion was so prepared. The Government printed the title, preface, preliminary notes, &c. with a wealth of blank pages, followed by a few lines of actual text, apparently to throw contempt on the work, and then “lost” the copy, which was discovered 18 years after in a pigeon hole, and was printed (partly at the author's own cost) only last year by the present Government. The manuscript, which will probably equal some two thousand or more pages of printed matter, has been bequeathed to the State, with the request that

they take up and print the work. It may be noted that Mr. Colenso's rough manuscript is far better than the bulk of the fair copy that passes through a printers hands.

The manuscript for the "A" portion survives in the collections of the Hawke's Bay Museum Trust (see <https://mtghawkesbay.wordpress.com/tag/maori-lexicon/>).



Mr. Colenso's Māori-English Lexicon (specimen of);  
Manuscript.  
Collection of the Hawke's Bay Museums Trust,  
Ruawhāro Tā-ū-rangi, 45/372

# COLENSO'S MAORI LEXICON.

We have received a letter, which we publish below, respecting the Maori Lexicon at which Mr. Colenso was so long employed. The completion of a work of this kind would have been of great interest and importance in several respects, and no one in the colony was so well qualified for the work as Mr. Colenso, who, besides being thoroughly versed in the language and history of the native race, is a scholar of great attainments, and possessed of considerable scientific acquirements. But Mr. Colenso made the error of commencing the work on far too gigantic a scale, as the specimen page laid on the table of the House abundantly shows, and the colony became tired of paying a yearly salary with no apparent result. The work was begun in 1865, and ought to have been finished in two years. The specimen page, or sheet of two pages, includes only a part of the meanings of the letter A, when standing alone. Writers of Greek or English lexicons are not so minute as Mr. Colenso. If Mr. Colenso would reduce the scale of his manuscript, and finish the work within a few months, he would add greatly to his already considerable fame as a scholar, but, as it is, his labour and the country's money have been thrown away. The following is Mr. Colenso's letter, but for the Parliamentary paper he refers to we cannot find space:—

"Napier, July 5, 1880. Sir,—Allow me to call your attention to a gross error, to say the least of it, made by your 'Special Correspondent' at Wellington. In writing to you of the Maori-English lexicon (which is called 'a Maori work'), a small portion of which—scarcely *one* page!—had been recently laid on the table of the House of Representatives, he says, 'Colenso has been paid £300 a year for the last ten years for working at it, but has advanced only a very small way.' &c. This statement, however, is the contrary of truth; rather, it is a little more than ten years since the Government (of that day) stopped the work! breaking their contract with me, and that utterly without any cause on my part. I had commenced the work early in 1866, under a resolution of the House and official appointment; the native Minister in July, 1875!—those should have been then printed and brought before the House. A parliamentary paper of 1875, which I send you herewith, will explain the whole matter more fully: I trust you will be able to find room for it in your large paper, and so do me common justice.—I am, &c., WILLIAM COLENSO."



There are many rough pages of lexicon notes in the Colenso material at the Mitchell Library in Sydney. There are many references to the lexicon in Colenso's letters to Harding ("Mao. Lex"). There are four entries published in the *Appendix to the Journal of the House of Representatives* relating to the lexicon. Many reports and opinions can be found in *Papers Past* (eg, *NZ Herald* 10 July 1880 at left).

At the Wellington office of National Archives is a file box (Record no. 1899/217) containing the extant correspondence, memos, notes, comments, etc relating to the Lexicon. The pile of papers is about 80mm thick (above).

Going through them is a daunting task, but this was a significant failure, a serious matter that for many years diverted the attention of a talented man from other productive activities (and, judging from the Archives box, that for many years kept a good number of politicians and public servants busy). A proper assessment should therefore be made—not only of the sequence of events that led to the failure, but also (by a *te reo* scholar) of the value or otherwise of the remains of what should have been Colenso's *magnum opus*.

*eColenso* has looked briefly at various aspects of the story—July 2011 “The *Evening Post* and the Māori Lexicon”; April 2013 “Colenso, Tregear & the Māori Lexicon”; August 2013 “The Lexicon: Journals of the House 1902, Reaction”; September 2013 Stuart Webster: “The lexicon in Colenso's Will”; April 2015 “20 August 1862 in the House”.

Colenso was from the beginning fascinated with *te reo*: on first landing his gear he recorded,

“Saturday, January 3rd.—Busily employed in getting Goods on shore:—thank God! got the Press and Type safely ashore—how the natives danced and capered about with joy, shouting and crying, “Ka pai Mihanare Koreneho, ta puka puku”,—(very good, Missionary Colenso, print books.)

He was a stutterer who found that he did not stutter in *te reo*. His bush journals are full of notes on the meanings of words and expressions in *te reo*. He wrote in his Exhibition essay,

The Language is remarkable for its euphony, simplicity, brevity, clearness, and copiousness. For its euphony, it is not only indebted to its not having two or more consonants coming together, and no word ever ending with a consonant, but to the copious use of the vowel *i*, (pronounced *ee*,) to the sound of its semi-liquid *r* (approaching *l*,) and to several vowels often closely following, together with a quick flowing

elision of others. Its simplicity arises from one word, or root, being noun, verbal noun, adjective, or verb; requiring merely the addition of a simple short particle; and from the peculiarity of its idiom. It knows of no circumlocution. All long, involved parenthetical sentences, are utterly foreign to it. Its brevity is often quite laconic; and while exceedingly terse, contains great beauty and power of expression. It is very clear and exact, as shown by its many singular and plural articles, and double dual, and double plural pronouns; its various modes of address, according to age, sex, and rank; and its many intensive and diminutive particles. While its copiousness may be readily inferred, from its having proper names for every natural thing however small—different names for a tree and its fruit, and for every part of a vegetable whether above or below ground, and for young and adult fish of the same species—for everything made by them, and for each of all its various parts—for every kind of tattooing, and each line and marking of the same—and upwards of fifty names for a sweet potato, and forty for a common one. Nevertheless, in words for abstract ideas, unknown to the New Zealanders, such as hope, gratitude, mercy, charity, etc., it is deficient; as also for many new things. It does not, however, follow, that an intelligent New Zealander, wishing to speak of any such, would not easily find suitable expressions wherewith to make himself quickly and clearly understood, and convey a very correct idea to the minds of the hearers. The writer has never known an old New Zealander (or a young one who knew his own language), ever to be at a loss accurately and minutely to describe whatever he wished of any new thing or transaction to his countrymen; at the same time it is believed by him, that the New Zealand language is but a remnant of what it once was, and is fast going to decay.

# This is how it began...

William Colenso, provincial Inspector of Schools in Hawke's Bay,  
wrote to the Native Minister,

Napier,  
December 17, 1862.

To  
Hon. The Native Minister,  
Auckland

Sir

Having very recently visited the Schools of this Province in my official capacity as Inspector, and having (among the rest) seen and examined those Maori schools at Te Wairoa under Mr. & Mrs. Deerness,—I have the honor of writing to you, sir, to point out what in my opinion is wanting—or absolutely necessary—in order to ensure a useful knowledge of the English language to the rising generation of Maories.—

In presuming, however, Sir, to trespass on your time and attention with my opinions, I should inform you that I assume:—

1. The acknowledged great desirability (by the Government) of the young Maoris speedily attaining to the correct knowledge of the English tongue.—
2. That although attempts have been made from time to time to effect this, very little real good has resulted.—
3. That the easiest and most feasible method should be sought, and, being found, should be accepted and diligently followed.

4. That there is an immense difference between understanding and memory;—e.g. in Maories repeating, or even reading, English Books, and their understanding them.—

5. That from long and actual experience I have some knowledge of the subject,—practically as well as theoreticaly.—

I have, for some time, been of opinion, Sir, that the proper means had not yet been discovered, or adopted, for teaching the young Maories English; but of this I was not quite certain, as I did not know what means were being used in the Schools receiving Government Aid at the North.—

For a few months Mr. Deerness was receiving Provincial Government Aid towards his Schools,—hence the reason of my inspecting them. I did not certainly know, until I saw him at Te Wairoa, that he was in the Service of the General Government.—

I believe Mr. Deerness to be well fitted for his Office; possessing that almost rare (and yet most necessary) qualification in this Colony—a heart set on his work.—

In a word, Sir, what is wanted—willing students and a willing Teacher being found—is, *the means of smoothing down the drudgery of learning*,—which, to an undisciplined Maori Youth is intolerable.—

Else, when the novelty of the teaching is passed, the pupils flag, and get discouraged at the ruggedness of the way;—and what was taken for an unmistakable sign of a good beginning and advancement, is found to be nothing more than a strong effort of unburthening memory.

How then is the way of learning the English language to be made both easier and attractive to the young Maori? Seeing



there is such an immense difference in the idioms of the two languages.—

By dealing with them as we ourselves were dealt with, in our being taught foreign and difficult languages. *By providing him with proper Elementary Books* (as well as proper Teachers). I hesitate not to state my firm belief, that no Maori Children living among their own people can ever learn English, so as to be of any great service to them, from such Elementary Books as are in use among English Children (however good such may be for English Children);—simply because such are written for children whose own vulgar tongue is that very language and idiom therein taught.—

What is mainly wanted, at present, is,—

1. Easy progressive Elementary Lessons, carefully prepared,—containing (at first,) little besides simple vowel and consonantal sounds—syllables—words—and sentences: excluding very many monosyllabic and other common words, always found in English Primers and “First Reading Books.”—

2. English-Maori, and Maori-English Lessons, of a progressive nature, very carefully prepared:—much after the English-Latin and Latin-English of our own better class schools. At present it is perfect misery to both learner & Teacher to attempt to render a common sentence from an English Primer or Reading-Book into Maori; however easily understood by an English child.—At the very outset the monosyllabic auxiliary verbs,—*be, have, had, may, do, did, &c, &c.*,—with their numerous strange aberrant inflections,—stagger and disgust the young learner. It is a grave error in teaching, to suppose, that because words are little, or of one syllable, they must necessarily be easy to the learner. For such plain & easy

English words as, “*If it be so,*” are more difficult to a young Maori (learning English) to comprehend, than four of the longest words in his own Maori tongue. Such being really the case, what then are we to think of such monosyllables as,—*see, sea, I, eye, lo, low, you, yew, ewe, high, sigh, tight, right, heel, heal, rain, rein, reign, dew, due, doe, dough, know, now, tough, rough, ruff, have, mare, knit, knife, fifth, ache, &c.*,—which are in all Primers and “Reading-Easy’s”?

3. Useful Vocabularies of the common English words with Maori meanings, carefully prepared to suit the progressive Maori-English Lessons, for which purpose these might also be in Parts. Part 1, for beginners at Translation, containing merely words of simple sound, and so on.—For, to be made to repeat words not understood is extremely detrimental to the faculties of a young mind.—

Lessons and Books of this description (here slightly sketched), would, of course, lead to others more difficult; as the difficulties of the English Language must (if its acquisition is to be of any real service to the learner) be overcome: but, the great thing arrived at is,—1<sup>st</sup>. to enlist and secure the energies of the learner;—and, 2<sup>nd</sup>. to continually lead him on—step-by-step. And so to enable him from a very early period to be increasingly interested in his work through his daily acquiring something which he himself sees, and so effectually and beneficially use that intense proclivity of the Maori after present gain (*utu*).

All Elementary Lessons should also be printed in clear type and on *small* sheets (one side only) for pasting on thin boards of planned timber; such are doubly useful and last a long while. I always used and preferred such, during the 19 years I served the C.M. Society.—

Small Prizes should, I think, also be annually given,—a shirt, knife, or a pair of Trowsers, publicly awarded, (after, it may be, and examination by the Inspector of Schools,) would not be thrown away. And, at first, a small *bonus* to the school-master, for *each scholar* he had advanced to *understand English* so as to translate it readily into Maori.—

Plain and simple and easy Rules, for the guidance of the Teacher (as well as the scholars) and suitable to the Maories, carefully drawn up by some one acquainted with them (no mere Theorist), should, I think, be also adopted.—

Of course, such Lessons & Books could only be properly prepared by some one well-acquainted with both languages, with the feelings and wants of the Maories, and possessing an aptness for the work.

I may add, that, during the past 12 months, I have had a particular opportunity of proving the truth of what I have herein stated: having had a little half-caste Boy (during that period) residing with me, whom I have been teaching both Maori and English. When he came he knew not a letter of either; now, however, he can Read and Write in both. From all the English Primers and Spelling-Books published, that I could find (either here or in Wellington), I have gained but little real assistance.—

Mr. Deerness, also, was trying several; among others, I noticed, a Comp\*\*\* printed at Wellington, by order of Sir. G. Grey, some years ago:—and a phrase-book compiled by Donaldson, lately printed here; both these, however, like all the rest, were unsuited and inadequate.—I have given a few specimens from the Irish National School-Books, which books are among the very best I have seen:—

a pink sash  
a gauze frock  
a red rose  
a nice tart  
a wax doll

A wig on a pin  
A doll is a fop  
A chime of bells  
A birch, or a beech

a warm mug  
a hot roll  
a seed burr  
a fine hut  
a big globe

Do pigs chew the cud?  
I loathe a toad  
A feint of the fox  
Frogs croak.

Haws are the fruit of the thorn.

Let me have sauce to my fish.

Wine is kept in vaults:—

how are such sentences to be translated?

*Should I continue to hold the office of Provincial Inspector of Schools*, I would be happy to Inspect, and to Report on the Native Schools of the Province;—should such be the wish of the General Government.

After all that I have written herein, (and I might have written much more,) the General Government may have already published—or taken steps to publish—such elementary books as I have suggested—or, even better & more useful ones. If so, I beg to apologise for occupying your valuable time.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,  
your most obedient servant  
Wm. Colenso



Dillon Bell was Native Minister. A note scrawled across Colenso's letter says, "This document was laid before the late Native Minister," but it seems no action was taken until William Fox became Native Minister on 30 October 1863.

Fox's letter to Colenso is not on file, but Colenso replied (from the General Assembly Library in Auckland) on

**17 December 1863.**

Herewith I send you my Letter on the Maori lexicon &c—and *if you have time* would thank you for your reply before I leave.—

I should like for you to read my Letter sent by me to Mr Bell (curiously enough, *this day*, last year,) from which I have enclosed an extract. Mr Bell—I am sorry to say—did not even acknowledge it!

I will be sure to send you Mr Catchpool's papers—perhaps tomorrow.

I write with great difficulty owing to a boil on my little finger.—

Should you wish to see me: I am mostly at Gen. Assy. Library or "Royal."——

P.S. in my obtaining some kind of answer from you before I leave—such would not only enable me to commence immediately on reaching Napier—but keep me from entering into any other engagement. W.C.

Fox must have replied at once, for Colenso wrote to him again on

**19 December 63.**

Many thanks for your kind note of yesterday. I cannot tell

you how greatly I feel obliged to you for it.—At the same time I scarcely know what answer to give, although I have been endeavouring to view your proposal from every possible point. I fear my good friend, Dr. Knight, does not see the matter from the same position as I do. A mere Vocabulary *alone* I should not care to work at: had I wished to do so I might have done it long ago, and have made money by it, having been often importuned by Printers to get out such work. But it was much higher game—a Thesaurus or Lexicon—on which my heart was set. What now inclines me to accept your proposal is the fact, *of it being a step towards the greater work*. But I very much fear the time of 2 years will not suffice for the production of a Vocabulary (*larger* than Williams',) and Elementary Children's Books. When I said, "a Vocabulary" (as a kind of sample of the larger work,) "might be got out in two years," of course, I did not include Elementary Books. Of such Children's Books, 3, *at least*, would be required:—1, & 2, progressive Easy Lessons English & Maori, word for word; 3. An Eng. Less. Book, using all the Eng. words used in Nos. 1 & 2, with others, of which *last new* words, an Eng.-Maori Vocabulary must be given.—These Books, such though they be, require much care in their preparation—

I am willing, however, to undertake the Work, and to labour hard—"can amore"—in getting it done; but I do not like to be *tied* to time, or money, or "liability to the Govt." in case of failure—as *to time*;—it's beginning Letter A., would scarcely be ready before its last Letter.

Further: I may ask, how and where are the Works to be printed? Of course I should have nothing to do with this, save the superintending & correcting the sheets.—

On the whole, my dear Sir,—(seeing I must have something to do, and I do not look for *great* things—rather to be usefully employed,)—I will agree to the following—say —

To prepare a Vocabulary of the Maori Language—in 2 parts—Maori & Eng. & Eng. & Maori; and, also, 3 progressive Eng.-Maori Lesson Books for Maori Children; to have them ready to be placed in the Printer's hands before the end of 2 years from Jany. 1/64: and to receive from Govt. the sum of £300: for the whole work, in 10 equal quarterly instalments (2½ years).—

P.S. should this meet your approval—please drop me a single word “*Yes*.”—Your Off. Letter can come after; as I should require to purchase 2 reams or so of ruled paper, & some other matters.—

I may add, that a Zulu-Kafir Dictionary, recently lent me by Sir George, containing 400 pages, took the zealous German author “20 years”!—W.C.

**6 January 64.** Fox wrote,

“Will Dr Knight be so good as reduce the substance of Mr Colenso's letter of Decr. 19<sup>th</sup>/63 into an official arrangement, to prepare dictionary of limited character & elementary school books?”

**9 January 64.** Charles Knight replied to Fox,

“Herewith, C.K.—Mr Colenso should be informed in reference to the correspondence on this subject, that the Government request him to undertake the work of preparing for the press a Vocabulary of the Maori Language in two parts—“Maori & English” and “English & Maori”; and also three progressive English-Maori Lesson Books for Maori children

the whole to be completed by the first of January 1866 for which the Government undertake to pay him £300 on the satisfactory completion of the works.—

“£30 per quarter will be issued from the Colonial Treasury to Mr Colenso by way of Imprest which will be charged to him upon account. C.K. 9 January/64.”

**11 January 64.** Fox to Edward Shortland, Native Secretary: “Mr. Shortland. Write Mr. Colenso in accordance with Dr Knight's memm. W. Fox.”

**11 January 64.** Shortland wrote to Colenso,

In reference to the correspondence which has taken place relative to the publication of a Maori Dictionary, and some elementary works on the Maori and English languages, I am directed by Mr. Fox to inform you that the Government request you to undertake for the press the following works;

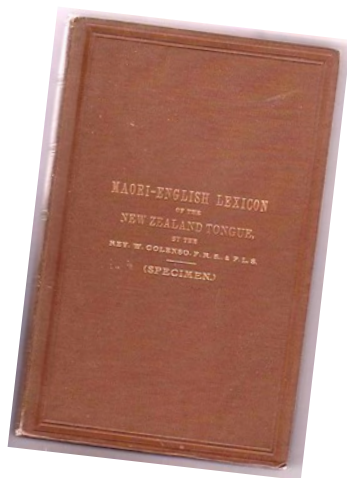
1. A Vocabulary of the Maori language in two parts—Maori and English, and English and Maori;

2<sup>nd</sup>. Three progressive lesson books for Maori Children in English and Maori: the whole to be completed by 1 January 1866. The Government on their part, undertake to pay you Three hundred pounds on the satisfactory completion of these works.

In the mean time however you will be at liberty to draw thirty pounds per quarter from the Colonial Treasury which will be \*\*\*nged against you as advance paid on account of the Three hundred pounds, which the Government undertake to pay you as hereinbefore stated.

And so on... an 80mm thick bundle of 45 years of correspondence!

... and this is how it ended



## Book Review

*Nature* 58 (1503), 364–365 (18 August 1898)

### COLENSO'S MAORI DICTIONARY

**A Maori English Lexicon.** By the Rev. W. Colenso. (Wellington, 1898.)

**M**R. COLENSO'S Maori English Lexicon, being, as stated on the title-page, a comprehensive dictionary of the New Zealand tongue, including mythical, mythological, "taboo" or sacred, genealogical, proverbial, poetical, tropological, sacerdotal, incantatory, natural history, idiomatic, abbreviated, tribal and other names and terms of and allusions to persons, things, acts, and places in ancient times, also showing their affinities with cognate

Polynesian dialects and foreign languages, with copious pure Maori examples, has a sad history to tell. To begin with, it is only a first instalment, going no further than *Anguta* in the Maori English part, and to come in the English Maori part; nor does it seem settled even now that Mr. Colenso will be able to finish the publication of it. That such a lexicon ought to have been published by the New Zealand Government long ago, admits of no gainsaying. It is a work practically useful to the whole Colony, and who is to publish such a work if the Government declines to do so? As far back as 1861 the Rev. W. Colenso made his first proposal to the House of Representatives. His motion, he tells us, was favourably received, and the resolution was passed, "That the House considers it highly desirable that a sum of money be devoted for the purpose of commencing a Standard Library Dictionary of the Maori Language." But there followed the ominous sentence, "as soon as the finances of the Colony will permit." A new application was made in 1862, when the finances seemed to be in a flourishing state, but without results. Then came the war in 1863, and nothing was done. The Governor, Sir George Grey, took an active interest in the matter; but in spite of that, nothing was done in 1864. At last, in 1865, an estimate was asked for, and Mr. Colenso stated that the time required would be seven years, and the expense would be 300l. per annum. In 1865 the House once more decided that it is highly desirable that the Maori dictionary should be commenced forthwith. Mr. Colenso then devoted himself entirely to this work, shutting himself up, as he says, fourteen and even sixteen hours a day. He gave up his official duties and his useful natural history studies, which had made his name familiar to students at home. He received, however, but scant recognition from the Government, and in 1867 it seems that an official inquiry was called for by the House, and another gentleman was appointed to inspect and report. The report was favourable, and so were some other reports in 1868. But

the House seems to have grown impatient. Mr. Colenso was informed that the work must be finished by 1870, and that no more money should be paid after that date. After that, the relations between the Government and the compiler of the dictionary seem to have become strained. Unfortunately illness supervened, possibly aggravated by disappointment, for Mr. Colenso speaks of "having been goaded on to desperation almost through the remarks made in the House and the bad faith of the Government." In 1870 Mr. Colenso entered the Provincial Council again, and was appointed Inspector of Schools, so that he could devote his spare time only to the prosecution of his literary labours. A last appeal was made by Mr. Colenso in 1875, offering to hand over his materials to Government, or to go on again with his work if the Government would grant the necessary funds. To this, we are informed, no answer was returned, but transactions went on, more or less unsatisfactory, till at last the first instalment of the dictionary was sent to press, and published in 1898!

This certainly seems a sad history, and, considering Mr. Colenso's age, we can hardly hope that he will be allowed to finish this great undertaking. In the meantime two Maori dictionaries have been published by Williams and by Tregear, but on a smaller scale; so that Mr. Colenso's work may still be very useful as filling many a gap left by his predecessors. It is difficult for an outsider to form an opinion as to the rights of the case. Scholars are sometimes dilatory, and Governments are sometimes stingy, and that on the highest principles. Personal feuds, too, are difficult to avoid when different parties divide the Government, and patronage is put into the hands of whatever party is in power.

The loss to science, particularly to linguistic studies, is very great, for by his long residence among the Maoris Mr. Colenso seemed highly qualified for the work which he had undertaken, and which, under more favourable auspices, he might have finished by this time. (In compar-

ing some of the entries, even in this small fragment we come across several which are most interesting. It is well known that the Maoris call their gods Atuas. But the question is, why? It seems at first sight as if Atua was derived from atu, a particle expressive of many things. Mr. Colenso enumerates thirty-three meanings of it, one of which is an emphatic very, used also to form superlatives and to express extraordinary greatness, or anything that goes beyond everything else. Atua may have been derived from it, though it seems to convey not so much the idea of exceeding greatness as of being terrible. Hence it is used as a name of any supernatural and malevolent being, a demon, and also of their gods, many of whom were more or less malevolent. The most dreaded and powerful Atuas were Tu, Rongo, Tane, Tangaroa, Tawhiri matea, and Whiro, four of whom appear again as the gods of Hawaii, viz. Tu, Lono (Rongo), Kane (Tone), and Kanaloa (Tangaroa). All of these, though invoked, were hated and often threatened by their worshippers. Idols also are called atua, and a number of imaginary invisible evil powers, genii, spooks and gnomes, go by the same name. Atua is applied also to sickness, pain and death, as personified, in fact, to anything abnormal and monstrous, disgusting and disagreeable. Natives who never touch pork, eels, or even mutton, call them also atua; in fact, anything uncanny or unlucky is atua. It was unfortunate that the same word should have been taken by the missionaries as the name of the Deity, the one true God, the God of the Christians. This to the natives sounded at first like a solecism, but in the course of time it has lost its original meaning, and serves its purpose now as the name of the God of Love. Mr. Colenso would prefer Matua, Matua-pai that purpose, though Matua itself is but a derivative of Atua.

One remark we should like to make in conclusion. Mr. Colenso generally adds Maori sentences in proof of the meaning assigned to each Maori word. But, alas! he gives no translations; and as the study of Maori has not yet been recognised in our schools and universities, much of the usefulness of these pièces justificatives is lost on those who consult his dictionary, however convinced they may feel that Mr. Colenso has rightly interpreted them.

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# In the *Bush Advocate* of 29 May 1888

William Colenso stayed in Dannevirke from 10 April to 2 June 1888. His name appeared often in the local news columns of the *Bush Advocate*, which began publishing in Dannevirke thrice weekly from 1 May 1888. The 29 May 1888 issue was so full of news about him that he bought several copies to send to friends and family. There's a charming childishness about this—not altogether what one might expect from a 77 year old.

There is a scrap of paper among the Colenso ephemerae in the Alexander Turnbull Library (Ms-papers-0031-1A) listing those he sent a copy to.

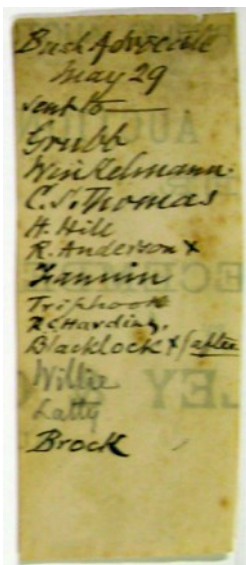
*Bush Advocate* 29 May 1888

## NEWS OF THE DAY

A correspondent writes:—Many of your readers will regret to hear that our worthy scientist, the Rev. William Colenso, is about leaving our district for the winter, he having pressing duties to attend to in Napier. He has been residing at Mr Baddeley's Railway Hotel for some time past, not only as a matter of choice for the unsurpassing salubrity of the locality and its bracing climate, but for its proximity to a splendid fern bush, and other notable novelties in the wild shrubbery line, amongst which in good weather he invariably took his eager walks in the interest of science. At the same time, though thus actively engaged, he did not at all forget local interests, but has

taken a special delight in bestowing most liberally and unostentatiously the means at his disposal towards the advancement of the district to a higher and nobler platform. On last Sunday evening, owing to the Revs. Robertshaw and Stewart being both away at Woodville, there would have been no service in Danevirke had it not been for Mr Colenso, who willingly filled the gap when spoken to on the matter, and preached a very eloquent and edifying sermon on the prodigal son, which was of the most evangelical type, to a very crowded and attentive audience in the new Presbyterian Church. To me, and to many of his auditors, if not to all, it was really refreshing to note the fervid and fluent utterance of an elderly gentleman verging on being an octogenarian, one who had spent many of his late years most successfully in the laudable pursuit of science, which with some scientists, when not directed with the good spirit that rules the universe, tends to lead to scepticism of gospel truths, but not so with him. Like Sir Isaac Newton, he only sees better the puny littleness of the best efforts of men, and that enabled him to raise his voice on the occasion with much power and pathos, humbly reechoing the Great Master's utterance as recorded in St Luke's Gospel.

*The “wild shrubbery line”? Auditors?*





## NEWS OF THE DAY

The Rev W. Colenso, of Napier, conducted service in the Danevirke Presbyterian Church on Sunday evening last, when, despite the rain which fell, there was a very large congregation. The rev. gentleman chose for his text the 20th and 21st verses of the 15th chapter of the gospel of St. Luke, from which he preached a most instructive and interesting sermon. The late cold and boisterous weather we have experienced the last week or two must have brought a few pigeons down from the range again, if we are to judge by the greater number of shots fired in the adjoining forests. We are not, however, likely to have them in any considerable number, if at all, before we see the Ruahine covered with snow. Should we hear that there is good sport to be had, we will not fail to inform our Napier friends, who, we hope, will be able to come to the Bush for a day's sport and return home with bags full and without having had to buy the contents.

## THE "MAORI RELIC"

(TO THE EDITOR.)

SIR,—Having seen your remarks, in your paper of the 26th inst., concerning a notched bone in your possession, as affording "a very valuable proof as a relic belonging to a time before the Maoris arrived here," my curiosity was aroused; and so I called at your office and examined it. I may also say that I had previously seen what had appeared in the columns of the Napier *Herald* respecting it, copied I believe from your paper, and upon that I had rightly concluded what it really was.

I now find it to be a very common instrument indeed, being nothing more than a barbed bone made for killing pigeons, which 40 years (or more) ago I have seen both made and used in the mountain forests in the interior, on the East side of the Ruahine range, and have dined off the pigeons so taken.

This barbed bone was attached as a head to a very long light spear made of tawa wood, generally about 40 feet long; this was partly secured to a suitable tree in the forests, in the proper season, on which pigeons were known (and further invited by baits) to perch, and then, in using, quickly sent upward with a jerk into their

bodies, of course entering from the lower part of the abdomen. Through the barbs the bird (though strong on wing and in fluttering) was secured.

The whole method of procedure (including the obtaining and the manufacture of those barbs and spears, etc., etc.) is very interesting, but much too long for your columns, even if I had the required time.

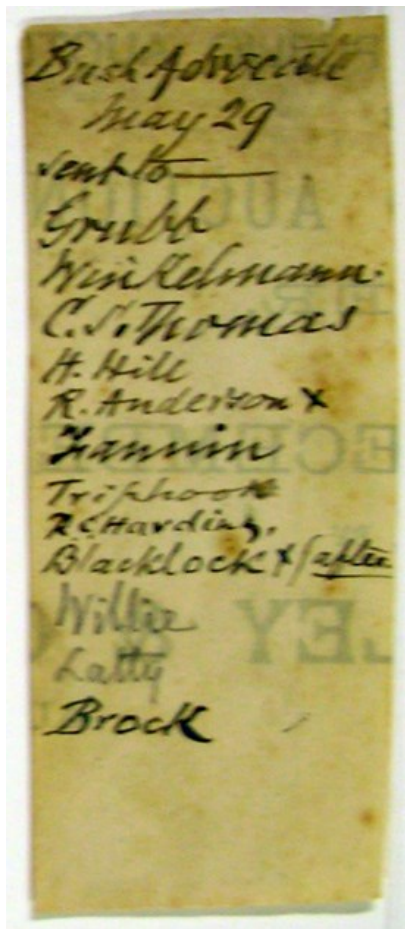
I may add, that from the appearance of the worn bit of bone (3 inches long), and particularly from its blunted barbs, I should suppose it to have been an old one, almost worn out, perhaps on that account thrown away. I have seen some newly made ones of nearly twice the size, with their barbs many, very sharp, tips reversed, and acute. No doubt the bone is human, such being very commonly used by Maoris for all such purposes—barbs for sea-fishing hooks, etc.—not having any known metal.

The old Maoris would call it a *tara*, or a *tara-matia*, or *tara-wero-manu*.

I note you seem to adhere to the *myth* of the Maoris coming to this land!—I had thought I had fully exposed that many years ago.—I am, etc.,

WILLIAM COLENZO.

Danevirke, May 28th.



## Who were the lucky recipients?

John Grubb was Postmaster at Napier; he was a friend of Andrew Luff and Colenso mentioned him often in his letters to Luff.

Charles Winkelmann was a teacher at Te Aute, later Kaipara; he collected specimens for Colenso.

In his 1884 HBPI report Colenso described Charles S. Thomas as “a young townsman”; his New Zealand Patriotic Hymn was adopted by the Education Department for use in the public schools.

Henry Hill was Colenso’s successor as Inspector of Schools and became his close friend.

Robert Anderson was Colenso’s live-in manservant.

George Thomas Fannin was a public servant in Napier and long time friend of Colenso’s.

Thomas Dawson Triphook was a Napier surveyor; he surveyed Colenso’s sections on Napier hill.

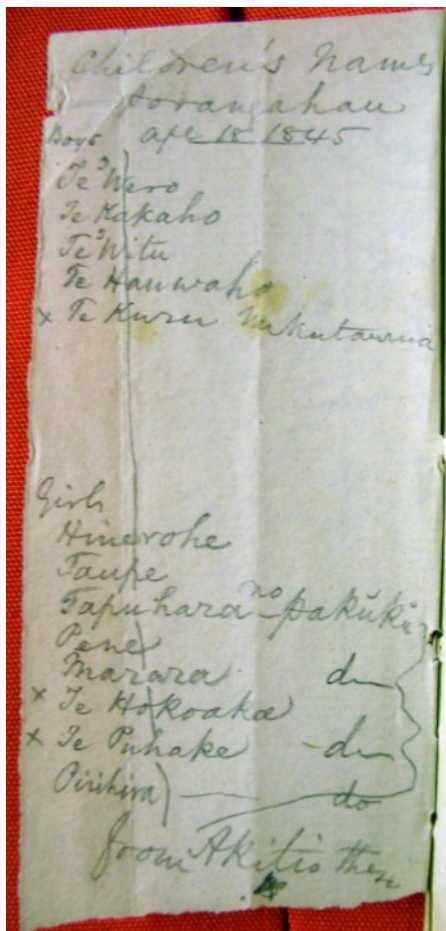
Robert Coupland Harding was Colenso’s young printer friend.

Colenso mentioned writing letters to “Mr. Blacklock” during the 1890s; he was probably the man who named his son Bernard Colenso Blacklock.

Willie and Latty were Colenso’s sons Wiremu and Latimer, in England.

Brock was his agent in London, looking after Wiremu’s affairs.





# The Porangahau children

On 17 April 1845 Colenso was on the rounds of his large parish and wrote in his journal for the CMS,

Starting from Wangaihu at 8, we arrived at Porangahau by 11 a.m., where we were loudly welcomed by several Natives who had been expecting of us. Heard of the sad conduct of Tiakitai, and of the mysterious death of Jane Wanau. Held Service this evening, preaching from Peter i. 18, 19. Spent night as usual conversing with Natives. Endeavoured to improve the late sudden death, but the sovereignty of God is little understood and less relished by the Natives. They appear to have no idea of the possibility of good resulting from what appears to be evil. Pressed on all sides to remain over Sunday.

18th. This morning read Prayers and held School, 60 present, after which I assembled the children and Catechized them, &c.

He kept rough diaries of his activities and based his CMS reports on what he had written in the field. Naturally these rough diaries contain some material that he would later judge unsuitable for the CMS.

The diary for April 1845 is among the GC Petersen papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library [ATL 88-038-03]. Stitched into it is this slip of paper reminding him of the children's names—including four girls from the Pakuku family of Akitio. This was over 20 years before he would become School Inspector: the missionary was the teacher as well as the preacher.

Note his use of 'W for Wh—for the boys' names Te Whitu and Te Whero.

# Colenso's map?

Colenso wrote in his *The authentic and genuine history of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand, February 5 and 6, 1840* that,

A ship having at last arrived in the Bay of Islands bound for Sydney (the “Eleanor,” Captain W. B. Rhodes...) passages were taken by her for both Mr. Busby and Mr. Wade and their families....

The Paihia missionaries made the most of Busby and Wade's time in Sydney—so much so that Wade would complain to Colenso [Wade WR1840. Letter to Colenso 6 April . ATL MS-Papers-0031-87. See *eColenso* February 2016],

*N.Zd. commissions for one and another have run away with the greater part of my time....*

There is a tantalizing entry in a letter from Busby (in Sydney) to Colenso dated 4 July 1840 [ATL Ms-0585],

*Clint the Engraver is engraving your map in copperplate, “from the latest and best information”—but without mentioning any names. I expected to be able to send you a copy per Columbine but I find it will not be ready for a week.*

No printed map has ever been associated with Colenso, so what could this mean?

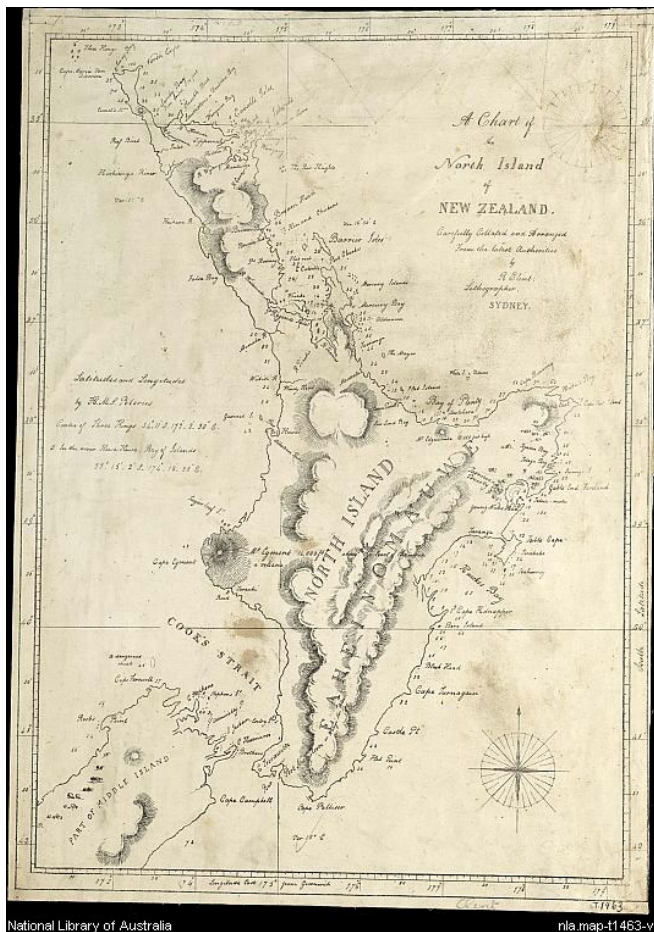
Raphael Clint's biography can be found at <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/clint-raphael-1904>. He established a printing and engraving business in Sydney in 1835.

“Clint modelled his New Zealand maps on published works but he failed to acknowledge his sources. Clumsily drawn, Clint's maps contain useful information. Nine of Clint's maps have been traced and there is every possibility that other prints will come to light in time.”

[<http://newzealandresearch.tripod.com/25-col-lithog.htm>].

Clint's maps are listed on that website as,

1. “A Chart of The Islands Of New Zealand. Compiled from the latest Authorities and from Original Surveys by R. Clint Lithographer Sydney.” c. 1839. (lith. 460 x 350 mm.)
2. “A Chart of the North Island of New Zealand. Carefully Collated and Arranged From the latest Authorities by R. Clint Lithographer, Sydney.” c. 1839. (lith. 520 x 360 mm.) (copied overleaf).
3. “A Chart of the Northern end of the North Island, New Zealand. From the latest Surveys. R. Clint Lithographer Sydney 1839.” c. 1839. 1839. (lith. 362 x 252 mm.)
4. “Part of the SW side of the Frith of the Thames In New Zealand. R. Clint Lithographer, Sydney, 1839.” (lith. 380 x 600 mm.)
5. “Chart Of Port Nicholson New Zealand Surveyed by E.M. Chaffers. R. Clint Lithographer Sydney.” This chart is mentioned in *New Zealand Gazette & Britannia Spectator* 12 September 1840, but a copy has not been located.
6. “Plan of the City of Wellington Port Nicholson: New Zealand: 1841. R. Clint Lith George St. Sydney.” An original print has not been found but a reproduction is included in L.E. Ward (Comp.) *Early Wellington* (Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1927). The plan is modelled to a large degree on W. M. Smith's plan of 1840).



7. "The Entrance To Hokianga River R. Clint Sydney 1839." (lith. 260 x 220 mm.)
8. "Plan of Shouraka Gulf and the mouth of the River Thames F. Mudie, Clint's Establishment, Sydney." 1838. (lith. 450 x 350 mm.)
9. "A Sketch Of The Bay Of Islands In New Zealand R. Clint Sydney 1839."
10. Clint published a chart of Kaipara Harbour in about 1840 but a copy has not been found.

Could one of these have been Colenso's map? There are no positive clues, but only Nos 5, 6 and 10 are as late as 1840 or 1841. Nos 5 & 6 are listed as lithographs rather than copperplate engravings, but that may not be important—but Colenso had not by then visited Wellington, so Nos 5 & 6 are highly unlikely. He explored the Kaipara in 1842 and his journal entries suggest it was new to him, so it is unlikely Clint's 1840 Kaipara map was Colenso's 1840 map either.

By 1840 Colenso had explored much of Northland and had sailed to Hick's Bay and walked down to Gisborne. He did make sketch maps of these regions (see *Sketches in New Zealand*. Supplement to *eColenso* April 2016 pp 31, 66, 67). Perhaps these formed the basis for the map Clint would engrave for him in 1840.

It seems unlikely Clint was engraving a plate for Colenso (the printer) to press: there are no maps in Colenso's early printed work.

His only published map is in his Treaty booklet and the correspondence clearly states it was drawn from an "original sketch by Mr. Colenso" (ie, not from a print).

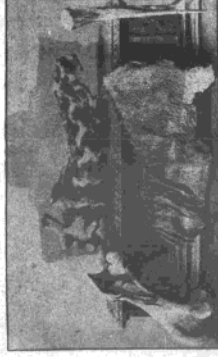
Furthermore (Busby noted), Clint would label the map "from the latest and best information"—but without mentioning any names", so Colenso's map may remain a mystery.

◀ "A Chart of the North Island of New Zealand. Carefully Collated and Arranged from the latest Authorities by R. Clint Lithographer, Sydney." c. 1839. (lith. 520 x 360 mm.)



# The moa lives!

# Battled For Life <sup>with</sup> Bird 20 Feet High



Fossil Remains of the Moa Showing the Elephant-like Hide and the Tremendous Backbone and a Part of the Leg. The Vertebrae Shown in This Photograph Measure Almost 2 Feet Through.

Supposedly Extinct Moa and Prepares to Send an Expedition to Investigate His Story

By Dr. W. H. Ballou.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

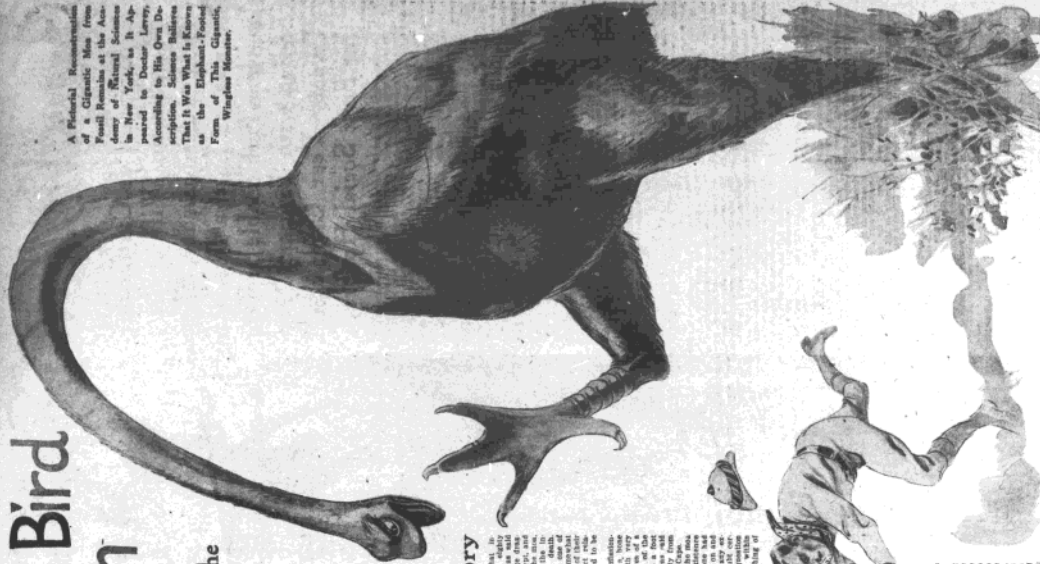
The moas were first brought to notice by Bishop W. Colenso, one of the many missionaries to whom science is under obligations. Early in 1838, in the East Cape region, he heard from the natives of Waikato talks of a monstrous bird called moa.



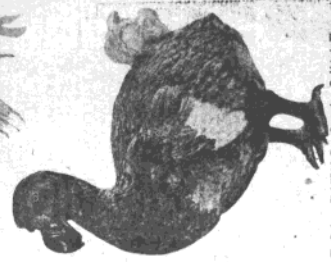
The Galapagos Tortoise—a Monster Form Which Sometimes Weighs as Much as Two and Three Tons—is a Direct Survivor of the Same Ancient Race as the Giant Tortoise of the Senegal. He is a Direct Survivor of the Same Ancient Race as the Giant Tortoise of the Senegal. He is a Direct Survivor of the Same Ancient Race as the Giant Tortoise of the Senegal.

Science  
Discusses the  
Astonish-  
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with a

to North and South America, and the Pacific Ocean. The only way to be able to do this is to have a very good knowledge of the world, and of the people of the world. This is why it is so important to have a good knowledge of the world, and of the people of the world. This is why it is so important to have a good knowledge of the world, and of the people of the world.



**A Pictorial Reconstruction  
of a Gigantic Man from  
Fossil Remains at the Aca-  
demy of Natural Sciences  
in New York, as it Ap-  
peared to Doctor Levy,  
According to His Own De-  
scription. Science Believes  
That It Was What Is Known  
as the Elephant-Footed  
Form of This Gigantic,  
Wingless Monster.**



The Dado—a Bird Which Comes Down from Prehistoric Times and Was Destroyed Only About Two Hundred Years Ago. The Dado Was About Four Times the Size of the Turkey but Its Ancestors Were Even Larger Than the Moa.

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# The moa lives!

Ann Collins noticed this reference to Colenso in the clipping on the last page, from *The American Weekly*:

“The moas were first brought to notice by Bishop W. Colenso, one of the many missionaries to whom science is under obligations.” Early in 1838, in the East Cape region, he heard from the natives of Waiapu tales of a monstrous bird called moa, having the head of a man, that inhabited the mountain side some eighty miles away. This mighty bird was said to be attended by two equally huge dragons, which kept guard while he slept, and on the approach of man wakened the moa, which immediately rushed upon the intruders and trampled them to death. None of the Maoris had ever seen one of the birds, but had seen and somewhat irreverently used for making parts of their fishing tackle bones of its extinct relatives, and these bones they declared to be as large as those of an ox.

*The American Weekly* erred in more ways than simply conferring on Colenso his cousin’s episcopal rank—*The New Zealand Observer* (“An illustrated journal of interesting and amusing literature—smart, but not vulgar; fearless, but not offensive; independent, but not neutral; unsectarian, but not irreligious”) sniggered on page 19 of its 18 October 1919 edition,

## A SCIENTIFIC STORY.

It will be remembered that Mr. Ivan Levy, a Wellington “Times” reporter, wrote a “living Moa” yarn in the Christchurch “Weekly Press.” It was excellent fiction, written purposely to appear as though the narrated events actually occurred. America saw the yarn! It will be noted in the following scientific article from “*The American Weekly*,” that Mr. Ivan Levy, of Wellington, becomes “Dr. Ivan Levey,” an English explorer, who seems to have returned to the United States from the wilds of this moa-ridden country. As a matter of fact, Ivan’s still in Wellington:—

*Colenso’s published papers on the moa are,*

**1843** An account of some enormous fossil bones of an unknown species of the class Aves, lately discovered in New Zealand. *Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Agriculture, Statistics, Etc* 2: 81-107. Republished in **1844** *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* 14 (89): 81-96.

**1879** On the Moa. *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 12: 63-108.

**1891** Status quo: A Retrospect.—A Few More Words by way of Explanation and Correction concerning the First Finding of the Bones of the Moa in New Zealand; also Strictures on the Quarterly Reviewer’s Severe and Unjust Remarks on the Late Dr. G.A. Mantell, F.R.S., &c., in connection with the same. *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 24: 468-478.

**1893** Notes and observations on M. A. de Quatrefages’s paper on “Moas and Moa Hunters.” *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 26: 498-513.

# A pair of parrots for Willie the sailor

The *Cornishman* of 11 December 1884 told its readers,

**A NEW ZEALAND hen-parrot safely reached Mr. and Mrs. William Colenso, of 8, North-parade, Penzance, from relations in that far-off colony, a few weeks since. A pair were despatched from southern climes, but the cock died as the feathered voyagers neared English shores. Since domiciled in Penzance the hen has commenced (perhaps has well nigh finished) laying, and has now produced 15 eggs.**

Rev. William Colenso's son Wiremu (Willie) and his wife Sarah lived at that address and the former must have been the sender as the other NZ Colensos were estranged from Wiremu. That suggests the birds were North Island kaka, as the kakapo was already very rare and the kea common only in the South Island.

I wonder if any of the 15 eggs hatched.

# A most uncalled-for, most impertinent and most outrageous letter

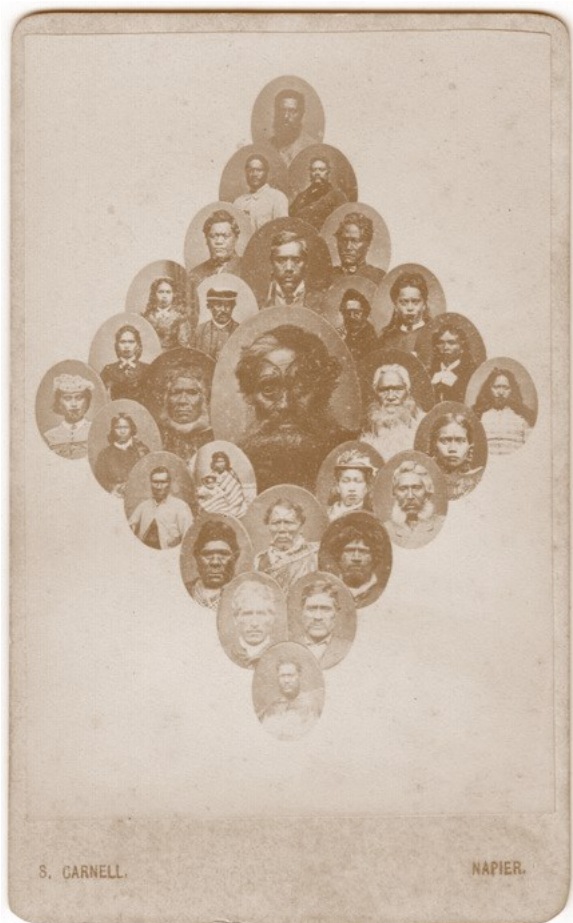
The *Cornishman* of 17 March 1887 carried a report of a meeting of the Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society, at which

Mr. T. H. Cornish read an extract from a letter by the Rev. W. Colenso, of New Zealand, in which he referred to the modern 'childish' prefix of Saint to a parish, such as Saint Buryan, or the use of the S. only—'a crooked letter, pregnant with insidious meaning.' In a prompt and spirited reply the Rev. S. Rundle shewed that Mr. Colenso's letter 'was most uncalled-for, most impertinent, and most outrageous,' for, admitting that the prefix of Saint had, in some cases, fallen into disuse, it was as old as Domesday - book and was used by William of Worcester, Leland, Carew, and others.

Such "prompt and spirited" hyperbole usually betrays a degree of uncertainty.

But the letter "S" crooked? *pregnant with insidious meaning*? I can understand Sam Rundle's outrage.... Ed.





#### A Carnell compilation

This *carte de visite* was auctioned recently on Ebay. It is a montage of small portraits of contemporary Māori surrounding a larger portrait of Kereopa Te Rau, by Samuel Carnell of Napier. A similar montage, with Ihaka Whaanga in the centre, is used as the frontispiece in *Nga Taumata—a portrait of Ngati Kahungunu 1870–1906* (Miria Simpson, ed. Huia Publishers with Ngati Kahungunu Iwi Inc. & the National Library, 2003). It was said to have been used by Carnell for advertising purposes.



#### An American off the Cape

A pencil sketch from the corner of a piece of notepaper among other Colenso ephemerae from the voyage of the *Prince Regent* which rounded the Cape of Good Hope on 11 August 1834. [ATL 88-038-09].