

eColenso

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Supplement: "My Botanical friend Reader"



William Colenso's Wairarapa olive

In 1848 Colenso sent to Kew “A List of Botanical Specimens, put up for Sir W. J. Hooker, July 1848; finished in September”. No. 1797 was an olive he had gathered at Hurunuiorangi on the Wairarapa plain.

1797. *Small, linear leaved Olive in fruit, Hurunuiorangi.*

He kept a specimen and that is still in his herbarium at Te Papa. It is *Olea montana*, one of 4 olives native to New Zealand, most collected by Colenso. He actually sent 15 specimens of *Olea* to Kew, and, frustrated with the delays in naming them, suggested names— “*Olea excelsa*, *O. longipetala*, *O. Tataruense*, *O. angustifolia*.”

Joseph Hooker eventually formally described three from NZ in his *Flora Novae Zelandiae*: *O. montana*, *O. cunninghamii* and *O. lanceolata*. Two of these were Colenso's, and the third, *O. cunninghamii*, Hooker identified with *O. apetala* from Norfolk island.

In 1868 Colenso's “Essay on the botany, Geographic and Economic, of the North Island of the New Zealand group” was published (*Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 1: 233-283), in which he wrote,

The Maire:—two, or more, very distinct genera, containing several trees, (*Santalum Cunninghamii*, and *Olea* sp.), are confounded under this Native name; although the Natives themselves generally distinguish them pretty clearly,—calling the *Olea*, Maire-rau-nui. Both were by them called Maire, from the fact of both being hard-wooded, and formerly used by them for the same purposes. One of the trees (*Santalum Cunninghamii*,) is confined to the North parts;

Lithograph of *Olea montana* by the incomparable botanical artist Walter Hood Fitch, from *Flora Novae Zelandiae*, 1853





Olea montana in the herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

while the various species of *Olea* are more general, and much more plentiful in the South parts of the Island. It is highly doubtful whether the true Northern Maire (*Santalum Cunninghamii*) is yet much known in the Arts and Manufactures; it is a small tree, belonging to the Sandalwood family, and the species is confined to a very limited area. The large Maire tree, or Maire-rau-nui of the Aborigines, comprise 3 known species of Olive, (*O. Cunninghamii*, *lanceolata*, and *montana*,) one species being found generally throughout the Island. It commonly forms a large tree, 60 to 70, or even 100 feet high, and 4 feet, or more, in diameter. It is very closely allied to the European Olive, and to the “Iron-wood” of Norfolk Island,—all being species of the same genus. There are two kinds known to the Manufacturer;—a dark variety fit for Cabinet-Making, and a white variety fit for sheaves, and cogs, and for Wheelwrights’ work. The dark kind has a handsome grain, and polishes well; but its brittleness and great weight prevent its being more generally used.

.... the European Olive might be advantageously grafted upon the several indigenous Olives of the island.

In May 1882 he wrote to the Napier *Daily Telegraph* (the issue for Tuesday 9 May is missing, so we do not know exactly the article he was referring to),

The New Zealand olive *Daily Telegraph* 11 May 1882.

Sir,—I note what you have said in your issue of yesterday (Tuesday) concerning the Olive tree and the tawa tree being one: viz.—“We cannot put our hand upon our authority, but we have a distinct recollection of reading somewhere a letter from England, in reply to a question relating to the introduction of the Olive tree, that the best and speediest way of naturalising the Italian Olive would be to graft upon the native tawa tree, which was stated to be a true Olive.”

I know nothing of “the letter from England,” mentioned by you, nor of its writer; but I suppose that (if your “distinct recollection” is correct) it must have been a modern one,—written, very likely, in consequence of so much having been said and published of late years about the introduction of the European Olive into New Zealand, as the basis of a future lucrative article of use and of commerce; and if so written, then assuredly it was not written by any authority, whether Botanical or practical Horticulturist, as it contains the great error of the tawa tree being an Olive, and of the grafting successfully of the Olive upon it! For, as I have already casually shown in your columns of yesterday, there is no Natural or Systematical connexion whatever between the two trees, or their Natural Orders; indeed they are farther apart in the Natural System of Botany, than a cabbage is from a cucumber.

I had early discovered 3 species of *Olea* (or true olive) in New Zealand; one at the Bay of Islands, one at Wairarapa, and one at Patea in the mountainous interior, (this last in 1847,) and had severally sent specimens of them to Sir W. Hooker, the Director of the Royal Gardens at Kew. And I believe that I, myself, was the originator, or the first writer, of the “grafting” part of that statement mentioned by you; which I will now endeavour to show.

Nearly 20 years ago, (in 1864,) Sir G. Grey, then Governor of New Zealand, acting with the Imperial Commissioners appointed to carry out the New Zealand Exhibition, held at Dunedin in 1865, officially assigned to me the Public Essay “on the Botany of the N. Island of New Zealand,” (and, also, the Essay “on the Maori Race,”)—and, in Part III of that Botanical Essay, in considering the Economic Botany of New Zealand, I brought forward several N.Z. plants, which, probably, would be found useful in the Arts, (a few I had, myself,

proved,) with observations on them, and also on the various soils, and Climates of N.Z., &c., &c., suited to plants of commercial value worthy of being introduced into the Colony; and, among other remarks, I said, that “the European Olive might be advantageously grafted upon the several indigenous olives of the Island.” (Essay, ¶ 32.) This essay was also republished in its entirety (but without the Notes) in 1869, in the first volume of the “Transactions of the New Zealand Institute.”

At the time of my writing of that Essay, I scarcely can suppose there were a dozen persons in the Colony who knew of our possessing an indigenous and true Olive in our woods; or, if they had happened to have heard of it, (from Sir W. Hooker’s early publications of my Botanical discoveries in the “London Journal of Botany,” 1841–1849, and in other works of his,) they did not really know the trees themselves in our forests. Subsequently, however, through the publication of Dr. Sir Joseph Hooker’s “Hand-Book of the New Zealand Flora,” in 1866, and its extensive circulation here in the Colony, our possessing species of the Olive in our woods became known; and yet, (strange to say!) among all the immense amount of talk, aye, and of writing, too, about the introduction of the European Olive into the Colony (both inside Parliament and outside), I have never once noticed any one even hinting or alluding to the far easier and ancient and more speedily profitable mode of its early and successful propagation in the Colony,—viz. by its being grafted on the plentiful wild olive-stocks which are so very common here. One would have thought, (even supposing our Representative men to be generally ignorant of Natural Science,) that some of them must, at least, have often heard of Paul’s striking natural imagery, in his Epistle to the Romans, (XI. 17.) about the graft-

ing of the olive; and that the bare recollection of this would have sufficed to give them an idea, or working notion of the thing! But then, as I said before, probably they did not even know of the existence of the wild olive tree amongst us.

And here, Sir, you, or some others, may justly enough say,—“Why did I not write to some of the papers of the day, and so inform them?” Were I to keep doing this, respecting the many useful, new, profitable, and other things, I have formerly written and published, on religious and other matters, I might do nothing else. I continually see, in Newspapers, Books, Sermons, and Colonial Almanacs, the same old, often exposed, and obsolete errors constantly being hashed, and vamped and served-up anew! arising from ignorance or carelessness, or forgetfulness; and I am sometimes driven to reflect—

“Since ignorance is bliss,
’Tis folly to be wise.”

In conclusion, I may briefly mention that my collecting, early last week while in the forests, berries of the olive and of the tawa trees, and bringing them with me to Napier, (with many other fruits and plants) to show at the meeting of the Hawke’s Bay Philosophical Institute on Monday night was wholly irrespective of what you had said in the leading article in your paper of that same evening. Indeed, I had got all my specimens put in order and packed up for taking down to the Athenæum, during the morning of that day; it was a highly curious and undesigned concurrence, or coincidence, and that was all. I am, &c.,

William Colenso

Napier, May 10th, 1882.

[Our thanks are due to Mr Colenso for the valuable information contained in the above letter. As most bush settlers are acquainted with the native names of trees, he would be adding to the obligation we are under to him if he would kindly furnish the names by which the New Zealand olive trees, most common in Hawke’s Bay forests, are known to the Maoris. Is the maire an olive?—Ed. D.T.]

The New Zealand Olive. *Daily Telegraph* 12 June 1882.

Sir,—I set aside my writing to-night to respond at once to your wish expressed in your paper of this evening, (in your postscript to my letter.)—to give the Southern Maori names of the N.Z. Olive. Indeed I should have done so in my letter, but for the fact, that the name usually given by the Maoris here to one species of the Olive, is by the Maoris at the North given to a widely different tree, of quite another genus. A name it bears here is what you have this evening rightly given or enquired, viz., Maire, but there are other trees also bearing this Maori name in part which do not belong to the Olive family; that is, their names begin with Maire, and in common colloquial language among themselves, that portion alone of the name is all that is expressed, which abbreviation of a common name is also quite in keeping with their mode of speaking respecting persons and things generally; as, for instance, in MacLean—Makarini (in Maori), but oftener only the first syllable, Ma was used. And this was another reason for my not having written the Maori name in my letter,—to prevent confusion. At the same time I should observe, that in their so speaking there was no confusion anciently among themselves, as to the particular kind of tree meant; no more than with us, when we commonly speak of grain, corn, grass, dogs, apples,

&c., &c., without distinguishing the precise kind.

Three names are (or were) used here among the Maoris for the species of Olive,—Maire, Maireraunui, Mairekotae. Other trees are called, Mairetawhake, Mairehau, Mairetaiki, Mairerororo, &c. And at the North the true Maire tree, is a very different tree altogether, being a species of *Santalum*, belonging to the same genus as the famed Sandalwood of commerce. I have only once seen it growing in these parts at the South, and that was near the head of the Ruamahanga river, in the upper part of the Wairarapa valley, where, strange to say, 3 trees grew together, and they were beautifully in flower; so that, that tree is also to be found in these southern forests,—hence 2 Maires here. Its flower and fruit, however, are both widely different from that of the Olive-Maire, whose flowers are very small and insignificant, and its fruit resembling in shape a very small Olive, and therefore cannot be mistaken.

In my letter I have mentioned “3 species of olive in New Zealand”; that is, 3 species described and published by Dr. Sir J. Hooker. I believe, however, that there are (at least) 2 more; one there, in the interior, and one confined to the country N. of the Thames,—making, perhaps, 5 species in all; but these last 2 have yet to be accurately determined.

Which species of all of them may prove to be the best adapted for grafting-stocks, has yet to be ascertained by experience.

No doubt the reason why the ancient Maoris gave the same name of Maire to 7 (at least) widely different trees, arose from their both being alike hard-wooded, and both used for the same purposes,—for making weapons of war, and for wedges used in splitting timber; one tree, also, being very common at the N., and one at the S. Such was their great

hardness that their names were often used figuratively in their proverbs and songs, as indicating a valiant hero in fight, the chief of a tribe, &c.

The wood of both the N. and S. Maires rank among the hardest of all the famed N.Z. hard woods.—I am, &c.,

William Colenso.

Napier, May 11th, 1882.

Grafting—as he explained in his 1898 “Certain errors of the Church of Rome plainly shown from Holy Scripture and the Catholic Fathers in a series of letters (originally published in the Hawke’s Bay Herald)”, Napier, Dinwiddie, Walker & Co—was St Paul’s metaphor,

... note the Apostle’s warning to that Church (Rome):—
“Thou (a wild olive) wilt say, The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off. But thou standest by faith: be not highminded but fear. For if God hath not spared the natural branches lest perhaps he also spare not thee. See then the goodness and the severity of God:... towards thee the goodness, of God, if thou abide in goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”
(Rom. xi. 19–22.)

On 30 June 1883 he wrote to Joseph Hooker,

I have a few plants (sps. nov.), which I obtained last summer, worked up and described in a paper, which, I suppose may pass muster and so be pubd. in vol. xvi Trans: among them are, — a *Metrosideros*, (an erect pretty white flowered shrub) a Hydrocotyle, or two, & perhaps a Panax, 2 Coprosmae, 2 Compositae, and probably an Olea, a Thelymitra (a handsome sp. w. peculiar column and staminodia.), a Dianella, and some Cyperaceae & Crypts., of all which, w. spns., more anon. I shall send you, however, w. the omitted seeds (supra), fruits

of my 2 new Coprosmae, & of the supposed new Olea, for sowing. These were recently obtained by me in the woods. The 2 Coprosmae are worthy of being raised at Kew; one (C. maculata, mihi,) a tall shrub or small tree, differing from the other sps. of the genus, bears large edible orange-coloured fruit; the other, a dear little 2–3 ft. shrub (which I shall probably name C. concinna.) bearing small claret-coloured fruit in profusion, sometimes in masses. I have long known these plants, but I sadly wanted good flg. spns., and as they flower early I have hitherto not secured them, but I purpose going very early this coming spring; besides, I can now go by Rail & by Coach to within a mile or two of their known & marked hab.: and so w. the Olea, which from its leaves & Fruit, I am pretty sure is a different sp., – the fruit is oblong, equally thick at each end (resembling in shape the larger berries of our Fuchsia excorticata.) the leaves are shorter & sub-falcate: to get flg. spns. of this tree, I shall have to procure a long ladder and carry it some 2 miles, but get there I will.

Get there it seems he did not, for although he described some of these plant in the *Transactions* in 1883, he did not mention the *Olea* again.

The generic name *Olea* has been replaced by *Nestegis* and of the species in that genus 4 grow in New Zealand, three endemic and one shared with Norfolk island; a fifth grows in Hawai'i.

They are,

1. *Nestegis apetala* (Vahl) L.A.S.Johnson—New Zealand (where the common name is Coastal maire or Broad-leaved maire) and Norfolk Island (where it is called Iron-wood)
2. *Nestegis cunninghamii* (Hook.f.) L.A.S.Johnson—Black maire (New Zealand)

3. *Nestegis lanceolata* (Hook.f.) L.A.S. Johnson—White maire (New Zealand)

4. *Nestegis montana* (Hook.f.) L.A.S.Johnson in O. Degener—New Zealand

5. *Nestegis sandwicensis* (A.Gray) O.Deg., I.Deg. & L.A.S.Johnson—“Olopua” (Hawai'i)

Olive groves are plentiful in the vicinity of Hurunuiorangi marae today—including ours (below), 5km away in the eastern Wairarapa hills. The European olive grows well here, fruiting early and abundantly, with no need for grafting.



Colenso's monarch butterflies

“New Zealand's most identifiable butterfly is the monarch (*Danaus plexippus*). The monarch is considered a native because it became established here on its own, but it is originally from North America. The monarch is recognisable for two reasons – its main habitat is the suburban garden and it's our largest common butterfly. We welcome monarchs into our gardens by planting their larval food – milkweed species such as swan plants – and enjoy watching their amazing journey through metamorphosis.” (<http://sciencelearn.org.nz/Science-Stories/Butterflies/Monarch-butterflies>).

In 1877 William Colenso enjoyed watching their “amazing journey through metamorphosis” too—and wrote lyrically about it...

Notes on the Metamorphosis and Development of one of our large Butterflies (*Danaüs berenice*), or a closely-allied Species. *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 1877; 10: 276-280.

[Read before the Hawke Bay Philosophical Institute, 13th August, 1877.]

On the 25th January, 1875, Mr. Huntley, of Meeanee (a member of this society), sent me some insect larvæ, apparently of a butterfly, in a box. In the letter which accompanied them, Mr. Huntley says:—“I send you some caterpillars gathered from ‘cotton plants’ in a neighbouring garden, grown from seed sown about two years ago. My attention was first drawn to them yesterday by a lady in the garden, she having gathered at least forty of them on her cherished row of

‘cotton plants.’ The most extraordinary thing seems to be that, although they made a large quantity of vegetable *débris* (more than a silk-worm), the leaves of the ‘cotton plants’ show no signs of having been eaten; and, further, there is nothing in the neighbourhood of the said plants upon which the caterpillars could possibly feed. These I send you I gathered myself from the plants—breaking off the twigs on which the caterpillars were clinging without disturbing them. I send also with the important parts of the plant from which they were gathered. I shall be glad to know whether the caterpillars will eat what is in the box.”

Unfortunately, when I received the box on the following day, the 26th, there was scarcely a vestige of vegetable matter remaining in it, save the woody fibrous parts of the small branches or twigs, and the ends (petioles) of a few hard leaf stalks, with a very small bit of a green capsule having the remains of soft spines,¹ somewhat resembling that of a young one of *Datura stramonium*; and also a large amount of “vegetable *débris*” (fæces). Of the four larvæ, however, three were alive and very active, apparently ravenously hungry. I immediately procured them leaves of various plants both indigenous and exotic—viz., sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*), Cape gooseberry (*Physalis*), *Arthropodium cirrhatum*, *Dodonæa viscosa*, *Entelea arborescens*, *Coprosma lucida*, *Veronica* (species), *Acacia* (species), *Geranium*, roses, laurustinus, laburnum, flowering currant, *Cordylina*, and of clovers and grasses; but nothing I offered suited them—they would not eat.

These larvæ appeared to be of gregarious habit; two of them were much larger than their companion, the third, being about two inches long, and of pretty uniform thickness throughout, each having six

1. The capsule of the “swan plant” = “balloon cottonbush” = *Asclepias physocarpa*/*Gomphocarpus physocarpa*.

fore-legs (veræ) and eight hind ones; the body smooth, transversely and alternately striped or banded with bright yellow lilac and white, each having in all eleven yellow stripes, while on each side of the yellow stripe was (1) white, (2) narrow lilac line, (3) white, (4) broad lilac band nearly a line in width, (5) white, (6) narrow lilac line, (7) white, (8) yellow; so that between each of the eleven yellow transverse bands, were seven other bands and lines of lilac and white, which were clearly distinguishable when the animal stretched itself out in crawling; the feet and belly of the larvæ were of a dark-blue almost a blue-blackish colour; the head was regularly striped across with lilac and white; it had two antennæ or horns near its anterior end, which were also bluish-black and nine lines long, cylindrical, soft and flexible; it had also two spinous processes near its tail, which were three lines long and soft. The larvæ were all very active, and kept incessantly moving their long flexible antennæ, or feelers, in all directions; in this respect more resembling those of a wasp or hornet, or some irascible perfect insect.

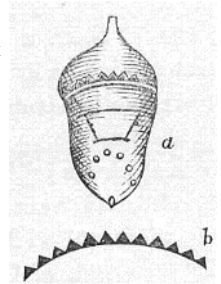
On the 27th January, the biggest larva (No. 1) commenced spinning a kind of fine web, by which it suspended itself by the tail only, and with no silky band around its body, in a box with a glass top, in which I kept them. The second large one (No. 2) did the same on the following day, January 28th, while the small one (No. 3), which I saw was not fully matured (and was apparently passing an uncomfortable kind of life, through its not having any proper food), did not enter into its pupa state until the 31st of January, or early on the 1st of February.

No. 1 emerged from its pupa state on the 15th of February; No. 2 on February 16th; and No. 3 on February 18th, being also imperfectly developed and of smaller size; so that 19–20 days is the time taken for its transformation, from its entering into the pupa state and its emerging a perfect insect.

The pupa was an elegant object, being 10–11 lines long and 6 lines wide (at its widest part), smooth, and of a pale pea-green colour, somewhat resembling in outline a small acorn in its cup, the stem of the cup (or calyx) being the produced point and the web by which it was suspended. Around the lower part of the pupa (as hanging) was a row of small circular dots, of a pale gold colour, having a metallic glistening appearance; while around the pupa in its widest part, and standing out a little from it, was a ridged crest or band, porcated towards the edge, which was crenulated; this, above, had also that metallic glistening appearance, while underneath, and seen from below, it was intensely black.

The accompanying wood-cut represents (a) the pupa, natural size, and (b) the ridged band, seen from below, magnified.

I have not unfrequently seen an ear-ring of green-stone worn by the Maoris of exactly the same hue of green as these pupæ.



But, if I was pleased with the elegant and unique appearance of the chrysalis, I was much more so with what I unexpectedly saw afterwards. I had watched them pretty narrowly, and when I found that No. 1 had quitted its pupa state on the 15th February, I watched No. 2 closely, and on the day after (the 16th) I was rewarded and gratified in seeing the perfect insect break forth into active life! I gazed with astonishment, and was almost spellbound—rivetted, as it were, for half-an-hour; and never have I seen a more interesting living gorgeous spectacle—one which I can never forget.

It broke through its pupa case at the top part, near the head and back of the imago, the case (in every instance) splitting longitudinally for two-thirds of its length into three segments, and then the insect

moved its legs a little and got out of its prison, and held fast. At this time it appeared almost wingless, or with two tiny transversely-folded, squeezed-up plaits (like pigmy epaulettes) on its shoulders. These soon began to move, to descend, growing larger, and progressing downwards in an astonishing manner—soft, damp, limp, and wavy, their colours prismatically glistening like silk velvet, and at first falling in graceful folds, plaits, and rumples, without the least approach to stiffness. As its wings were mysteriously and silently evolved and produced, and grew and descended, they also widened to their natural size, but not at first.

It seemed a truly mysterious sight to see these large wings growing so fast—evolving from nothing! by some occult hidden power. It was not, for instance, like water (a spring) welling forth from a mountain's side over green moss, for there was the hidden quantity or mass—here there was nothing behind, and yet it evolved and grew!

It took forty-five minutes, or very nearly an hour, before its wings attained to their full size, after which they very soon stiffened, and became rigid. Beautiful they still were in their symmetry, colours, and markings; but, *sic transit!* the surpassing glory—that gorgeous pristine excellence which had so spell-bound me, was, as an object, gone for ever—never, however, to be forgotten while memory remains.

I have seen, at various times, many plants and flowers unfolding, opening, bursting forth into bloom and beauty—have watched the evolution of some of our elegant tiny ferns, the rapid growth and change of some fungi, and the wonderful and beautiful birth of the ephemeral day-lily, when it unrolls its gorgeous petals to the morning sun; but all that I have seen of that description pales and fades before this—the birth, the amazingly rapid growth, and the beautiful and mysterious development of this butterfly.

Words fail to describe it, in its splendid and wonderful living reality—

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.”

About four years ago, I heard from one of our members (Mr. Meinertzhagen) that he had captured at Waimarama a butterfly of this species. On his communicating with me concerning it, I identified it as one I had more than once seen in my travels in New Zealand many years before. Shortly after that I saw a pair of them flying here on the hill-side, at Napier; other specimens were also caught much about the same time, one, or more, of which are now in the Museum of the Athenæum in this town. And Mr. Meinertzhagen, and subsequently Mr. Huntley, found from the Maoris that they knew the insect well.

Mr. R.W. Fereday, of Canterbury, has a paper on the Waimarama butterfly, in Vol. VI. of the “Transactions of the N.Z. Institute.” In that paper Mr. Fereday mentions two species (or varieties) *D. erippus* and *D. archippus*, specimens of both being in the Canterbury Museum. The former, *D. erippus*, having been sent from Melbourne; the latter, *D. archippus*, from San Francisco. Mr. Fereday doubts our New Zealand butterfly being distinct from *D. erippus*; at the same time he prefers giving it the specific name of *berenice*—which has superseded that of *erippus* in some published catalogues.

Mr. Fereday further says, that Mr. Nairn, of Pouerere, had found some larvæ of this insect on plants of *Gomphocarpus ovata* growing in his garden. It is not at all unlikely that the “cotton plants,” whence Mr. Huntley obtained his specimens, were a species of *Gomphocarpus*, from the scrap of a spinous capsule, or follicle, I found remaining in the box; but the leaves were long and lanceolate, as I subsequently found from Mr. Huntley. I know several species of *Gomphocarpus*, but none bearing the specific name of *ovata*.

From a portion of a newspaper lately received from a friend, I find that our butterfly, or a species very nearly allied to it, was represented, in two very fair characteristic cuts, in the “Australian Sketcher,”

of July 12, 1873, under the name of *Danaïs archippus*, on the authority of Professor McCoy of Melbourne, where it had been lately captured, who says it is found very commonly in America from Canada to Brazil; but only of late years observed in North Australia, Queensland, and the northern parts of New South Wales, and more recently in Melbourne.

I venture, however, to doubt our insect being identical with the Australian one, as therein represented and described; there seems a slight difference in its markings, and a still greater one in its colour. Those differences, however, may be only sexual ones. Should it hereafter prove, on full examination and comparison of specimens of both sexes, to be distinct from both the Australian and American insects, I trust it will have, and retain, the name of *Danaïs novæ-zealandiæ*.



From archi-nature.tumblr.com.



Orthodera novaezealandiae Colenso
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodera_novaezealandiae

The monarch butterfly isn't eaten by vertebrates because the glycosides it ingests from the swan plant are toxic. The shining cuckoo seems to relish the caterpillars nonetheless.

One predator is the praying mantis, the New Zealand species of which Colenso described (as *Mantis novæ-zealandiæ*) to the members of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute on 8 November 1880, a description he then published in

Colenso W. On some new and undescribed Species of New Zealand Insects, of the Orders Orthoptera and Coleoptera. *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 1881; 14: 277-282.

It was found on Scinde Island, Napier (Colenso Hill), "on trees (nympha state only), 1878–1879, Mr. J. A. Rearden; imago state (one specimen), 1880, Mr. J. D. Ormond."

He considered

"This species has pretty close affinity with the European species *M. religiosa*, but it is very much smaller, with shorter horns, and less spiny and narrower fore-legs, etc.

Reminiscences of Colenso as an old man

When AG Bagnall was contemplating a biography of Colenso he wrote to a number of senior citizens seeking their reminiscences. Russell Duncan replied (4 June 1944) from 9 Cobden Cres, Napier,

I am glad that you are writing a history of Wm. Colenso which has been sadly neglected in the past—I have today written down all that I can remember of him & I trust some of it will be of use—Cannot give any chronological order & have just written items as they come to mind—

After all these years it seems a bit difficult.

The Colenso property bordered on the grounds of the Napier Grammar School where I was a boarder. Living so near it was strange how little we saw of him. Once or twice some of the boys were asked to visit him & were regaled with afternoon tea & cake. Mr. Colenso on these occasions played on an extraordinary instrument for the edification of the boys. I cannot remember how it was started in motion either by turning a handle or pedalling with the feet. It might have been called a harmonium or an organ but it made some hideous noises. Now there is some history recorded about this musical instrument but I cannot call it to mind. In your research you may come across some information about it.

Mr. Colenso had a married couple a Mr. Mrs. Anderson to look after him and he lived very plainly. He seemed to live a sedentary life & few people as far as I can remember were his visitors.

I should think a good deal of his time was spent in writing very long political letters to the HB Herald! I have a Volume of the “HB Herald” for 1859 & in it are a number of letters to the Editor on political subjects of the day. Apart from this however Mr. Colenso has earned the gratitude of the people of New Zealand for the quantity and quality of the written knowledge he has left behind him.

There were many missionaries of various creeds in N.Z. in the early days but very few have troubled to write of their impressions.

It is generally accepted that Mr. Colenso stands in the first rank of botanists in N.Z.

In 1840 Colenso became acquainted with J.D. Hooker (afterwards Sir Joseph the famous botanist) & these two men kept up a correspondence till death parted them. Colenso when crossing the Ruahine range thought more of carrying a heavy bag of plant specimens than something more useful to a mountaineer.

There was a boy at the school named William Yates who was keen on the cultivation of native shrubs & garden flowers. Colenso took a special interest in this boys hobby.

You ask what was Colenso's appearance. That question is rather beyond me, but from recollection I would say he was a little above middle height, slim of body & with hair & whiskers rather long. When walking about the Napier streets his manner of dress was perhaps quaint. He usually wore a long mackintosh coat with the addition of a cape over his shoulders, the flaps of the cape blowing about his ears if there was any wind.

A frail looking man it was hard to realise that he had successfully undertaken such arduous journeys on foot when pursuing his

ministerial duties. Fancy walking from Poverty Bay via Waikaremoana & over the Huiairau mountains on a scant diet of potatoes & Colenso never grumbled.

After the death of Mr. Colenso his son Latimer came out from England to square up his father's affairs. There were heaps of old letters & papers contained in boxes, shelves & cupboards & these were eagerly sought after by collectors.

Latimer made a bonfire of the lot—and would not allow any to be disposed of to collectors. It was a great pity for no doubt very interesting history was lost for ever.

Colenso owned at one time a very valuable collection of Maori weapons & curios, et cetera. He offered all of this collection as a gift to the town of Napier provided the townspeople would build a brick building to hold it. This most valuable offer was turned down by the most ignorant & selfish town councillors.

I have a book which once belonged to Colenso. It is called "Christianity among the New Zealanders" & the author is William Williams Bishop of Waiapu. In the title page is written in Colenso's handwriting

"Cost me 10/-

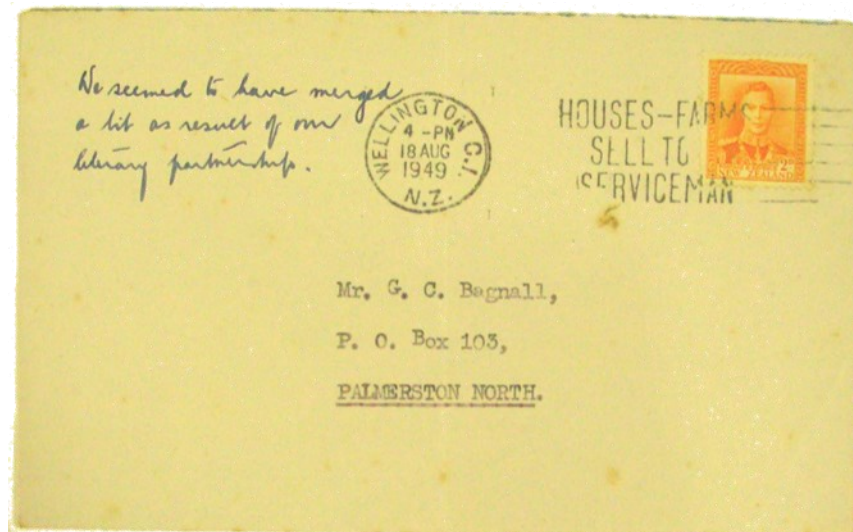
An imperfect work. W.C."

This shows how the wind blows. I know there was a lack of kindly feeling between the Williams' & Colenso.

Colenso was recognised as a kindly man always approachable by any one wanting advice.

WT Hill wrote,

The strange expression used by Colenso, and which struck my Mother so much, that when ever he was approached for money for whatever cause he would exclaim, "I am at the bottom of the bucket".



AG Bagnall (Wellington) and GC Petersen (Palmerston North)'s biography *William Colenso* was published in 1949. Petersen must have forwarded this envelope, with its rehab farming postmark and his wry comment ("We seem to have merged a bit as a result of our literary partnership") to Bagnall in Wellington. (ATL 88-103-1/17).

P.O. Box 67,

TAUPO

13th June, 1944.

A.G. Bagnall, Esq.,
Makina Bay,
Eastbourne,
WELLINGTON

Dear Mr. Bagnall,

re; Colenso

I duly received your letter herein of the 26th ult., to which I am now able to reply.

I do so rejoice you and Mr. Peterson of Palmerston North are contemplating "a life of Colenso", a man certainly worthy of the highest praise for the future history of New Zealand. I believe my Father once contemplated such a "life", and maybe amongst his papers some manuscripts might exist. Yes, he was a close and dear friend of both my Father and Mother.

Strangely, it was in about 1875 or -6, when my parents were coming to New Zealand "a young sailor lad was seen with his clothes in tatters". My Mother told the lad to bring his clothes to her, and these were duly mended. Some time after his arrival in New Zealand - and centred at Christchurch - my Father was appointed to the Inspectorate of Hawkes Bay, which position Mr. Colenso had formerly occupied. Then, on my Father's reaching Napier - and on meeting Colenso, a name my Mother remembered on board boat - and on Colenso being told of the incident, "they became life friends since it became known that the sailor boy was Colenso's own son.

He was a strange man, and for some years prior to his death in 1898, I used to take him Christmas puddings, made by my Mother, when I received the usual bright sixpence. I often recall those days, and only wish now I had been older to have entered into the spirit of his life. His study was very low in height - dull to dark - with little light from the world outside. His walls were full of books - which Angus & Robertson purchased. Also plants and bugs were on his table - wet and dry. He was a vain man, maybe with cause, as he was looked upon as the handsomest man in the Parliament in the Sixties. He had a mania for collecting anything - and nothing destroyed. Even when his beautiful hair was cut, curls were wrapped in wee parcels, dated and placed away for safe keeping. Every conceivable thing was put aside - match boxes, tins, nibs, etc.

He fell from grace in 1852, I believe, when Bishop Selwyn visited him at Waitangi (Clive). Colenso was nursing a child (half caste) and asked the Bishop to hold it for a moment. "How dare you," said his Lordship, "offer me a child of sin!"

For many, many years from that date until practically the year before his death, he was thus dishonoured, and during

2.

those sad years my Father and Cannons Jordan and Eccles fought yearly fights - until he was reinstated "as a Minister of Christ". I have a letter written to my Father from Dannevirke in which Colenso states his joy and happiness at being asked to administer the marriage ceremony 9th is in 1898) the first since his removal from the Church.

The many and varied references to Colenso in the early papers - the Hawkes Bay Times - practically gives his full life as from 1860.

I have several of his letters - written from Woodville (14/2/92); an excellent one in 18/5/98 anent "Lexicon" on its appearance, and his jubilation and happiness, and his acting as Minister at a marriage, first since 1852.

Then there are the first articles of his in the Tasmanian Journal of Science (1840 seq.) I enclose a copy of an original poem which he made to my Mother. It reads well. He was inclined to poetry - due to his loneliness maybe - and his letters to the stated press are brilliant. His papers to the Transactions of course are known to you both. I have his Manuscripts of the Ruahine Range, a remarkable paper written in those early days.

So, if you are of the opinion the above notes can be of any assistance, please let me know and I shall do what I can to help you in your excellent scheme of work.

With kind regards,

just sincerely
W.H. Hill

Memos.

1. You might get some interesting information from Messrs. Gainsbury, Logan & Williams, Solicitors, Napier, as the final trustees of the Colenso bequests. I may mention that Colenso's original trustees were five H's - Hector, Hooker, Hamilton, Hardy and Hill.
2. His Will made particular provision for ship-wrecked sailors on the Hawkes Bay coast.
3. His Will made mention of those called "Colenso" were to receive £50. and those "William Colenso" £100. bequests.

A letter from WH Hill, son of Colenso's friends Henry and Emily Hill, to AG Bagnall (ATL 88-103-1/21B)

Young Oscar Alpers

On 18 July 1883 William Colenso wrote to Henry Hill, who had succeeded him as Inspector of Schools in Hawke's Bay,

I cannot tell you how very much I have been interested in reading your annual Report of the Pupil Teachers' Examination that appeared in the "Herald" this morning. I note, with pleasure those pupils of whom you have reported so highly,—especially, Oscar Alpers, Charles Laws, & Margaret Morgan. I see you had suggested to the Board, that a small Book prize should be given to them,—but it is not stated that the Board had agreed to do so. Be that as it may, I wish, through you, to make them a small present, say, £1. each: also, to Agnes Downs of the Native Protestant School, a similar sum of £1.—and to those three (3rd year),—Robert B. Ryder, Havelock; George Garnell, Wairoa; and Eric Oatridge, Gisborne,—the sum of 10/- each: total, = £5.10.0, cheque enclosed.

I leave it to you, Sir, to present the same to them either in money or in suitable books—not sectarian ones: and you may also (if you think it better on the whole to do so,) conceal the name of the donor,—and merely say, from a friend & well-wisher. [Rex Nan Kivell collection, NK4168: Australian National Library Ms 4246].

Oscar Thorwald Johann Alpers 1867–1927 migrated to Napier with his Danish family in the *Friedeburg* in 1875 and was at age twelve appointed a "pupil-teacher" at the Napier District School: he had lied about his age. He became a judge of the Supreme Court of New Zea-

land and in his memoir *Cheerful yesterdays* [Whitcombe & Tombs, 1928] he recalled this occasion—and meeting Colenso,

At the end of the second year of my apprentice-ship, when the results of the annual examinations appeared in the newspapers, I received through my friend, the Inspector of Schools, a most kind letter from a complete stranger congratulating me on my success, enclosing an order for several guineas on a local bookseller, and hoping I should "choose wisely." He proved to be the Rev. Wm. Colenso, cousin of "Pentateuch" Colenso, Bishop of Natal, the well-known writer of books on mathematics and famous—or must I say notorious—for his daring flights in theological controversy.

The Napier Colenso had lived for many years in retirement, devoting himself to botanical researches. Occasionally, too, like his more famous cousin, he made excursions into the stormy regions of Higher Criticism. For a time he was, in consequence, out of favour with his Bishop and the authorities of his Church. But shortly before his death, when he was an old and venerable-looking man, I heard him preach in the Napier Cathedral. On a tablet to his memory it is recorded of him that he printed on a hand-press brought out with him from Home the first translation into the Maori language of a portion of the New Testament. And so, at the end, there was peace.

When I called upon him to thank him for his gift he talked to me for a long time about his difficulties and struggles as our pioneer printer. He had much trouble to conceal from his Maori converts the lead he had brought out to the Mission for casting into type wherewith to print the gospel of peace; the Maoris used to steal it and melt it into rifle-bullets! He recalled also, I remember, that he had spent Christmas Day, 1842, with the great Charles Darwin on

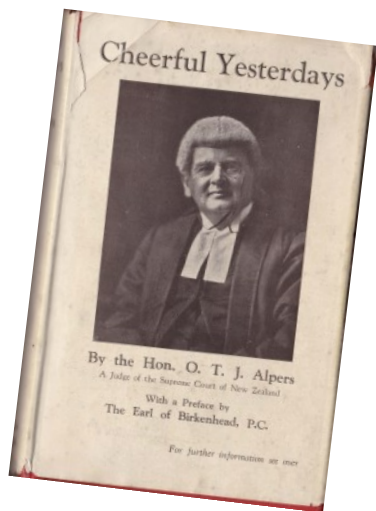
board the *Beagle* in the Bay of Islands. This, he said, started him on what he regarded as his life's work—the classification of New Zealand ferns.

Probably Colenso got to know the boy quite well; he wrote to his Norsewood friend Herman Lund on 27 July 1884,

Yesterday, young Alpers brought me your letter of the 23rd. As you had requested—I gave him the name of the specimen of fern you had enclosed, (*Polypodium rupestre*),—you also ask for “the name of the Fern tree”,—but which one of them is it that you mean? seeing there are 8 or 9 of them.—Alpers could not tell me: so this must stand over....

I was very busy when Alpers called (as indeed he saw), and so had no time to have much talk with him. I shall always be glad to hear from you. [ATL MS-Papers-0031-51].

Herman Marius Lund c.1853 –c.1917 was a Dane who migrated to NZ in about 1876, and was a clerk at Tahoraiti, then stationmaster at Ormondville and Makotuku: a keen collector of coins. Colenso gave him his numismatic books.



What happened to Colenso's big bell?

On 19 November 1844 William Colenso, about to leave for his posting to Hawke's Bay, wrote from the Bay of Islands to Dandeson Coates of the Church Missionary Society in London,

As Archd. W. Williams has returned to Turanga, (which he did while I was absent at Wangarei.) I cannot now send you an authorized Indent for a large Bell and Communion Service for Ahuriri, and small Bells for the many villages, and Slates, &c., for the several Schools—but I hope to do so ere long; meanwhile we must be content to use our clanging hoe, or “bent musket-barrel”!

He was referring to makeshift bells in Māori villages: for instance,

7 March 1841 at Ngunguru: *Capt. L(ewington). had given the little party... a very fine Bell, by which they had plenty of tintinabulatory clatter, much to discouragement of the Pikopeans, who were numerous, yet only had a hoe for a bell.*

19 September 1841 at Paparaaumu: *Male School over, rang bell (i.e. beat a hoe!)*

25 November 1841 at Kawakawa (E Cape): *A woke very early indeed by the sounding of be hoe for prayers.*

7 December 1843 at Manawarakau:

My mind was much affected (during the last few days) with what

I could but consider a partial fulfilment of that glorious prophesy in Micah,—“they shall beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid,”—on seeing, at Mataikona, Wakaraunuiatawaki,¹ Akitio, Porangahau, and this village, musket barrels, formerly used as deadly instruments of destruction in destroying one another, now converted into peaceful bells to summon the people to prayer! For this purpose the barrel is bent into a long semi-oval, (which is accomplished through repeatedly heating it and striking it while hot with a stone,) suspended by the middle, and struck with a piece of iron; the sound emitted is shrill and louder than that of the hoe, the pseudo-bell in general use.

He must have ordered—and the CMS must have sent—his “large bell” for Ahuriri in 1848, for on 28 June 1849 Colenso recorded in his journal,

This evening Te Hapuku wished to see the large bell, (sent out by the Society, and which arrived last year, but, owing to my prospective leaving, has not yet been hung,) and, on seeing it, he said, that he must have that for his village when he should turn to the Faith, which would not be long.—

In July 1852, surely aware his time was limited, but nonetheless keen to obtain land and re-establish his mission inland at Te Rotoakiwa, he recorded,

Breakfast over we all returned to Te Rotoakiwa, where I again read the deed (which they also had had in their possession all night,) when they all unanimously and with loud voice consented to it.—This done, I took off my hat, when Te Hapuku (at my re-

quest) dug a spadefull of earth and gave it to me; another chief fetched a calabash of water from the lake; another cut down a living tree and brought it; another fetched a dry branch as fire-wood, while others pulled grass & fern; all which were given into my hands. In conclusion, I gave them a very brief address, reminding them, that our Creator and Judge, to whom alone belonged the earth and the fullness thereof, was looking down as a witness to our proceedings. Having pointed out where the dwelling-house would in all probability be erected, and, also, the site for the Chapel, Te Hapuku immediately pulled up some fern pretty close to the latter spot, saying that his house should be erected there. I told him, that the great bell, which the CMS. had sent, and which he had long wished to have, should now be his in his residing here, which pleased him.

It was not to be. In January 1853 the Colensos’ house burned and he wrote to the CMS secretaries,

In addition to the dwelling house and portion of the Garden destroyed—there has been also burnt, the little barn behind with its contents, and all the small outhouses and offices, and a great deal of the house field and garden fences. The fire burnt with great fury, insomuch that all glass, and every brass article has been remelted, including even heavy bells of 12–14 lbs weight.

The big bell survived, though, for twelve years later, on 21 July 1865, Colenso, evicted from Waitangi and newly defeated by Donald McLean for the Napier seat in the House of Representatives, wrote to the CMS Secretaries from his new home in Napier,

Rev. & Dear Sirs

Enclosed is the Original of a Memorandum respecting a large Church Bell the property of the C.M.S.—which for a long time has been in my possession.

When obliged, in 1862, (sorely against my will;) to leave Waitangi, I wrote a note to the Rev. S. Williams, informing him of my being about to do so, and requesting him to take charge of this Bell, and of some Maori Books belonging both to the C.M.S. and to the B(ritish). & F(oreign). B(ible) Society, but, as I did not receive any reply from him, I brought away the Bell and Books to Napier in my last cartload of goods.—

Subsequently I have been often asked—both by the former as well as by the present Minister of our Church in this small town, as well as by some of the Congregation, to lend this Bell—which I have at length consented to do on the conditions expressed in the Memorandum.

I may add, that I have this day written to Rev. S. Williams enclosing the Duplicate of the within Memorandum (keeping the triplicate): and, that I have from time to time, as disposed of, accounted to the B. & F. Bible Society for their Books abovementioned removed hither by me. Some of the Books of the C.M.S. (Maori Pentateuchs, &c.,) are still in my charge.

—

And, further, that if the C.M.S. could conveniently give the said Bell to the Church of St. John's, Napier, it would be most thankfully received. As a Congregation we have had to purchase a site for our Church and Parsonage, to build enlarge & endow, and to maintain our Minister, which altogether falls rather heavily to our small number.

I am,

*Rev. & Dear Sirs,
Very truly yours,
Wm. Colenso.²*

The first church of St John the Evangelist had been built in 1862 opposite the west end of the present cathedral and was in the Wellington Diocese. I can find no further record of its bell, but it seems more than likely the CMS bell was used.

William Williams, the first Bishop of Waiapu, lived in Napier because war parties in Poverty Bay threatened his safety. So Hawke's Bay was included in the Diocese of Waiapu in 1869 and St John's Parish Church was raised to the status of a pro-cathedral.

The foundation stone of the first Cathedral was laid in September 1886 and the building was consecrated two years later. On 3 February 1931, while communion was being served, the building was totally destroyed by earthquake with the loss of one life. For 25 years a "temporary" wooden building, dedicated in October 1932, served as a cathedral for the diocese. The foundation stone for a new cathedral was laid on 12 October 1955 and the building completed in 1965.³

But what happened to Colenso's large bell?

Richard Spence emailed,

... yes I do know a bit about a Colenso bell. Here it is. At Colenso High School there was in the 60s a handbell that purported to have belonged to Colenso and been used by him while he was at Waitangi on the coast south of Napier. The bell was used once a year by the Head Prefect to summon students to the final assembly of the year. When in 2006 I enquired after the bell at the school I was told that they didn't know about any Colenso bell but there was one in the Principal's office and perhaps that was it. It was indeed. Somewhere there is a photo of me ringing said bell while en route to the Colenso cairn on the Makororo River. I returned it to the school (now William Colenso College) afterwards.

Clearly not the big bell. Perhaps that went elsewhere when the first cathedral replaced St John's in 1886–1888. Perhaps it was destroyed in the 1931 earthquake. Perhaps it survives in another Hawke's Bay church.

References

1. A small village between Mataikona and Akitio.
2. ATL Micro-MS-0309.
3. <http://www.napiercathedral.org.nz/history.php>



Church of St John the Evangelist, Napier
—Photograph by Swan & Wrigglesworth, c. 1867; National Library.
Was Colenso's big bell in its belltower?

On the introduction of the decimal system

On 25 August 1896 Colenso wrote to Harding, "I have received from you copies of your letters in Wgn. p., and I thank you for them, & *go w. you in them*: 2–3 yrs. ago, in reply to Hutton, I went full tilt against the metrl. system, H. wishing *support* to make it general at least, in *Inst.* papers, which he *pursues*..."

He was referring to a correspondence begun by Harding's letter, on the suggested introduction of the metric system, to the Wellington *Evening Post* of 5 August 1896,

FOREIGN METROLOGY.

SIR—Every reader of the daily press must be aware of the complaint from time to time of the over-burdened curriculum in our public schools, which renders thorough training in some departments difficult, if not impossible. So far as the higher standards are concerned there would be decided gain and no loss if the entire subject of the foreign "metric" system were struck out. The English tongue is already practically the world's language, and the British standards (with, it may be, some simplifications in their divisions) will have to be

the world's standards. The benefit of the "metric" system exists wholly on paper; in every department of practical work it is an abomination. Its use is advocated chiefly by two classes—accountants, to facilitate computation, and the very limited number of people who use foreign scientific books, and who do not care to take the trouble to reduce the quantities they there meet with to the national standard. In a late number of the English Mechanic "A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society," a well-known contributor to that journal, has some timely remarks which, as they apply equally in New Zealand, I think are worth a place in your pages. He says, referring to "Mr. Balfours eminently practical and suitable reply to Mr. Arnold Foster in the House of Commons on 20th May with reference to the adoption of the metric system:—"The whole of the agitation in favour of that tremendous change in our units and methods of weighing and measuring affords an admirable illustration of the manner in which a noisy set of fanatics, in a hopeless minority, can and do work together to coerce the independent overwhelming majority of the nation. Everyone behind the scenes knows how the Commission appointed to investigate this subject was exploited by a persistent little ring, whose names must be familiar to anyone and everyone who has ever devoted the slightest attention to the subject. No one who heard the cut-and-dried evidence and knew who were pulling the strings

could doubt for one single instant what the report would be, and I am delighted beyond measure to find that the First Lord of the Treasury appraises its recommendations at their true value, and pays exactly the kind and amount of deference to them that they deserve. The fact is that it is only the apathy of the general public that has enabled this spurious agitation to achieve even the very limited amount of success that it has done. People who know that the yard, the bushel, and the pound have come down to us from Saxon times will require very cogent proof of the advantage to be gained by substituting for them the metre, the demi-hectolitre, and the kilogramme. Conceive, if you can, what it would mean to have every English weight and measure now in use declared to be illegal after a certain date. Fancy an English workman buying his beer by the litre (a good excuse, by the by, for weakening or watering it), and his bacon by the kilogramme, and the condition of things incident on his wife going to the village shop to buy 25 metres of flannel for a petticoat! Try to imagine what it would signify that each and every one of our great engineering works must abolish every pattern, weight, and gauge; that even every barometer and thermometer in the kingdom would have to be discarded on account of its graduations having become obsolete or useless; and that our very astronomical and surveying instruments would have to have their degrees and minutes obliterated, and be re-

graduated in grades, and all the rest of it. Thank heaven our rulers are Englishmen, and refuse to lend themselves to a piece of tomfoolery which, as Mr. Balfour said, would not be 'within the range of practical politics' in a country which has most certainly nothing to learn from its neighbours in this respect. The subjects of an Empress on whose dominions the sun never sets have assuredly no need to go abroad for their standards of weights and measures. It would be hard indeed to say what we should gain by doing so." More than one attempt has been made to place New Zealand under this foreign yoke, and as our Parliament has in former years shown some disposition towards sanctioning the unscientific and unpractical French system, every employer, every artisan, and every housewife ought to know what dire inconvenience, waste, and ruinous loss its adoption would involve. And as the teaching of the system in our public schools can only be designed as a preliminary to its ultimate adoption, I hope that you will use your influence in protesting against it. At present the time of both teachers and scholars is being wasted on an elaborate system of metrology which is and will be of no more practical value to the vast majority of our people than the mastery of the Chinese ideograms.

I am, &c.,

R. COUPLAND HARDING.

Wellington, 1st August, 1896.