

# eColenso

*eColenso* is the free email publication of the Colenso Society, 32 Hawkestone St, Thorndon, Wellington 6011: please forward it to interested others. Contributions should be emailed to the editor, Ian St George, [istge@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:istge@yahoo.co.nz).

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**The NZ polymath:  
Colenso & his contemporaries.**

Wellington 16–18 November.

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# Colenso's 1840 plant list

Five sheets listing “Plants in boxes” recently came to light among the Busby papers (MS-46) at Auckland Museum Library. They are in Colenso's hand, annotated “List of Plants contained in the Plant Cabinets sent to England per Matilda Feby 1840” and dated 14 February 1840.

Colenso had written to Captain Phillip King on 6 January 1840,

You kindly offer “to put me in correspondence with Prof. Hooker” which offer of yours I most thankfully accept. It is almost certain that I shall be enabled to send him several new, not to say interesting, specimens of the Botany of N. Zealand, from my having occasionally to travel about in the Interior. I sent Cunningham some specimens, which were quite new to Science, as he informed me, but, unfortunately, he had not time then to examine them so as to describe and name them. Pray send me Dr. Hooker's address, when convenient. Mr. A. Busby is still here, but expects to sail shortly, and as the opportunity of sending anything in charge to England is a good one, I think it is very probable that I may send some specimens, both dry and in spirit, to Dr. H., if I can succeed in obtaining his address.

On 14 February Colenso wrote to “Sir W. J. Hooker, Regius Prof. of Botany, University Glasgow”,

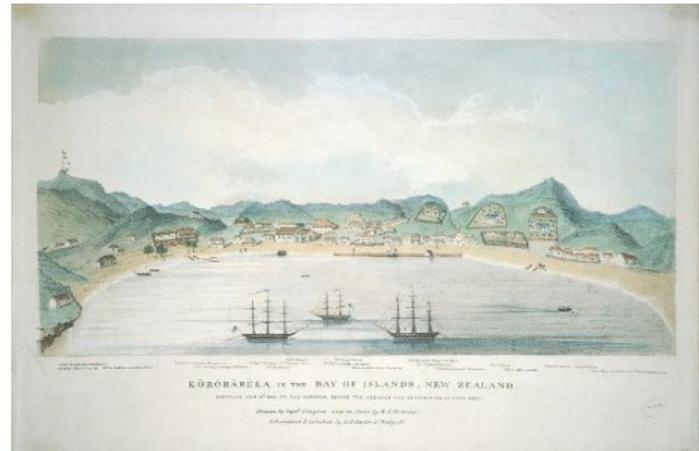
My dear Sir, An entire stranger, wishing to advance the science of Botany, takes on himself the liberty of addressing you without an introduction and also to send you a few specimens of Plants, among which he hopes you will find at least a few that may prove an acquisition to your Herbarium....

By this ship I forward you two Boxes: – one, containing sev-

eral of the Orchideæ of N. Zealand, in diluted Hy. acid: – the other, a few dried specimens. I hope they will arrive safe. They are but a few, it is true, and some of them are but inferior specimens, but my Herbaria have been so culled over by one friend and another that I had not many Duplicates remaining. I have many more by me of Genera not now sent, but the vessel sails tomorrow – and I have not another case ready made by me, &c. &c. Receive these, however, my dear Sir, as a Preface, and if you wish, I will endeavour to send you some others very shortly....

He went on to list the orchids in some detail, but apologised that, “the dried specimens must speak for themselves.”

Lists of these plants are not among the Colenso papers in the Hooker correspondence (now at Kew), but the sheets in the Auckland Busby papers are almost certainly duplicates, given to Busby by Colenso at Victoria, Busby's property at Waitangi, in February 1840. The boxes went to England by the *Matilda* (at right below).



Not Accountable for Charges



AB.  
#132.

Shipped in good Order & well conditioned by James Busby Esq,  
in and upon the good Ship called the *Matilda*,  
whereof is Master for this present voyage, and bound for London  
and now riding Bay of Biscay  
to say

Two Cabins Plants.

being marked & numbered as in the Margin & to be delivered in the like good Order & well  
conditioned at the aforesaid Port of London the Act of God the Kings Enemies  
Fire & all & every other Dangers & Accidents of the Seas Rivers & Navigation of whatever Nature or Kind ever  
accepted with *Mr John Matton*  
or to red. Assigns Freight for the said Goods to be paid in London  
at the rate of *shillings 10* per ton  
with Lading & Average accustomed. **IN WITNESS** whereof the Master or Purser of the said  
Ship hath affirmed to *three* Bills of Lading all of this tenor & Date the one of which Bills  
being accomplished the others to stand void.  
Dated in Bay of Biscay *21<sup>st</sup> Feb*

1840  
*J. Busby*

The bill of lading for the two cabins of boxes of plants sent by Colenso to Sir William Hooker on the *Matilda* with James Busby in 1840.

Plants in Boxes  
Victoria, Feby. 14. 1840.

No. of Box	Native Name.	No. of Plants.	Botanical Name.	Place of Origin.
1.	Roma	6	<i>Daerydium capripinum.</i>	Japan
	Taukaha	5	<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides.</i>	Brown
	Rawarawa	1	<i>Xylothia exalta.</i>	Brown
	Mae	1	<i>Daerydium</i> *	Hampden
	Koroka	1	<i>Aralia crassifolia.</i>	Japan
	Ponga	1	<i>Lythaea dealbata.</i>	London
	Kauri	1	<i>Dammara Australis.</i>	London
	Kahikatea	1	{ <i>Podocarpus exaltus.</i> " <i>Daerydium taxifolium.</i> }	Nichols Lindley
2.	Rawarawa	1	<i>Xylothia exalta.</i>	Brown
	Mae	3	<i>Daerydium</i> *	Hampden
	Taukaha	13	<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides.</i>	Brown
	Roma	2	<i>Daerydium capripinum.</i>	Japan
	Kahikatea	1	{ <i>Lepidopodium soperianum.</i> " <i>L. Hee.</i> }	Foster
3.	Taukaha	3	<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides.</i>	Brown
	Roma	1	<i>Daerydium capripinum.</i>	Japan
	Aroro	3	<i>Mora</i> *	Hampden
	Mae (Tern)	1	<i>Lomaria procera.</i>	Hampden
4.	Kauri	7	<i>Dammara Australis.</i>	London
	Mae	3	<i>Daerydium</i> *	Hampden
	Koroka	1	<i>Aralia crassifolia.</i>	Japan

\* This is probably an undetermined form; but I think there is little doubt of its being a species of *vitis* - I have therefore placed it in that genus - *vitis* *pauciflora*.

o I think this is correctly named *Heliconia* *Heliconia* & *Heliconia* *Heliconia*.

No. of Box	Native Name.	No. of Plants.	Botanical Name.	Place of Origin.	
5.	Kahikatea	10	<i>Daerydium taxifolium.</i>	Lindley	
	Kahikatea	9	<i>Daerydium taxifolium.</i>	Lindley	
		Mae	1	<i>Daerydium</i> *	Hampden
6.	Kohutakute	2	<i>Fuchsia spectabilis.</i>	Foster	
	7.	Kauri	6	<i>Dammara Australis.</i>	London
Mae		2	<i>Daerydium</i> *	Hampden	
Taukaha		2	<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides.</i>	Brown	
8.	Makomako	1	<i>Ficinia racemosa.</i>	Hampden	
	8.	Roma	3	<i>Daerydium capripinum.</i>	Japan
Koroka		2	<i>Aralia crassifolia.</i>	Japan	
Kauri		1	<i>Dammara Australis.</i>	London	
Taukaha		6	<i>Phyllocladus trichomanoides.</i>	Brown	
Kohutakute		1	<i>Fuchsia spectabilis.</i>	Foster	
Kohikoko		1	<i>Xylothia spectabilis.</i>	Japan	
Mae		7	<i>Daerydium</i> *	Hampden	
Makomako		1	<i>Ficinia racemosa.</i>	Hampden	
#18		Kahikatea	1	<i>Daerydium taxifolium.</i>	Lindley
		Rawarawa	4	<i>Xylothia exalta.</i>	Brown
			3	<i>Alseuosmia Banksii</i> *	Hampden
	Mae		1	<i>Daerydium</i> *	Hampden
Tawa	1	<i>Laurus Tawa.</i>	Hampden		

\* The *Alseuosmia* Genus (Some *Coronia* affinis) was fully established by that lamented & indefatigable Botanist Mr. G. on his Visit to N. Zealand, in 1838. - I have ventured to name the above plants, as *Banksii*, though I have little doubt but that they may be different species of that Genus - or species being already known.

Plants in Popul:—

No.	Names in vulgar dicty	Names Botanicum.
10	Rauarawa	<i>Knightsia excelsa</i>
	Ramarama	<i>Mirtus bullata</i>
	Taraine	<i>Laurus Taraine</i>
	Puriri	<i>Vitex littoralis</i>
	Tawa	<i>Laurus Tawa</i>
	Kokokohi	<i>Hartighsa spectabilis</i>
	Potokairiri	<i>Hedycaia scabra?</i>
	Mahoe	<i>Melicope ramiflora</i>
	(Pora)	<i>Asplenium bulbiferum</i>
11	Rauarawa	<i>Knightsia excelsa</i>
	Puriri (2/)	<i>Vitex littoralis</i>
	Taraine	<i>Laurus Taraine</i>
	Tawa (2/)	<i>Laurus Tawa</i>
	Potokairiri (2/)	<i>Hedycaia scabra?</i>
	Hinaw	<i>Elaeagnus Hinaw</i>
	Tipau	<i>Myrsine Worsillea</i>
	(Pora)	<i>Aspidium Kuspidium</i>
12	Taraine	<i>Laurus Taraine</i>
	Puriri	<i>Vitex littoralis</i>
	Rauarawa (2/)	<i>Knightsia excelsa</i>
	Pate	<i>Analis schoffera</i>
	Potokairiri	<i>Hedycaia scabra?</i>
	Rauwhau	<i>Coprosma patidistoma</i>
	Kairatua	<i>Phacelothamnus Dianaria</i>
	Mahoe	<i>Melicope ramiflora</i>
13	Puriri (2/)	<i>Vitex littoralis</i>
	Ake	<i>Sadsona spathulata</i>
	<del>Abundant</del>	<i>Alnusmia</i>

4.	Tawa	<i>Laurus Tawa</i>
	Rauarawa (6/)	<i>Knightsia excelsa</i>
	Taraine	<i>Laurus Taraine</i>
	Ramarama	<i>Mirtus bullata</i>
14	Houhere	<i>Houheria populnea</i>
	Pate	<i>Analis schoffera</i>
	Potokairiri	<i>Hedycaia scabra?</i>
	Tawa	<i>Laurus Tawa</i>
	Tango	<i>Laurus calicaris</i>
	<del>Kauarua</del>	<i>Alnusmia</i>
	Taraine	<i>Laurus Taraine</i>
	Horeke	<i>Analis crispifolia?</i>
15	Tawa	<i>Laurus Tawa</i>
	Kokokohi	<i>Hartighsa spectabilis</i>
	<del>_____</del>	<i>Alnusmia</i>
	Houhere	<i>Houheria populnea</i>
	Mangemange	<i>Lygadium articulatum</i>
	Rauarawa	<i>Knightsia excelsa</i>
16	Kauakawa	<i>Piper excelsum</i>
	Puriri	<i>Vitex littoralis</i>
	Tawa	<i>Laurus Tawa</i>
	Rauarawa	<i>Knightsia excelsa</i>
	Houhere	<i>Houheria populnea</i>
17	Tawa	<i>Laurus Tawa</i>
	Houhere	<i>Houheria populnea</i>
	Tipau	<i>Myrsine Worsillea</i>
	Puriri	<i>Vitex littoralis</i>
	Rauarawa	<i>Knightsia excelsa</i>

No. of Box	Native Name.	No. of Plants	Botanical Name.	Name of Discoverer, or Collector
#	Kahikatea	3	Decasium taxifolium -	Lindley
19	Tango	1	Laurus calicaris -	Solander
		1	Alnus abiplicifolia?	Spungler
	Aroro	1	Mira	Spungler
	Melomako	1	Friesia racemosa	Spungler
#	Tango	1	Laurus calicaris -	Solander
	Tawarouni	2	Laurus Victoriae W.C.	
20	Taraine	2	Laurus Taraine.	Spungler
	Maire	1	Mira Eucalyptoides.	Spungler
	Kahikatea	3	Decasium taxifolium.	Lindley
	Hinau	1	Podocarpus Hinau.	Spungler
		3	Alnus abiplicifolia?	Spungler
#	Kahikatea	1	Decasium taxifolium.	Lindley
21	Towai	8	Leiospermum racemosum.	Don
	Mee	3	Decasium	Spungler
22	Totara	6	Podocarpus	Don
#	Taraine	1	Laurus Taraine	Spungler
# 9	Totara	6	Podocarpus	Don

I believe the plants are rightly named as above; but it is not an easy matter to ascertain precisely - when so very young.

W.C.

## The Hawke's Bay Philosophical Society's founding documents

Napier, # 1844.  
October 24 1844.

Sir

We have recently succeeded in forming a branch Philosophical Institute here, and as we wish to imitate those older branches in the larger Provinces - at all events in our Rules & Regulations, - I have the honour to request that you will please to send us a copy of the Rules of your Institute to lay before our Council at their next Meeting, which will be held shortly. - and am

Yours very truly  
W. Colenso  
Hon. Secy.

The Secretary  
of the Auckland Institute,  
Auckland.

Hon. Sec. William Colenso wrote seeking copies of the rules and regulations of the older bodies.

Napier, 15th September, 1874.

SIR,—

I have the honor of calling your attention to the following Resolutions, &c. ;—and, should you be desirous of joining this new Society, I will thank you to give me early intimation thereof.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

WILLIAM COLENZO,

Hon. Secy., and Treasurer.

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At a Meeting held in the Provincial Council Chamber, Napier, on Monday, 14th September, for the purpose of forming a Scientific Society in conformity with the N. Z. Institute Act of 1867,—His Honor the Superintendent, J. D. Ormond, Esq., in the chair, the following Resolutions were unanimously carried, viz. :—

1. "That it is highly expedient to form, under the "New Zealand Institute Act, 1867," a branch Society or Institute for the Province of Hawke's Bay, to be called *the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute*; and that we whose names are herein entered do this day unite in forming this Society.

2. That for the purpose of the better making known and carrying out the objects of the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute, Mr. Colenso be appointed Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, *pro tem.*,—whose main duty will be to draw up and get printed a suitable circular, and to circulate it throughout the Province.

3. That the next Meeting of this Society shall be held in the Provincial Council Chamber, on Monday, the 12th day of October next, to report progress, and to choose a Committee and other officers."

At the same time the undermentioned gentlemen subscribed their names as Members of the said Society: viz. :—Messrs. J. D. Ormond, T. Tanner, T. K. Newton, F. W. C. Sturm, J. Chambers, M. R. Miller, C. H. Weber, William Waiapu, J. G. Kinross, W. Colenso, W. I. Spencer, J. Hall, jun., J. A. Smith, J. M. Gibbes, M. Hutchinson, G. Peacock, J. S. Smalley, H. R. Holder, S. Locke, and Andrew Luff.

I may here observe, that the weather yesterday was very inclement,—and that a large number yet from the town and neighborhood are expected to join us.

The Hawke's Bay Herald of this morning contains a brief abstract of what was said yesterday at the Meeting, shewing the manner in which, in accordance with the said Act, the Society should be established,—and, also, the great advantages arising therefrom. And, (as you may not have seen the Herald,) I may briefly add,—

(1.) That the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute is founded for the advancement of Science, Literature, and Art, as well as for the development of the resources of the Colony.

(2.) That in order to become a branch of the N. Z. Institute, (now a flourishing Institution,) this Society must have (at least) 25 Members, and must, also, be in the receipt of (at least) £50 per annum. One-third of its annual revenue may be expended in or towards the formation or support of some local Museum or Library; or otherwise shall provide for the contribution of not less than one-sixth of its said revenue towards the extension and maintenance of the Museum and Library of the New Zealand Institute.

(3.) That all affiliated branch Institutes, or Societies, possess the great advantage of having their Papers printed in the yearly volumes of the *Transactions* of the Institute,—provided such are approved of by the board of Governors, and the Members also receive free a copy of the said Transactions. Five volumes have already been published, (and the 6th is nearly ready,) containing a very large amount of scientific and interesting matter concerning New Zealand,—in fact, a fair proportion of its whole Natural History,—Animal, Vegetable, Mineralogical, Geographical, and Meteorological;—together with the ancient history of the Maori nation,—their legends and superstitions, their arts and knowledge, their manners and customs, their battles and migrations, their probable descent, and the structure of their language,—are therein related in both the scientific and popular manner. Those volumes are large, averaging nearly 500 pages with about 20 plates,—all of New Zealand objects; and is a work which is well-adapted for the rising generation, and which should be found in the house of every intelligent settler. And, the better to enable the said N. Z. Institute to carry out its work of publication, &c., it is endowed under Act with a grant of £500 per annum from the Colonial Revenue, together with many other advantages. At present it has branch Societies in all the larger Provinces, containing about 700 Members.

(4.) It is hoped that Scientific and interesting Papers will be read and suitable Lectures given at future meetings of the Members of this Society, of which due notice will be published. And, further, that the annual subscription will not exceed one guinea.

P.S. As it is possible that I may unintentionally have omitted to forward a copy of this circular to some of our settlers, I will thank you to shew it, or to speak of it to your neighbors.

W. C.

# The Earl of Derby and Colenso's grebe

On 21 January 1848 William Colenso wrote to Sir William Hooker, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew

*Waitangi Hawke's Bay,  
January 21, 1848.*

*My dear Sir William,*

*I did myself the pleasure of writing you a short note in September last, since which I have been honored with a long and kind letter from that generous and distinguished Patron of the Natural Sciences Lord Derby; enclosing a short introductory Note from yourself. I have now finished a letter to his Lordship, in which I have been obliged, sorely against the ardent desires of my soul, to acquaint him, that I fear it is not in my power to render him that service which, if it were possible, I should rejoice to do. The obstacles in great measure arise from Natural causes, which I have at some length therein detailed. And now, my dear Sir William, while I indeed grieve that I have it not in my power to aid the noble cause of Science (at least as far as the obtaining living specimens of the ornithology of this country), I have, also, prospectively to fear I shall have unintentionally offended the Noble Earl with my letter. If so, I shall be indeed sorry—but my conscience will be ever clear in the presence of the Great Searcher of Hearts, whose wonderful works in every part of His dominion, whether organic or inorganic, it has been, and ever will be my delight to contemplate and, according to my ability, make known. Were you, or your Son Dr. Joseph, fully ac-*

*quainted with my situation—its duties and difficulties; the all but extinction of many of the more prized genera and species of the class Aves; and my increasing infirmities, (for, non sum qualis eram), I should have, I know, in either of you a good mediator with my Lord:—but I will say no more. [1]*

Edward Smith-Stanley 1775–1851, 13th Earl of Derby, English politician, landowner, builder, farmer, art collector and naturalist—the Derbyan parakeet, *Psittacula derbiana*, is named after him—was the first child and only son of Edward Smith-Stanley, 12th Earl of Derby. He was the father of future Prime Minister Edward Smith-Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby. He was Member of Parliament for Preston and Lancashire from 1796 to 1832 but in 1834 succeeded his father to be the 13th Earl and withdrew from politics, concentrating instead on natural history. He had a large collection of living animals: at his death there were 1,272 birds and 345 mammals at Knowsley Hall near Liverpool, shipped to England by explorers. Many of Derby's collections are now housed in Liverpool museum. From 1828 to 1833 he was President of the Linnean Society. He was Edward Lear's patron. [2]

Colenso's letter has survived in the collections of the Liverpool Record Office [reference 910 DER (13) 1/37/1].

It is a 16 page essay on his knowledge of the birds of New Zealand and is, I think, an important document, detailing the early decline of many species soon after European settlement.

Mission Station, near Cape Kidnapper,  
Hawke's Bay. New Zealand, January 19, 1848.

My Lord,

At no period in my whole life have I ever felt so utterly inadequate to answering a letter, as at the present, when (an opportunity offering of sending letters to our Capital—a thing of rare occurrence) I endeavor to reply to your Lordship's very kind and condescending Letter of Feby. 11/47, which only reached me a short time ago.

It is not, however, from your Lordship's being an entire stranger to me—nor, from a person in a humble sphere of life like myself, having to address the head of the noble and ancient house of Stanley—that I now feel unequal to the task; but, because, while my own ardent inclination would willingly lead me to lay hold of every opportunity with my utmost ability in carrying out your Lordship's requests, my peculiar situation, heavy charge, and increasing infirmities, I regret (*truly* regret) to say, too surely preclude my doing so.

And, in order, my Lord, that you may know somewhat of the truth of the foregoing sentence, it is necessary I should briefly explain myself for your Lordship's satisfaction.—

When, fourteen years ago, I came to N. Zealand, I landed fully determined to do all that I could towards elucidating the Natural Treasures of this (then) little-known Country—and particularly its Ornithology, Conchology, and *Flora*. I procured cages & pens, and, in course of time, obtained several living specimens of the genera *Falco*,<sup>1</sup> *Athene*,<sup>2</sup> *Nestor*,<sup>3</sup> *Platycercus*,<sup>4</sup> *Apteryx*,<sup>5</sup> *Botaurus*,<sup>6</sup> *Porphyrio*,<sup>7</sup> *Aptenodytes*,<sup>8</sup> *Larus*,<sup>9</sup> *Anas*,<sup>10</sup> *Columba*,<sup>11</sup> *Halcyon* or ? *Dacelo*,<sup>12</sup> *Philedon*,<sup>13</sup> *Anthornis*,<sup>14</sup> *Rhipidura*,<sup>15</sup> *Miro*,<sup>16</sup> *Alaudæ*,<sup>17</sup> &c.,—but could never succeed—spite of all my attention—in keeping them alive. Or if I did, (as in the case with the genera *Nestor*, *Anas*, *Aptenodytes*, & *Larus*.) they invariably escaped. Disappointed, I, for

a time, persevered; but the growing difficulty of getting specimens, and the increase of duties, caused me to abandon the attempt of procuring and keeping living specimens, and to direct my attention to the preserving the skins of any rare species I might happen to obtain. This, too, in process of time, I was obliged to give up, through the progressive accumulation of labour. And, finally, to confine myself to the collecting of plants and shells, which I still could do, even while travelling, without any ways interfering with my duties.—

But, my Lord, on my being stationed here, in this new and extensive field, larger than some English Counties, extending (by chart) over more than 2°. of lat., and that, too, without roads, far off from civilized man, and, consequently, from help, among a rude and scattered people, remnants of tribes of renown, who, but for my influence and vigilance (under GOD) would soon be at deadly feud among themselves, among whom I am not only in the capacity of Minister, but of Doctor, Schoolmaster, Magistrate, Peace-maker, &c., &c.,—added to which, the many onerous secular matters (the thousand-and-one things of daily occurrence, which must be done, and done by one's own self,) of which a person at home in our "Father's-land" can have little just conception—I soon found, that even that delightful pursuit—or rather, recreation—of Botany, which had grown with the years, must now be laid aside. The more so, too, from my increasing infirmities of severe Rheumatic affection, &c., which sometimes even kept me from my duty. Yet, on finding that my dear friend, Dr. Joseph Hooker, was engaged—and that under the auspices of H.M. Government—in publishing the *Flora* of these and the neighbouring Islands, I was once more stimulated beyond my strength, and have thus endeavored to send him *scraps* of all I could find in my lonely

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1. Falcon; 2. Little owl; 3. Parrots; 4. Parakeets; 5. Kiwi; 6. Bittern; 7. Swamp hen; 8. Penguins; 9. Gulls; 10. Dabbling ducks; 11. Pigeon; 12. Both are genera of kingfishers; 13. Honeysucker; 14. The bellbird; 15. Fantail; 16. Tomtits; 17. Larks.

and often wanderings.— And to this, my Lord, if needed, Sir William Hooker could bear a kind of collateral testimony—namely, the *smallness* of the specimens which I have from time to time sent him, gathered in haste and pain, and (often) hunger, and made up when I ought to have been seeking rest in necessary sleep. During the Year just past, I have been absent from home travelling among the Natives of this District 205 days, leaving my wife and family with only the wild and uncivilized Natives around them, and that too in these stirring times.—

Pardon me, my Lord, if, what I have written should seem to savour of Egotism. For I have only attempted to explain the seeming paradox, why I should not readily do that which my heart so ardently desires.—

Should your Lordship, or any Scientific Nobleman, or Gentleman, send a person to N. Zealand as a Collector of Birds, &c.,—and should that person come into my District, or any where within reach of my local influence among the Natives, I scarcely need add, that the same should be fully exercised in his favor.—

Perhaps, my Lord, it will not be considered amiss, if I add a few remarks upon the Birds of this Country. As there are not, perhaps, many persons who have travelled more in this Island than myself, and, at the same time, paid some little observation to its Natural productions. I believe the Ornithology of N. Zealand (of the Northern Island at least) to be very poor—comparatively, and to contain but few genera and species in addition to those already known. (The whole number of species, as drawn up by Gray, in Dieffenbach's compilation, only amounting to 84.) The death-like silence of many of the N. Zealand forests and plains, strikes the most casual observer, and that too where Birds formerly existed in countless numbers. The *Rasorial*<sup>18</sup> order was once well-represented, if not in species in number. The *Apterix*, once every-where common, furnished both food and clothing to the N.Z. chief; cloaks, made of its skins, were commonly worn. The *Coturnix* (*Novæ Zealandiæ*)<sup>19</sup>

covered the plains, and were often taken in numbers by the Natives with nets. The *Columba* (*argetræa*)<sup>20</sup> abounded in every wood. And the all but extinct "*Kakapo*" (which I believe will be found to belong to this order, dwelt together in large flocks on the higher grounds amid the umbrageous seclusions of the *Fagus* forests. This latter bird, in particular, was preferred by the Natives, for its size, its fleshiness, its gregarious habits, and the ease with which it was captured. From 10 to 14, or more, they say, were generally found together in one "*umu*" (pit) the female bird could not fly, and the male could only flutter a little with his wings, and so manage to ascend the *Fagus* trees, the branches of which are low and spreading. I have never seen a *Kakapo*, yet it still exists, but is becoming very very scarce. My Natives once (when we were travelling across the Ruahine mountain chain) heard one, a cock bird, calling to its mate; and, subsequently, another has been heard in the woods near Taupo Lake. I have offered a great price for one (£4.), and if one could have been obtained, I think I should have had it: I still, however, live in hopes. The *Coturnix*, too, is nearly as scarce. Twice, and only twice, in all my wanderings during 14 years, have I seen this bird—and that in the same locality, the open grounds between Auckland and Kaipara. The *Apterix* is rather more plentiful, but, also, scarce. I saw *one*, a fortnight ago, in the secluded forests of the Ruahine range, and another answered its call. It ran like a hen when pursuing a flying insect. Unless there should prove to be a great disproportion between the sizes and colours of the male and female birds, there will, I think, be found 2 species of the *Apterix*; one, a smaller bird, and of a dirty dingy colour—of this species (or variety) I have only seen *one* specimen, which I (rather unwillingly) spared to the Colonial Treasurer in 1840.

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18. Scratching birds, like chickens; 19. Quail (*Coturnix novaezealandiæ*), extinct by 1875; 20. The NZ pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiæ*);

Of *Incessores* we have to fear the speedy extinction of the elegant *Neomorpha (acutirostris et crassirostris)*, the highly-prized “*Huia*” of the Natives. And that not only in consequence of the exterminating war carried on against it by the Natives, who generally assemble every spring in order to take them for the sake of their skins and tail feathers which are greatly valued as hair ornaments, but because it has only been known to inhabit a very limited district. It is now but rarely seen; yet, on one occasion, when travelling along the shores of Palliser Bay, I saw 4, which a Native had just taken upon some *Karaka (Corynocarpus laevigata)* trees nearby. I had agreed with a Native to snare & take alive some for me, which he did (and which, in fact, has been often by them done), but they soon died in confinement. The Natives invariably speak of this bird, as *being very difficult to keep alive*. It flies but a short distance at a time, and is easily captured. Another large bird of this order, *Glaucoptis cinerea*, the “*kokako*” of the Natives, (by some called a “crow”! and by others placed in the *Corvidae* Family—with which, surely, it has but little *Natural* affinity,) although at one time pretty generally distributed throughout the Island, bids fair to follow the fate of the others, and soon to become extinct. This bird is now very rarely to be met with.—One of its principal places of resort at present, is, in the dense sequestered woods of the Hikurangi, between Wangarei and the Bay of Islands. The two *Cuckoos*, (*Eudynamys* ——,<sup>21</sup> & *Cuculus nitens*,<sup>22</sup>) being migratory, will, doubtless, share a better fate. I was not a little and agreeably surprised, when on the silent and snowy heights of the Ruahine a few days ago, to hear both these birds. The *Eudynamys*, is almost invariably heard uttering its peculiar cries at intervals throughout the night. The Parrot Family, (represented by the different species of the genera *Nestor*, *Platycercus*, and *Trichoglossus*,) are still abundant in certain woods, particularly the genus *Nestor*, of which there may be two species. Yet these, according to the observation of the older Natives, are as nothing compared with their former numbers. Both *Platycercus Novae Zealandiae*<sup>23</sup> and *Tricho-*

*glossus aurifrons*<sup>24</sup> are rather scarce in these parts, being much more plentiful at the North, in the woods in the neighbourhood of the Bay of Islands.—

The *Gallatorial* order has here several representatives; a few of which are, I think, still unknown to Science. Some of the species of the genus *Charadrius*<sup>25</sup> keep in dense flocks, and haunt the sands of the sea-shore. Others, (genera *Hæmatopus*,<sup>26</sup> and *Himantopus*,<sup>27</sup>) lead a more solitary life, being rarely ever seen except in pairs; those of the former genus on the sea-coast; these of the latter on the open and stony banks of secluded rivers. In winter, however, the *Himantopus* leaves its seclusion, and boldly visits the habitation of man, seeking for works, &c., in every pool, even at one’s very doors.—Wilson’s description of the flying, cries, tumbling, &c., of the North American species, (*H. nigricollis*, Viell.)—*vide*, Am. Ornithology, vol. iii p.76,—agrees exactly with the habits and manners of the New Zealand bird. While others, such as *Botaurus australis*,<sup>28</sup> *Herodias Matook*,<sup>29</sup> &c., lead a peculiarly solitary life, never being seen even in pairs, and a single one but rarely. The *Herodias Matook* (*Matuku* of the New Zealanders), is to be found wading in retired estuaries and bays in the still waters of the sea. I have never heard its cry, and its flight and movements are so perfectly noiseless, that it might well serve for a personification of living Silence. The *Botaurus* (*Matukuhurepo* of the Natives), is, on the contrary, a noisy bird; and, like its British relative, generally to be found in secluded marshes, where it makes a loud booming noise throughout the night. A few years back I sent, through Sir W.J. Hooker, a specimen to the Linn. Soc., which I then considered to be another sp. of *Ardea* or *Botaurus*.

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21. Long tailed cuckoo (*Eudynamys taitensis*); 22. Shining cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx lucidus*); 23. Red crowned parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*); 24. Yellow crowned parakeet (*Cyanoramphus auriceps*); 25. Plovers and dotterels; 26. Oystercatchers; 27. Stilts; 28. Australasian bittern (*Botaurus poiciloptilus*); 29. Reef heron (*Egretta sacra*);

It was very much smaller than the *B. australis*, to which it is closely allied.<sup>30</sup> The *Porphyrio melanotus*,<sup>31</sup> is much more common than any of the three last-mentioned genera. This bird, too, inhabits deep *typha* swamps, where, at intervals during both day and night, it makes a loud noise, hid from observation by the close bulrushes; but in the winter season, when the waters are high, it is driven from its shelter to the neighbouring shores, where from 6 to 10 are sometimes to be seen running about like poultry, their lovely purple necks glistering in the sun. As they are great thieves, being very eager after the Natives' Maize and Potatoes, they are often snared and eaten; their flesh is said to be dark and coarse. The *Ocydromus australis* (*Weka* of the Natives), another solitary bird of this order, is often heard uttering its loud and plaintive cries during the evening and night, in the sequestered mountain forests, and among the sedgy watercourses of the desolate and stony hills. The crop of one, which my dog caught on the Ruahine range, was filled with the fruit of Araliaceous plants—probably of *Panax simplex* and *P. arboretum*. Its flesh was coarse and stringy, and skin remarkably thick. An elegant, and, hitherto, unnoticed, species of *Fulica*, (*F. Novae-Zelandiae*),<sup>32</sup> vide, Lond. Journ. Botany, vol. iii p.54.) is casually met with in the deep swamps, and, also, in the reedy sides of rivers. It is, however, a very shy creature. But of all the birds of this order inhabiting New Zealand, which have yet been detected, a species of *Ciconia*?<sup>33</sup> (or, perhaps, *Grus*?<sup>34</sup>) is, by far, the most interesting. During my residence in these parts, I have, fortunately, seen 5 specimens—3 of which were in a state of enlarged captivity. I could not, however, get so near to them as I wished, as they (though tamed) kept in the marshes, or among the reeds in the muddy sides of rivers. The Native Chiefs prize them highly on account of their feathers, which they use to ornament their hair. For this purpose they pluck them twice a year. The bird is, when standing erect, upwards of 3 feet high; bill of a greenish-yellow colour, and much longer than its head, its whole plumage snowy-white; tail feathers rather long soft and drooping; legs of a greenish-grey hue. It is a

shy retired bird, and feeds only on small fresh-water fishes. I offered £3. for one, to a poor Native who was in rags, but was refused! I have named it *Ciconia Novae Zelandiae*;<sup>35</sup> and yet hope to be able to secure a specimen. It is not, however, to be found wild in this locality. It is only now and then that one is to be seen flying. The Natives say it comes from the mountains in the Middle Island, which may, perhaps, be correct.

The *Natatorial* order,<sup>36</sup> has, doubtless, several genera in N. Zealand; particularly the family *Anatidae*.<sup>37</sup> The *Casarca variegata*<sup>38</sup> is a splendid bird, and breeds upon the banks of retired rivers, but is very difficult to rear, invariably escaping, sooner or later, to its loved wilds.—The old birds are always to be found in pairs; often in lonely spots on the seashore. They are not found to the North of this Bay, and are not plentiful in the Middle Island. I have seen from 7 to 9 ducklings with the parent birds at one time. When surprised with their young, the old birds will immediately tumble about in a hundred different ways, to draw your attention from their brood; while the young are seeking to escape in all directions. But, if water is near, they invariably dive into it, and swim a long way beneath the surface, when, rising for a moment, they dive again, and so escape. There are, I think, a few curious members of this Family yet unknown to Science; among which are, the *Wio*<sup>39</sup> (perhaps a species of *Rhyncaspis*) the *Papango*,<sup>40</sup> (*Querquedula*? sp.) and the *Pakaukuku*,<sup>41</sup> small solitary birds, here and there to be met with upon the streams of the

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30. Either the Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) or the extinct New Zealand bittern (*Ixobrychus novaeseelandiae*), last seen in the 1890s; 31. Pukeko (Australasian swamphen); 32. The extinct New Zealand coot (*Fulica prisca*); 33. Storks; 34. Cranes; 35. Kotuku, the White heron (*Ardea modesta*); 36. Pelicans; 37. Ducks, shelducks, swans, geese, mergansers, teals, shovellers; 38. Paradise shelduck (*Tadorna variegata*); 39. Whio, the Blue duck (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*); 40. The Black teal or NZ scaup (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*); 41. I can find no other reference to this duck;

mountain recesses far from the haunts of man. I have, also, seen, a graceful species of *Podiceps*?<sup>42</sup> (not, however, *rufipectus*,<sup>43</sup>) a large greyish bird with a fine crest.—A very fine species of *Aptenodytes* (widely different from *A. minor*,<sup>44</sup>) as large as a goose, with crested eyebrows.<sup>45</sup> And some other small but curious species of *genera novæ*, or of genera unknown to me. All of which, however, are rare, and only very seldom to be met with. I doubt not but a few years will suffice to complete the Ornithological List of this Island, when the Families, Laridæ,<sup>46</sup> Pelecanidæ,<sup>47</sup> and Procellariidæ,<sup>48</sup> will be increased;—the only families, indeed, (with the exception of Anatidæ,<sup>37</sup> and, perhaps, *Muscicapidæ*,<sup>49</sup>) which can, in my opinion, possibly receive any great addition;—especially as we get to know more and more of the Southernmost shores of the Groupe.

I have not mentioned the *Raptorial* order, as in that we are particularly barren, both of genera and species; possessing only those 3 Birds already published, *Falco harpe*,<sup>50</sup> *F. brunnea*,<sup>51</sup> and *Athene Novæ Zealandiæ*<sup>52</sup>—unless, as I suspect, there should prove to be another species of *Falco*, or, possibly, of *Nisus*,<sup>53</sup> or *Milvus*.<sup>54</sup>

I have already, my Lord, spoken of the fast disappearing of nearly all of the genera of the *Rasorial* order from N. Zealand. Such, however, is not confined to that, but is equally applicable—in a greater or lesser degree—to every, order—excepting only a portion of the *Natatores*,—i.e. the Sea-birds. Those Families and genera which have a greater capacity for escaping from their many foes suffer least, and *vice versa*. Their foes are, Man, Dogs, Pigs, Cats, Rats, Hawks, and Owls; and last, though not least, the frequent and extensive fires of the Natives every spring season; through which leagues of forest, plain, and marsh, vegetation is annually consumed. The wild Pigs, Cats, Dogs, & Rats, (all introduced) devour the eggs and young brood in countless numbers every year. The natural prey of the Hawks & Owls, of this country, is small birds. And Man (the Native, man, woman, and child,) kills always and never spares all that comes with-

in his reach, whether for food, for ornament, or for sheer sport. Hence it is that the *Rasorial* birds, in particular, are all but extinct. Wherever I have gone—whether on the uninhabited Islets off the shore, the unfrequented mountain's brow, the depths of the primæval forest, or the secluded morass—I have every where found numberless traces of those foreign pests, Rats & Cats. Nor is the mischief confined to the Class *Aves*: of the 3 terrestrial mammals which N. Zealand possessed, two have, I fear, been entirely lost—the Dog, and the Rat (? *Arvicola*, sp.). The Dog has been so blended and crossed with all kinds and varieties as no longer to be discriminated.—In fact, it is to be doubted, whether the Native Dog was ever truly indigenous, as I believe it was never, at any time, to be met with wild. The Rat, however, was truly indigenous, and existed in countless thousands, in every grassy plain and sedgy hill, dwelling peaceably with the *Coturnix* and *Apterix*. Now, however, not one is to be obtained, although I have often offered large reward for one. The third mammal, the Bat (perhaps 2, or more, species,) still exists, owing to its fortunately having wings, but is, also, become very scarce. The orders *Reptilia*, and *Mollusca*, have also suffered greatly: animals of the

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42. Grebes—he probably saw the Australasian Crested Grebe (*Podiceps australis*). He did send a specimen of this to Derby;

43. *Podiceps rufipectus* is the New Zealand dabchick; 44. The Little (Blue) Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*); 45. Colenso is probably referring here to the Fiordland Crested Penguin he found on the beach in Hawkes Bay; 46. Gulls; 47. Pelicans; 48. Shearwaters; 49. A group that includes thrushes and black-birds; Colenso knew the now extinct native thrush, Piopio (*Turnagra capensis*); 50. The New Zealand falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiæ*). There may have been other extinct and undescribed species of *Falco*; 51. Now regarded as a synonym for *Falco novaeseelandiæ*; 52. The Morepork, the little New Zealand owl; 53. *Accipiter nisus* is the Eurasian Sparrowhawk; 54. *Milvus migrans* is the Black kite, a vagrant.

former order, of the *Saurian*<sup>55</sup> Family, literally swarmed throughout the Island; but now many of the larger genera are all but extinct, through the continual inroads of their adversaries—Pigs & Cats. And of the *Mollusca*—particularly the Families *Pulmonea*,<sup>56</sup> *Cardiacea*,<sup>57</sup> and *Inclusa*<sup>58</sup>—several genera are becoming exceedingly scarce. For, not only have the Land and Fresh-water species been diligently and constantly consumed, but daily and nightly upon the ebbing of every tide, droves of pigs frequent the sandy shores in search of their wonted supply. I have often been astonished by the sagacity displayed by this mammal, as well as at the strength of its jaws in crushing with ease the thickest shells, apparently quite free from pain or inconvenience in its tongue and mouth, although continually filled with sharp fragments and laminae of broken shell.—So, again, in the Vegetable Kingdom; several *Orchideous* and other plants having edible roots, and which formerly grew so very plentifully as to afford food for man, are now all but entirely lost—their roots having been eagerly sought after by the innumerable herds of wild pigs which infest the whole extent of the Country; while other smaller plants, which grew upon the surface of the soil, have also, if not quite disappeared, become exceedingly scarce, through the continual uprooting of their foes, and the equally fatal fires of the Natives.—

Before, however, I conclude, I should, perhaps, mention some of the very great difficulties now attendant upon the procuring of a living specimen of any of the larger and more valued Birds.—For, my Lord, in addition to their extreme scarcity, and to the few which remain having retreated before their foes to the more inaccessible parts of the mountain forests, (where food for the Collector is not to be found,) is the very great disinclination of the older Natives—who alone know their haunts, their food, their calls which they imitate, and the manner of snaring them—to go forth upon such an errand—even when tempted with gold! It is not the apparent fruitlessness of the search, nor is it the smallness of the reward in their estimation, which keeps them inactive; but it is that peculiar apathetic

state of mind—unknown to Englishmen, though common, I believe, to all savage Nations—which knowing no *present* want, cannot, by any means short of despotic, be roused to exertion. An *old* N. Zealander's wants are very few, and soon supplied, and then he sleeps in the sun. A *young* N. Zealander's wants are more—much more—but his disinclination to labour, and actual disability to those works in which his fathers excelled, is far greater than that of the older ones. So that, an *old* Native will not go because he has no present want to send him forth; and a *young* Native will not go, because he does not know *how* to go about it. Nor should the present (and, I greatly fear, prospective) unsettled state of the country, be altogether lost sight of; as I much doubt the safety of any one who should just now happen to be wandering about among the Tribes as a Collector.—

I have intimated, my Lord, the great difficulty which I have experienced in attempting to keep some of the N. Zealand birds—especially the genera *Philedon*, *Anthornis*, *Rhipidura*, *Miro*, *Platycercus*, *Columba*, *Botaurus*, &c.,—which, doubtless, in great measure was owing to my ignorance of their natural food, or inability to supply it when known. The genera, *Philedon*, *Anthornis*, and *Platycercus*, are, however, very subject to fits when in a state of confinement, which soon carry them off. And I have, also, been informed by the Natives, (who anciently delighted in taming all they could, taking no small pains therein,) that they could only succeed with a very few,—such as *Nestor*, *Larus*, *?Ciconia*, *Philedon*, and (rarely) *Apterix*. And, if I recollect aright, H.M.S. “Buffalo”, when here loading with spars, in 1834, took away a very great number of living Birds, especially of the genera *Philedon*, and *Platycercus*, not one of which, (if my information is correct,) reached England alive—

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55. Lizards; 56. Land snails; 57. Cockles and related molluscs; 58. Bivalve molluscs (pipi, toheroa, mussels, tuatua);

save one (*Philedon cincinnatus*,<sup>59</sup> Cuv.) which happened to belong to one of the fore-castle-men!

And now, my Lord, in conclusion, allow me to say:— If I should be at any time so fortunate as to procure a *living* specimen of “*Kakapo*”, *Apterix*, *Coturnix*, or ?*Ciconia*, or of any rare or curious birds, I will do my best to preserve and send it alive to your Lordship. And, should you wish to have the skins (roughly dried) of any species, I will strain every nerve to procure and send them to you. And, should I have a little more leisure by-and-bye, or should I be removed to a Station nearer woods and nearer to a Harbour—and health by graciously vouchsafed—I will then most cheerfully do my utmost to send to your Lordship a Case of living plants. The Country round about me here, for very many miles, being particularly barren in Trees, Shrubs, and Curious Plants.—

I trust your Lordship will graciously pardon this long and tedious, and (perhaps) uninteresting Letter—which I have written by snatches—and permit me to subscribe myself,

Your Lordship’s  
most obedient and Hble. Servt.,  
William Colenso.

To  
The Rt. Hon The  
Earl of Derby,  
Knowsley.

Part of the Earl’s letter in reply is preserved in the Alexander Turnbull Library collections [91-169-1/6],

Knowsley  
Novr. 4th. 1848

Rev Sir

*By yesterday’s Post I was favoured with your Letter of 19th. Jany. from the Mission Station near Cape Kidnappers for which I am very much obliged to you, tho I will not deny that it has occasioned me some disappointment to find that circumstances are not likely to enable you to render to me the assistance which from several of my friends I had been encouraged to hope you might have been able to afford to me. I am not likely, & I am rather less so now I have read your Letter to undertake the responsibility of sending any person out to the Islands of New Zealand as a collector for me. Still however I will venture to avail myself of the aid you kindly express yourself as willing to give to any person who for such purpose may come within the scope fo your local influence, & will request you to extend it to Mr. Strange, who has for some time lately been employed by Mr Gould as a Collector in the Australian Provinces & from whom I received a letter also by the same Post as your’s from Sydney of the date of 21st. of last April in which he tells me that he was then daily expecting the arrival of HM Ship Acheron Capt. Stokes in which he had taken a passage to Auckland & from thence he shd. proceed to the middle Isld. of New Zealand, where he considered himself quite even of meeting with a large species of Apterix standing not less than 4 feet in height. If he shd. as is most probable fall in your way during his researches in New Zealand may I hope you will lend him your countenance & aid in his endeavour to procure objects of Nat. History. He has hitherto since poor Gilbert’s death been collecting skins &*

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59. Tui (*Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*).

materials for Gould's Australian Works, & latterly has employed himself in obtaining, in conjunction with his Brother, (who at this moment I understand is occupied in the neighbourhood of Darling Downs in a similar manner) collecting living specimens of Birds & Mammalia to be added to my Collections here. Mr. Strange tells me that he expects to be back at Sydney from N. Zeal. in February next to meet his Brother & to leave that Country finally on his return to England in March with what he can in life. I will hope should he meet with you, you will be kind enough to put him as far as may be done, in the way of obtaining some of the interesting productions of N.Z. & especially those which your Letter has strongly excited my desire to obtain specimens, perhaps increased by the apparent improbability of success at least in any material degree as shewn by the copious & interesting details of your letter. I will own that the tribes which to me are the most interesting & desirable are with one exception, the Anatidae, what appear to be the less likely to be successfully procured, much as the Gallinaceous,

Rosales & Grallae. The Psittacidae are generally of less importance to me, as they are more easily procured & I already possess a tolerably large collection of these, but those belonging to that Order from New Zealand. are as seldom to be met with that all species are very

**John Gilbert** collected for **John Gould** in Australia and many of his specimens survive in the Merseyside County Museums, donated by the 13th Early of Derby in 1851. Gilbert lost his life in 1845 on the Leichhardt Expedition from Brisbane to Port Essington.

More than \$600,000 worth of precious Maori artifacts were sold at auction in Paris in December 2010. Included was a 13cm hei tiki carved from greenstone. It was collected by naturalist **Frederick Strange** during a stopover of the HMS **Acheron** in Auckland in 1849.

desireable to me, but especially that very rare one recently described the night Parrot, to which Gray has given the name *Strigops habroptilus*. Its native name you doubtless know is Ker.. Ker.. Po.

I find the native name of the *Strigops* or Night Parrot is as given in Dr. Dieffenbach's New Zealand Ker...Ker...Poo, but I fear this wd. be as difficult to obtain as any of those you name. I will notwithstanding all apprehensions set down a List of names from the Catal. in Dieffenbach's Book, which wd. be very desireable underscoring those which wd. be most so.

<i>Falco harpe</i> or <i>Australis</i>	Native name	Kaha
“ <i>brunneae</i>	nat. name	Karearea
<i>Athene N. Zealandiae</i>	nat. name	Ruru-ruru
<i>Neomorpha Gouldii</i>	“ “	Huia or Hia
<i>Prothemadera N. Seelandiae</i>	“ “	Toui
<i>Keropia crassirostris</i>	“ “	Pio-pio
<i>Miro longipes</i>	“ “	Miro-Miro
—& <i>albifrons</i>		
<i>Callaeas cinerea</i>	“ “	Kokako
<i>Trichoglossus auriform</i>	“ “	Kakariki
<i>Nestor meridionalis</i>	“ “	Kaka
<i>Eudynamis Taitensis</i>	“ “	Kohyghissa & Koekoia
<i>Chrysoingy lucidus</i>	“ “	Piwiwaruoa
<i>Corophaga N. Seelandiae</i>	“ “	Kukupu
— & <i>orgetone</i>		
<i>Colmonix N. Zealandiae</i>	nat. name	
<i>Apteryx australis</i>	“ “	Kiwi or Kiwi-Kiwi
<i>Charadrius xanthocheilus</i>		Tuturuatu
<i>Haematopus picatus</i>		Toria
<i>Botaurus inlanotis</i>		Matuku
<i>Ardea jugularis</i>		Matook
<i>Himantopus N. Zealandiae</i>		Tutumata
<i>Ocydromus Australis</i>		Weka or Weka-weka
<i>Rallus assimilis</i>		Konini or Katatai
“ <i>Dieffenbachii</i>		Moerikio
<i>Casarka variegata</i>		Putangi-tangi
<i>Anas superciliosa</i>		Huparera

*Malacorhynchus Forsterosum*  
*Spatula Rhynchotis*  
*Fuligula N. Zeelandiae*

*He weeza*  
*Hepatiki*

The letter is unfinished and ends here, the signature no doubt purloined by a trophy hunter long ago.

Colenso did send a bird to the Earl: Clemency Fisher, Senior Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at National Museums Liverpool emailed that there is one specimen in the collection “which we received as part of the 13th Earl of Derby Collection, which founded this institution in 1851. It is a New Zealand Grebe, which Lord Derby obtained from the Rev. Colenso in 1849”—the year after their letters.

The Australasian crested grebe is now *Podiceps cristatus australis*, in te reo, Kāmana, whose black headcrest (tikitiki) was taken to adorn men of rank.

#### References

1. Kew Directors' Correspondence LXXIII: p53; ATL Micro-Ms-Coll-10 Reel 3: E361.
2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward\\_Smith-Stanley,\\_13th\\_Earl\\_of\\_Derby](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Smith-Stanley,_13th_Earl_of_Derby)

**Note:** After writing this I became aware that Colenso's letter has been published—see Abbott, I 2012. Depletion of the avifauna of the North Island of New Zealand: an 1840s perspective. In Davis WE, Recher HF, Boles WE (eds) *Contributions to the history of Australasian ornithology*, vol. II. Cambridge, Mass. Pp51–88.

Edward Smith-Stanley, 13th Earl of Derby ►



#### Colenso's grebe at Liverpool ►

MUS. DERBIANUM, LIVERPOOL. *Podiceps rufipectus*,  
G.R.Gr. New Zealand Rev. Mr. Colenso, E. Mus.  
Derby. 3325.

Presd. by Rev. Mr. Colenso July 2, 1849.  
From New Zealand.



# Enteritis in 1875 & Guillain-Barré syndrome in 1876 in Napier ?

On 5 May 1875 Colenso wrote to Andrew Luff in London,

*I have heaps of things to tell you of—if I could see you—but I must pick and cull for a letter.—First then, of the sad mortality, which has been too common here ever since Jany. 1st. As I told you in my last, it was mostly young children at the beginning, but for the last month or so it has been young men & women,—healthy, strong, apparently—and youths—and children too. The no. of deaths is largely in excess of the births: I will just note a few whom you know:—*

*Mrs Orr (young Orr's wife)*

*Tim Sullivan*

*Young Northe*

*Young Lingard*

*Young Garry (3rd son)*

*Young Webb (eldest of H.E.W's.)*

*Young Jacob: a clerk in the N. Bank.*

*A young man at Dolbel's, whom he brought out!*

*Minnie Parker!*

*Miss Firth (F's. niece, 7 months out)*

*& Several young Immigrants, newly arrived.*

*Edmund Sutton (Watt's) was all but gone—but is now convalescent. At P(hillip) D(olbel)'s. there are 7 down now with severe illness—& P.D. and his Brother shadows! just worn out: it is feared his niece must also succumb.—*

*The disorder appears to be a kind of low fever,—which begins insidiously, & in a few days all is over! It is common every where—inland—S. at Wellington and all the S. Provinces, & just as fatal: also in Melbourne, where, too, the deaths exceed the births.—*

*Our med. men are nearly worn out; charitable aid—for sick, suffering, families (Immigrants) deprived of fathers, &c &c—much called for,—& a good response made.*

No, it probably wasn't *Campylobacter*: typhoid fever was especially prevalent in fast-growing towns, where cesspits often leaked into water supplies. Infants and young children were especially vulnerable. Registered typhoid deaths in New Zealand peaked at 323 in 1875 [<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/epidemics/3>]. Measles and scarlet fever were also epidemic in that year.

Colenso wrote again to Luff on 9 March 1876, “Mr Tylee is got round again, & just at office”; on 5 April, “Tylee is still very unwell”; and on 2 May, “We have still more of sickness & death than we could wish—young Butler (who was in Tel. off.) died of Diphtheria, 4 days ago; & poor Mrs Locke is very dangy. ill with it, & has been so for more than a month; Tylee is still holding out, but his legs are paralysed!”

We cannot be sure Tylee had diphtheria, nor that the paralysis of his legs was Guillain-Barré syndrome, but it seems very likely. Tylee (Hawke's Bay Provincial Treasurer) recovered. Colenso (Hawke's Bay School Inspector) wrote to Luff again on 28 June 1876,

*Your letter came in a dreadfully busy time—school vacation close at hand, and still several to visit! & Tylee wanted all Teachers' (& other school) accounts in with him by yesterday—as he may have to send in an account of payments to Head Quarters by 30<sup>th</sup> .!! So I have been at work night & day, & Sundays too!*

**John Thomas Tylee** 1827–1884 was born in Bath, died in Napier and is buried in Napier Old Cemetery. He arrived with his wife at Port Chalmers in 1849 on the *Mariner*, was in the Whanganui area by 1851 and farmed at Parewanui near Bulls in the early 1850s. He was Clerk to the Bench of Magistrates in Whanganui in 1856 and Head of the commissariat for the British troops garrisoned at York & Rutland stockades, Whanganui. Historic Tylee House at Whanganui is named after him. He went to Napier around 1861 and held various positions—Curator of Estates of Deceased Persons, Hawkes Bay (1870), Deputy Commissioner of Crown Lands (1871), Sheriff (1872–76), Provincial Treasurer (1871–76), Commissioner of Crown Lands, Wellington. Remarried in 1880.

[<http://www.airgale.com.au/tylee/d4.htm>].

**Guillain–Barré syndrome** is an autoimmune disorder, the body's immune system attacking the peripheral nerves and damaging their myelin sheaths. It is often triggered by an infection. The symptoms are typically changes in sensation with muscle weakness, beginning in the feet and hands, often resulting in paraparesis—paralysis of the legs. Recovery may take weeks but most do recover fully.

French physician Jean-Baptiste Octave Landry first described it in 1859. In 1916, Georges Guillain, Jean Alexandre Barré, and André Strohl diagnosed two soldiers with self-limiting acute paralysis. Dr Guillain would go on to become professor of neurology at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris.

## The trials of lexicographers

In August's *eColenso* we touched briefly on the difficulties William Colenso experienced with those who had commissioned his *Māori Lexicon*. On 20 August 2016 *The Spectator* carried a review (p32) by Christopher Howse of Peter Gilliver's *The making of the Oxford English Dictionary* and there are some apparent similarities between the experiences of James Murray 1837–1915 in that work and Colenso in his.

It was “an unequalled task that was his life, and eventually his death.... Working, working, working, 90 hours a week for years....”

“Yet the biggest struggle was not with the paper but with large human characters mobbing him.... On one side was Frederick Furnivall (who) had a flawed knowledge of philology but unbounded energy which made him meddle tactlessly and endlessly.... On Murray's other side were the delegates of the Oxford University Press, the publishers. They exhibited in its most florid form the defects of management by committee, forever scolding Murray for being too slow or too voluminous, while cheeseparing in a way that robbed him of efficiency. Months were spent quibbling over shares of future profits; but no profits materialised.”

By 1896 “D” was done—after 17 years' work.

Like Colenso, Murray was touchy and unable to delegate and “Gilliver leaves a vivid impression of the effects of personality on the titanic task of making a dictionary.... Many of the best dictionary-makers were, like him, not university men... or were outsiders.”

Colenso's scolders, cheeseparers and quibblers were the politicians rather than the publishers, but their management was just as defective and proved deadly to his endeavour.