

*S. Marsden to J. Pratt, 6 November 1815*

Parramatta Nov<sup>r</sup> 6. 1815

Rev<sup>d</sup> & Dear Sir

About a week since I closed my Letters to you, to send by the Northampton, as she was expected then to sail but finding she has been detained in Consequence of a Vessel arriving from the South Sea Islands, I deem it necessary to drop you another Line. A few days ago a Colonial Vessel arrived from New Zealand, and brought me Letters from the Settlers dated Oct<sup>r</sup> 4. 1815. I am happy to inform you that the Settlers were all well and the Settlement going on very prosperously. At the same time I am sorry to acquaint you, that the Colonial Vessels, as well as some of the Whalers treat the Natives exceeding ill, and may endanger the Safety of the men and Settlers who are resident at the Bay of islands— From the best Information that I am able at present to obtain, the last Colonial Vessel must have committed the most dreadful Crimes on the Coast of New Zealand. Five men belonging to the Vessel were killed in the Quarrels they had with the Natives, and from their own Account, not less than 100 of the Natives— This happened not far from the River Thames, an Account of which had reached the Settlers at the Bay of Islands, and greatly distressed them. After this affair the Vessel touched at the Bay of Islands on her return to Port Jackson [f] and it is more than probable would have been cut off there for the Crimes they had committed, had not the Active been lying in the Harbour: and the Settlers there. The Settlers express no Alarm for the[ir] personal Safety tho they lament much the evils that these Crimes occasion.

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The Natives at the Bay of Islands were much offended with the Europeans who had murdered so many of their Countrymen. But it is in vain for me to attempt to bring any of these men to Justice. Nothing can be done unless the British Parliament will take into Consideration the unprotected State of both the Missionaries and Natives in all the Islands in these Seas. The Europeans may at present, and do commit every Crime with Impunity; and there is no Law either to restrain or punish them. The Natives have no means but to repel Force by Force. — The Europeans have at the same time greatly the advantage over them on Account of their Guns. Mr Wilberforce did mention in a Letter I had the Honor to receive from him, that there was some Hope that Government would have an armed Vessel in these Seas for the Protection of the Natives and the Missionaries who are employed amongst them. One master returned last week, from the Islands, and had lost his vessel, and not brought back one single European who sailed with him. When I asked the owner what were become of the Ships Company he said, he could not tell, but that two Boats and their Crews had been cut off he supposed at New Zealand, but could not get any clear [f] Account from the Master — I think it is very probable that these men are now living somewhere amongst the Natives. There must be numbers of Europeans in these Islands should any Inquiry ever take place about them. The only effectual Remedy for these evils, would be for Government to have a Vessel in these Seas in order to prevent the Commission of Crimes. I shall refer you for further Information to Mr Nicholas, who will be able to

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throw some Light upon this Subject— I should feel no Hesitation in visiting any Part of New Zealand. The Natives will not allow themselves to be robbed, and shot, and insulted, and their wives taken from them without retaliation. They are men of great minds and will not submit to be ill treated, with Impunity. I am anxious to learn from the Settlers the particulars of the late Quarrels between the Natives and the Vessel. Tho' it is more than 100 miles from where they live, yet I have no doubt, but the Natives will visit the Settlers and state their Complaints to them should they understand for what Purpose they are living at the Bay of Islands. It is much to be lamented that no legal [sic] notice is taken here of any Crimes however great committed in these Seas— This calls loudly for the Interference of the Legislature in order that Justice may be administered in some way or other. I will transmit you the Particulars as soon as I can, as I am not without my fears that these wicked men will very much injure the Settlement at the Bay of Islands by their Acts of Fraud and Violence. It also appears to me strange that a Master of a Vessel should sail from Port Jackson, and return with the Loss of the [f] whole of his Crew, or a Part, and no public Investigation take Place to know by what means these men were killed or lost— I have made several attempts to obtain Redress for the injured Natives, but have always failed: as the Persons who were appointed to investigate these Complaints at all times alledged that there was no law to punish the guilty. I trust the Society will take this important Subject into their serious Consideration; as I see nothing in the way to

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prevent the Spread of the Gospel, and the Knowledge of the civil Arts, but the Crimes of Europeans. You will hear how greatly the Mission to Otaheite has been blessed. In the Society Islands many hundreds have turned from the worship of dumb Idols to serve the true and living God. The Spread of the Gospel amongst these poor Heathens is wonderful indeed. King Pomare writes like an Apostle. I shall send Home his Letter to the Society addressed to the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Burder— It will give great Encouragement now to the pious world. When the missionaries about five years ago returned from Otaheite giving up all for lost, and never intending to return, I had much conversation with them relative to the Mission— At this time their Spirits were broke and they despaired of the work. After a time they recovered their Strength a little, and their Spirits— I wished them to return to their Station; as I was by no means satisfied in my own mind with the Reasons they gave for relinquishing the Cause. At length it was agreed upon and they sailed for Otaheite with fear and trembling— I was uneasy also, lest they should not prosper— but now we all rejoice with exceeding Joy— I am D<sup>r</sup> Sir Yours truly

Sam<sup>l</sup> Marsden

Rev<sup>d</sup> J. Pratt