

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

Marsden's Vale, Bay of Islands

New Zealand Nov. 10. 1823

My Dear Sir.

The time is fast approaching when our venerable and valued friend will leave this to rejoin his family. Numerous and varied have been the scenes which have presented themselves before us, and though I know it would be your wish to have as many particulars as possible, yet from the unsettled state in which we have been, our numberless calls and occupations, I shall be unable to mention minute circumstances. All our eyes, hands, and feet have been totally occupied, from our landing till nearly the present time; and it is only now that I can obtain an opportunity of retirement from the bustle of a new Station.

On Sunday, the 3d of August, we worked into the Bay of Islands, and narrowly escaped shipwreck by striking with considerable force against a sunken rock; but the blow being in an oblique direction, we did not sustain much damage. The sensations of our minds were great upon beholding the canoes with our new Countrymen, with their reddled bodies and bushy hair. They manifested great joy when the ship drew near any of them, but none were on board till we came to an anchor. About two o'Clock we were in sight of Ranghee-hoo, a singularly looking place, one house above another, it being built directly upon the side of a high hill; it was, however, exceedingly pleasing to view English dwellings in so rude a spot, with the banner flying, as the signal of the sacred day.

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

About sunset we anchored directly between Kiddeekiddee and Rangheehoo; and, though the whole day had been occupied by the working of the ship, and in the greatest confusion and bustle, yet we had the satisfaction of assembling in Mr Marsden's cabin for prayer and the celebration of the Holy Communion: in all, seven, being Mr Marsden, the Rev. Mr Turner, Mrs Turner and Mr Hobbs, Wesleyan Missionaries, Mrs Fairburn (wife of a Carpenter going down with us) Mrs Williams and myself. In the evening we assembled the Seamen (as had been the case every evening during the passage) and addressed them upon the importance of eternal things. Their attention was very great upon these occasions, and they came with apparent cheerfulness; but they were as greatly depraved as any set of men I had seen out of Port Jackson.

The first news we heard was that all the Chiefs were gone to the war to the river Thames, and Mr Leigh to Wangarooa. This gave a considerable check to our plans, that being the station to which Mr Marsden had intended to have gone.

The following morning the deck was crowded with Natives, friends of Mr Marsden, among whom we were glad to discover several Chiefs. We afterwards went to Rangheehoo, where we saw Mr Hall, Mr King, and Mr Cowell. While here Mr Kendall's eldest Son arrived. I felt greatly his situation: a fine, interesting young man. His father had called at the ship a long time before day to leave particulars. We found all well belonging to the Mission.

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

Upon returning to the ship we met Mr Butler, who kindly proposed that Mrs Williams and the children should go the following morning to his house, which was thankfully accepted.

It became my next thought and care what Station we should select for ourselves. This is a case of much serious consideration, as an individual cannot remove from one place to another: as a proof, we had the case of Mr Shepherd. [f] Upon consulting with the Members, some proposed one Station, and some another, till we were obliged to explore for ourselves.

The first place we went to was a beautiful situation, on the banks of a fine river. Upon approaching it we were struck with the appearance of, as we thought, vast quantities of wild ducks, which had been reported to be in this quarter; but upon drawing nearer, we discovered that it was a considerable quantity of children in the water collecting cockles, and upon landing we were surrounded by great numbers. The place was a very desirable one, but was afterwards objected to, on account of there not being any stated Chiefs and the Natives being disposed to plunder.

After much consultation with different Chiefs upon the subject, Mr Marsden and myself went again to another district close to the former place, under a chief of great authority, but absent at the war: he is well known to Mr Marsden, having been at Parramatta. The spot was, in every respect, desirable, having several acres upon a flat, and surrounded by high hills, & children in every direction.

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

Having concluded these steps, we immediately proceeded to land the Stores &c. The weather was much against us, raining and blowing nearly the whole time; and no place to deposit them in. However, by the assistance of Mr Hall, Mr Butler, and Mr King, we had a store walled round in one day, in which we collected all the property. Here Mr Fairburn and myself took up our station at night, under a tarpaulin, and reposed as quietly as we had ever done; and although the wall was but eight feet high, without a covering; yet none attempted to disturb us, or anything belonging to us. The Natives always retired at Sunset and returned at day-light, and manifested every disposition to serve us, but always looked [f] for the hootoo (payment). We took our repast and held our devotions in the centre of the village; and it was very pleasing to see with what attention the people observed all our proceedings. We sat in a semi-circle on one side of a fire, and they in a semi-circle on the other; and did not express any desire to possess anything they saw with us. A Chief who accompanied us, tabooed one of their huts for the use of the white people, in which was deposited all our articles for present use; no one was observed so much as to look into it.

While we were engaged in arranging our things, the Natives were busy in building a rush-house for me, 40 feet long, & 18 wide, having four apartments in it. We are in all eleven persons at this Station, Mr Fairburn, his wife, & three children, Mrs Williams, myself, and our three children, a Man sent by Mr Marsden to assist as most necessary: we are daily expecting another to join us, and Mrs Williams is expecting to be confined hourly.

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

Mr Fairburn came down formerly to assist in building Mr Butler's house, but returned some months since to the Colony. He now, by Mr Marsden's approbation, has accompanied us. I believe some unfavourable representations were made to you respecting him; but upon the observation I have been enabled to make both of him and his wife, I consider them likely to be very useful, and that the representations did not proceed from the best of principles. He is a good worker, young, quiet, civil, obliging, active, zealous, and not only of excellent morals, but I have every reason to hope under serious impressions, and by no means avaricious.. The necessity of his being here is obvious, having none of the Missionaries with us, and Mr Wm Hall declining any Carpenter's work, beyond that at his own Station. The buildings here will not occupy much time, nor stand at great expense; and after that, I think Mr Fairburn would be most [f] usefully engaged in teaching the Native Youths the civil arts. He is a wheelwright by trade, and I am assured will readily turn his hand to anything for the advantage of the mission. What I have said of him, will apply to M-r Fairburn, who has expressed a wish to take part in the School, which we shall establish immediately, upon having a building for the children to sleep in, and provisions for them, which will be in a very short time.

Several Committees have been held, and the affairs of the mission look much better. Mr Marsden will give you the full particulars.

I shall now return to a few remarks on Mr Kendall. The sight of him and his young and numerous family, could not but excite a feeling of great

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

compassion. He appeared cast down under a sense of his crimes; and to feel the displeasure of the Committee, but I was greatly struck at the plain and open manner in which he spoke on these melancholy subjects before his children, wife and daughters. He complained of the severity of the Committee, and uttered bitter charges against the whole body of Missionaries, Mr Kemp excepted. I scarcely saw him again till he was about to embark on board the Brampton, and was then thrown into his company in order to receive the stores he was to deliver up.

On Saturday the 6th of September, I took leave of Mr Marsden on board the Brampton, who was embarked with Mr Kendall & family and Mr & Mrs Cowell and were to sail the following day, being that day twelvemonth from our embarking on board the Lord Sidmouth in the Thames. But it would appear that Mr Marsden had not yet completed his work and therefore was not permitted to move.

After I took my leave of him, I went to Kiddeekiddee, to spend the Sabbath with Mrs Williams & family, being still there. Towards evening it came on to blow fresh from the east, which [f] is directly into the Bay. The following morning it was still blowing fresh, with every appearance of a gale. With this wind, a heavy sea generally sets into the Bay. We considered that it would be impossible for the ship to move from the anchorage. The better part of Sunday, it blew hard with heavy rain, also on Monday, and on Tuesday morning (it being more moderate) while engaged in family prayer, the Natives ran in, in great consternation, calling out in their language, that the ship was

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

broke; the ship was broke! At first I knew not but that all were lost, as must certainly have been the case had they got out of the Bay; but we in a short time made out that Mr Marsden and Mr & Mrs Leigh were safely landed at Kiddee Kiddee. This was a catastrophe we did not look for, nor had we then time to reflect upon it, but jumping into the boats, three of which were then there, we went down the river to render what assistance we could to those on board, & to restrain the Natives from any acts of violence.

The ship had run between two reefs, and the breakers appeared all round her, and as it still blew strong, with a heavy sea, it was not prudent to run alongside, nor did [it] seem necessary, as she could not fall to pieces. Mr Butler with two boats remained under the lee of an Island. I was obliged to pass the wreck, though a heavy sea was running, my own Station being left without any responsible person at it. As soon as the weather was abated, the boats were on board and assistance given as long as necessary. When canoes could approach her, she was surrounded, but several Chiefs being on board, the plundering disposition of the Natives was restrained scarcely one was allowed by them to ascend the sides, [f] and the Captain and Crew were enabled to clear the ship of all her stores and unrig the two remaining masts as quietly as if she had been in any part of England. Mr Cowell returned to Ranghee-hoo; Mr Kendall to his late residence.

In the course of a fortnight, Shunghee returned from the war, and immediately paid his respects to Mr Marsden. He spoke of Mr Kendall, but did not oppose his retiring to the Colony. Mr Marsden has had much conversation

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

with him. He appears well disposed towards the Missionaries, and none of those sanguinary deeds have been practised as heretofore. Great numbers were killed in their fights, but I have not heard of any sacrifices since their return. Shunghee narrowly escaped; he was struck thrice; the helmet preserved him once. He lost a very considerable force, and had all his canoes burnt. He has asked for Mr Clarke, and given Mr Marsden every reason to believe that he will not be asked to make or mend muskets, but if he comes, he is to go to the Kiddee Kiddee. Mr Marsden, I believe, will send him, but without working implements.

Mr Marsden and myself have thought considerably upon the benefit of having a sailing boat, for the purpose of visiting the coast in the summer season. At present very little is known beyond the Bay of Islands, and even within it, hundreds of Natives but seldom see any of us. Were we to extend our intercourse it would prepare the way for Missionaries being placed amongst them in time, which could not be accomplished without it, but by a gradual advance from these Stations. Also, the great difficulty, expense, and loss in conveying stores from the ships when they arrive with them, to the several stations, from various circumstances, seem to call for a vessel of this kind. Mr. Marsden has, therefore, authorized us to build a large [f] boat about 30 feet keel.

But we have more extensive nautical views. In considering the wishes of the Committee in the re-establishment of the Seminary at Parramatta for the New Zealand youths, it is evident their conveyance must be very uncertain,

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

very limited, & also very expensive: but these, perhaps, are amongst the least of what appears to us. The Natives are increasing daily in their desire of seeing the Colony, and, being an enterprising people, in order to gratify their strong desires, they prevail with some Captain to take them on board, who makes them pay extravagantly, either in pigs or dollars, and the society into which they are thrown is universally of the worst kind; they soon fall into their habits, and the seamen being unconstrained delight in leading them into great abominations. Sad examples can be produced of the evils of their communication and intercourse with the seamen who touch in these harbours.—

In order then to counteract these evils, we have seriously considered the expediency of having a vessel of a hundred tons, to be built here, by the present Carpenters Puckey and Fairburn, with the assistance of the Natives. Timber is brought to the spot for less than an axe a log. Timber and knees may be cut by Puckey, she may be iron fastened, and built for comparatively a small sum. And lest the expenses should be considered great, I would undertake to navigate her to the Colony and back once a year, which need not exceed six weeks or two months, and we consider that two English Seamen would be sufficient to belong to her, and when she might be in this harbour, one of the men or both might be engaged [f] in some public duty: the remaining complement of her crew should be composed of Natives who make the best of seamen.

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

The privilege also of the Missionaries visiting the Colony occasionally, is very great, and would be of considerable relief to them. For a man to remain here six or seven years without seeing civil society requires more than ordinary strength of mind, and an abundance of the grace of God.

I must now return to Mr Kendall, who has strangely conducted himself lately. Since Shunghee's return, much conversation has passed between them, as is obvious from Shunghee's behaviour after Mr Kendall had been spending Sunday the 16th of October and part of Monday under his roof. He has since shewn his determination of not accompanying Mr Marsden to the Colony, a vessel having arrived and been taken up by Mr Marsden and Capt. Moore of the Brampton to convey them to the Colony. His language to Mr Marsden has been more than once most violent, and taking up the idea that the Society was bound to pay his passage to England and ration him while here, and a few more reasonable [sic] demands, which Mr Marsden told him he would not be justified in acceding to. He told him he should bring his family to Kiddee Kiddee. Shunghee has given him a piece of ground, a short distance from the Settlement; but I do not apprehend any particular difficulties or inconvenience from that, for it would be very much to the detriment of Mr Kendall's present interests to leave the place he is now at, which is just opposite to me, two miles across the water, where all the whalers anchor, very convenient for his carrying on any traffic he may think proper: should [f] he remove to Kiddee Kiddee he would be quite secluded from the shipping.

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

About the same time that Mr Marsden learnt Mr Kendall's determination of not going to the Colony, he was informed by Captain Moore of the late ship Brampton and Captain Walker of the Brig Dragon, that Mr Butler had been in a state of inebriety on board the Dragon on the 27th of last month; and his language having been very high and incautious to Mr Marsden several times, and some complaints coming against him from the Chief in his neighbourhood of his rough conduct and of his striking some of the Natives, Mr Marsden resolved to take him and his Son with their wives to Port Jackson. Mr Butler demanded an enquiry upon the charge of the Captain: it was entered into, and much to his dishonour as will appear in the proceedings, he thereupon, with his son and their wives and Mr & Mrs Cowell are expected to sail in the course of two or three days, with Mr Marsden, Mr & Mrs Leigh, and Mr White Wesleyan Missionaries.

Upon looking at the latter charges, we view them as mysterious. Mr Marsden had concluded his communications with us and was embarked with Mr Kendall and family, and, without any reasonable cause (for the loss of the ship is very remarkable and with common prudence might not have occurred) was cast amongst us again, as though his work was not accomplished. Such is the importance we consider the removal of Mr Butler and his Son: haughty, overbearing, boisterous, and unguarded in his language, it is marvelous how the Mission has held so long as it has!

Amidst all this, I cannot close without saying a few words respecting Mr Kemp. When I consider what he must have had to endure, yet not from the

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

Natives, I exceedingly wonder at the mildness of his conduct & Christian [f] forbearance - and in addition, though the voice of slander has greatly traduced every other individual in the Mission, and I fear in some instances not without some truth, yet does he and his partner stand alone, none charging them with any acts of impropriety. You will therefore rejoice that there has been and still is a little leaven, by which the whole may be leavened.

The great evils of the Mission I trust are now removed, and I hope the blessing of the Lord may now descend amongst us, and preserve us in that peace, union, and brotherly affection which has not yet been visible.

Mr Marsden has taken effectual steps to break off that intercourse with the shipping which has long existed and been the foundation of all the mischief.

When I consider the Natives, their noble and dignified appearance, their pertinent remarks and questions, their obliging disposition, with the high sense of honour which they possess, I cannot but view them as a people of great interest, and one which our Almighty Father will ere long adopt for his own. They are desirous of Missionaries, they will receive instruction, both men and women, and children have the utmost confidence in us, and I have now many who wish to leave their little ones with us, but for the reason above stated, I am obliged to decline for the present. Their observance of the Sabbath is, for them, very great; they know when it arrives as well as we do, and distinguish the day by wearing their European clothes and abstaining from work; our Settlement on that day is perfectly quiet. The head Chief, with his

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

wife & many others, generally attend our Services, and frequently family prayer. [f] The difficulties into which the Mission has at times been thrown, does not originate from them generally, but from a hasty mode of proceeding on the part of some individuals. There are a few trying circumstances certainly and painful for a time; but by letting the matter rest, the evil will remedy itself in a general way, and if it should not, we cannot help it.

It is very usual now, when a Chief expresses a desire that a Missionary should be established at his district, he will say, he wants a man who is not fond of fighting, who does not scold and make a noise, for though the New Zealander in war is as ferocious as a human being can be, yet at home he is another man.

As our numbers here are now greatly reduced, and from the awful examples we have before us, I hope you will see, as Mr Marsden and myself do, the necessity of my brother William Williams joining us, instead of proceeding to another part of the world, as you appeared inclined to do when we parted.

It is, to my mind, of high importance that a firm stand should be made here, and the various qualifications he possesses clearly point out New Zealand as the Country to which he should be directed. The Language requires great attention to bring it to proper order, but upon this subject Mr Marsden will also address you.

It has been considered by us, though it has not been brought before the Committee, that a small Printing press would be of considerable benefit, and

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

as the quantity of writing now in the Mission is on the increase, we should feel thankful for a copying press, were it not of too great expense. I think you would then possess more minute circumstances, [f] which at present is almost impossible from the many copies required.

With regard to a salary for myself, as I told you when in England, so it is still my intention not to have one; but in consequence of the removal of Mr Butler, who is a Magistrate, and there being none besides him, I shall be put to great inconvenience from not being able to take any Affidavit necessary for receiving my half-pay. Therefore, until an opportunity should offer for my doing so, either by my visiting the Colony at any time, or by the appointment of some other person as Magistrate, I feel it will be necessary for my drawing occasionally on the funds of the Society; though I may afterwards liquidate it, by sending you an Order upon my Agent.

The Cooking apparatus you provided for me has proved of very great use, it has saved considerable labour, and has been highly approved by all who have seen it. The Natives were greatly delighted with it.

Mr Fairburn the Carpenter has expressed a desire to possess one, to be charged to his account. Therefore, should you think yourself at liberty to have one the same as mine forwarded for him, I shall myself feel particularly obliged. All extra charges had better be attached to the Bill.

I may perhaps enclose a List of a few things required at this Settlement.

In looking over the Missionary Register for August 1822, there appears, in my opinion and in that of several persons here, too strong a representation

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

in Mr Leigh's Letter, relative to Shunghee. It is true, I know but little of the man; but [f] considering him as a Savage, not much more could be expected from him. From the account which I have heard of the dispute between him and the River Thames Chief, I think he acted with great forbearance. I will endeavour to collect the account and forward it to you. Mr Kendall I expect will make some use of what has been stated, and perhaps may not confine himself strictly to the latter. The Chief, no doubt, may be irritated, as it is what he has charged upon some of the Missionaries.

Two days since Mrs Williams was safely delivered of a boy. This is the second birth since we have been here. Mrs Fairburn was confined three weeks since, when Mrs Williams attended upon her and gave all the requisite aid. She was so far recovered as to perform the same office for Mrs Williams, who is now greatly recovered, and with the infant is as well as it is possible for a person to be after so great an event. Her health has been of the best, the children's also; and we have great cause for praise and thanksgiving each succeeding day. We were never more comfortable in our lives; nay, I will say happy; nothing interrupts it but the knowledge of our own unworthiness. That we may walk in the fear of the Lord, is our constant desire and prayer; and to be made useful to these particularly interesting people. Fear has never once entered our minds. The children are constantly amongst the Natives. And from the first of our coming here to the present time, notwithstanding the great exposure of property at the landing, we know not of the loss of the value of a [f] single nail; and for a considerable time we were obliged to sleep without

*Henry Williams to Josiah Pratt*

either door or window. The Natives never think of obtruding themselves into the private apartments. Mr Marsden will furnish you with many interesting particulars. His trials and vexations have been great indeed, & his contributions have not been less. He will have more to encounter on his return to the Colony; but his strength of mind is great, and will bear him up beyond all.

We are much comforted by the late regulations, and begin to hope.

Remember us, my Dear Sir, we beseech you, for we stand in jeopardy very frequently, not in person, but in mind. Hitherto, Prayer Meetings have been dispensed with, because they could not take place, without a great degree of variance in the heart, backbitings, and slanderings: that these may not again appear, I pray God.

You must let my Brother come here & help us: he will greatly strengthen our hands.

My Dear Sir

Your most obedient Sert.

Henry Williams

To

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