

they possess into cultivation. Natives are employed in the labour, and they have in this way cleared several acres.

The fern, from its size and strength, is supposed to indicate a fertile soil; but this is not the fact, for I have seen nearly a thousand acres in a body covered with a growth of it six feet in height, where the ground was deemed fit for no purpose but to furnish brick-clay. So densely do the ferns grow, that it is impossible to force a way through them, and the only mode of traversing the country where they abound, is by following the native paths; these pursue the high ground and ridges, and have branches which lead to the neighbouring cultivated spots. The moment the culture of the land is neglected, the fern again makes its appearance.

The clayey soils afford only a scanty growth of grass, which is scarcely fit for pasture, and indeed there appear to be no native grasses. In the more fertile soils, red clover, according to Mr. Brackenridge, does well; and he believes that white clover would succeed on the hills, which are now bare. The climate is favourable to the growth of the foreign grasses.

After the fern has been burnt and the ashes spread, a crop of wheat is raised, and the land is laid down in grass. To give an idea of the produce of land near the Bay of Islands, we may cite the instance of Captain Wright's farm, which is eligibly situated, and is considered as possessing a fertile soil. He had twenty acres in wheat, whose average product was only fourteen bushels per acre.

Among the foreign fruits which have been introduced, are apples, peaches, and grapes. The latter grow best in the volcanic soils, but the climate is considered to be too moist to permit them to attain perfection. The peaches are fine, but the propensity of the natives to pluck them before they are ripe, prevents them from attaining their full flavour. Cape gooseberries are plentiful, but the common description of that fruit, and the currant, have not been introduced. Late writers have given marvellous accounts of the growth of the fruit trees of temperate climates, in New Zealand; but these may be set down as exaggerations calculated to mislead, and intended to subserve speculation. The success of Captain Wright, however, in raising fruit and vegetables, has been great.

Among the native vegetables is the sweet-potato, which they call kumara: it is plentiful.

The missionaries stated that the natives have a remarkable tradition in relation to this root; namely, that it was first brought to the island in canoes of a different construction from their own, and composed of pieces of wood sewed together.