

a cooking hole, dug in the ground, of about two feet in diameter, and between one and two feet deep. Even when the natives are confined to their beds by sickness, and, it may be, at the point of death, they must receive whatever food they take in this outer room, which, however, is sometimes provided with a shed, supported upon posts, although in no case does it appear to be enclosed by walls. It is here, accordingly, that those who are in so weak a state from illness as not to be able to bear removal from one place to another usually have their couches spread; as, were they to choose to recline inside the house, it would be necessary to leave them to die of want.

Nicholas, in the course of an excursion which he made in the neighbourhood of the Bay of Islands, was once not a little annoyed and put out of humour by this absurd superstition. It rained heavily when he and Marsden arrived very hungry at a village belonging to a chief of their acquaintance, where, although the chief was not at home, they were very hospitably received, their friends proceeding immediately to dress some potatoes to make them a dinner. But after they had prepared the meal, they insisted, as usual, that it should be eaten in the open air.

This condition, Nicholas, in the circumstances, naturally thought a somewhat hard one; but it was absolutely necessary either to comply with it, or to go without potatoes.