

But when one "cookee," or common man, pilfers from another, it is quite another matter. In this case, the act entirely wants those aggravations which, in the estimation of a New Zealander, give it all its criminality; and the parties, besides, are so insignificant, that the notion of avenging any injury which the one may have suffered from the other by the public execution of the offender would probably be deemed in that country nearly as unreasonable as we should hold a proposal for the application of such a scheme of government in correction of the quarrels and other irregularities of the lower animals.

It need not, therefore, surprise us to be told, especially when we consider also the trivial value of any articles of property they possess, that thieving among the common people there is regarded, not as a crime, but as an art, in which, as in other arts, the skilful and dexterous practitioner deserves reward rather than punishment; nearly as it was regarded among the Spartans, who punished the detected thief, indeed, but not so much for his attempt as for his failure; or more nearly still as it is said to have been among the ancient Egyptians, by whom such acts were, in all cases, allowed to be perpetrated with impunity.

This view will go far to explain various incidents which we find noticed in the different accounts of New Zealand. The reports of the missionaries, in particular, abound with notices