

NABOTH'S VINEYARD AT LAKE MACQUARIE

To the Editor of the Newcastle Chronicle.

SIR—I perceive in your issue of the 2nd instant, a reference to an aboriginal named Ned, well known, I believe, in Newcastle and in the district of Brisbane Water. Every word in that well-expressed paragraph I can guarantee to be perfectly true. As former clergyman at Gosford, I am acquainted with the circumstances of the family mentioned, and have feared that some one would play Ahab by selecting their little plot. The dwelling and situation are better than those of many selections, and are as the event has proved, a tempting bait to anyone without either bowels or conscience. Ned is a hard-working, inoffensive old man. He maintains himself by getting honey and beeswax. Margaret, his wife, is an ornament to her sex, as your paragraph says, perfectly irreproachable in morals though she has been a fine-looking woman. She has had some Christian instruction, and her daughter did, at one time, know the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Some of the family are baptized. The house they live in is divided into rooms. Margaret acts as dress-maker and is an excellent needlewoman. All her family are clad in clothes made by her own hands, and she works for people in the neighbourhood. She is a skilful cabbage-tree hat maker, and her hats realise from £2 to £4 each, according to order. Ned grows a little corn, a few vegetables, a little tobacco, attends sporting parties on the lake, and maintains his aged mother. His home is everything to him. It is on the Lake side, close to the honey, close to the fish, close to the cabbage-tree, and close to fresh water. Without his home he will be something like a ruined man. There is another instance in the above district of the same kind as Ned's, but that Aboriginal is a bachelor, and belongs to another tribe. Moreover he is a man of violent temper and perhaps it would not be quite safe to despoil him. But Ned is a peaceable, inoffensive, hard-working old fellow. If any subscription could be started to help Ned I will willingly forward £1. But I think the Governor could interfere, for if I recollect right, a portion of his oath of office expresses that he will protect the Aboriginal inhabitants of the country, and here is a case where such protection clearly is required.—I am, sir, yours, &c.,

JOHN SHAW.

Scone, September 7th, 1871.