Maori Trails & Pakeha Tracks

e Bush and River

E. T. FROST

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BY MAORI TRAIL
AND
PAKEHA ROAD

By Maori Trail and Pakeha Road

Tales of Bush and River

By

E. T. FROST

New Zealand
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Wellington and Dunedin

TO THE OLD MAORI, THE TRAIL-BLAZER, WHO HAS PASSED ON, AND TO THE BRAVE PIONEER WHO FOLLOWED WITH HIS TRACKS AND ROADS, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED IN THE HOPE THAT THOSE WHO READ IT WILL NOT FORGET.

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1947

TAWHIAO, Maori King, successor to Potatau

Foreword

I was born of pioneer parents, on the bank of the Northern Wairoa River, in the heyday of the great kauri timber industry. My maternal grandfather arrived at Auckland in the year of the founding of the city, 1840, and was amongst the first purchasers of city lots at public auction.

My paternal grandfather and grandmother, with their family of eight children, arrived at Auckland by the ship *Telegraph* in 1863, just prior to the outbreak of the Maori War in the Waikato. They took up land near what was known as Riverhead, on the old overland route from Auckland to the Kaipara and Port Albert districts.

My father, after some years of operations in the timber industry, settled on the Waikato River in the late eighties. There he established a large flaxmilling and storekeeping business, his clients being mainly the Maoris, of whom many of the older ones were warriors who had been engaged in both intertribal and the European—Maori wars.

As eldest son in a family of eight, upon leaving school I assisted in my father's business. One branch was that of operating a steamboat on the river, carrying Maoris to and fro and purchasing kauri gum, flax, fungus and other commodities from them. This entailed close contact with the native race on a stretch of over seventy miles of river, and many thrilling stories were gathered over the course of the years.

Former incidents concerning many localities were recalled on these river trips. Old fortifications were reminiscent of tribal battles; a Taniwha lived here; a certain large eel was always to be found there, and so on.

The whole seventy miles of river was a storehouse of old traditions, and a reminder of great battles fought over the right to take the huge quantities of eels which descended to the sea each autumn.

A shopping expedition of Tawhiao and his followers was a sight that would have delighted the modern movie picture man, as also would the great bone-scraping feast.

Most of the actors in these scenes have now passed through the portals of Te Rerenga Wairua, and only a remnant of their descendants have any recollection of their activities and mode of living. The new century ushered in a completely different life. It was the privilege of very few Europeans to have close contact with the closing days of the old Maori and his ways when the Hauhau cult was practised by some tribes of the lower Waikato. The pupils of pioneer missionaries Maunsell and Ashwell were old men then, but their influence was still in evidence.

—E. T. FROST.

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A scene on the lower Waikato River.

Here was a landing place much used by the Maoris when crossing over to the Manukau harbour.

In the spring of 1863 one of Rewi Maniapoto's raiding parties landed in this neighbourhood and attacked the settlers in the Mauku district. Though repulsed, some European settlers were killed in the encounter.

The island in the foreground is historical. In the fifties it was purchased from the Maoris by a young Englishman named Francis Dart Fenton, who later became a Judge of the Native Land Court. Fenton was a close friend of the missionaries Maunsell and Stack, and was a frequent visitor at the Kohanga mission station.

"King" Tawhiao

PART I

CHAPTER I—WAR

"King" Tawhiao, or to give him his full family name, Tawhiao Potatau Te Whero-whero, assumed the leadership of the Waikato-Maniapoto people in troublous times.

The "King" movement originated in the "fifties" when a prominent Chief of the Ngatihaua tribe in the vicinity of Matamata, Wiremu Tamehana, conceived the idea of welding the whole of the Maori tribes into a single nation with a King and Government of its own.

His idea was that there should be two separate Governments in New Zealand and that each one could pursue its course, independent of each other, but work peaceably together.

As a theory it sounded all right but in practice it would not have worked. Tamehana succeeded in the early stages of the movement, after many meetings and much negotiation, in persuading a number of tribes to form a federation and select a chief who would be known as their "King."

The two main tribes in the movement were the Waikatos, which included many "Hapus" or sub-tribes occupying the lower Waikato basin, and the warlike Ngati Maniapoto tribe who, under their truculent and warlike leader, Rewi Maniapoto, occupied the land between the upper Waipa and the upper length of the Waikato river known as the Horotiu.

Potatau was an old man then, and soon came under the domineering influence of Rewi, as did his son Tawhiao later on.

Ngaruawahia was selected as the "King's" headquarters and a large settlement was formed there and the "King's" standard flown from the citadel.

This movement gave the Government cause for uneasiness, as the Maoris, who were well armed, began to realise the strength of their confederation, and the truculent Rewi committed several acts that could not be overlooked if the Government was to keep its face, among which was the wrecking of a printing press at Te Awamutu operated by Mr (later Sir John) Gorst.

Alarms and excursions by bands of armed Maoris were the order of the day from 1860 until the actual outbreak of war in 1863.

Amid all this trouble old Potatau died and was buried at Ngaruawahia in 1860, and Tawhiao assumed the title of "King".

To give him his due he was of a more peaceful nature, but many of the chiefs and a large number of the rank and file were cast in a different mould. Fighting had been the pastime up to about twenty years previous, and was supposed to have been done away with by the treaty of Waitangi which, by the way, was not signed by Potatau when Maunsell handled it in the Waikato district. Therefore the innate love of combat was not extinguished in these younger men, but was only lying dormant, and was easily resuscitated by the war dances and recitations of past combats.

Clashes took place between settlers and these raiding parties within thirty miles of Auckland, as the Waikato river was then the undisputed highway of the Maori, and their mobile canoe fleets were manoeuvred on its broad waters.

Such districts as the Mauku, Patumahoe, Papakura, Pukekohe East, Southern Wairoa, all had their turn of the raiding parties, many homes were destroyed and a number of settlers lost their lives. Firm measures had then to be taken, and an order was issued by the Government for all Maoris, north of the Mangatawhiri stream at

Pokeno, to give up arms and swear fealty to the Queen by a certain date or retire across the stream to the south and be treated as rebels.)

This was in July 1863. Meanwhile a military road, now known as the Great South road, was built from Auckland to Pokeno, and a series of redoubts or military posts established across the island from the Hauraki Gulf, via Pokeno, to the Waikato river at Tuakau, from whence gun boats patrolled the river to the Waikato Heads.

The main outpost was the Queen's Redoubt at Pokeno, from which a continuous stream of military vehicles carrying stores and equipment for the troops plied between there and Auckland. Although attacked at times by raiding parties no serious loss occurred on this route, owing to the military escort which accompanied the transport corps. Water transport was also opened up on the river, and a military depot established at Havelock near the mouth of the Mangatawhiri creek from whence the water transport corps operated.

The Maoris gathered forces just south of this outpost on the river and the first clash of arms of importance occurred on the Koheroa ridge, east of the present township of Mercer. The Maoris suffered a defeat and retired into the great swamps of the Whangamarino, later rallying at Meremere and Rangiriri.

As General Cameron received further additions to his river fleet, and several new regiments of troops, a general advance was made in November 1863, and on the 20th of that month the first major battle took place. After a fierce struggle, in which there was heavy loss on both sides, the Maoris evacuated the position in the night and retired further up the river. They did not offer any resistance when the troops occupied King Tawhiao's headquarters at Ngaruawahia, but retreated to the upper Waipa district where they had erected some very strong fortifications.

The following autumn, in April 1864, the memorable battle of Orakau was fought, the Maoris being led by Rewi Maniapoto and, after a severe cannonading and the advance of the troops by sapping up close to the earthworks the Maori warriors retired, and shortly after peace was declared between the Waikato-Maniapoto tribes and the Government.

Tawhiao and a large number of his people, some from as far down the Waikato river as Tuakau, crossed the Waipa river at Pirongia, and shut themselves up in the Rohe Potae or King Country, as it is generally named, remaining there in sullen silence for about twenty years. The area was closed to all Europeans, and several parties were turned back while trespassing thereon. The land to the east of the Waipa and north to the Manukau, an area of about two million acres, was confiscated, but later on some of it was returned to the former owners. Tawhiao made his headquarters at Whatiwhatihoe, and no doubt moved about within the confines of the Rhoe Potae.

As time progressed the intense feelings engendered by war moderated, and in the early eighties Tawhiao crossed the boundary for the first time since the war ended in 1864, taking with him a retinue of followers, and visited Auckland, where he was entertained by the authorities. The ice having broken, it was not long before he moved down the river to a place named Pukekawa, where a large settlement was formed in due time. However, just prior to this, he decided to go to England and see Queen Victoria. Accordingly, with a number of other chiefs and an interpreter he set off overseas. As he travelled under the cognomen of "King Tawhiao" he did not manage to get an audience with the Queen who, no doubt acting under her advisers, could not meet a "King" from New Zealand.

A greenstone mere in each hand,
And shark's teeth in his ear quite grand,
The dusky monarch led the band
When they set out for London.

But when they left this glorious shore,
Oh! how they wished it, more and more,
That they had given much thought before
They agreed to go to London.

King Tawhiao, bent upon a spree,
Resolved old England he would see,
And with some others did agree
That they would go to London.

And so they all packed up their traps
These half-a-dozen tattooed chaps,
With feathers in their potae hats
They booked their berths for London.

For the pakeha ship would not keep still
And, oh! it made them very ill
To see the great waves swish and swill
While on their way to London.

But longest voyages have an end;
Their health it was quite on the mend,
So from the ship their way they wend
And make straight on for London.

When the great city came in sight
It really gave them quite a fright
To see the pakehas left and right
In the great town of London.

One day when passing a large shop
The monarch came to a sudden stop
And said, "That hat will fit my top"
While I walk the streets of London.

It was a pakeha's beaver tile,
And made him look just quite the style.
The Bond Street people all did smile
As it topped his head in London.

Now the pakeha's kai is allright you know,
But give me some real corn pirau,*
And tuna† fat, and piharau,‡
Which is not to be had in London.

So after parading all they knew,
And amusing the riders in Rotten Row,
They all decided back to go
And say goodbye to London.

When Aotearoa hove in sight
They hailed it with a glad delight;
No more again would they take flight
To see the City of London.

When once he had settled down amid European civilization he moved about the townships of the lower Waikato, and as he had a large retinue of followers he provided a good deal of trade for the local storekeepers. Funds were readily obtainable as the flax industry was in full swing in those days, also gum-digging and fungus gathering. The life was communal, and Tawhiao was the guide and philosopher for large numbers of Maoris in those days of peace. Most of his followers had adopted the "Hauhau" religion, a mixture of scripture and Maori mythology, which originated about the year 1864.

*Corn pirau. A delicacy much prized by the old Maori. The method of preparing it was to steep the shelled maze in running water, in large kits. After several weeks it would be taken out and cooked in large boilers and plenty added and with the shell of the large mussel the contents were soon disposed of. The odour was unforgetable, as the name indicates "rotten corn."

†The eel. ‡The lamprey, a fish greatly relished by the Maoris. It was of a cartiliginous species.

CHAPTER II—PEACE

The usual practice when funds were required was to select from fifty to one hundred young men, together with a number of women for cooks, and proceed to the bank of the Waikato river where large quantities of flax were to be had. They had a large number of canoes, some of which were capable of carrying up to five tons weight. The men were divided into three gangs. The first cut and tied the flax in bundles, the second carried them out to the river bank, and the third transported it to the mills in canoes. In those days the price averaged from ten to twelve shillings per ton at the mill, and as they often cut up to fifty tons a day it did not take long to knock up a cheque of a few hundred pounds. This being done they would return home to the village, and later on a great shopping expedition would be arranged. This generally took place at Mercer, where the general store was kept by M. and S. Hunter who were well known to the Maoris for honourable dealing. The method of shopping was rather unique at that time, and was a pecursor to the self-help system in vogue to-day.

Tawhiao, at the head of a large number of followers, would arrive early in the day and interview the proprietors. Word would then be sent out that no European would be served that afternoon, which was to be exclusively devoted to serving Tawhiao and his followers.

At the entrance to the shop the proprietors and Tawhiao sat, and the followers, several at a time, were allowed to pass into the shop and select whatever they wanted. Shawls, blankets, guns, powder and shot, tools, ovens and groceries were the staple items bought. On passing out the goods were displayed and checked by Messrs Hunter, and entered into a book. This went on for the greater part of the afternoon, Tawhiao sitting there all the while, nodding his approval now and again as a special purchase was displayed. When the last man had passed out he would rise and say "Kua mutu,

aha te utu?'' (finished now what it to pay?). The treasurer, who carried a gladstone bag crammed with gold, silver and notes, would be called, and the sales made up. No haggling or bargaining; each trusted the other implicity, and a pile of notes and coins placed on the counter liquidated the purchases. There is nothing on record to show that any of the natives ever tried to pilfer any goods. This style of business went on for several years until Tawhiao removed his headquarters to Parawera on the borders of the King Country.

While in residence near Mercer Tawhiao had some picked canoe crews, and those were the days of the real Maori regatta. Mercer regatta was known far and wide then, and some exciting contests took place between the crews of the various villages. The settlers' sons of Tuakau and surrounding districts thought they would take a hand in it, purchased a canoe, and in 1889 entered it in the war canoe race, but not having been trained enough they were beaten. Next year however, by extensive training they beat the Maoris, and Tawhiao, who was an onlooker, said that they were the best crew in New Zealand. Lord Onslow was also present at this regatta. This was about the last public appearance of Tawhiao. He retired to his new headquarters at Parawera, where he lived quietly until his death in the spring of 1894. There was great mourning amongst the Maoris when the news of his demise was spread abroad, and preparations were made to hold a tangi on a huge scale, to which all the tribes in New Zealand were invited. It was decided to hold it at Taupiri, on a plain just below the sacred burying ground, and word was sent out to all the tribes to prepare and send in food for the feast. This tangi was unique from a European point of view, as a number of old Maori customs were still in existence. Many a warrior who had survived the campaign of thirty years previous was there, and night after night was passed in recounting the feats of warfare. The whole tangi was run on the lines of a military camp, and is worthy of a special chapter.

Young Maori cutting flax on the Waikato river bank.

When funds were needed Tawhiao gathered his retinue together, and proceeded along the banks of the river where flax grew in abundance. After cutting a quantity it was conveyed to the various flax-mills where the raw material was manufactured into fibre.

CHAPTER III—TANGI FOR TAWHIAO

When, at King Tawhiao's death, it was decided to hold the tangi at Taupiri great preparations for the procuring of food supplies were immediately put in hand, and the tribes from far and near were asked to prepare their quota.

The Kaipara Maoris immediately set to work shark fishing, and in a short time several thousand sharks were hanging in the sun, drying preparatory to shipping. The Hauraki tribes procured huge quantities of shellfish, which were prepared in the old Maori fashion. From the King Country came pigeons and tuis preserved in their own fat. Pigs were rounded up all along the Waikato river, as also were large numbers of cattle. Large fishing parties went to the lakes at Rangiriri for eels, which were caught by the ton and kept alive in traps until needed. A poll tax was declared on all the tribes by the Central Committee, and thousands of pounds were raised by this means. While all these preparations were going on in the commissariat department, a squad of men were sent ahead to prepare the ground. A long row of hangis (ovens) were prepared, likewise a similar row of fire-places.

Immediately at the back of these a dining room was erected of nikau, roofed only, about four hundred yards long, and a similar one faced it across the other side of the paddock, so that the common dining room was over half-a-mile long. Besides this, special and better finished rooms were prepared for distinguished guests. A track was cut down the steep river bank, and arrangements made for a water supply. Arrangements were made with the local baker for two thousand loaves a day, and a similar quantity was ordered from Auckland. Our steam launch was chartered, and we were kept busy freighting pigs, cattle, eels and various kinds of food from the villages on the river. One load I remember consisted of over five tons of live eels caught in the lakes near Rangiriri.

When all was in readiness at Taupiri the funeral procession started out. A new buggy and harness was bought, and was drawn by a pair of black horses. The coffin, inside of which was another leaden one, was covered with many beautiful specimens of Maori mats, and the old warrior's weapons were laid on it. Thousands of Maoris lined the road as it approached the sacred precincts of Taupiri, under whose shadow the last rites were to be celebrated. Many were armed with guns, and some even had sticks of dynamite to which short fuses were attached, and these were set off with loud detonations like the small boy of to-day fires a cracker. A halt was made at the entrance to the ground, and for several hours there was great crying and wailing. Finally, this being over the casket was laid in state on a special resting place, and the speeches commenced. The old time Maori delighted in oratory, and on occasions like this he lets himself go.

The Government was represented by Mr G. T. Wilkinson, Native Agent of Otorohanga, and Major Gilbert Mair. The native Members of Parliament, Henare Kaihau and Wi Pere, were present, and all the prominent chiefs of the Waikato. Chief among these were Rewi Maniapoto the famous defender of Orakau, Major Te Whero who fought with the Queen's troops in the Waikato War, Hori Kukutai, Mita Taupopoki the Arawa Chief, and many others from the East Coast and Manawatu district. The only Maori brass band in New Zealand at the time was present, and was a source of great interest to the local natives. It came from Otaki. The buggy which conveyed the casket, having been declared tapu (sacred) was placed on a huge bonfire together with the harness, and burnt, the ironwork later being thrown into the river. A whole month was devoted to feasting and speechifying, Maoris coming and going all the time. Gradually, however, the gathering began to thin out, and at last a grave was dug in the cemetery on the highest part, and the casket deposited there with very little ceremony at the last.

Now comes the anti-climax. It was told to me on good authority, in fact by one who was in the secret, that the body of Tawhiao was not in the casket at all. It was an old Maori custom to secrete the body of a dead chieftain in case an enemy would exhume it and steal it, thereby imbibing the dead warrior's greatness. It was told me, that following this custom, long before the procession set out from Parawera the body of the King was taken away secretly by night and hidden up in the Maungakawa ranges, and that four men only knew of the secret hiding place. The secret would be handed down, and it was said at some future date the bones would be exhumed and brought to Taupiri. Maori customs have changed so much of late, and owing to the harder times the tribes have now to make a living, it may be that the remains will never again be moved.

No other gathering like this can ever take place in New Zealand. All the old warriors are gone, as are also the pioneer Europeans who were just beginning to penetrate the King Country at that time. The times are in the melting pot and customs, both Maori and European, can change almost in a night. To have seen and mingled with such an historic gathering of the last of the old Maori was indeed an interesting experience.

PART II

The Waikato River

THE LIQUID HISTORY OF AUCKLAND PROVINCE

CHAPTER I—GEOLOGICAL HISTORY

The Waikato river is an errant waterway and did not always flow placidly, as it now does, down its present course. Rising in the high country of the central North Island on the line of the earthquake belt, seismic disturbances caused it to change its course several times, and it passed through many vicissitudes before it settled down in its present course. Even now it is rather restless at its mouth, and has been known to alter its outflow by several miles during the past few centuries. It is also unique in the quantity of sand it carries down its bed annually, a great deal of which it deposits in its great wide estuary some several miles inside its mouth.

Lake Taupo is looked upon as its main source, and at its outflow from that lake it immediately becomes a river, carrying off the water that enters the lake by many streams. Originating in such unstable country, it is not surprising that it changed its course several times to follow the line of least resistance.

One of its first courses, before it even had been named, and certainly before man had set foot in the land, was in a south easterly direction towards Hawkes Bay. A great eruption, which caused the tremendous crater which is now Lake Taupo, changed the configuration of the central district of the island, tipped the land in the direction of the Bay of Plenty, and provided a new line of flow for the river, which got settled down nicely to flow in that direction. Not for long, geologically speaking, was it to use that course, for another disturbance threw an obstruction across its path, and it had to start all over again.

This time it took a more northerly direction, and began to form what we know as the great Waikato basin, bringing down millions of tons of silt and sand, and creating many lakes and morasses. After flowing for an unknown period into the Firth of Thames at the southern end of the Hauraki Gulf, and forming the great Hauraki plains as they are known, another great shock split open the range of hills at Taupiri, and left a fault line of which old man river, who tired of being driven here and there, slipped through and cut a new channel towards the sea, this time on the west coast.

For the main part it was now settled in the bed as we know it, but as it neared the sea it had to fill up a twenty thousand acre depression, now the Aka Aka plains, before it managed to empty itself into the Manukau Harbour, near the present town of Waiuku.

Pumice pits opened up in that area indicate the old bed of the river.

Once again another disturbance occurred, and cut its flow off from the Manukau, damming it up for a while long enough for it to kill off a kahikatea forest growing on its southern bank. Gradually, however, it managed to cut away at last direct into the Tasman Sea, where it is to be hoped it will stay put, as any disturbance that would alter it again would make the Napier earthquake look like child's play.

It was thus that the Maoris found it when the descendants of the *Tainui* Canoe, after landing at Kawhia some seventy miles south of its mouth, set out to explore the land. Making their way across overland they soon discovered what a delectable land the river had made, ready for occupation by man, and before long canoes floated on its placid waters and crops grew on its fertile banks.

CHAPTER II—THE MAORI OCCUPATION

One of the great chiefs of the *Tainui* selected a strategic position about twelve miles up river from the Heads, and proceeded to fortify it. His name was Horeta, and so well did he carry out the work with the primitive implements of the day, that the great trenches can be seen to this day, some close on twenty feet deep.

The site was known as Te Auaunga, later Europeanised to the "Devil's Elbow", and is now a favourite picnic spot. This elbow, composed of a hard conglomerate, projected out into the river, reducing its width by almost half and producing a very strong current, thus making it an ideal site for defence.

However, like all man-made forts, it can be taken sooner or later, and taken this was, after Horeta's day, sometime in the eighteenth century by a rading party, who attacked it when most of the fighting men were on a seasonal eeling expedition up the Mangatawhiri creek near Pokeno. A few old men and women were killed off, and some children carried away as slaves.

The valley of the Waikato was a veritable land of plenty for the new comers. The population increased rapidly, and must have numbered many thousands just prior to the advent of the European. The river encompassed many islands, large and small, which were exceedingly fertile and supported a large population. Along the banks grew great totara, matai, and kahikatea, out of which they fashioned their canoes, both large and small, and there must have been thousands of these craft floating on its waters in the heyday of Maori settlement. Portages were made across to the Manukau at Waiuku, and to the Hauraki Gulf at Maramarua. The Waikato-Manukau portage assumed some importance in the early days of European occupation, as will be related later on. Thus along this river the Maoris, for an aboriginal race, led an ideal existance. Fish, such as

eels, whitebait, mullet, kahawai and herrings were plentiful for miles up the river past the tidal influence, while down at the mouth, schnapper and sharks were to be had in season. Enormous deposits of shellfish (pipis) were gathered and eaten on the spot, as the huge middens of bleached shells bear witness today. Many canoe loads of them were also taken far inland, and probably traded for other edible commodities.

Wildfowl, such as duck and teal and pukeko were taken in large numbers by snaring, as were pigeons, kakas, and tuis which were to be had in the forests nearby. The main crops before European occupation were kumaras, taro, and the hue or gourd, which was used as a water carrying vessel. Karaka trees were evidently planted in many places near permanent settlements, and these provided a large supply of edible berries after certain treatment had rendered their poisonous properties innocuous. Koroi berries (from kahikatea trees) and the tawhara, the edible flower of the kiekie, were also plentiful in season. Some local battles ensued, arising out of boundary troubles and fishing rights. Casualties, however vere not heavy.

The signing of the Treaty of Waitangi and the foundation of Auckland created a profound change among the Waikato people, now coming under the influence of the missionaries, and an era of prosperity set in which lasted until the disastrous war of 1863 broke out in the lower Waikato.

Under the guiding influence of the missionaries at Kohanga and Taupiri the Maori began to cultivate his land much better than heretofore. Horses and agricultural implements were used, and large areas of wheat and potatoes were planted, besides maize, pumpkins, and many varieties of garden produce. A brisk trade with Auckland was opened up, and many large canoes were to be seen passing up and down the river between the portage overland to Waiuku and the upper reaches of the Waipa its largest tributary. Peaches, cherries,

apples and pears flourished along the banks of the river and its tributaries, and many early Auckland residents have recollections of the large kits of peaches which were to be had for the humble shilling.

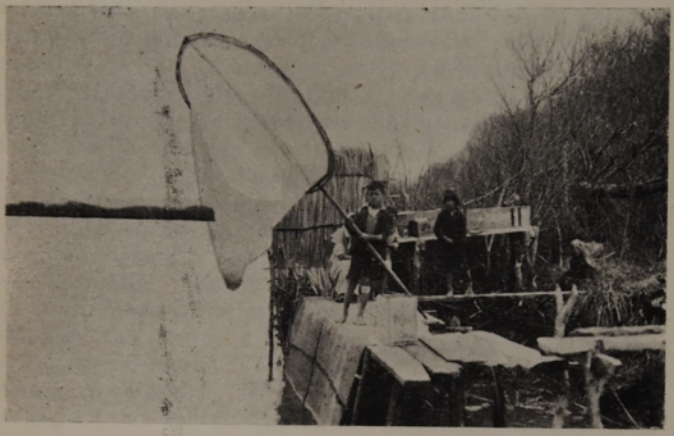
The production of wheat increased, and it was not long before flour mills were erected. Many streams were harnessed by watewheels, and the Maori was self-supporting as far as flour was concerned. The erection of these mills was carried out by an English millwright, John Chandler who, for a number of years prior to the Maori war of 1863, went up and down the river selecting sites, and with the assistance of the local Maoris erecting and starting them off on this new venture. This added wonderfully to their diet, and as it would not be refined as we know flour today, contained many of the vitamins we hear so much about these times.

CHAPTER III—THE ADVENT OF THE WHITE MAN

During the first three decades of the nineteenth century only a few white men apart from the missionaries penetrated to the valley of the Waikato. There is record of some entering the upper part via Raglan or Whaingaroa as it was then known. One well known man, named Marshall, settled at the Waikato heads in 1832 and started a trading station. Scraped flax fibre was the staple product, and was produced in large quantities, considering the primitive method of manufacture, by scraping off the vegetation with shells.

Firearms and gunpowder were among the principal articles bartered, but cooking pots, axes and tools were also sought after. At that time several feuds existed between the Waikatos and the Ngapuhi, and both tribes sought to procure enough weapons to ensure their superiority over their enemy.* Owing to their geographical position the northern Maoris were the first to come in.

* See *Tales of Ngapuhi Raids*, by E. T. Frost.



Whitebait Fishing.

This industry was a source of revenue and food for the Waikato Maoris. In former days large quantities were dried for future use and for bartering with inland tribes.

In later years the fish was sold for consumption in the towns, and for canning.

contact with the trader. They were thus able to procure enough weapons to ensure superiority over all their enemies, as the records of early raids made by them bear witness. The Waikatos, however, as soon as opportunity offered, procured the coveted weapon, and small trading vessels ran from the Waikato and Raglan to Sydney. John Chandler, during the years previous to the war, had gained an intimate knowledge of the river, and when the war broke out and vessels were brought in to the river to patrol it, he offered his services as pilot. His offer having been readily accepted, he went aboard the gunboat *Pioneer* and navigated it through the tortuous channels and snags during the naval operations. The Maoris, on learning this, were greatly incensed. They considered it unfair for him to impart his knowledge to the military authorities, as they looked on him as a friend. They threatened to kill him, war or no war, and so pronounced was this feeling after hostilities ceased that the Government deemed it wise for him not to be seen in Auckland and gave him an island off Matakana where he resided until his death about the year 1884.

The two decades prior to 1863 were probably the best that the Waikato Maoris ever experienced. Peace reigned supreme, and more and more the people came under the influence of missionaries like Maunsell and Ashwell, who taught them many of the arts and crafts so necessary to those who cultivate the land.

But war, red war, was just around the corner, spreading from Taranaki. Fanned by some fanatical leaders the conflict came to this peaceful valley, the days of peace and plenty were over, and much water was to pass out of the river into the great sea of Kiwa ere it was over. Never again were the tribes to cultivate the land where and when they liked, as two million acres were confiscated in the valley of the Waikato. Later on a small portion was handed back to a remnant of tribes who had lived in hiding for about twenty years in the

Rohe Potae (King Country) where, with Tawhiao their King, they remained in sullen silence apart from contact with the white man.

CHAPTER IV—WAR ON THE RIVER

The clouds of war which hung just over the horizon in the Taranaki district moved closer, and the outlying settlers of Auckland began to fear for their safety. In the winter of 1863 matters were brought to a head by a proclamation issued by the Governor calling on all Maoris living north of the Mangatawhiri stream to lay down their arms and swear fealty to the Queen, or retire across the stream to the South. Several raiding parties attacked settlers in the scattered settlements between Auckland and the Waikato river, and the troops were called out, and reinforcements brought in from India and elsewhere. A chain of forts was erected across the island from the Hauraki Gulf at Miranda to Tuakau on the Waikato, about twenty miles up from the Heads. These forts were named Miranda, Esk, Surrey, Queen's and Alexandra at Tuakau. The two most important ones were the Queen's at Pokeno on the bank of the Mangatawhiri creek, and the Alexandra at Tuakau, which was situated on a high bluff commanding the waterway. From thence the river was patrolled to the Heads by naval craft. Up to the issue of the proclamation no steam-propelled vessel had floated on the river, but war soon changed this.

One fine spring morning in 1863 smoke was seen at sea outside the Heads, and soon two vessels were sighted, one in tow of the other. They turned out to be the warship *Eclipse* with the small gunboat *Avon* in tow. The small boat was cast loose and was soon breasting the surges on the bar, passing into the calm waters of the river, and the "eye of the Waikato was put out."

Preliminary soundings and chartings had been carried out by Captain Drury (after whom the township

of Drury is named) of the *H.M.S. Pandora*. Stack in his memoirs mentions Captain Drury calling in at the mission station at Kohanga on one of his surveying trips.*

With the *Avon* on the river a supply line was opened up to the interior, and General Cameron at the head of a force took up his position at the Queen's Redoubt, which was being connected with Auckland by a military road then under construction by the troops. The first clash took place on the Koheroa ridge, a narrow strip of land lying between the Mangatawhiri and Whangamarino streams. The Maori were thrown back, and General Cameron took up a position on the river at the Whangamarino and awaited supplies and reinforcements.

A supply route to the Waikato was opened up overland from the Manukau harbour to the Waikato, and a two-chain-wide path through the forest was cleared. The river terminus was named Camerontown, the cleared route being known as the Tramway and to-day a portion of it is used as a road. This terminus on the Waikato was used as a military depot, and a large amount of stores were accumulated there. A water transport corps had been formed and a number of large boats, manned by a number of stalwart rowers and carrying several tons each, plied between the Heads and the depot, which was soon to become the scene of a desperate action between the regulars and the Maoris skilled in bush warfare.

It was soon realised by the military authorities that, if troops were to be marched to the interior of the Waikato valley, it was imperative that a supply route be opened up on the river, which also would have to be patrolled by suitable boats. For the purpose of procuring suitable craft, Mr James Stewart, a civil engineer of Auckland, was sent over to Sydney where there were already facilities for shipbuilding, and very soon had a gunboat of suitable draught under construction, and

* *More Maoriland Adventures*. Edited by A. H. Reed.

others made to take down and reassemble at Port Waikato, which had become a place of military importance.

The gunboat was named the *Pioneer,* and was fitted with a stern wheel and of shallow draught. On deck were two loopholed turrets for riflemen, and around the gunwale was fitted a perforated steam pipe which was connected with the boiler, and steam could be turned on to repel boarders should the occasion arise. This boat was towed over from Sydney, and arrived as General Cameron was stationed at Whangamarino redoubt, contemplating an advance up river. The gunboat was sent up to Meremere to reconnoitre the position, but came under gunfire and received some damage.

The Maoris, with great labour, had dragged two cannon across from Raglan (or Whaingaroa) and, bringing them down the Waipa and Waikato by canoe, had mounted one at Meremere and the other on the opposite side a couple of miles higher up stream on a bluff where the channel compelled any craft to hug the shore, as was the case also at Meremere. As the *Pioneer* drew abreast of the one at Meremere all seemed quiet, but suddenly a loud report and a cloud of smoke revealed the position of the cannon, hidden in dense scrub which grew down to the water's edge. The enemy had waited until the warship drew abreast of the gun, and as the range was only a few yards it did not require much skill to register a hit. The missile fired was a strange one, its like probably never used either before or since this occasion. It was nothing less than a steelyard ball, which, although it could not be termed an accurate missile at any distance, could do a lot of damage at close quarters. It crashed through the side of the vessel well above water line, and it is said to have caused damage to the cargo, which among other things consisted of barrels of salt pork intended for the troops. The cooper, who at that moment was down in the hold repairing some leaky barrels, got the fright of his life, and shot up through the hatch covered in brine which splashed about

as the ball fetched up among the barrels. However, there was no structural damage to the vessel except the hole made by the ball, and a landing was immediately made. The enemy did not wait, but retired inland into the great swamp, where no doubt a fleet of canoes awaited them.

The second cannon was not used, indeed its presence was not known until the year 1912 when some natives discovered it partly covered by earth and scrub. It had lain undiscovered for nearly fifty years. They cleaned it out, loaded it up with some blasting powder, and touched it off. Weakened by corrosion it blew into fragments, and an interesting relic was lost.

General Cameron, shortly after this incident, moved his forces up the river, and on the 20th of November 1863 engaged the enemy in battle at Rangiriri, losing a high percentage of his troops engaged, owing to the excellent fortifications and strategy of the enemy, who retired after darkness set in leaving some prisoners and wounded in the hands of the General.

Moving quickly up river the General arrived at Ngaruawahia on the junction of the Waikato and Waipa rivers, where he set up his headquarters on the site of the recent headquarters of King Tawhiao, who had retired up the Waipa towards Te Awamutu.

As the troops moved further inland from the port, and the lines of communication became longer, the position at times became acute, as there were not yet enough vessels on the river to keep up a regular service.

One of the boats pre-fabricated in Sydney was being put together on the slip at the Port, under Mr Stewart's supervision, when word was sent down to hurry the completion at all costs and launch the hull as soon as it would float. This was done, and the vessel, the Koheroa, was hurriedly loaded with stores and set out for Ngaruawahia.

Bad luck however, dogged them, as the boat grounded on a sandbank at the top of high water, about eight miles from the port. All attempts to back off were of no avail, and as the tide receded the undue strains set up on the yet unfinished vessel caused the rivets to start, and with a loud report the hull threatened to split asunder. Boats were sent back to the port for assistance, and punts loaded with heavy baulk timber were sent up. Cargo was removed, and as the tide flowed again the rents closed up enough to be temporarily fastened, and the vessel limped back to port to be again placed on the slip.

Heavy baulk timber was bolted around the sides and other repairs were hurriedly carried out, and the *Koheroa* was again launched and loaded, and set out once more. This time the trip was successful, and she arrived at Ngaruawahia just in time to replenish the Army's depleted stores.

From then on regular trips were made until the defeat of Rewi Maniapoto at Orakau ended the Waikato War in April 1864.

The *Pioneer*, after the cease fire at Orakau, was taken back to the Waikato Heads. While berthed there, it had the misfortune to break away from its moorings one night when there was nobody on board. Its loss was not discovered until next morning, when it was seen drifting out at sea. A rescue party, under the chief engineer Mr Lodder, manned a large boat and pulled out to rescue the drifting vessel, which was heading up the coast towards the Manukau bar. The party boarded it, and an attempt was made to raise steam, but the vessel was shipping a lot of water, apparently through the openings where the cranks operated the stern wheel, and before long it was seen that it was doomed. The rescue party took off, and stood by to see the steamer plunge beneath the waves, before setting out on a strenuous row back to the Waikato Bar.

Mention has been made of two iron turrets which stood on the deck of the *Pioneer*. These were taken off

before the vessel was laid up at the Heads, one at Point Russell, later known as Mercer, and the other at the Bluff, an outpost about a mile down river from there.

The one at Point Russell was put to rather a novel use. With the advent of the regular road and river traffic the population of the river port increased, and some unruly elements were included. As there was no place prepared to accommodate any who over-indulged in liquor the turret was found to meet the situation admirably for an overnight incarceration. But it had its disadvantages, though perhaps not from the prisoner's point of view. The rifle shots were found to be just the right size to insert the neck of a bottle; consequently a prisoner who had mates outside was sure of a good old drunk, as many were ready to accommodate the thirsty one, and his last stage was worse than the first.

This turret was eventually placed on a concrete base, in a prominent position as a memorial of the first great War. The one lying at the Bluff was shipped up river to Ngaruawahia, and placed in a prominent position near the old site of General Cameron's Headquarters.

CHAPTER V—AFTER THE WAR

The war along the river ended in 1864 with the retreat to the interior of the rebel tribes, and the confiscation of two million acres of their ancestral lands.

The surveyor was soon at work, and grants of ten acres each were given to many of the Imperial troops who had fought through the campaign. Armed constabulary patrolled the border line between the confiscated land and the Rohe Potae (King Country), whither "King" Tawhiao had retired with his warriors.

Townships sprang up along its banks. Hamilton was founded about 1869 and the townships of Taupiri,

Huntly, Rangiriri and Point Russell gradually assumed importance as distributing centres. The name of Point Russell was changed to Mercer, after Captain Mercer who fell at Rangiriri while leading a charge.

The Waipa also became an important waterway, and the township of Alexandra (changed later to Pirongia), was established as a military outpost. It became the terminus of the Waipa waterway and was the outlet for the Te Awamutu district long before the advent of the railway.

The Great South Road had been constructed by the military and connected Auckland with the Queen's Redoubt on the Mangatawhiri stream, and a further extension soon took it to Mercer, which in the years between 1870 and 1885 became an important river port. Prior to the railway from Auckland reaching it, coaching was the only mode of passenger transport, and goods were carried by drays, which took two days from Auckland.

The coaches made it in one day, horses being changed at Drury where the passengers obtained refreshments. Quick and Co's. coaches were well known on the roads in those pioneering days. Many small flaxmills sprang up along the river, and a back-load of fibre was often sent to the city.

Passengers for Hamilton, Cambridge and intermediate ports were catered for in Mercer by an hotel (Point Russell) and sundry boarding houses. Quite a fleet of steamers, both stern and side-paddle, plied on the river, among the better known ones being the *Rangiriri*, *Waipa*, *Delta*, *Quickstep*, *Waikato*, *Lily*, *Bluerose*, *Planet* and *Gymnotus*. The latter boat was screw-propelled, and was the first of that type to ply on the river. It was built at Onehunga by the late J. McIntyre, and carted overland to the river.

It was said that the *Quickstep*, operated by the proprietors of the coaching line, had such powerful engines

The site of the Alexandra Redoubt on the Waikato River, at Tuakau.

In the winter of 1863 a redoubt was constructed on the high bluff overlooking the river, and was garrisoned by the 63rd Regiment.

Two 63-pounders were set up, and on one occasion were fired at some Maori canoes.

Prior to the erection of this fort, and one further up the river at Havelock, the mobile fleets of the warlike Rewi Maniapoto were in possession of the waterway for nearly a hundred miles, and raiding parties who used the river as a highway were a potential danger to settlers between the river and Auckland city.

that if opened up to full speed a person standing on the foreward part of the vessel would do a miniature step-dance. Certainly its engine was massive for its day as, when the boat ceased running after several years, it was taken out and operated in a sawmill near Camerontown, owned by Buckland and Shipherd. In 1895 the plant closed down, and it was then sold to a sawmiller named Chadwick at Pahi on the Kaipara Harbour, where it ended its days of usefulness after a long and strenuous life, a tribute to the splendid work of the British manufacturers Marshall and Co. Various adventures were encountered by these steamers, the river in places being infested with snags, and the moving sandbanks often caused them to ground and stick fast, especially if the summer season was a dry one. The *Waipa* struck a snag and foundered near Ohinewai, just opposite where Firth's pumice mill now operates. Piles were driven each side of the sunken vessel, and it was raised. The *Bluerose* sank in the Waipa and was raised again.

However, most of the vessels remained afloat until the oncoming railway, which ran parallel to the river, deprived them of their usefulness, and they were run ashore and abandoned. In some cases the machinery was sold to operate flax and saw mills.

The most spectacular accident of them all was that which befell the *Rangiriri*. During one of her regular trips down from Hamilton a young deckhand picked up a lump of coal and threw it at the man at the wheel, hitting him with some force. Releasing the wheel, the helmsman chased the young fellow around the deck, intending to chastise him. The steamer, out of control for the moment, sheered out of the channel and struck some rocks in mid stream, tearing a gaping hole below waterline. It was soon seen that the vessel was sinking fast, and she was headed for the shore, which she reached in a sinking condition. The vessel sank in moderately shallow water, the fore part remaining above water, and the after position completely submerged. This happened about ten miles upstream from Mercer, where the passengers were eventually landed by other boats.

The work of raising this fine boat was undertaken by D. Gouk, a shipbuilder of Auckland, and eventually it was raised and temporarily patched, floated down to the Heads, and placed on the slip, where permanent repairs were carried out. These being completed the vessel set out up river once more and picked up a cargo at Mercer among which was a quantity of flour.

Bad luck dogged her for, on reaching the part of the river which flows over an ancient forest, another snag was struck, and the vessel was holed again. The captain, on feeling the impact, jumped into the hold to ascertain the damage, and found a fairly large opening through which the water was pouring in rapidly. Picking up a sack of flour he dropped it fairly over the hole, and jumping on it to assist retaining it in position, at the same time calling for assistance. Eventually the bag was shored to the deck above, and as the flour coagulated it formed an almost watertight patch, and the vessel was able to proceed on its way up to Hamilton. It is stated that it operated for six months before time was found to again place the boat on the slip at the Heads.

The hull of the old *Rangiriri* lies on the bank of the river at Hamilton, below the traffic bridge. The engines, which were built in Sydney by Russell and Co., were taken out and placed in a new hull built at Ngaruawahia in 1891 by A. Nicholl for Thomas Davis who was commonly known as "Steamer Davis". These fine engines saw this second boat out, and were dismantled at Mercer about 1930, still in good condition.

The *Waikato,* a side-paddle steamer operated by the Waikato Coal and Steam Navigation Co. used to ply between Hamilton and Onehunga, and her regular sailings were advertised in the *Weekly News* as late as 1882. Her master was Captain Alan Marshall, a son of the pioneer trader who settled at the Heads in the early thirties. This old boat was left ashore at Huntly, its engine and boiler being taken out and installed at the

pit head of Ralph's Mine to operate an endless wire hauling rope. Gradually all the old boats disappeared after serving their purpose. First the rail and then the motor lorry revolutionised transport and although there is still some activity on the river it is only a shadow of its former volume. The river is still serving a most useful purpose, being harnessed to produce electric power, and when fully exploited will open up a new era for both primary and secondary producer within the scope of its power boundaries.

CHAPTER V—HOW A V.C. WAS WON

The average citizen of Auckland to-day, dwelling in security and plenty, can hardly visualise the fact that less than eighty-five years ago a chain of fortresses was thrown across the island about forty miles south of the city to protect and defend it from invasion by the fierce Hau Hau Maoris, who, in defiance of the Governor's proclamation to give up arms and swear fealty to the Queen, had gathered together on the war-path, and were already burning the homesteads of the outlying settlers and murdering the occupants wherever they overtook them.

War, red war, had overtaken the young colony, and a vigorous and resourceful enemy was engaged, one who knew every track and stream in the hinterland which was only partially explored. So all able-bodied men were mobilized, and immigrants, on landing, found themselves shut up in the city, or enrolled in the Militia, according to their sex and age.

Fresh troops were brought from India and England, and steps were taken vigorously to prosecute the war. At first the "Red Coats" were inclined to hold the enemy cheaply, but as time progressed, these veterans of Alma, Inkerman and Lucknow entertained a much greater respect for him. In the winter and spring of 1863 a military road was driven into the enemy country as far

south as about where the present township of Mercer now stands, and the whole of the operations were under the command of General Cameron, a Crimean veteran.

One of his first steps was to secure the city from invasion and to this end he erected a chain of redoubts from the Hauraki Gulf on the east coast to the Waikato river on the west, naming them respectively, Miranda, Esk, Surrey, Queen's and Alexandra. He patrolled the country between, and although the enemy broke through once or twice, it was only a hurried raid that could be effected, and the city was never in serious danger. The incidents to be narrated took place in connection with the Alexandra Redoubt, which was erected on a high bluff overlooking the Waikato river at Tuakau. From thence to the sea the river was patrolled by the gunboats *Pioneer, Avon* and others. It was occupied by a detatchment of the 65th Regiment under Captain Swift. In the meantime a road had been cut through the bush from the Manukau harbour to a place on the Waikato river about five miles below the redoubt, named Camerontown, after the General. Here some huts were erected, and a military depot established under the care of a friendly tribe of Maoris, the Ngatitipa. Early one spring morning a much respected civilian, Mr Armitage, who was a magistrate, set off in a canoe with a couple of natives from the Alexandra Redoubt for the Waikato Heads, where there was a large military and naval establishment. His intention was to land at Camerontown en route, and so, turning the canoe ashore, they made their way to the landing-place.

Instead of the friendly welcome they expected, a volley from the bush close by met them, and Mr Armitage fell shot through the shoulder. Two other white men, named McKeown and Strand, jumped in the canoe with Mr Armitage and pushed out into the stream, under a hot fire from the enemy. Leaping overboard, they endeavoured to swim and tow the canoe out of range, but they were pursued, and their hands chopped off as

they clung to the craft in which lay the wounded man, who was also despatched with a tomahawk. In the meantime the friendly natives had disappeared without offering any resistance to the enemy, and the stores were plundered and the huts set on fire.

From Alexandra Redoubt the smoke of the burning huts was seen, and the bugle sounded the alarm. Gathering a flying detachment, Captain Swift, with Lieutenant Butler, set off in the direction of Camerontown, and late in the afternoon entered the thick bush near the site of the depot. Enjoining the strictest silence on his company, the gallant captain led his men in Indian file through the dimly-lit bush track.

Suddenly a crashing volley came from one side, to be followed by others in front and rear; they had stumbled into an ambush. At the first volley the leader and his lieutenant fell; for the moment panic ensued, and it looked as if the whole company would be massacred. There were cool heads, however, in the company. Colour-Sergeant McKenna, on seeing his brave captain fall, drew him to cover, rallied the men, and stood the enemy off, exchanging volley for volley. Determined not to let their beloved leader fall into the hands of the enemy, the troops stood-to all night, and as fresh troops arrived in the morning under Colonel Murray, the enemy was driven off, but at the price of the lives of the captain, lieutenant, and several rank and file. In the fight apparently some of the men got separated. The bones of one poor fellow were found alongside the rusty barrel of his rifle many years after by a settler who was clearing scrub.

For gallantry in face of the enemy, and for rescuing the body of his captain under heavy fire, Colour-Sergeant McKenna was awarded the Victoria Cross, probably the first one granted in the Maori War. Captain Swift was buried in the Symonds Street cemetery, Auckland, and one of the rank and file, Stephen Grace by name,

lies alongside the site of the old redoubt. An obelisk has been erected in the old fort, and the earthworks are being kept intact as far as possible.

The river flows placidly at the foot of the bluff, and at Camerontown all signs of warfare are blotted out by the growth of beautiful native bush, which casts reflections on its mirror-like surface.

The old Maori warriors are all passed away, and no more the river echoes to the war-cry or fusillade of firearms. Peace reigns supreme, but let us not forget that it has been purchased by the blood of our pioneer colonists and soldiers.

PART III

Pioneer Days

THE STORY OF A TRAGEDY

The average person to-day who can travel from one end of New Zealand to the other with speed and in comfort can hardly realise the discomforts and perils of travel in the days of pioneer settlements. To make a journey of less than one hundred miles from the city of Auckland meant much discomfort and strenuous exertion.

One main route to the north was up to the head of the Waitemata to Pihoihoi (Riverhead), thence on foot across to Kaukapakapa on the Kaipara harbour where a boat, generally a small uncomfortable cutter, would take travellers to the Northern Wairoa or Albertland which had just been opened up.

The Maoris on this route had not joined their Waikato relatives in the European-Maori war of 1863-64 but had remained neutral, although among them were warriors who had been used to wielding the taiaha and mere in the days prior to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, when might was right. The influence of the Rev. William Gittos, an early missionary, was much in evidence among the Ngatiwhatua tribe who were the ancestral owners of all the land in the Kaipara district through which this pioneer trail ran. Kaukapakapa being the terminus of the first day's journey out of Auckland, years before the railway was laid, was thus an important centre, and the usual store and post office was established.

A man named Thompson settled there and started a small store, and also kept the post office. He is stated to have been a man of splendid physique, and used to carry the mail to Auckland on foot, making the journey in one day, returning the next. Besides the mail bag

he would carry sundry purchases for the little shop which his wife looked after in his absence. Everything was peaceable and quiet, when early one morning he left for Auckland on his periodical mail trip. Grim tragedy was, however, stalking that little pioneer household, and ere he returned had descended upon it wrecking it for ever.

Some time after his departure a Maori entered the store, ostensibly to make some purchases. The storekeeper's wife went to serve him, and in doing so had occasion to stoop down behind the counter. This was the opportunity the murderer had been waiting for, as he immediately pulled out a tomahawk and struck her dead with a deadly blow across the back of the neck. At that instant a door leading from the shop to the dwelling apartment opened and a young girl, with a baby on her back, appeared in the opening. With a cry of horror she turned and fled, slamming the door behind her. Uttering a fierce cry the murderer sprang over the counter in pursuit of the child, who, burdened with the baby on her back, was no match in speed for the blood-lusting maniac, and but for one fortunate happening would have fallen a victim. The saviour was a fox terrier belonging to the family. As soon as the chase started out of the back of the house the terrier set on to the Maori, snapping at his heels and hindering him, and causing him to turn his attention from pursuing the fugitives. Foxy stuck to his guns till the girl with the baby had got far enough towards where some bushmen were working, and their attention was attracted by the barking of the terrier, and no doubt by the cries of the girl. In any case the Maori gave up the chase, and disappeared into the surrounding bush and was lost to sight.

A hue and cry was started after the murderer as soon as it was ascertained what had happened, and settlers for miles around scoured the country for days armed with rifles and shot guns. Sad to relate another tragedy, though an accidental one, took place during this

Looking across at the Alexandra Redoubt from the river.

In the thick bush skirting the river many a skirmish took place in days of old. Now river and road are highways of peace.

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man-hunt, as, while marching along, Indian file, on a narrow bush track, one of the party accidentaly discharged his rifle, which shot the man in front of him and he died almost immediately. This cast a further gloom over the settlement, and every effort was made to trace the Maori, but all in vain.

The authorities then tried another plan which it was thought might prove successful. The Governor ordered the paramount chief of the district, Parore, to assemble all the men of the tribe at Awaroa, near Helensville, on a certain date. This was done, and it is said that between one and two thousand men assembled just where the Helensville railway station now stands. The girl who witnessed the tragedy was brought, and as the men all stood in rank, she was taken along in front of them in the hope that she would be able to identify the criminal. Passing rank after rank of men she suddenly stopped in front of one, and pointed him out said, "That is the man." Protests were unvailing; he was arrested; further evidence was forthcoming which fixed his guilt, and he was tried and sentenced to death, and was hanged in the old gaol at the foot of Victoria street in Auckland.

To return to the storekeeper-mailman Thompson, who of course in the absence of telegraphs in those days, was ignorant of the tragedy. On his return with the mail the next day he was met by settlers who broke the news to him, and it was said by those who took part in it that he became almost a raving maniac. He declared his intention of wrecking vengeance on all and every Maori he came in contact with, and he had to be forcibly restrained for the time being. So long did this mania persist with him that the Government decided to move him to the South Island, away from the scene of the murder altogether, and where there was little likelihood of his coming in contact with any Maoris. This was done; he was given a small post office somewhere in Otago, and disappeared altogether from the district where he had suffered so much. The vindication of the law had a salutary effect on all the Maoris who had

taken part in the assembly on the banks of the Awaroa, who realised that law and order were to be enforced and the old days of killing and looting had gone forever.

PART IV

Maori Stories and Legends

CHAPTER I—RAIDS AND COUNTER RAIDS

During the period between the advent of whaling ships at the Bay of Islands and the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the northern tribes of Maoris, particularly the Ngapuhi, were able to procure firearms in return for flax fibre, vegetables and timber, which they bartered freely for the new weapon. We have it on record how Hongi, on his return from England laden with presents, exchanged them at Sydney for guns and ammunition, and on his return to New Zealand, set out on the war-path and devastated a large portion of the North Island. He raided the peaceful villages on the Tamaki river, and, it is stated, slew over three thousand in one battle. He was evidently an intrepid and daring warrior, for he not only took his canoes by water, but also hauled them overland when necessary. Hongi's track is still shown to travellers on the Rotorua-Whakatane road. Many other minor raids, of which little or no record is known, were also undertaken. One hitherto unrecorded raid took place somewhere about the year 1830, and it had a sequel which was rather dramatic.

ATTACK ON PIRONGIA PA

On the banks of the Waipa river, where the present township of Pirongia stands, was a noted fortress, or pa, known as Matakitaki It was the pride of the Maniapoto people, and commanded the waterway of the Waipa, between the head waters of Otorohanga and the Waikato river. It was considered impregnable, and no doubt was so until the advent of the new weapon. The fame of this pa had spread as far north as the Bay of Islands, and Hongi was determined to attack it. Several canoes were manned, and set forth on their murderous journey.

Paddling down the coast to the Waitemata the raiders hauled the canoes across to the Manukau harb-

our, and thence across to the Waikato river. This could not be done secretly in the enemy country, and as the natives in the lower Waikato heard of them coming they fled up the river, scattered up the many creeks and lakes, and disappeared in the bush. Meanwhile the raiders had started to ascend the Waikato river, paddling by day and camping at night in the deserted villages. One camp was made at a pa just below Tuakau, and during the night some Waikato natives, who had not managed to get away ahead of the raiders, tried to pass, but were detected by the watchful Ngapuhi, and a long chase took place. Eventually they were overtaken near the present township of Mercer and killed. Takutai was the name of the chief who endeavoured to elude them, and he was shot while standing up in his canoe urging the crew to further exertions.

Word had been sent ahead that the Ngapuhi were going to attack Matakitaki, and several thousand Maoris gathered there to resist them. The Ngapuhi warriors probably did not number more than two to three hundred, and not all of them armed with firearms, while opposed to them were three hundred warriors. As the enemy approached the pekerangi, or outer palisade of the pa, they were greeted with shouts of derision at their small number, and were invited to come on and be cooked. The besieged danced themselves into a frenzy, and manned the parapet within a few yards of their enemies, who as yet had not discharged a firearm.

Suddenly a warrior stepped forth and called on the garrison to surrender, "for," he said, "we have the 'pu' (gun) which can kill from afar, and you had better surrender at once." He was greeted with shouts of derision, for the Waikato Maoris up to that time had not made the acquaintance of the 'pu' and were in total ignorance of its deadly qualities. So they shouted with the valour of ignorance. "Heiaha" (never mind). "He Pu kia matou" (we also have the pu). The 'pu' they meant was a war horn made of wood, or flax, or a large sea shell, which was used for war purposes, prob-

ably like a bugle. However, to show they had the 'pu' a blast was blown on them and a war dance executed on the parapet.

The next instant all was death and confusion. The Ngapuhi had fired a volley at close quarters into the living mass, and a terrible havoc was created. Panic broke out immediately, and it is stated that more were killed in the stampede than by the enemy. The pa was taken and those who could made their escape, but the majority were killed. Some prisoners were taken and their heads cut off. Laden with their spoils the Ngapuhi returned home, leaving behind a memory which even today is effective in keeping up a certain amount of restraint between the Waikato tribes and the Ngapuhi.

After the sack of the pa the remnant gradually returned, and long and loud were the wailings for the dead and the loss of prestige.

After much discussion a scheme of revenge was planned against the Ngapuhi. It was one that showed much craft and cleverness, and it was hoped that by stealth the advantage of the new weapon could be taken away from the enemy.

Six large canoes, manned by picked warriors, were selected and these, after much ceremony, set off down the Waipa river. Continuing down the Waikato river, they ascended the Awaroa creek, running towards Waiuku, and thence pulled overland into the waters of the Manukau, to the Whau portage, and overland into the Waitemata harbour. Arriving towards the enemy's coast they proceeded only by night, lying up in hiding all day. Several days were occupied thus in going up the east coast.

At length they set out for the last night's voyage, and every heart was beating high at the thought of extracting utu from the deadly enemy. Here it was

that the crux of the whole scheme lay. Of course it was quite apparent that they could not attack a great pa openly with their small numbers, so the idea was to attack the enemy away from their stronghold. Now the Ngapuhis had most likely expected retaliation of some sort, for it was not the old Maori warrior's style to take a beating lying down; he often would wait a lifetime for revenge and, if not able to obtain it, would hand the feud down to his sons, like a Corsican vendetta. So it happened that in the grey dawn of morning the lookout at the pa saw six overturned canoes lying on the beach below, with no sign of anyone about. Crying out that the enemy had arrived and turned faint-hearted at the sight of the great pa and fled, a stream of warriors ran down to the beach to seize the canoes.

But these canoes were like the Trojan horse, for, as the rabble approached, up leaped the Maniapoto warriors who had been lying underneath them, and with a shout and a rush they were amongst the Ngapuhis. Crash went the meres and stone clubs on their luckless skulls and, in a few minutes, a number of the enemy were lying dead or dying on the sand, while the remainder retreated to the pa to get shelter and arms.

By the time, however, that they were armed and ready to defend themselves the Maniapotos had collected their trophies of war in the shape of many of the heads of the enemy, had launched their canoes, and were on their way down the coast. Right back over the same track and up the rivers they came in a triumphant return, and great was the rejoicing at Pirongia when the result was known.

Not long after this the European influence began to be felt, and such raids became a thing of the past. But the memory of such lingered long in the old Maori mind, and round the fire on a winter night the younger generations were told the tales which are being fast forgotten.

The final scenes in connection with these warlike raids and counter raids took place on the Waikato river somewhere about the years 1834-35. Smarting under the successful raid of the Waikatos, the Ngapuhi's prestige demanded satisfaction. After some time an attack was planned, and it was intended to sweep the whole valley of the Waikato, sacking each pa as they came to it.

The Waikatos, however, had learned the use and power of the firearm, and on their return from the raid into the Ngapuhi's territory, had begun to acquire many stands of arms. Traders had appeared at Kawhia, Raglan, or Whaingaroa as it was then known, and Waikato Heads. Flax fibre was the staple product of trade, and large quantities were exchanged for firearms and powder and bullets. Thus equipped the Waikatos felt that they would be a match for the Ngapuhi, whom they felt sure would sooner or later launch another attack. In this they were not disappointed, and at length word was received that a fleet of canoes was on the Manukau harbour, making for the portage at Waiuku, across which the canoes would be hauled to the Waikato river. This time matters were different. The invaders found all the pas in the lower valley of the Waikato deserted. Word had been passed along the river that the invaders were coming, and that no resistance was to be offered at any of the lower fortifications, so all the Ngapuhi found were deserted villages, all the inhabitants having retreated into the fastness of the forest-clad hinterland.

All the time, however, scouts had kept a watch on the raiders, and the chiefs had arranged their plan of campaign. The enemy was allowed to proceed about fifty miles up the river, and at a suitable place an ambush was laid. The spot chosen was admirably suited for the carrying out of such plans. About four miles below Rangiriri on the western bank of the river are two creeks about one mile apart, the Opuatia and the Whangape. Between them the banks are very high in one place, and there was a very formidable pa on the most prominent point of land. The channel runs close under the high

banks, and canoes would of necessity have to keep close to the western bank. In these creeks two fleets of canoes were awaiting the enemy, manned by warriors armed with the real "pu" this time, and eagerly awaiting the opportunity of trying out the new weapon. Scouts on the headlands kept watch, and the scene was set for what was to be the last intertribal battle on the Waikato river, and probably in New Zealand.

At length the Ngapuhi came in sight, the long, beautiful war canoe foaming at the bows as they sped through the water, each one propelled by sixty or seventy warriors, who paddled as one man, keeping time to the chant of the leader who stands in the centre of the craft mere in hand, urging them along with chant and gesture.

Now great excitement prevails in the fleet hidden in the Opuatia creek.

The Ngapuhi approach and are allowed to pass unmolested, and not until they are out of sight around a bend does the fleet put out. Meanwhile word has been sent to the fleet in the Whangape creek a mile further up, and just as the Ngapuhi come abreast of the pa which is close to the creek, a score of warriors leaped up and hurled defiance at them. At the same time the Whangape fleet sallied forth on to the river and the Opuatia fleet came up behind. The guns belched forth and the battle was joined, but caught between two fires on the water, and subjected to a flanking fire from the pa, the Ngapuhi, under Pomare their chief, fought a losing battle. The odds were overwhelming, and when Pomare fell mortally wounded the fight was practically over. Many Ngapuhi swam ashore and escaped that way, but the Waikatos' vistory was overwhelming.

It is said that the victors took the body of Pomare and disembowelled it. In the stomach was found some undigested corn which Pomare had eaten just a short time previously. This was planted on the river bank

Camerontown, on the Waikato river, where a Victoria Cross was won in September 1863.

Early one fine morning in September 1863 James Armitage, a much respected magistrate, left the Alexandra redoubt en route to Port Waikato.

With the purpose of calling in at Camerontown, where an army depot had been established, he drew near to the shore. Instead of a friendly welcome he was met by a volley of musketry and fell mortally wounded. The depot had previously been captured by a raiding party, some of whom put off in canoes and despatched the wounded magistrate and two companions.

On the news reaching Alexandra, Captain Swift set out at once with a party of men for Camerontown. During an engagement in the bush Captain Swift was killed and Lieutenant Butler disabled. The command fell to Colour-Sergeant McKenna, who was awarded the Victoria Cross for conspicuous gallantry.

All signs of warfare have now disappeared; the river flows placidly past the bush-clad hill which speaks of the peace and tranquility which should be the lot of all men.

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and germinated, and the seed of this was kept and sown by the river tribes for long after, and this special corn was often referred to as "Te Kaanga o te puku o Pomare" (the corn from Pomare's stomach). The name of the pa from which the attack was launched was Tu Pekerunga, the meaning of which is to "jump up upon," and was probably named so after this battle. Today it is a peaceful settlement known as Churchill. Thus ended the warfare between Waikato and Ngapuhi.

CHAPTER II—A SLAVE'S REVENGE

During the Maori intertribal wars a couple of decades before the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi it was the custom of the victors to bring back from their raids to their own locality a number of prisoners, many of whom were slain later for cannibal feasts. Others were made to work in the kumara plantations or assist in making and repairing the fortifications.

On one such raid by a Northern tribe, to the district later known as the Thames, a prisoner of high caste was among the captured, and he was spared in order to be a witness of the horrible feasting that followed the return of the victors, when a number of the prisoners were cooked and eaten. After listening to the recital of the brave deeds of the warriors who gloated over him and his fellow captives, his heart must have sunk within him, well knowing that his turn would come later on.

He was put to work preparing the aruhe (fern root) for one of the chiefs who was very partial to this diet. The method of preparing it was by beating it on a flat surface of a stone, with a heavy pounder of either wood or stone. After being so pounded the coarse stringy matter was picked out, and the starchy residue was kneaded into small balls and cooked on the hot stones of a hangi (oven) or on live coals.

So, day after day he sat, pounding at the roots the busy women gathered and brought in to him. No doubt his thoughts often turned to his far away home and his family and tribal friends, and as he was a Maori, imbued no doubt with the same sentiments as his captors, he pondered over the hopelessness of his position, knowing full well what was in store for him when the chief decided he had had enough of fern root diet. Then suddenly one day a scheme of revenge flashed across his mind, and he decided to put it into operation at the first opportunity, which was not long in coming. One day the chief for whom he was working drew near to him, watching as he pounded away at the favourite delicacy. After drawing the chief's attention to something peculiar about the roots he was working on which caused his master to draw near, he suddenly sprang up and with a fierce war cry brought the heavy pounder crashing on to the skull of the luckless chief, who was stricken dead. Of course death was the penalty for such a deed carried out in full view of numbers of the tribe, but before any of them could lay hands on him the prisoner had rubbed his hands in the blood of the dead chief and smeared it over himself.

By doing this he rendered his body tapu or sacred, and no one would dare think of cooking and eating him, being anointed with the blood of their chief.

Death by combat was his end, but he died knowing that he had taken a measure of revenge against his enemies who would never desecrate his body by making fish hooks or spears out of his bones, also that sooner or later his own people would get to know of his success in exacting utu from their enemies. Thus he died the death of a warrior instead of the ignominious one of a slave.

CHAPTER III—THE GREAT HAHUNGA

The word "Hahunga," seldom heard in the everyday conversation of the Maori at the present time, refers

to the ancient ceremony of the exhumation, scraping and cleaning, and re-burial of the remains of deceased ancestors. In the internecine wars of pre-European days, when many noted warriors fell to the mere or taiaha, it was considered a great feat to obtain the head and other parts of the anatomy of the fallen warrior. The head would be preserved as a trophy of war, and such parts as the leg and arm bones would be used to make the native koauau (flute) or the putorino (nose flute) and occasionally matau (fish hooks).

Great value was attached to such instruments, more especially if the warrior had been a noted toa (brave) as it was considered that the spirit of the warrior was imparted through his bones to their possessors. So it can be seen that every precaution would be taken to prevent the body of a fallen brave from falling into the hands of the enemy. The body was often hurriedly interred in a cave or hollow tree by a few trusty warriors, who kept the secret closely in case the remains should be discovered by an enemy later on. Even when a chief died from natural causes the body was hidden away by a select few after the tangi, or mourning celebrations, were over. It can be seen, therefore, that in the course of time, in various parts of the country, there would be quite a number of these remains deposited over the years. After a lapse of years, most likely in a time of comparative peace, these remains would be collected and buried in a wahi tapu (sacred burying place) with due ceremony and mourning. This was the "Hahunga."

It has not fallen to the lot of many Europeans to see this ceremony from beginning to end, and I was fortunate enough to see and take part in the last great hahunga of the Waikato Maoris in the year 1895. To diverge a little I will recapitulate the incidents and reasons which led the tribes of the Lower Waikato to decide to have a great Hahunga.

Prior to the Maori Wars which broke out in the lower Waikato in the winter of 1863, a large number of

natives lived in and around the districts of Tuakau, Pukekohe, Pokeno and Mangatawhiri. Most of these later on took up the new cult of "Ringatu" (the up-raised hand) and from the vocal expressions given forth in their chants were commonly known as "Hauhaus." This call originated about the year 1864 in the Urewera country.

This tribe, known as the Ngatipou, did not come under the influence of Maunsell's Mission at the Waikato Heads and Kohanga, and immediately took up arms against European settlers in the Papakura, Mauku and other near-by settlements. In July of that year Sir George Grey, Governor, issued a proclamation ordering all natives north of the Mangatawhiri stream to hand in their arms and swear fealty to the Queen. This was not acceptable to the lower Waikato Ngatipous. Hostilities commenced, and the soldiers marched into the settlements of the Maoris at Tuakau and Pokeno just in time to see the last of the Maoris crossing the river, losing for ever their ancestral lands in and around these districts. The war progressed, and not until General Cameron had cleared the whole of the valley of the Waikato as far as Te Awamutu was peace declared. Two million acres of land in the Waikato were confiscated as a penalty, among which were the districts above mentioned. The former occupants of these districts retired to the Rohe Potae, or King Country as we know it, and lived there in sullen silence with their King Tawhiao.

Relenting somewhat towards these dispossessed Maoris, the Government in the early eighties set aside a block of land in the lower Waikato, known as Onewhero 99, and let it be known that the former owners of Tuakau and surrounding districts could come and settle there again. The land was to be held by a trusteeship, the trustees being chosen from the tribe. One of the original trustees was a Mr George Swanson, a brother of the Hon. William Swanson of early colonial fame, after whom Swanson street is named.

Gradually the Ngatipou, the dispossessed tribe, returned to this block and settled down, but there was always a strained feeling as they walked the roads of the pakeha settlement of Tuakau, which was the one nearest to their new homes, and which had been the ancestral home of many of these returned warriors, numbers of whom bore the scars of battle.

Later on the reason for this sullenness became apparent, and this is where I entered the scene. My father had settled in Tuakau in the eighties, starting a flax mill and general store, and for many years had dealings with all these natives, whose confidence he gained. Later on, when old enough to assist, I undertook most of the dealing with these natives, and got to know them better than most of the local settlers.

We procured the first small steam boat that plied on the lower river, and the natives made use of it often in travelling about, up as far as the Waipa district. It was then I began to understand the feeling of the Maoris, when they disclosed to me the fact that many of their warriors were buried in lands now under the plough and fenced in by the pakeha. In fact one grave was in the centre of the main road which led from the Waikato river to the railway station at Tuakau. At last the Maoris held a great "hui," or meeting, and decided if possible to get permission to dig up their ancestors' bones and re-bury them in the sacred ground at Taupiri.

The older men knew where the graves were, even though buildings had been erected over some, and trees grew alongside others. Hollow trees still standing in places contained some, and some were in caverns in stony ground. In some cases I was asked to go with them and explain the circumstances, and ask permission to obtain these bones, which in every case was given. The local body gave permission to exhume any body buried in a road, subject of course to the excavation being filled in.

Everything being in order, the work began. It had its humorous side. I often saw a troop of the younger men galloping home in the evening with their packs loaded up with bones which rattled as they raced along the road. Bones of chiefs that were known were kept separate, but the rank and file were all bundled together in boxes and sacks etc.

I saw a number of graves opened up, often in the most unexpected places. In many cases the merest traces of bones were obtained. Quite a large assortment of curios were dug up. I saw beautiful greenstone ornaments, American dollars dating back to early whaling days, rusted remains of old flint lock guns, and a golden Napoleon—a French coin worth about £5/0/0.

After several months work, which covered a district of many square miles, including islands in the river, the Maoris had enough, saying that although they knew of some more graves, one of whom was a great chief, but who was buried right under a settler's house where it could not be got at, they decided to end the digging and start the burying again.

The total number of bodies exhumed was 1,140. These were all washed and cleaned and packed in boxes, the chiefs being in more elaborate caskets, and a great tangi or wailing took place over them, the virtues of every known warrior being recited by those who knew them.

Our boat was then chartered to convey the remains to Taupiri, where two large graves had been prepared for them. Accordingly we set out with the load of bones stacked in a punt, together with close on a hundred Maoris, men women and children, a dog or two and some cats. The distance was about fifty miles up stream, but en route were a number of native villages at which we had to stop for the usual tangi and speechifying, consequently it took several days to accomplish the trip up

river. The journey being ended and the bones being safely interred in the sacred ground of Taupiri, the tribe returned with the feeling of satisfaction that they had done what their ancestors would have wished.

During the great exhumation of bones one old warrior came to me in great distress, and asked if I would go with him to see a certain pakeha under whose house his grandfather, a chief, was buried. Being unable to speak much English, and the pakeha speaking no Maori, he was unable to make his wants known clearly enough, and as I understood what he wanted I agreed to go with him and make his requests known.

His great fear was that, owing to his inability to remove his ancestor's bones along with the others that were being dug up at that time, he would certainly die, and I firmly believe that die he would, had I not have gone with him and got his request granted.

This request, which was a simple one in the eyes of a European, but a serious one for the Maori, was that he be allowed to obtain some ashes out of the fire place in the house, which he stated was just about over where the body of his ancestor lay. These ashes he wanted spread between slices of bread, which had been baked on the fire, and which he would then consume. Accordingly I went with the old chap, and on meeting the owner of the house I warned him on the quiet not to make a jest of the request, as it was very serious for the Maori.

"He can have all the ashes in the fireplace if they will do him any good," said the settler, and so, carefully lifting out some on a spoon, and placing them between some slices of bread, the old warrior ate them in silence. With the last mouthful consumed his face lit up and he exclaimed, "Kua ora ahau inaienei" (I will live now, or I am feeling much better and will not die). The old man returned with me and lived many years after and I

was his friend for life. This warrior had been shot at the battle of the Koheroa in July 1863, and an Enfield bullet had passed clean through his chest. I saw the mark in his back where the bullet had emerged leaving a hole that a tennis ball could have rested in.

I asked him how he was healed up, seeing that he was carried off the battlefield and had no European medical attention, and he told me that the openings of the wound were plugged up with certain mud the Maoris knew of, and that was all the medical attention he had. Rough and ready as it was it proved effective, as it was over thirty years after the Maori War when I saw him, and he was then hale and hearty.

CHAPTER IV—KAIWHARE THE TANIWHA

Very many years ago there dwelt a great Taniwha near the Manukau Heads. Kaiwhare (The House Eater) was his name, and he spread terror over a large portion of the Manukau Harbour, alongside which dwelt several tribes of Maori people who were great fishermen. Kaiwhare's particular home was in an underwater cave near Piha outside the Heads on the west coast.

On quiet evenings, as darkness fell over the placid waters of the harbour, the fishermen in their small canoes would drift down with the ebb tide to where all the channels of the harbour meet, ready to catch the fat tomure (schnapper) mango (sharks) kahawai and other fish in season.

This was Kaiwhare's chance, and he would quietly swim in over the huge surges of the bar and come up quietly alongside a canoe in the darkness and seize his victim.

Perhaps the season would arrive for the taking of the patiki (flat fish), when many people would be wading in the shallow water with torches and spears. Here

again Kaiwhare, knowing all this, would quietly appear and another fisherman would be among the missing. These happenings caused great concern among the tribes, and fishing near the ocean was a risky undertaking, consequently the best fishing grounds became almost untouched.

Now about the time of some of the worst losses there dwelt at Hauraki, near Tararu, a noted warrior and chief named Tamure, who owned a Mere Pounamu (greenstone mere) which was credited with being able to cope with any Taniwha if its owner could but get near enough to strike him with it, but it meant great risk to attempt to do his. The Manukau tribes sent a messenger to Hauraki to appeal to Tamure for help, as they were in desperation. Tamure agreed to come over to Manukau. This was quite a short journey for him, as he was able to step from hill top to hill top, taking rivers and streams in his stride. Crossing from the Hauraki warriors over to Waitakaruru he arrived at the Waikato river at the mouth of the Whangamarino stream. One step from there took him across to Pukekawa, and he soon arrived at Putataka near the mouth of the Waikato.

Many people were gathered at Maraetai, relatives of the Manukau people, and they proposed to help him in his project of killing Kaiwhare, the scourge of the Manukau.

Tamure, however, wanted none of their assistance, which might prove more of a hindrance than otherwise, so, taking a stride across the river from a bluff named Oteata, he landed on the sand dunes across at Maioro. The place where he set his foot down te Maioro is pointed out today as a proof of Tamure's crossing, as the blowing sand has never been able to cover it up. The place is always green, and water flows out of it although entirely encircled by moving sand dunes on the seaward

side. Another step took Tamure to the sandy shore of the west coast, and in a short time he arrived at Awhitu where dwelt a large hapu (sub-tribe) of the Manukau people.

A hui, or meeting, was called of all the tribes, and the story of their losses was told to Tamure, who, after listening to their tale of woe, informed them that he alone would deal with Kaiwhare, but they must implicitly obey his instructions. Kaiwhare's dwelling place, near Piha, was pointed out to him, and after due consideration he laid his plans accordingly.

One fine evening, when it was the season for taking the patiki, he instructed a number of fishermen to take their canoes, and with spears and torches to set out to spear these fish, but not till after he had crossed the waters of Manukau and made his way to Piha to lay in wait for their dreaded foe.

Everything was set for the final act, and the fishermen set out after Tamure had taken up his strategic position. Gradually, as the shades of night fell, the lights from the torches, made of korari (the dry stalk of the harakeke or flax), were seen as the fishers wandered about the shallows in search of the patiki.

This was the first venture for a long time. Kaiwhare had missed his diet of fisherman, and as soon as he became aware that there were some out again he quickly decided to see if a nice fat one was to be obtained for supper. Tamure had senses on the alert, heard the rumbling, and felt the earth trembling as the monster moved about in his cave preparing to come up and investigate.

Grasping his mere pounamu he waited patiently. Suddenly the rocks near by moved, and out of a great under-water cave appeared the head of Kaiwhare, and without a moment's hesitation Tamure brought the weapon crashing down on it.

The struggle which followed was terrific. After delivering the blow, Tamure made off inland to escape the falling cliffs and rocks which were flying about, as with his great tail, Kaiwhare swept down cliffs and cleared the rocks off the beach into the sea, leaving a level stretch of rock which can be seen to this day. Kaiwhare's wound prevented him again entering the Manukau, and he had to content himself ever after with the koura and wheki (crayfish and octopoi) which were to be had around his cave. So the Manukau tribes fished in peace ever after.

CHAPTER V—MAURI, AN ANCIENT MAORI BELIEF

An ancient Maori belief, one that is not commonly known to Europeans, and which the younger generation of Maoris know little of, is that of the "Mauri."

The real meaning of the word is somewhat difficult of interpretation into European thought, but it apparently was a sort of talisman. It often took the form of a stone which represented the fertility of the forest, and there was a great deal of ceremonial attached to it.

The possessors of such a Mauri in their forest area were said to be ensured of a bountiful harvest of birds, and were the envy of others less fortunate than themselves, and no doubt in some cases intertribal wars occurred over the ownership of such a powerful influence in assuring a harvest of birds.

That intrigue took place at times for the possession of a Mauri is related in a tradition of the Maori tribes who occupied the Pukekohe district. This forest area was abundant in bird life owing to its Mauri, which was situated on the slopes of its dominanting hill. This Mauri was connected with a plentiful supply of birds, such as the pigeon, kaka and tui so much sought after by the old Maori for food. Its fame had spread far and wide, and the district was the envy of other tribes. The

location of the Mauri was known only to a chosen few, who closely guarded the secret of its hiding place. Year after year in season the bird-snaring parties returned to the villages below, laden with fat pigeons, kakas and tuis, and the harvest never failed.

The fame of this Mauri spread as far as the Urewera country, and one of the tribes in that district hatched a plot to obtain this Mauri by stealth, and obtain the benefits which would accrue from having it in their possession. A scheme was planned, and the execution of it devolved on a young man of the tribe who set about it accordingly.

Journeying by easy stages he arrived at one of the main villages, which was situated on a creek, near where the main trunk line now runs through the district. Here he halted and took particular pains to ingratiate himself with the chief or rangatira of the tribe, he being also a rangatira of his own tribe. Later on he married one of the chief's daughters and became a recognised member of the tribe. However, he never lost sight of the real reason of his visit, and with infinite caution proceeded to carry out the scheme.

When the bird snaring season came round he accompanied the parties on their periodical trips, and returned laden with birds. Gradually he opened the subject of the plentiful supply of birds, the like of which he had never seen in his part of the country, and was then informed that it was because of the influence of the Mauri that the birds were so plentiful and easily obtained. Indeed, one of the guardians of the Mauri informed him that if he went up the hill and held up his two hands with the fingers spread open, pigeons would immediately fly down and insert their heads between them. He appeared to doubt this and was offered an ocular demonstration, which was just what he wanted, as it might lead to the discovery of the hiding place of the Mauri.

At an appointed time the young man and his guide set forth and, arriving at the forest, the guide held up his hands, spread open his fingers, and immediately there was a fluttering of pigeons, and some flew down and inserted their heads and were captured. Moving on into the forest the young man noticed that the birds became more and more plentiful, and more were captured in the same manner.

Now, thought our young man, this is the time to make an attempt to obtain the secret of the Mauri, so he praised the guide, flattering him, and suggested that it was probably his Mana, or influence, which caused the birds to act so, and that there was probably no Mauri at all in the district. This had the desired effect, as the guide, not wishing to have the Mauri disparaged, offered under a vow of secrecy to show it to him as it was close to where they were then standing.

Thus he obtained the secret, for close by, hidden in the hollow of a huge rata tree, was a stone, which could easily be carried under one's arm.

They returned to the village, the young man taking careful bearings so that he would be able to return when he was ready to do so. Not wishing to act hastily he continued to live on with the tribe, taking part in all their activities.

As the next bird snaring season approached he made his plans and camouflaged his movements accordingly. He would go out alone at night fishing eels, and remain until a late hour or until early morning. This he did a number of times, so that when he made the final break his presence would not be missed immediately, in consequence of which he would get a good start on his return journey after stealing the Mauri. One evening he set off with his kits and traps for an eel fishing expedition, as those who saw him go supposed, but he had made his mind that night to steal the Mauri and

return to his tribal people with it. Making his way through the dense forest by a well defined track, he came to the big rata tree in which the precious stone was hidden, and extracting it, he placed it in a kit, slung it over his back, and started on his return journey.

Next day the chiefs of the village decided to go up the hill on a bird snaring expedition, and having collected their traps and spears set forth. On entering the forest there was an ominous stillness, the usual screech of the kaka, the coo of the pigeon, and the bell-like note of the tui was nowhere to be heard. What could have happened? With one accord they made their way to the hiding place of the Mauri, only to find it missing. Not a bird was to be seen anywhere, although the miro berries were at their best and the birds in the best of condition. It was a troubled and sad party that returned to the village, where the news was received as a bad omen.

A meeting was called at once to discuss the situation, and finding that the stranger in their midst was missing, suspicion at once fell upon him. A diligent search failed to locate him at the usual fishing haunts along the creek, and it was decided to send out a party of warriors to track him and recover their precious Mauri. A picked band set out and divided into two parties, one travelling up the Waikato river by canoe, the other going overland by the old inland track.

Meanwhile the thief had made fair headway. He had commandeered a canoe at a river village, and set out up stream, and made as far as the sacred mountain of Taupiri, where the inland trail ran close to the river. Here he abandoned the canoe and set out on foot, across the great swamps and plains to the foothills of Maungtautari.

His pursuers, knowing that he would make for his own people, were hot on his trail, for standing on an

eminence and looking back over it he saw in the distance a party of warriors which he instinctively knew were on his trail. From then on it became a race so, picking up his burden which he dare not leave behind after all the trouble he had taken to procure it, he ran on, making for Rotorua and his people. His pursuers, now hot on the trail, gradually gained on him, till at last, coming almost up with him near a large lake, it was only a matter of time before they would capture him. This meant certain death and the loss of the Mauri for his district.

Making up his mind that the latter was to be avoided at all costs, he plunged forward at his utmost speed, making for a point near the lake where the water was very deep and with his pursuers at his very heels, uttering a triumphant cry he plunged headlong into the water with the precious stone clasped in his arms and sank in its depths.

A wailing cry arose from his pursuers, who knew that their precious Mauri was lost to them for ever, and it was a sad party that returned to the village on the slopes of Pukekohe.

The birds, once so plentiful, never again were taken in such great quantities and with such ease, and it is said that the influence of the Mauri was transferred to the Rotorua and Urewera districts.

PART V

A Backblocks Romance

A TALE OF PIONEER DAYS

The afternoon of a winter's day was drawing to a close, as the proprietor of a small country store closed the doors and entered the residential part of the small dwelling to prepare the evening meal. The small business, which was a type of many of its kind in the pioneering days of the young colony, included the post office, from which a weekly service connected the settlement with the outside world. In those days there was no telegraph or telephone connection, and urgent messages had to be sent by special messenger on horseback over roads or tracks which, in winter, retarded the rate of progress to a walking pace.

This night, however, was a special occasion, for the storekeeper, who by the way was a bachelor and a shy, retiring kind of a chap, had a visitor who was going to stay overnight with him, being weather bound. The visitor was a commercial traveller who made a trip to the district, on horseback or buggy according to the state of the roads, about four or five times a year.

As usual the morning and midday dishes had not been washed, and this was the first thing to be done after a good fire had been started in the big wide fireplace, and a good back log set in place. All being cleaned up, and the camp oven set over the fire with a roast of wild pork, flanked by plenty of potatoes, a pleasant odour soon permeated the small room, and in due time the appetising meal was ready and justice done to it by both men. The meal over and everything made shipshape, they prepared to make themselves comfortable alongside the now blazing back log which was diffusing a kindly warmth.

"I can't understand why you don't get married," said the commercial, who we will refer to as "R.J." "You have the making of a nice little business here as the settlement progresses, and the addition of a couple of rooms to the present dwelling would be all that is needed to make things comfortable for a wife, why don't you get married?"

The storekeeper, a young man not more than 25 years of age, blushed as he answered, "Where will I find a wife? I have no time to go riding round to any of the few socials that are held, and am far too busy all day and half the night with my own affairs. So you can see, even if I thought about getting married I have little opportunity of meeting any girls in a social way."

"I have an idea," said R.J., "suppose when I get back to the city I advertise for a wife, photos to be enclosed, the answers to come to me addressed to a name I will give at the newspaper office."

"Oh no," replied John the storekeeper, "I don't think I could possibly pick one like that; it would be an awful gamble."

"It's a gamble anyway," said R.J., "and look here, John, I'm going to do it for fun, as you can't possibly go on like this; your health will give way; you are not looking after yourself properly; you have too much to do. Let me do it as soon as I go back to town."

After much discussion John agreed to the proposition, and as soon as his friend arrived back in the city the matrimonial advertisement was inserted in the local daily paper. Answers soon began to come in, and inside a fortnight there were nearly two dozen applications, with photos enclosed. Packing them all up in a parcel R.J. forwarded them on to John in the little country village, and awaited results. One morning a week later, while sitting at his desk in the warehouse, he heard a

knock at the door, and on opening it, to his great surprise found John standing on the threshold, all spruced up, flower in his buttonhole, and as excited as a schoolboy off for a holiday.

"Why John!" exclaimed R.J., "how on earth did you get away from the business so quickly?"

"Oh! I got a neighbour and his wife to look after it for me. I felt I must come at once. Look, R.J., here is the photo of the girl I want, and you must help me."

"You're pretty sudden, are you not " asked R.J. "Let me see the photos." John spread them out on the desk, exclaiming at the same time, "This is my pick, never mind the rest, we will look at her letter."

R.J. read the accompanying letter and then remarked, "I know where this girl works, you can go up the street not five minute's walk from here, and you will find her behind the counter in G's fancy goods shop; the rest is up to you. Take the letter and photo with you to identify yourself."

John went hot-foot up the street, and arriving at G's fancy goods emporium had a look inside the door, and sure enough there was the object of his search in the shape of a very comely young woman behind one of the counters. Walking casually up to her he asked the price of certain articles, and to fill in time purchased quite a collection, but not a word was mentioned as to the object of his visit. All his old bashfulness returned, and he was tongue-tied, so picking up his purchases hied himself off to his friend, who was quite anxious now that matters seemed to be coming to a head. John walked in with a load of packages which he deposited on the floor, wiping his fevered brow, and threw himself into a chair.

"Well?" queried R.J., "fixed things up O.K.?" "No," replied John, "I've bought these goods from her, and spoken to her in a business way, but she does not know I have her letter and photo, and I really don't know how I am going to open the subject to her."

"Now, look here," said R.J., "you go up tomorrow and just breast the tape like a man; don't behave like a shy schoolgirl; and mind you, I expect to hear of results tomorrow, so no nonsense."

On the morrow John returned to the shop and started by making more purchases. The girl recognised him, opened a conversation with him about the quantity of goods he was buying, and elicited the fact that he had a small country store and had come to the city to make some purchases. Nothing further transpired however, for he could not make up his mind to show her the letter and photo.

Once more he returned to his friend, who tried to sting him into action by reproaches, and at last induced him to decide to wait outside the fancy goods shop till closing time, engage her in conversation, and ask to see her home. This he did and, mustering up courage, spoke to her and asked to see her home.

"Certainly not, sir. I don't know you," and she moved on, leaving him standing almost stupefied.

He would not face his friend in the warehouse after this rebuff, and went to his lodgings to ponder over the situation. "I think more of her than ever for this. She is not one of the cheap sort, and I must win her now at all costs." So his thoughts ran, and he became determined to carry out his intentions.

Meanwhile he kept away from his friend, and busied himself with his situation as he now apprised it. Back to the shop he went again, making more purchases, and gradually an intimacy sprang up between them.

The climax came within a month when he marched into R.J.'s office one afternoon and presented her as his fiancee, at the same time placing his finger on his lips for silence.

After congratulations were given and received the happy couple left, but John managed to get aside with R.J. and informed him that he had won her without disclosing anything about the advertisement, and that she was never to know anything about it.

They were married almost at once, and returned to the country store where, according to R.J. who knew them for many years after, she made him an ideal wife and they prospered. The one secret that he kept from her was that of the photo and the letter, and who is to say that he was not right?

PART VI

A Clash with the Maoris

The years 1894-95 witnessed the last time arms were used to enforce law and order among the Maoris in the Waikato district. At that date many men were living who had taken part in the Maori War thirty years previously, and it did not require a great effort on their part to arouse the fighting spirit.

The Maori has always been susceptible to being led away by the tohungas (chieftain priests), as witness the great Hauhau movement in the early sixties. On the occasion of the incident recorded in this narrative, a tribe living on the lower Waikato river had come under the influence of Te Whiti the prophet of Parihaka, Taranaki, who prophesied among other things that the pakeha would all be driven into the sea, and that the Maoris would resume their ancestral lands. So imbued with this prophecy were these people, that they thought it' worth while to improve the shining hour by selling a large block of land to the Government. They would then receive payment for it, and later on when the pakeha had been driven out of the country they would get the land back again thus having both money and the land. Hence, notwithstanding the advice given by a well known chief of an adjacent tribe, the owners of a large block of land on the lower Waikato proceeded to dispose of it as quickly as possible.

At the time Mr V. Roberts, who was also postmaster at Mercer, was the Government agent for land purchases, and to him they flocked to sign and dispose of it. This particular block, known as the Opuatia, lay across the Waikato river from Tuakau, and consisted of virgin forest land of excellent quality. Some thousands of acres were sold, and the owners, in the usual Maori style, proceeded to live like millionaires for a short period.

When negotiations were completed the Government proceeded to subdivide the area into sections for disposal to numerous settlers' sons, who were wanting to strike out for themselves, and surveyors were sent to lay out the block and mark off the roads, reserves, etc.

Meanwhile the former owners had been tripping up and down to Parihaka, coming closer under the influence of Te Whiti, and probably they thought that the departure of the pakeha might be delayed unduly, so, on finding surveyors at work some of them decided to assist in the departure, at least from that part they had formerly owned, of any that might be found thereon.

One fine day as the Kai ruuri (surveyors) were fixing a trig, they were suddenly surrounded, their instruments seized, and themselves ordered peremtorily off the land. Having no option in the face of such display of force, they promptly left, and, returning out to the frontier settlements reported the incident to the authorities.

A force of mounted police was soon gathered together in Auckland, and under Inspector Hickson crossed the Waikato river at night, and proceeded through the bush tracks to the site of the trig station, which they found destroyed and many survey pegs pulled up. The surveyors had recognised two of the leaders, and the villages on the lower Waikato were searched, but no trace could be found of the missing pair. To all their enquiries they met with "kahore mohio" (we don't know), even from those who were not in sympathy with the movement, as it was not considered quite the thing to turn informer. It was up to the police to find them. It seemed as if they had vanished into thin air for the time being.

The next move was to comb all the villages between Ngaruawahia and the Waikato Heads, a distance of seventy miles. This would take a great deal of time,

as at that period they were numerous along the Waikato river. However a launch started out and proceeded down stream. Aboard were several permanent police and a number of specials sworn in for the occasion. Arriving one Saturday afternoon just about where the Tuakau bridge spans the river now, they ran high and dry on a sandbank. A certain amount of liquid refreshment was carried aboad, and during the strenuous efforts to refloat the vessel a good deal was imbibed, and in the end most of the crew succumbed to the effects of the sun and water, plus —?

My father had the only steam launch on the lower Waikato at that date, and noticing the plight of this strange boat, we got up steam and went to the rescue. As our boat was of lighter draught than theirs, we were able to lay alongside. We found that the sand had choked the pumps, the boiler had got short of water and some of the tubes were burnt out, and the boiler was leaking. Most of the specials were down and out, and one policeman was trying to fill the boiler with a pannikin.

We transferred the men to our launch, and after strenuous work we towed the stranded launch off, and berthed it at Tuakau landing. As it was out of commission the officer in charge requisitioned our launch, and we set off just at dusk for a further search of the villages down the river.

Coming to a creek which led to a large village (Te Kohanga) we proceeded up it as quietly as possible, in order to effect a surprise visit. Unfortunately (for the wanted men were asleep in this village), some of the specials were inclined to be noisy, and we were discovered. The two men were advised of our approaching boat, and they immediately slipped out under cover of darkness and hid in an adjacent swamp. (This was told me by the fugitives long after the incident). Of course all inquiries met with the usual "Kahore mohia," and we

perforce had to return empty handed, and landed back in the grey dawn at Tuakau. The engineer of the other launch, having managed to repair the leaky tubes, got up steam and the party returned to Mercer.

At that time there was a large war canoe on the Waikato named Taheretikitiki and the natives of the villages below Tuakau manned it and set forth up the river. In it were the two wanted men. Probably they recognised that a "show down" had to come sooner or later, and the more spectacular they could make it the greater heroes they would appear.

The canoe pulled into the wharf at Mercer, where a constable was stationed watching the river for any passing canoes. Although he searched it from stem to stern he did not discover the two wanted men. They were secreted under the grating on which sat the paddlers, and were covered with raupo. Right under the nose of the police they were, and remained undiscovered. The canoe was then taken across to a landing place near Mercer and the crew disembarked. Suspicion was aroused, however, by this movement, and a further investigation revealed the fugitives. One constable, however, had no chance of arresting them in the face of a number of men and women who were determined to resist. Word was immediately sent to Auckland, and a detachment of the Permanent Force, armed with Martini Henri rifles, was despatched, together with a squad of constables. Crossing the river they found the Maoris drawn up to meet them with the two men enclosed in a circle of determined women, who were working themselves up to a frenzy.

Acting under instructions, the constable stationed at Mercer moved forward to arrest them, and was met with a vigorous kick from a twenty-two stone woman.* It laid him out flat, completely winded for the time being. Matters were now at a high state of tension. The Permanent Force were standing to with loaded rifles, and

*I weighed the woman some time later when she registered the above weight.

Waikato river bridge at Tuakau.

This bridge spans the Waikato at the place where the old ferry operated at the time the police force crossed the river to arrest the Maoris who had interfered with the surveyors, as related in "A Clash with the Maoris."

very little would have precipitated a tragedy. Not a man could approach the cordon without getting a kick or his uniform torn. The women were doing all the fighting, and made it very hard for the constable to handle the situation. In the end, however, wiser counsels prevailed; the two men, who by the way were named Tame Kapene and Pana Kukutai, and were really decent old Maoris, decided to give themselves up to prevent a tragedy occurring. The women and men who had actively resisted the police were also apprehended, and a whole carriage load was entrained for Auckland, and charged before a magistrate, Dr. Giles. Knowing the psychology of the Maori very well the worthy Doctor gave them a lecture on the foolishness of following Te Whiti's advice, and discharged all the men and women who had resisted the police. The two principal offenders were sentenced to a year's imprisonment, but were given special treatment. They were put to work in the gardens of Government House, and Lord Glasgow, the Governor, used often to converse with them.

One of them told me after his return that he felt no shame in going to prison, as it was not like being put there for theft. As he put it, "Kahore e whakama mote noho kei te whareherehere mo te rarureru o te whenua." (I am not ashamed of going to gaol over a land dispute).

The natives who had sold their land felt very much ashamed, and a whole village of them packed up their all and moved to Parihaka where they remained for about five years, after which they gradually returned to their old home on the Waikato river.

Nearly all the principal actors in the dispute have passed away, the land has been settled, and is now one of the finest districts in the Auckland province. Very few people know of the incident which led to the opening of this block of land, and these few lines are penned in the hope of interesting those who follow up the development of these lands of the Southern Cross.

PART VII

Nature Studies

CHAPTER I—WRIGGLER

THE LIFE HISTORY OF AN EEL

"Wriggler" was a tiny little fellow, only about an inch and a half long, no thicker than a small knitting needle, and almost transparent. Although so small and helpless he had already travelled hundreds and perhaps thousands of miles across the great ocean.

Far away from land in one of the great oceans he was hatched out from a tiny egg. At first there was little indication of what his shape would be later, as his appearance shortly after hatching out was more like the leaf of a willow tree than anything else. There was a small vein-like line down the centre of his leaf-like shape, just like the mid-rib of a leaf. Gradually this leaf-like appearance was altered by the absorption of the thin membrane on each side of the midrib and he assumed the shape with which we are all familiar.

During this operation he was drifting along with the great ocean current, not so aimlessly as would appear at first sight, as the wonderful instinct of his parent had seen to it that he was born in that part of the sea where the ocean current would pick him up along with millions of his kind and bear them along to their appointed destination.

One fine morning in the spring of the year he found himself, with millions of others, off the mouth of a great river on the west coast of New Zealand. It was the time of the big spring tides which occur at that time of the year, backed up by a strong westerly gale. Taking advantage of these he swept in over the great surges of

the bar, entered the quiet waters of the river, and prepard for a long, strong swim against its swift flowing stream as soon as he passed the effect of the tides. Hence, immediately after entering the river Wriggler and his accompanying shoals divided and swam up stream close to the bank on either side of the river.

In this particular river there was another tiny fish known as whitebait, which, like Wriggler, had entered from the sea, and were ascending it but when Wriggler appeared they gave him the right of way as they would not mix with him.

The fisherman, sitting patiently alongside of the river bank,catching whitebait, as soon as the eels appeared, called out to his fellow-fishers within hail, "Kua rere te tunatuna" (the eels are running), and gathered up his nets, knowing well that Wriggler and his host would probably take three days to pass a given point.

As Wriggler swam upwards from ten to twelve miles a day this would mean that the line stretched out would be sixty miles long, every yard of which was packed with these small creatures.

So day by day swimming steadily up stream, Wriggler and his kindred host came to their destination, which was the lakes and streams which bordered the great river.

Into one of these streams, which emptied into the river out of a large lake, Wriggler made his way, and finally came to rest in the lake itself, where he found conditions favourable for him, and gave his attention strictly to feeding, and growing into a fine specimen of an eel, and lived for years in comfort.

Even in this quiet lake life was not without incident. One morning as he was idling in the shallows bordering the lake together with some of his companions,

something spear-like darted into the water alongside of him and snatched up one of his mates, narrowly missing Wriggler himself. It was "Boomer" the bittern, who had been standing like a statue in the water, waiting patiently for his breakfast to swim within reach of his sharp bill. After this Wriggler kept to the deeper waters, but even then it was only his alertness that saved him on one occasion when "Diver" the big black shag came down to the bottom of the lake to pick up stray eels.

As the season progressed he became more wary and so escaped these dangers which were ever present, and as feed was plentiful he grew into a fine fat specimen of an eel. One morning in the autumn of the year he felt a peculiar sensation, something unlike anything previously experienced. Others of his kind were also experiencing it, and thousands of them were swimming around the lake bed, apparently aimlessly.

It was the migratory urge which was beginning to have effect on them, and which would continue to grow and influence them until it caused them to leave their home in the lake, and set out on the return journey down the river, and out into the great ocean from whence they originally came.

It was at this stage of their existence that a new element of danger entered their lives, in consequence of which many thousands of them never saw the great sea again, but were trapped to provide food for the tribes of men who dwelt near the lake.

The wise men of these people knew all about the movements of Wriggler and his kind after they entered the river, and when the migratory urge was upon them they prepared accordingly. All along the creek which connected the lake with the river they had prepared a series of weirs that restricted the flow of water to a narrow opening. When the migration was on they

lowered a trap which the travelling fish could easily enter, but from which there was no return.

One evening in the fall of the year these people assembled alongside the stream and erected temporary shelter, just as their ancestors had done for generations past. The traps were all prepared and in readiness, long lines of stakes were driven into the ground and long poles lashed horizontally thereto. Stones were collected for the cooking ovens, and everything was set for the great catch which was anticipated. The wise men watched and waited, and one evening, just as darkness fell, the order was given to lower the traps at the prepared weirs.

Then and there commenced a series of frantic operations which continued all night. Very few minutes were required to fill these traps which, when full of eels, were as much as two men could conveniently lift into the canoe alongside. The cap at the bottom of the trap was lifted off, and thousands of slippery eels were emptied into the canoes. The trap was again lowered and the canoes drawn alongside the bank where, by the light of big fires, the catch was emptied out on to the ground to be dealt with and strung up by the women and young folk, who were all ready to deal with them. All night long for several nights this went on, and thousands of eels were hung up to dry, besides those that were cooked and eaten on the spot. The first run being over all hands set to work preserving the catch and packing them away in kits for transport to the interior. There were several other runs, and a huge quantity of these delicacies were obtained.

Wriggler was one of the fortunate ones who managed to pass through all the dangers of this locality. Although such a large number were taken, it was only a very small proportion of the vast horde that migrated from the lake. So, entering again the waters of the great river wriggler instinctively made his way down stream, where once again he escaped the danger of being

picked up by "Diver" and his kind who were on the watch for such a toothsome mouthful. After a day or two he arrived at the mouth of the river to be swept out by the big tide into the great ocean, there to reproduce his kind, who in turn would travel back over the same route and face the same dangers as did Wriggler, the tiny eel.

CHAPTER II—WAR IN THE WILD

"Nibbler" was a fine big rat, who measured just about twelve inches from his whiskered nose to the tip of his tail. His ancestors had come to this country about one hundred years ago in one of the numerous whale ships that used to frequent our harbours, and had found this country so much to their liking that they soon spread far and wide over the land.

Nibbler had made his home in a sheltered valley leading from a fertile river flat to the bush clad ranges inland. The slopes of the valley were of hard sandstone, with many crevices in which he could make a warm home, and in which he could retire in safety when prowling dogs came near. Also they provided dry storage for the berries which he liked to store against lean times.

Food, however, was plentiful nearby. Groves of karaka trees provided luscious fruit, and there were hinau trees that provided a rich fattening berry. Tara-ire, tawa, and other berry bearing trees grew near, and in the spring there was the sweet flower of the tawhara very much sought after by Nibbler and his kind. Yes, life seemed very good to Nibbler as he sat up near by his home one sunny morning in late spring, performing his toilet by stroking his whiskers and enjoying the warmth.

But Nibbler had been somewhat worried lately, and it came about thus.

On a similar morning some week or so previous he had been doing exactly the same thing when suddenly his keen nose registered a strange scent, wafted to him from the flat below, where dwelt a "Man" who owned a small terrier dog.

Now he knew all the odours that came from this direction, and could interpret each one, and act accordingly. This time, however, he knew that this was a strange scent, and moreover he knew that it portended danger for himself. The instinct handed down from his ancestors was not at fault, and he knew that his deadly enemy "Trailer" the weasel had taken up his abode on the flat below, and that life would never again run as smoothly for him as it had done in the past. Yes, "Trailer" the killer had at last come to the peaceful valley and death and destruction came with him.

One morning the housewife, on going to her fowl yard to feed some newly hatched chickens, found the whole clutch lying dead with their throats punctured.

Then some ducklings suffered the same fate, as did a quail sitting on its nest. So cunning was Trailer that he was never seen, but "Foxy" the terrier scented him at times and hunted for him, but Trailer was so small that he could get into a very small crevice where Foxy could not follow. After this the fowls were all locked up at night and Foxy tied close by to guard them, and there was a general exodus of other creatures of the wild from the valley.

This produced a scarcity of food for Trailer, and he became hungry, and a hungry weasel is an angry one, so he sought pastures new in a mood that boded no good for anything he came across that would provide red raw meat and fresh hot blood for him.

One morning the Man shouldered his axe and strode off up the slopes of the valley to lay in a stock of fire-

wood for the winter. All alone he went, Foxy being tied up at home to guard the fowls in case Trailer was prowling about in the vicinity.

Nibbler, high up in a taraire tree, saw him coming as he had often done before, and could see that Foxy was not with him, so he gave him no more heed and went on with his meal.

The day being warm, after working a while the Man felt like having a spell, so he sat down in the shade of a tree close by the one in which Nibbler was having his dinner.

Someone else had also moved up the valley that morning; Trailer, finding the chickens all shut up and guarded by Foxy, and all the wild birds shy and wary and keeping out of his way, had decided to quit the vicinity of the homestead and look for pastures new. He was in an ugly mood, being hungry and angry.

Nibbler saw him coming this time before he smelt him, as the wind was not favourable, also when he did see him he was between the tree and his home in the cleft of the rocks. Not that it would have been much use retreating there, as Trailer could follow him anywhere, so he played "possum" and "froze" to the bough on which he was at the moment.

Trailer was a born scout, and was working in circles, advancing up the slope all the time, when suddenly he stopped short and then set off madly on Nibbler's track, which he had picked up. It was just at this moment that the Man came to sit in the shade near the tree Nibbler was in, and he saw the tragedy which followed, and finally took a hand in it.

Trailer, hungry and lusting for warm blood, heeded not Man's presence, but sped along unerringly. Straight up the barrel of the tree he ran.

Nibbler saw him coming and finally crept out on the bough as far as he could possibly get. After him came the blood lusting Trailer, and as he closed in Nibbler jumped on to the bough of another tree close by, and ran down its trunk to the ground in a trice, hoping to outwit his enemy.

His start, however, availed him little. Trailer could not leap like Nibbler, but he was down the tree like a streak, and cast around for the scent, which he soon picked up, and followed to another tree in which Nibbler had taken refuge.

Apparently for some reason Nibbler did not like the tree in which he now sought refuge and had started on his way down again when he met his enemy on the way up. In an instant he turned and made for the top, with Trailer at his heels, and took a flying leap into space, landing in a smaller tree somewhat down the slope. Here he sat shivering, not knowing what to do to outwit his wily enemy. Perhaps Trailer would not wind him as he had not touched the ground this time. So he thought, but Trailer had no such thoughts. His mother had trained him well, and the store of hunting knowledge brought from the older civilized countries had been well drilled into him. The next thing Nibbler saw was the head and shoulders of the little fiend peering at him over a bough only a few feet away. Like an arrow from a bow he shot out from the top of the tree, and as there was no other friendly tree near enough he fell heavily to the ground very much shaken, but many yards away from the tree in which he last saw his enemy.

Trailer was soon on the ground, and running round in ever-widening circles, until at last he again picked up the trail of his quarry and sped after him.

Nibbler was making his way down to the creek below, as fast as he could under the circumstances, but the fall had injured him somewhat, and his speed was slowed up considerably. If he could get into the water

he might have a chance of escape, as he could dive well, but just as he jumped over the edge of a high bank of the creek on to the shingle Trailer sprang on him and his lance-like teeth met in Nibbler's neck, and all the fight was out of him.

Just at this juncture the Man who had been an interested spectator, thought that he would take a hand in the battle, and hastening down to the creek bank he looked over to find Nibbler on his back with the murderer at his throat, and although the Man made an exclamation Trailer only looked up and snarled, and buried his fangs again in the rat's neck.

Down came a heavy stick on the sauguinary little beast, and as Nibbler breathed his last, his persecutor was lying a yard away with a broken back, snarling and spitting as it lay until Man, knowing that this was the murderer of his chickens, put it out of its misery.

After this there was peace in the little valley once again.

CHAPTER III—A TRAGEDY OF THE SANDS

If you take out your map of the North Island of New Zealand and study the land surrounding the lonely North Cape, you will notice on the northern coast immediately to the west of the Cape a bay named Tom Bowling. An area of flat land lies immediately above highwater mark, overlooked here and there by sand dunes. Only a narrow isthmus separates the waters of Tom Bowling Bay from the east coast water just south of the North Cape, which is a promontory hundreds of feet in height, and which at an earlier age was apparently an island.

It is a lonely, isolated place, and only an occasional searcher after kauri gum takes up a temporary residence there. But there are other occupants of this area. Thousands of sea birds make their homes along this

coast, where plenty of food is to be had. Among these is found the small white-fronted tern, the beautiful swallow-like bird that is so much admired. Every night at dusk hundreds of these birds fly ashore to sleep among the sand dunes, and so plentiful are they that in the distance they appear to cover acres of ground when they settle down for the night.

Some time ago a wanderer in search of gum built a camp in a sheltered nook close by a beautiful stream, and he relates how, on rising early one fine morning, while the dew was yet sparkling on the grass, to go down to the beach to catch some of the fine schnapper to be had there, he came across the footprints of a large wild cat, plainly visible in the damp sand. Being of an inquiring turn of mind he followed these tracks, which, as he could see, led to the camping ground of the tern. His suspicions were aroused, especially as he could read the signs as the predatory animal approached the birds.

Evidently the animal crouched lower and lower as it approached its prey, for the sand showed the marks of its body plainly. Gradually creeping up behind a small sand dune within a few yards of the unsuspecting birds, it apparently "froze" for a time, the marks of its tail as it moved backwards and forwards being visible in the sand. Then, with a rush and a lightning dash, it was in among the birds and had struck its prey down. The marks of the whole procedure were written plainly in the sand, and all that remained were the larger feathers and an odd bone or two to mark the place of the tragedy.

These birds have for years past made this their nightly roosting place, and until the white man let his destroyers loose in the lands, were quite safe. But never again will they have the old-time security, as hundreds of these wild cats roam over the northern peninsula, left behind by gum diggers and timber workers, and they are now a real danger to our beautiful birds.

These cats grow into very fierce animals and will fight to the bitter end, and it is a brave dog that will tackle them. One and all they should be destroyed when and wherever possible so that the land may again become safe for our feathered friends.

CHAPTER IV—WAYS OF THE WILD

One beautiful summer evening, just as the last rays of light were receding from the glassy surface of the broad river, a fussy little steam tugboat with a heavy punt in tow pulled in alongside a grassy bank to make snug for the night. The river being low, it was almost impossible to negotiate the winding channel after dark, so a convenient landing was chosen. Everything being made shipshape aboard, the crew, a man and a youth, proceeded to light a fire ashore, and prepare the evening meal. Huge willow trees grew in profusion on the river bank, and as the fire blazed up they assumed fantastic shapes according as the light struck them.

Bacon was on the menu and soon some slices were sizzling in the pan, and the aroma was diffused quite a considerable distance around in the still evening air. The meal being over, the fire was stoked up afresh, and perfect quietness reigned. One would have thought that there was not another living being within miles.

This, however, was an erroneous conclusion, as two very interested spectators were at that very moment gazing into the circle of light from out in the shadows. "What is that?" exclaimed the youth, as something made a quick scurry across a beam of light between the fire and the river. "Why, it's a rat, and what a big one!" Yes, it was Diver, the big grey water rat, who had a hole in the bank close to where the steamer was moored. The aroma of the frying bacon had been wafted to his keen nose, and he proceeded cautiously to prospect its source. His ordinary food consisted largely of the fresh water

mussels which were plentiful all along the river banks in shallow water. Diver was an expert at picking them off the river bottom, and usually carried them ashore and climbed high up in an old willow, where by some means he opened them without damaging the shells, and extracted the juicy morsel each contained. He had a big knot-hole in one tree close by, which appeared to be his favourite eating place.

The second observer was Ruru the Owl. High up in the tree top he sat, but his keen gaze was not on the men and the fire. Many times he had stalked Diver, but in vain, and now once more he saw him on the outskirts of the firelight. Here was a chance, as Diver's attention was attracted by the prospects of a bit of bacon.

Suddenly Ruru dropped silently and swiftly across the firelight, and it looked as if Diver's number was up there and then, but apparently, however, the shadow of the swiftly moving bird across the lighted area caught his eye just in time, and with a squeal he ran up the willow tree, and into the knot-hole where he had had many meals of shellfish. The baffled bird flew on out of the vision of the onlookers who had witnessed its sudden swift descent.

All was quiet again. The fire died gradually down, and the crew decided to turn in for the night. Before doing so, the youth procured a pole and, climbing a few feet up the willow tree, poked it into the hole where Diver had taken refuge. Suddenly there was a scatter of empty shells and the terrified rat ran down the pole, jumped to the ground, and made off at full speed for the river, where he knew he would be safe.

Alas for Diver's hopes, Ruru the silent one was patience personified, for he was ready up in the tree-top, and had been so ever since he missed the first chance. This time he made no mistake; his sharp talons fixed themselves in Diver's back, and, swiftly rising with his prey, he disappeared into the silence of the night, his patience rewarded.

CHAPTER V—THE KAURI

A NATIONAL HERITAGE

At the present time the preservation of one of the last stands of kauri forest is engaging the attention of many people in the North Auckland district, where the remnant of these once great forests remains.

A great many people of this Dominion do not realise how economically important was this fine timber in the early days of last century, and right up to very recent times.

The value of kauri timber was recognised early in the nineteenth century, when tall masts were required for the ever increasing volume of shipping, and in 1820 the British Admiralty sent *H.M.S. Dromedary* to the Bay of Islands and other parts of the Auckland Peninsula in search of tall spars. In those days extensive kauri forests grew right down to the water's edge on many of the northern harbours and rivers. Grown in sheltered positions the kauri grew very tall, and being close to the water was comparatively easy to procure. The earliest method used was probably that of the block and tackle, and the spars were manhandled into the water with this type of gear.

The *Dromedary* brought out a team of bullocks, probably the first ever used to haul timber in this country, and these were used around the Whangaroa Harbour, but it was not until nearly fifty years later that bullock teams became the main method of log-hauling. The timber growing near the water was got out on what was known as a rolling road, and timber growing about ten chains from the water was procured by using the timber jack to roll the logs on skids to the water. The men operating the jacks, called jackers, became very expert, and on level ground could keep a log continually on the move. Their jacks were kept clean and oiled,

and woe betide the ordinary bush-man who tried to use one of these special appliances.

As the distance from the waterway became too great for this type of work, the use of bullocks became general, and the years between 1870 and 1880 saw many such teams in the bush bordering the Hokianga and Kaipara harbours. Saplings were laid close together on what was the main skid road to the water, and short side-roads branched off to the area being worked. The log was either jacked or blocked on to the skids and then sniped, that is, the front end of the log next to the skids was trimmed round so as to rise over any inequalities of the road bed. The team was hooked on to it, and all was set to start. But just before it got under way a swab man, as he was known, carrying a tin of half-melted fat, and a swab, went ahead and dabbed a splash of the soft fat on the skids to lessen the friction and make the hauling easier. As fat was procurable in those far-off days at one penny per pound it was not spared, and after some use the road bed was a veritable slide.

The bullock driver, or bullocky as he was generally known, was a man apart, and had a language of his own. A good driver knew his team intimately and they responded to their names, which were often novel. With his long-handled whip he could wake up the lazy bullock with a crack in the air above its head that sounded like a shot out of a gun; while another member of the team would be spoken to in a caressing voice as the thong dropped lightly on its flank. The leaders of a good bullock team were wonderful animals, and responded to the least variation in the voice of their driver.

As time went on the bullock team was gradually displaced by the steam log hauler, but this method was restricted often by the roughness of the country, and the bullocks were often used to haul the logs to the loading ground within reach of the hauling rope.

Accidents happened at times, and some of the animals would get killed or maimed. When one considers that many of the logs which were hauled over extempore roads and bridges exceeded six feet in diameter, some measuring up to nine feet, and weighed many tons, it is not to be wondered at. However, the incidence of these accidents was not high considering the magnitude of the logging industry in those days.

Among the most expert bushmen in the kauri logging industry were the men of the Waipu settlement. These men left their mark in the North after the timber was worked out, and brought a great deal of the old bush workings into good farming land.

The bullock team and steam hauler have now been displaced in most cases by the huge tractor, which cleans a track for itself through the forest growth where the ground is level enough, but as far as the kauri timber is concerned this is almost worked out. One can travel up the Hokianga harbour or the Northern Wairoa river where one hundred years ago, magnificent kauri, totara, and kahikatea grew right down to the water's edge, and hardly catch sight of any of these trees. The bleached stumps in many cases are a monument to our modern commercialisation of the capital resources of timber which can never be replaced in our generation.

Many people, realising this, are thus concerned lest these one or two last remnants of the primeval kauri forest, which they wish to see preserved for posterity, be cut down and lost forever.

Hokianga Harbour was once one of the most beautiful sights in New Zealand. In pre-European days it was heavily timbered, and great forests grew right down to the water's edge. Great ridges of huge kauri and totara, winding valleys and flats of white pine (kahikatea) whose barrels rose up to one hundred and fifty feet, matai, rimu, miro, and the hundred and one other native trees and shrubs all went to make a glorious picture.

The old Maori had little or no effect on this forest during the hundreds of years of his occupation of it. He respected Tane the god of the forest, and seldom wantonly destroyed any of Tane's children. The taking of a tree for the purpose of hewing out a war canoe was a ceremonial work, and Tane had to be appeased for the loss of even one of his children. So the tides flowed and ebbed up and down this beautiful stretch of water and all was peaceful in this garden of Nature.

The irruption of the European altered the whole scene within a century. The axe, firestick, and saw, wielded by thoughtless man for a few decades, changed the face of the country. Today scarred hills, gorse covered slopes, choked watercourses, landslides, and all the effects of forest denudation meet the eye as one traverses the waterway.

Size by size, probably no other harbour in the world opened up so much forest wealth. The amount of timber exported from Hokianga, for a mere pittance, was enormous. It is estimated by those who were in the timber business in later years that over one thousand million board feet were exported besides what was used locally. Then the usual fires, which were always in attendance when timber was worked, accounted for many millions more. Verily our civilisation has much to account for.

We respected not Tane the god of the forest; our idol was money, and now we have no forest, and money has degenerated into an almost meaningless term. Much of the timber was squared in the forest, a process that entailed great loss. Totara and kauri were the two timbers treated in this manner. By this means a tree six feet in diameter was reduced to four feet by four and hauled to the water, where ships fitted with bow ports hauled them into the depths of their holds. The operation of squaring was a work of skill. Huge scarfs were cut in each side of the fallen monster from six to nine feet apart, the log being anything up to sixty feet

or more in length. When these scarfs were completed to a line then came the process of backing off. To do this a special wedge with an offset head was used, and the huge section started. Axes then followed, and gradually the piece was removed. These huge parings would carry a man afloat on the water, and in later years some were even re-split to make rails and battens. The process was continued until both sides of the great log were rough squared, and then finished off with a broad axe, the log being then turned over and the process repeated on the other two sides. The waste was enormous, forty per cent, often being lost, and the resultant squared log had to be all clean heart to conform to purchasers' specifications. The average price at the ship's side in those days would be in the vicinity of from ten to twelve shillings per hundred feet, and in some cases even less. The worst feature of all this wasteful procedure was the danger of fire, and it is doubtful whether any milled bush escaped. Once a fire started nothing could check it. The great stacks of chips and slabs produced such a terrific conflagration that it baked the very earth. Spreading far and wide these fires raged through the standing bush, and millions of feet of green timber were killed, much of it only to be swept again in a few years and totally destroyed. This picture is only a mild description of the welter of destruction that raged not only in the Hokianga district but in other northern harbours where the timber once grew down to the water's edge. Verily we have paid, and still are paying, a great price for our so-called civilisation.

One wonders whether the old Maori with his wise conservation laws did not far excel the pakeha in knowledge and wisdom.

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Maori Trails and Pakeha Tracks

TALES OF THE BUSH AND RIVER

By E. T. Frost

This book recaptures the romance of those faraway days of three score years ago when the author, who comes of pioneer stock, spent his boyhood on the banks of the Waikato river. There his father in the eighties established himself as flaxmiller and storekeeper, and there E. T. Frost, paying up and down the great inland water way, came to know many tattooed Maoris who had fought the British in the Waikato war of the sixties. He saw their manner of life and listened to their stirring tales of the doings of themselves and their forefathers on the great river and on the trails of the bush through which it flowed.

The last tattooed Maori and the last pioneer pakeha have long since passed, and the author not only tells new stories of adventure heard by himself but recaptures for us the atmosphere surrounding them. He recalls Tawhiao the Maori king, and amongst other episodes describes the monarch's shopping expeditions to the river-side store, accompanied by his retinue.