

the Maori war in 1860, and on the site—Tokomaru—a number of grape-vines now grow. From the top of the low range of hills running parallel with the coast can be obtained a remarkably fine view of the north Taranaki coast-line, even Paritutu being visible on a clear day, whilst Mount Egmont shows its majestic head in lonely grandeur in the far distance.

In the good old days two Maori tribes lived near Mokau Heads. The Ngati-Tama of Poutama dwelt on the south side of the river, with boundaries extending to a couple of miles south of the White Cliffs, and the Ngati-Maniapoto and their minor branches on the north side, and, as may easily be imagined, tribal fights were frequent, and often on apparently inadequate grounds. On one occasion (supposed to be about seventy-five years ago) some of the Ngati-Maniapoto were fishing at the Heads in a small canoe, and caught a large snapper. Coming back with their catch, just inside the bar, they saw some of the Ngati-Tama watching them, and in defiance held up, for them to see, the large fish they had just caught. This was at a point now called Ture (the Place of the Law). The Ngati-Tama immediately claimed possession of the fish, as it was caught within their tribal waters; but the Ngati-Maniapoto resumed their paddling up the river for about half a mile, when they rested at a place now called Te To, where the Ngati-Tama once more claimed possession of the snapper. This was again refused, and the Ngati-Tama, continuing their paddling, reached a third place, half a mile further on, where they landed, and hung up their catch of fish to dry and be cured. This place is called Te Rainga. This and other incidents led to the siege of the Ngati-Maniapoto on a small island situated in the river about a mile and a half from the mouth, known as Motu-tawa, an account of which is given from the "Journal of the Polynesian Society," Vol. xvii as follows. The following account was written previously by Mr. S. Percy Smith, and supplies a most interesting history of the principal occurrences in the district:—

After the great expedition of Ngati-Haua and other tribes, which came to Pou-tama to seek revenge for the death of Tai-porutu had been hurled back by the bravery of Ngati-Tama, there was apparently a transient peace or truce between the latter tribe and their northern neighbours at Mokau for some ten or twelve years. At any rate, no incident has come to our knowledge marking that period, though, no doubt, the enmity in which these tribes had lived for so many generations would not allow of any available chance of striking a blow to be passed over. But there were no great expeditions, and both sides would, no doubt, be glad of a few years' rest in order that the boys should grow to maturity and be trained as warriors.

But about the year 1812 (so far as can be ascertained) hostilities set in again through an act of brutality on the part of Ngati-Tama whilst on a visit to Motu-tawa. Motu-tawa is a pretty little island situated in a deep bay in the Mokau River, about three-quarters of a mile within the Heads on the northern shore, now covered with bushes and small trees. It is about half an acre in extent, with cliffs nearly all round, rising up from the waters to about fifty or sixty feet, but not equally steep on all sides. At low water the bay is dry, but as the tide rises it surrounds the island to a depth of perhaps four to six feet of water. On the flat top of this island in former days was built a strong palisaded and embanked *pa*, the refuge and stronghold of the Mokau people. On one side is a convenient spring of fresh water.

Ngati-Tama were apparently on such terms with the Mokau people about this time that they were admitted into the *pa* and were hospitably feasted, but at the same time my informant (old Rihari, of Mokau) says that they were on a *taua*. What the exact circumstances were are not of much consequence. But during the feasts two boys of the *pa*, named Pitonga and Nga-whakarewa-kauri, helped themselves to the food provided and set apart for Ngati-Tama. They were reprimanded for this, but again repeated the offence. This roused the wrath of Ngati-Tama, who—probably seeking a *take*, or cause, against the *pa*, and seeing here their chance—knocked the unfortunate boys on the head. There was an immediate rush to arms, and a desperate fight commenced between the two parties. But it was not of long duration: Ngati-Tama drove their hosts pell-mell out of the *pa*, and took possession of it. The parents of the boys, together with the whole of Ngati-Rakei of those parts, fled with the utmost expedition to the forest which even to this day lines the shores of the little bay in which Motu-tawa is situated, and gradually made their way through the country to Otorohanga in the Waipa Valley—now a station on the Main Trunk Railway—to join some of their relatives there. Here the people settled down for some three years, not daring to return to their own country at Mokau, which was in occasional occupation of Ngati-Tama and some of the Ati-Awa tribes.

The exiles dwelt amongst their friends at Otorohanga, as has been said, for about three years, cultivating on the lands of others as *manene*, or strangers, and feeling generally uncomfortable through this fact. When the strong westerly winds used to blow from the coast the old people would listen to the far-distant sound of the breakers dashing on the shore—which they could hear from the ranges not far from Otorohanga—and sniff the salt-laden breezes of of their old home. Then the people would greet and lament over the misfortunes which had taken them so far from their beloved homes. This feeling became so strong at last that the chiefs consulted together, and determined to attempt the reconquest of their lands and homes.

Te Wharau-roa, who at that time was the leader of Ngati-Rakei, Ngati-Hia, and other Mokau *hapus*, raised a war party from those tribes, and started from Otorohanga on their long and risky journey. They came up the Mangapapa Valley and by Te Ana-uriuri on the Waipa-Mokau water-parting, and thence to the head of the Mokau, and down that river by canoes to Te Mahoe, a bend in the river some two miles from the mouth. Here the party went into camp, carefully concealing all signs of smoke, &c., whilst spies were sent out to see where the Ngati-Tama were. They returned, and reported that the enemy was all over the country at the mouth of the river, and along the coast southward, but that the principal number were gathered at a village they had built about half-way between Mokau and Mokaka-tino. A council was then held to consider how the war-party might reach this village without being seen, and finally a plan was adopted. Starting at dawn one morning, they crossed the river, and concealed their canoes in the little creeks just opposite Te Mahoe, and from there climbed the steep forest range which leads up to the high hill named Tawariki, on which there is now a trig. station. From here they followed the ridges that run parallel to the coast until they came out at the Mohaka-tino River, about a mile from its mouth. The party was now between Ngati-Tama and any succour they might receive from their own people to the south. Arrived at the sea-beach, Wharau-roa instructed all his party to trail their spears and other arms along the sands, with one end fastened to their ankles by a flax string. The party now advanced along the beach in careless order, some shouting, some singing, some skidding flat stones along the wet sands, all of which was done to make Ngati-Tama think it was a party of their friends from the south coming to visit them.

The war-party was 140 *topu* (i.e., 280) strong, whilst the Ngati-Tama and Ati-Awa were said to be more numerous. As they drew near the village many of the women, children, and some of the men came down to the beach to meet the visitors. When Wharau-roa saw the time was come he gave the signal, and in an instant the spears were seized and a charge made into the unsuspecting Ngati-Tama, all of whom were killed. The rest of Ngati-Tama in the village, seeing what was going on, armed and rushed down the beach to meet the foe. Here, on the beach, these ancient enemies fought it out, it is said, during two flood tides—hence the name of the battle, Nga-tai-pari-rua (the Twice-flowing Tide). No doubt there is some truth in the story, or the name would not have been given. The end of the fight saw Ngati-Rakei and their allies victorious for once over Ngati-Tama, who, after losing a large number of men, were obliged to retreat. They fell back on their impregnable stronghold, Te Kawau, where they were safe. The Mokau people went on and occupied their old homes on the river, greatly to their delight, says my informant, and he adds, "The Mokau people have to thank my grandfather Te Wharau-roa for saving their country for them."