

RADIO WILL TELL THE STORY

BUT all this doesn't exist for me at the moment, and it doesn't exist for Oriwa either. It's long past our lunch-time, but that doesn't matter at all. There's no such thing as time at the moment. We—or rather Oriwa himself—has outwitted Time for the moment.

He has slipped back through the best part of a century and he has taken me with him—most willingly. We are in the world of ghosts, the ghosts of Oriwa's ancestors and my grandfathers, and this world is desperately real to him, more real—I imagine—than the present.

At times, Oriwa jumps from his chair and takes a stride or two in the confined space of this cellar room. The fist of one hand crashes down into the palm of the other. His eyes are larger than usual and his bottom lip thrusts itself out. He is illustrating something. He is illustrating the blow of a mere on a human skull. And this is what he tells me.

Native Guile

"YOU wonder where the Maori got his powder from in his wars against the white man? So did I, until I heard the old men talking and laughing about it in the pa. The Maori was very clever. It makes me laugh, too.

"Out from the gates of a pa that the white soldiers are attacking comes a Maori, running as hard as he can, while all the other Maoris chase him. He reaches the soldiers, who don't fire because he is being chased by their enemies.

"He lies panting for breath and then begins to speak against these other Maoris. He tells the white soldiers about them. He becomes very friendly with them. They don't know that he has arranged with these other Maoris to fire over his head when they were chasing him.

"This Maori joins the white soldiers. He is a great fighter. They see him go into battle with them and they see him kill the other Maoris.

"He knows very well which ones to kill. What does a slave matter more or less?

THE white soldiers are impressed. They say he is a ferocious fighter against the Maoris. Later on he takes his turn as sentry for them.

"At night the pakehas bivouac. They go to sleep, first stacking their rifles, butts on the ground, barrels together, and under each lot of rifles they put a barrel of gunpowder.

"The Maori is on sentry-go. He marches up and down the line of the rifles with his musket on his shoulder. He hears a weka cry, and he answers it softly.

"As he marches past a barrel of gunpowder he gives it a push with his foot and it goes rolling down the hill.

"As he marches past a second barrel he gives this a push with his foot, and it slides down the hill.

"But the third barrel makes a great noise as it rolls down the hill, and the soldiers stir, so the Maori, thinking like lightning, fires his musket in the air to drown the noise of the barrel, and as he fires he cries out, 'Who coma dere?'

IT is very funny. There is an old Maori chant that you can hear in some places to-day, and it's got those words in them—'Who coma dere?'—English words in a Maori song."

They made a Maori song about it, and they sang it in the pas. This is the sort of thing that Oriwa's Centennial history will tell listeners.

It is the story from the Maori's point of view. There are men whom Oriwa has known who remembered incidents like these. They would talk over them among themselves, laughing about them, and recalling them.

THE Maori was a grand soldier, but he was not only fearless in battle, he was crafty, too. You have to be crafty in war.

When the white men have crafty leaders and soldiers on their side, like Lawrence of Arabia, they become heroes in our history. When they are on the other side they just become plain villains.

It's just the odd way we have of looking at things from our point of view. That is the quaint thing about history. So much depends on which side is telling it.

And this is one reason why these radio playlets are going to be so fascinating. We are going to see the writing on the other pages of our history that so far have not yet been read.

BEFORE the white men came, Oriwa told me, the wars of the Maori had two sources. They summed it up themselves in the words, "wahine mete whenua," "the women and the land."

Then the white men came to take the land for Britain under Captain Cook. Oriwa will tell that episode in his playlets.

Ship In The East

HE paints a word-picture of the ship coming down from the east in the early morning, dipping and swaying on the ocean, with sail full bellied. The ship moves slowly forward.

The scene shoots to the top of the foremast, where Young Nick, the first to see New Zealand from the ship, is watching for land. It shows the sailors watching the flotsam and jetsam over the rails.

There is the cry of "Land-ho!" and Cook is pictured looking at the land through the glass and discussing the Maoris he can see on the hill. A canoe puts off from the shore and, keeping its distance, circles the ship and then withdraws.

THE ship moves forward, and a boat manned by white sailors brings Cook to shore. He comes up the beach, making friendly advances, but the Maoris go back to the bush again.

Some sailors are left to guard the boat as Cook goes inland.

One of the Maoris—"he is a big man," says Oriwa, "he is what you call the aggressive type, and I have his name, it is remembered in an old Maori chant"—runs down to the boat to club the sailors on guard. A shot rings out and he falls.

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—Gov. Publicity Dept. photo.

... *The old Maori always remembers.*