

# Sailing into the

## And Kupe Returned to of the Land of the



LESS than two hundred years ago, Abel Tasman, looking for the limits of New Holland, as Australia was then called, brought news of a country of high mountains, dense forests and warlike natives to the Old World. Then came Cook and learned more about this country. He had passed through the Pacific, faced innumerable difficulties, and re-discovered this isolated country, and a people who knew not the use of the sailing ship, nor the compass, nor firearms. But they had courage and strength—they were not a retrograde native people that the white men were encountering in the age of colonisation. They were the Maori—the greatest of all primitive peoples.

After fifty years of strife and unhappiness, during which time forest

*The late Hamoira Hakopa, who for two years led the Maori party in their performances from 2Y.A.*

became pasture land and the mountains bare, while pas became strangely empty and the European settlements grew, the Maori was understood. The learning that had given this white race possession of the world became useful in the possession of the Maori; and so his story was unfolded.

BEYOND the restless waters that engulf the coast of these lonely isles is Hawaiki, the gathering place of souls. It is not clear what islands or countries constituted Hawaiki, but it is generally regarded as the mythical home of the Maori. Many, many generations back—the Maori took pride in counting back his generations, and he had a prodigious memory—the warriors of

Hawaiki longed for fresh hunting and fishing grounds; furthermore, their numbers were increasing and their land was small. And so they sailed out in many directions, and discovered many islands. They even visited a land away to the south. "A foggy, misty and dark place not shone upon by the sun, where there were waves three times as big as anything seen elsewhere, a goddess whose long hair waves about in the waters and on the surface of the sea, a deceitful animal who dives to great depths, and things like rocks whose summits pierce the skies, but are completely bare and without any vegetation on them." And these wonderful things were set in a land where the sea was covered with "stuff like thick fat or beaten white arrowroot." So the Maori in his frail craft reached a land which the European in his steel ships and aided with the science of a thousand years was later to enter and describe these same things to the world through a wonderful mouthpiece.

These explorations took place before 1000 A.D.

THE craft of these explorers were simple. The largest were probably 150 feet long. Others were double, and some had outrigger. They were paddled, and not propelled with long oars like those of their European contemporaries—the Normans.

From Hawaiki came Kupe. Daring the perils of the ocean, he visited island after island in the south seas, always eager, anxious, ambitious. In his double canoe, in which we would barely dare to cross Cook Strait, he came as far down as the Kermadec Group. Dauntless of the great unknown ahead of him, he sailed on, and found a land, a rich land, with its waters teeming with fish, with huge wingless birds, where there was no enemy to disturb the serenity of a quiet atmosphere. Surely here the gods who had brought them so far could be appeased and would favour them. Kupe, if tradition can be relied on, circumnavigated the land of "the long white cloud," Ao-tea-roa, and sailed back to Hawaiki to tell them of the rich land he had found—out into the setting sun.

But Kupe was not alone in his discoveries, and in the interval of time before the migration, the first settlers came to the coast of the land of "the long white cloud." From the neighbouring islands, these long double canoes, propelled with nought but a crazy sail or

