

Beyond the Veil

A Talk on the future of the Maori Race broadcast from 3YA Christchurch by Te Ari Pitama

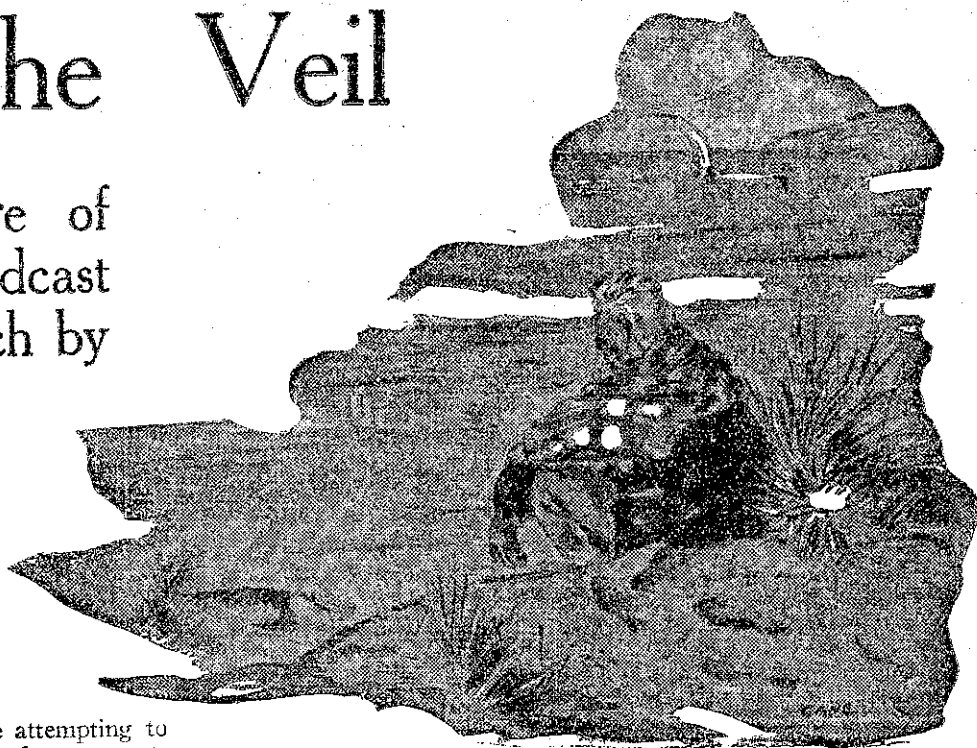
THE future of the Maori is the destiny of the Pacific. The great human family must be considered spiritually, intellectually, morally and physically. It is not my purpose to adorn the mantle of the prophet or to give the dictum of the student of ethnology. The subject under discussion is that of surrendering the primitive concepts of ancient Maoridom and the acceptance of the complex ideas of the West. Before attempting to give a judicial verdict it would be good to reflect for a few moments and analyse the different stages of progress through which the Maori has evolved.

We first enter upon the human epoch of the Maori, when he dwelt in a state of Communism. It was that period when the Ariki, Rangatira, leader, chief and protector, ruled supreme over the tribe and guarded its interest. When his word was sacred. Indeed, it was a period when the Maori was physically active, self-reliant, and above all things aggressive. His spiritual concepts, although strange and primitive, was the channel utilised by the high priest for the administration

of civil law. With patient and incredible toil, he shaped his kauri and totara with a crude stone axe into the great war canoe, tilling or preparing his extensive marae, sowing the kumara and taro; the catching of fish and the snaring of birds were the activities of outdoor employment.

Now for his social conditions. Custom demanded on ceremonial occasions for those present to display their physical powers in the exercise of their limbs and lungs in the production of oratorical effects.

The romantic



tales of some beautiful mythical Venus of the South Seas was revealed by the tohunga, the repository of ancient sacred law, or it may be the prowess of the mighty and adventurous Jason. His was an easy life. To this period, Judge Manning, the author of "Old New Zealand," refers to them as "the good old days." We are next faced with the transition stage.

- (1) What were the forces which brought about this change?
- (2) What did these forces change?
- (3) Has the change wrought any good to the Maoris?

Those responsible for the first point of contact with the Natives were the derelicts, convicts and whalers. With them came alcohol, guns, soap, money, the spirit of land-lust, and every other lust conceivable to humanity. It was due to this overwhelming force which brought about the disintegration of Native laws and customs in New Zealand. From this welter of lust and brutal barbarity, the Maori emerged from the Slough of Despond a much troubled and unsettled individual.

THIS contact brought about the destruction of fortified custom and the stability of a religious system which almost annihilated the communal order of their social well-being and development. The destructive work of the whaler and derelict was followed by the pioneer missionary, many of whom adopted an air of self-sufficiency and superiority; who ignored the primitive culture of a barbaric people and ridiculed the philosophy and wisdom of Polynesian convention, in their vain and inglorious attempt to transplant the devastated area with the seeds of faith, hope and charity.

Tribal destruction was the result of the introduction of firearms, and it was necessary for the Home Government to intervene. That remarkable document, the Treaty of Waitangi, was the handing over of the *all* of the Maori to their beloved Sovereign, the Queen. There are those of my people who believe that the signing of this document meant the absolute annihilation and destruction of the Maori.

On the contrary, from a drama of dissipation and destruction, we find him being elevated to a full equality, spiritually, politically and socially. The appointment of Tahupotiki Haddon as superintendent of the Maori Wesleyan Mission, and Frederick Bennett as the Bishop of Ao-tea-roa, is regarded by both pakeha and Maori as a judicious move.

To my mind the move was somewhat premature. May I yet live to see the day when a Maori will administer to the spiritual requirements of both pakeha and Maori, as is successfully demonstrated among the Indians, in the Diocese of Dornakel. In (Concluded on page 2.)

