

as sailing-master on the Jean Bart. Captain Walsh, of the Adele, learned later that Captain Cecille, after leaving the Chathams, discovered that part of the crew of the Jean Bart had survived, and taken refuge on Pitt Island, a small island of the group. He visited it, but found no one there, so he returned to the Chathams and destroyed another village, but as before could capture no Maoris.

The three Maoris taken over from the Rebecca Sims were taken away. The chief, in spite of the instructions to the contrary, was soon told that his wife had been killed, and the sailors had no compunction in assuring him of his own fate. How did he treat his captives—killed and ate them. Well, then, what else did he expect for himself? He committed suicide before they reached the American coast. One of his companions died off Brest just before reaching France, while the third came out with the French when their settlement was formed at Akaroa in 1840, but he died on another French ship, the Allier, off the coast of New Zealand, in 1842, without ever seeing his home again.

This account is much condensed from R. McNab's in "The Old Whaling Days," and McNab writes: "There appeared to have been a lingering desire on the part of the French for further reprisals against the Chatham Islanders, and it was thought that this third Maori might prove useful."

This story does not make it at all clear what actually happened on the Jean Bart; and there is another version, given by Captain Ray, of the Rebecca Sims.

On his visiting the islands as told, he was surprised that no Maoris came aboard for trade. This was quite unusual, so he went ashore to find out why. He was not long in learning that they had taken and burnt the Jean Bart. From what he was told, he concluded that the Maoris, intending to take the ship, had gone aboard soon after she dropped anchor, swarming over the ship in great numbers. It was thought that the Maoris had seized some of the whaling lances and other implements of the trade, and used them against the French; but many of the Maoris had wounds as if from these same implements, so if they had been employed as weapons they must have been used by both sides.

Further details are obtained from a French account of the incident, in which Captain Ray is reported to have told Captain Cecille that on the Jean Bart entering the bay the Maoris appeared and boarded her for trade in the usual way; but the French, finding them too numerous on board, ordered them ashore. Either misunderstanding them, or wishing to trade, they hesitated; and the French suspecting their intentions, attacked them with lances and spades, killing twenty-seven and wounding many, only two Frenchmen being killed. He said that as he had twice visited the islands, and had always experienced only good treatment, he could not help thinking that the French must have been to blame.

The same French authority tells in addition quite another story, and as it is against his own countrymen it is more credible than if it had been told by the American. Whether the story was told to Captain Cecille, who can say? The accounts hint—it more than hints—that it was so told by Eitouna.

"I dare not," says the narrator, "state what Eitouna, the chief of the tribe, taken to France as a prisoner,

The Tragedy of the "Jean Bart"

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actually revealed as to the causes of the massacre."

"As is customary in Oceania, where prostitution is not shameful," he says, "some women of the neighbouring tribe came to pass the night on board." He modifies this: Women? No; young girls, and less than young girls, poor children, sold for a few wretched articles of trade, tobacco, or biscuit! It appeared that one night a drunken sailor murdered a little girl, under particularly revolting circumstances.



Lester Moller,

A popular young 4YA humorist, who will entertain on Friday, March 3.

The child's cry told her companions that something more than ordinary had taken place: all the women on board broke away and leaped into the sea to gain the shore.

Next day not a native came on board, and it was certain that an act of vengeance was in meditation. Orders were given to hoist sail, but the winds were still; they attempted to tow the ship, but the currents were unfavourable. The Maoris, warned by messengers, could be seen assembling from all quarters; and while those on board saw the preparations for attack they were unable to flee from it. It seemed as though providence itself was at last set against them. Again and again they set the sails to woo the winds, again they attempted to tow the ship, but all in vain.

Night came, and strict watch was kept; sailors armed with muskets were placed at bow and stern, with orders to fire on all who might approach during the night.

At about one in the morning the man in the bows heard what sounded like someone swimming, and he fired at the luminous spot where the phosphorescence of the water betrayed the presence of the swimmer. The swim-

ming ceased. Eitouna himself later told what had happened; the swimmer's breast was pierced: he was a chief who, feeling friendly to the pakeha, was furtively swimming to warn the captain that they were to be attacked at sunrise. "He would betray his own people," said Eitouna, "and his atua punished him for it." A tragic circumstance. More tragedy followed.

As the sun rose, canoes great and small flocked to the Jean Bart from all parts, three hundred warriors inspiring terror into the thirty who defended the vessel. They had assembled on the deck, besides rifles and muskets, the weapons of the whalers—harpoons, lances, spades, and axes. These they would use should the attack outlast their ammunition. The fight was prolonged; the French fought with the courage of despair; but what could thirty do against three hundred? When the last sailor had fallen, the ship was hauled ashore, looted, and burnt.

Some months later the Rebecca Sims appeared. When they began to trade, a chronometer was one of the objects of barter, for which powder was asked. They had the muskets of the Jean Bart, but all the powder had been used up in the fight. The American captain recognised other articles as having belonged to a French ship, and gradually learned the story.

This account puts a very different complexion on the whole affair. It gives good reason for the attack; it explains how it was that some of the Maoris had wounds caused by whaling implements.

Now, if this version had been given by Captain Cecille, it would have been seen by McNab. He does refer to a story—which is probably this one—which he had seen by a French writer, but he was waiting to verify; he may have verified it, he may not: I have not seen any reference by him beyond the mere mention in "Old Whaling Days."

But what of Captain Cecille? It certainly looks as though Eitouna told him the story: why did he suppress it? Did he think the telling would throw a stain on the fair lilies of France? Then what of his own action, especially if he knew the story? But what of his own action in any event? Did not that throw a stain on the lilies? And what of the action of the American captain, who had always been well treated by these same Maoris, and who suspected that the French must have been guilty of some act of aggression. What can be said of his action? It looks as though he wanted the reprisal to be a lesson to which he could point in future—"You dare to resent what I do, and that is what I will bring on you."

People have sometimes wondered why I speak up for the Maori people whenever I get the chance. They were called ferocious savages; I want to show that their ferocity against the whites was always called up by some cruel or dastardly act of the whites themselves. It was a savage time; but it was made worse by savage men.

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