

## ART. XLIII.—The fleeing Maru-iwi walk over Glenshea Cliff at Night.

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[Read before the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute.]

WE of the present time should endeavour to the utmost of our ability to collect and place on record such fragments of the ancient history of New Zealand as may come within our reach, more especially those portions which relate to the life-history of those people who inhabited this land before the arrival of the Maori in the "Arawa" and "Tainui" canoes, and others of that date. In this paper I propose to add a supplement or small addition to a well-written article by Mr. Elsdon Best, of Rotorua, which is here copied from the pamphlet entitled "In Ancient Maori Land," page 37.

"MARU-IWI: Te Heke a Maru-iwi ki te Po" ("The Descent of Maru-iwi to the Shades"), by Elsdon Best.

"The Maru-iwi were one of the aboriginal tribes of New Zealand, and originally occupied the valley of the Wai-mana River, where they had many a fortified pa, the principal one being Ma-pou-riki. The whole land was occupied by the tribes of the *tangata whenua* [men of the country—T.W.], whose ancestors held these lands long before the historical vessels came from the Hawaikian Fatherland, which lies far away, across the great Ocean of Kiwa. When the ancestors of the present Maori people became numerous in Ao-tea-roa [New Zealand], then wars arose between the two races, and many battles took place, and the long peace of the Great White World was broken at last. Then was known the evil which comes with war and strife. The clash of arms was heard in the old-time homes of Te-tini-o-toi [the descendants of Toi—T.W.], the sound of the war-trumpets [*pio-tara*—T.W.] echoed far and wide, the rivers and lands of the descendants of Maui were stained with the blood of Maru-iwi and Te Maranga-ranga, of Te Po-kiki and Te Po-kaka.

"Maru-ka was a chief of Te Maru-iwi [*iwi* = tribe—T.W.]. He and Koira, of Ngati-awa [*ngati* = descendants of: these were a Maori people—T.W.], had a long argument concerning the *kumara* [sweet potato—T.W.] of Rehua and of Wha-nui. They came to high words, and Maru-ka struck Koira on the face. Then was Koira dark in his heart, and he went forth and sought his *tupuna* [ancestor—T.W.] Rakei-ao. A man of great knowledge was Rakei-ao, versed in the sacred lore of his race, and a *tohunga* [priest or learned man—T.W.] of

great fame. And Koira said to this *tohunga*, 'I have been insulted by Maru-ka, of Te Maru-iwi; yea! even struck by that man, sir! It is not well that this tribe should remain here. Rather let them be driven from these lands, driven away towards the setting sun.' Rakei-ao, the man of knowledge, agreed to this; he said, 'Let this place be swept and made quite clean.' This was done, and then the priest said, 'Now you must dig a hole, even a deep hole, that I may perform therein the necessary ceremonies and incantations [*karakia*—T.W.] to enable me to drive away the Maru-iwi to other lands. But you must be careful and not laugh at anything I do, or my work and prayers will be in vain.' So ended the words of Rakei-ao, the *tohunga*. Then this priest, with his sacred girdle around him, descended into the hole which had been prepared. He did not descend in the ordinary manner, as other men do, but went down head first, and performed the necessary ceremonies in that position. The meaning of this was, 'a driving-away or expelling of Maru-iwi' (*hei whakaterere-terere i a Maru-iwi*). Even so were Koira and his people enabled to expel the Maru-iwi from Wai-mana, their ancient home. And they fled—fled with a great fear upon them—far away from their well-loved homes of many generations, away to the region where the sun goes down.

"So went forth the Maru-iwi, pressing onwards through the ancient lands of Te Rarauhe-maemae and Te Ma-rangaranga, of Te Po-kiki and Te Po-kaka. They left their tribal lands, they left the hills and valleys, they left the rivers and forests. As they looked back at the well-known mountains which encircled their former home they paused and greeted each known peak and deserted valley, the forests wherein so many generations of their tribe had hunted and fought, the sacred places wherein lay the bones of their dead. Far away across the White World was borne the wailing of Maru-iwi as they chanted a song of farewell to the Land of the Ancient People, for the Maori had come, the Maori of Hawaiki, of the Dark Ocean, trained to war and slaughter in the crowded isles of Polynesia.

"So fled the Maru-iwi with the battle-cry of the Coming Race ringing in their ears, with the fear of death upon them. By rugged mountains and lonely valleys, across swift rivers and pathless jungles, over wide plains and amidst the murmuring 'children of Tane' [forest-trees—T.W.] the Maru-iwi fled. They saw in each moving shrub an armed enemy; they heard the relentless foe in the sighing winds, in the mysterious voices of the night. Strong men hurried forward to an unknown haven; women carrying little children pressed wearily onward; the old and the weak died by the way; still the Maru-iwi fled. They reached Titi-o-kura, and the black

fear was on them, for the savage foe may be hard upon their trail. Who might know? The dreadful foe, who killed for killing's sake; who slew old and young of both sexes; who roasted and ate the bodies of the dead—a truly terrible foe. Thus the Maru-iwi hurried on. In the darkness of night they clambered up the rugged mountains, they traversed the darkling woods of the unknown land. The foremost reached a deep chasm in the range—a cañon with perpendicular walls. Unknowingly they stepped into the abyss and met a fearful death; unknowingly the others pressed on, and were in turn forced into the gulch by the pressure of those behind them. And there in that dark and fearsome chasm lay strong men and feeble women, warriors and little children, crushed and lifeless. For the death they dreaded from the rear had met them face to face in the mountains of the Ririo.\* Hence came the expressions:—

Te Heke a Maru-iwi ki te Po.

Te Heke a Maru-iwi ki te Waro.

These have come to be used as synonyms for death. And the few survivors of Maru-iwi fled onwards to Wai-rarapa, and to the Land of the Pounamu [the South Island—T.W.], and their name is lost to the World of Life, and no man may know their descendants. Only this remains: 'Te Heke a Maru-iwi ki te Po!'

"And Maru-a-hangaroa, of Kahu-huna, married Rakei-ao [the *tohunga* of this story—T.W.], and had Puhī-awe, who married Ava-tope, and had Ira-wharo and Koira; and Koira had Koko-wai, who had Tua-hina-rau, who had Hika-pua-pua, who married Te Uru-hina, and had Te Rangi-patai and Hine-oho; and Hine-oho had Tua-hiwi, who had Te Mokena, who had Hamiora,† who had Te Mate-kuare, who had Whare."

This ends Mr. Elsdon Best's graphic description of this terrible incident of the olden time.

Excluding Koira, from Koko-wai to Hamiora gives seven generations, which, taken at twenty-five years for each generation, gives one hundred and seventy-five years, and add to this the two persons named after Hamiora and we have two hundred and twenty-five years as having lapsed since the flight of Maru-iwi.

The Maru-iwi lived contiguous to the east coast, in a district till lately known as "the King-country." The pakeha.

\* "The Ure-wera inform me that the Ririo is the leading *atua* (god, spirit) of the Taupo tribes, as Te Rehu-o-tai-nui is of Tuhoe, and Makawe that of the Arawa tribes.

† "Old Hamiora, of Ngati-whare, who gave the above information [concerning the flight of Maru-iwi.—T.W.] "

was forbidden to enter this part of the North Island up to within the last few years, but the Maori has now allowed a road to be surveyed therein. Hence the allusion to driving the Maru-iwi towards the setting sun.

For nearly ten years I resided on a property known as "Glengarrie," situated northward of Napier, and it may be about half-way between the latter place and Titi-o-kura, the place mentioned by Mr. Elsdon Best as passed by the Maru-iwi in their flight from the Maori of the north. Attached to the Glengarrie land was, in my time, a part named "Glenshea," which the Maoris have told me they called "*Kuri-paka*" (the brown dog). (A chestnut horse was once pointed out to me as of the colour *paka*.) At this place there are what I may term perpendicular walls of highly water-worn and polished boulders about the size of a man's fist, intermixed with others slightly smaller. These boulders are themselves of a blackish colour, but, being cemented about by ferruginous particles, the *tout ensemble* is as of a red conglomerate rock, very hard and solid in texture. I have since wondered if there was some mistake in interpreting the Maori saying, and that possibly *kiri paka* (the reddish-brown or burnt-looking shingle) might be the name of this place. This wall of conglomerate runs along the northerly face of the ridge, and is mostly covered by the surface-soil on the flat top of the ridge, showing out below after the manner of a ha-ha or sunken fence in England, giving some 8 ft. to 15 ft. of a perpendicular exposure, when it is again hidden by the soil of the sloping land below. This wall is here sufficiently formidable to any person travelling on a dark night; and the more so in the condition in which I first saw it, when the land was hidden under fern and tutu, breast high, and often over a man's head—but this is merely a preliminary sketch, and to record the Maori name of the place.

Along the westward boundary of this land flows the Manga-one River, a tributary of the Tutae-kuri. This divides it from land then called "Pa-toka" (the *pa*, or fort, of the rock). The Manga-one is on both sides mostly hidden away under gigantic precipices. At some few places (mostly where the side streams flow in) the descent is more gradual, but many of these side streams are confined between even worse cliffs than those of the main stream. Many of these cliffs are formed by the before-mentioned conglomerate rock, nearly as hard as iron, standing on a great depth of papa rock. The lower, being the softer rock and more easily weathered, is mostly overhung by the upper strata. Now, hide away these truly awesome depths by an upper coating of the tall fern and tutu (which held sway until the improving hand of the

pakeha caused their disappearance), and you can see the dread place which engulfed the fleeing Maru-iwi.

For some eight or nine years certain Maori people came from about Tara-wera and shore my sheep. They were under the leadership of a young *rangatira* named Petera, whose father, a chief of considerable influence, was also named Petera, which I suppose to be the Maori of Peter. (The father was probably Petera te Puku Atua, of Rotorua, Arawa Tribe—see pedigree, March number, 1894, vol. iii., of the "Journal of the Polynesian Society," by Major Gudgeon. Henare te Puku Atua, a chief of Ngatiwhakane, brother of the latter, formerly Assessor, Native Lands Court, died in August, 1897. His ancestor Taunga came in the "Arawa" canoe twenty-three generations ago.) These Maoris did their work well, and were less trouble than the average pakeha shearer. They brought their own cook, fleecpickers, and rollers-up, and also their children and dogs. One season they told us about a whole tribe (or most of them) who, when fleeing from their pursuers, walked straight on over the terrible cliff at Glenshea. These people were fleeing from the north by way of Titi-o-kura, and coming to that branch of the Manga-one bounding Glenshea from Raukamoana (now held by Mr. John More), and it being night-time, they walked straight onward into the empty space, and fell headlong into the depths below.

Possibly these people, even at that time, had used a well-beaten but very narrow track which led through the tall fern and tutu in a southerly direction along the ridges from the narrow dividing-ridge between the aforesaid creek falling into the Manga-one and the stream which here takes its rise and is a tributary of the Esk or Petane River, the one flowing west and the other to the east. This old Maori track followed on from Titi-o-kura to Puke-tapu and Moteo, and was in use when I lived near by. (Now the pakeha roads have altered all this, and the old track has many fences built across it, and is obliterated from all but the memories of the elderly people of both races.) We might assume that the Maru-iwi, when struggling along through the tall fern in the dark, lost the track when nearly arrived at the head-waters of the two streams, and so went to their death over the precipice on the left-hand stream.

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