

brance of the length or breadth of the pits. Certainly the remains of former shellfish feasts gave the locality a home-like aspect.

ART. XLVIII.—*A Maori Stronghold.*

By TAYLOR WHITE.

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

THE old-time pre-pakeha Maori and his history, habits, and mode of life are becoming year by year more interesting. I will now, therefore, endeavour to describe some of the evidence still remaining of the works of the old-time Maori people.

About the year 1876 or 1877 Mr. McDonnell, who then owned the land known as Rakamoana, near Pohui, showed me the remarkable position which had been selected by Maori people as a refuge from the attack of others of their race, or possibly as a fortified habitation. The site of this fort is in a bend of the Mangaone River—I may state that this river and its affluent creeks are nearly always on either side embanked by high precipices of papa rock, in some cases several hundred feet in height, and which are in most cases entirely inaccessible and highly dangerous both to animals and man if unaware of their proximity.

This pa was situated on a kind of peninsula, being connected with the main land by a very narrow neck or passage. On either side of this entrance-passage to the pa was a great precipice, and it was easily seen that an assaulting party could only approach it by one or two at a time; it was terrible to think how the combatants might be thrown both to left and right down this frightful chasm, or that champion fighters of both parties might fall over locked in a tight embrace.

The interior of the fort was of considerable extent, and was protected on the other two sides by the cliffs, while the more gradual, though still very steep, descent to the river on the fourth side was protected by a ditch and bank, probably at one time carrying a palisaded fence.

I noticed several remains, still erect, of posts; very likely the remains of whares, or dwelling-places. I also observed several pits which made me think of rifle-pits, but possibly they were store-places for kumara or other provisions.

Water would have to be carried from outside the fort up the long and steep ascent from the river. This want of water within the pa was the common defect of Maori forts, and

must often have caused the besieged party to suffer great torture, and possibly to capitulate or surrender, in which case the conquered warriors would be mostly killed and eaten, and the women and children be carried away as slaves to the victors.

The site of this pa is near a track known as Marshall's Crossing, named after the first European owner of Rakamoana—the Rev. Mr. Marshall, who actually kept a school for boys in this out-of-the-way place.

On questioning some Maori shearers at a later date as to the history of this pa they referred the question to an old man who was employed at the wool-table. He replied in Maori, which was interpreted by one of the others to me in English. The story was this: The dwellers in this pa were relatives of Maoris living at Moteo—a distance of some ten miles. Another tribe of Maoris came one day from the north, by way of Titiokura and Pohui, and, taking the dwellers in the pa by surprise, killed them all or otherwise disposed of them. Shortly after the people from Moteo started on a journey to visit the pa, being unaware of the fate of their friends. As the land in those days was covered with a dense growth of fern, tutu, and manuka scrub, the stony bed of the river was, especially during the warmer months of the year, the easier line to travel. As is the Maori custom, when these travellers neared the pa they commenced to search the likely places for eels, so that they might arrive with a present of acceptable food; and presently they were horrified by seeing the water blood-stained, and further on they came across the dead bodies of some of the people of the pa, which had been thrown over the cliff. Upon this the visiting party fled in the greatest terror.

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ART. XLIX.—*A Maori Earthwork Fortification.*

By TAYLOR WHITE.

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

THE site of this remarkable work is close to the small township of Herbertville, and to the south side of the Wainui River. A small but deep and sluggish stream here joins the river, and together they enclose a considerable semicircular space. This partly enclosed piece of ground would seem to have been selected by a party of Maoris as a place of refuge in times of danger, in case of an assault from others of their race with whom they had a blood-feud or vendetta.