

A very complete and graphic account of the *kuaka's* habits is given by Sir Walter Buller in his monumental work on New Zealand birds (vol. ii, p. 40), from information supplied by Captain G. Mair. The learned doctor describes the extraordinary migration it performs every year. Starting in large organized parties from near the North Cape of New Zealand in the end of March or the beginning of April, it makes its way northward, passing along by China, Japan, and Manchuria, until it reaches Eastern Siberia, where it remains for several months and rears its young; the rest of the year being spent in its alternate home in the Malay Archipelago, Polynesia, Australia, and New Zealand—the New Zealand contingent returning in straggling flocks from September to Christmas.

The flight of birds has often helped the navigator in locating a country. In his account of the discovery of Bass Strait in 1798 Flinders describes the continuous stream of sooty petrels or mutton-birds heading in a certain direction, which he took to be an indication "that there must be in the large bight one or more inhabited islands," which eventually proved to be the Furneaux Group. Similar instances are recorded in the history of other voyages of discovery; and it seems to me that an observant and adventurous people like the Polynesians could not have failed to observe the annual migrations of the *kuaka* to and fro between known spots, and that a party of them, driven by some tribal quarrel, or by some urgent necessity to seek a new home, would not have hesitated to trust themselves to the guidance of the winged pilot over the wide seas that separated them from New Zealand. The large number of birds would indicate a considerable tract of country, while the fact that on their southern journey they went in "straggling flocks" extending over several weeks would enable the travellers to check their course from day to day.

A careful observation of the routes travelled by the birds would doubtless throw some light on this theory.

ART. XXI.—*On a Stone-carved Ancient Wooden Image of a Maori Eel-god.*

By A. K. NEWMAN.

[Read before the Wellington Philosophical Society, 2nd August, 1905.]

Plate I.X.

THIS quaint figure of a Maori god of eels was dug up recently whilst a field was being ploughed near the City of Auckland. From its position when found, it is clearly of great antiquity. It is a relic of the Stone Age, having been cut by stone chisels,

and in its style and character is striking proof of the excellent work done by the prehistoric Maori carver. The body of the eel is carved with great skill, and is exceedingly lifelike. It is carved on a board belonging to an ancient *wharepuni*, or temple.

Maori mythology has many references to eels and eel-gods, and, as will be shown presently, the capture of eels was always celebrated with religious rites and ceremonies by the prehistoric Maori—both before he went eel-catching and after his return.

Tangaroa in New Zealand and throughout Polynesia was the god of fishes. He was one of the greatest of all gods, and so sacred throughout Polynesia that his image was never carved. Tuna was one of the lesser Maori deities, the son of Manga-wai-roa. Legend says there was a drought in heaven, and naturally the eel-god came away in search of water, and came to earth. One legend says he killed two of the great god Maui's children, and the latter in revenge slew him. Another legend says that in Maui's absence Tuna came up out of the water and ravished Maui's wife. Hearing this, Maui told his wife to go to the *whare* by the river, and he laid logs between the hut and the river and there lay in ambush. Tuna came gliding gaily over the logs to see the lady, and Maui slew him. One legend says that Tuna's tail became the fresh-water eels' progenitor, and his head produced salt-water eels. The next story reverses the order, but confirms the fact that he begat both sorts. John White says some Maori tribes worshipped Ruahine as the god of eels, and performed religious rites to him. His worship, however, was strictly limited, as there is no other reference to him in Maori legends.

RELIGIOUS RITES OF EEL-FISHING.

When a young man first went eeling the *tohunga* performed many rites over him, and recited appropriate *karakia*, invoking the gods to make him a successful fisher. Eldon Best, in our Transactions of 1902, gives a special *karakia* addressed to Tangaroa used at this ceremony, which caused a great haul of eels. When a young man made his first catch he gave to his priest an offering of the daintiest—a sign that the Maori *tohunga* knew how to look after his own interests.

Maoris in olden days when building eel pas or weirs put at each end of the weir a carved post, which, like all other Maori carvings, had a religious character, and thereby invoked the eel-deities to make it a success after their labours.

Eel-fisheries were as valuable to the ancient Maoris as gold-mines are to Europeans. The failure of the eel-catch was often a great disaster. In the earlier days when Europeans first came to New Zealand, cuttings from swamp to swamp abounded;

there the Maoris caught the migratory eels. These eel-drains are fast disappearing, and will presently be as extinct as the carved eel-posts, none of which have been saved for our museums.

If a tribe of Maoris owned the lower half of a river and did not dare, because of a powerful tribe, to fish the upper half, they chose a stone or log of wood, calling it a *mauri*; the priest sanctified it; and this was supposed to have the effect, aided by his incantations, of preventing the eels going beyond and thus being lost to them.

Not one of the first catch made by a young man was allowed to be eaten by women. Women in Mangaia must not eat eels.

There was nothing the prehistoric Maori did in relation to the catching or eating of eels that had not its appropriate ceremony or rites performed to the gods. Tangaroa married Te-ami-awatoa (Chilly Cold), and out of this appropriately named lady begat all kinds of fish.

In Mangaia Tuna was an enormous eel, lover of Ina-moe-aitiu. Tuna assumed human form, and the angry deities threatened to drown the world because of this deed. He told Ina to cut off his head and bury it; then the flood ceased. Tunarua was a name sometimes applied to Tuna. Tinirau was the son of Tangaroa, the god of the ocean, and he also was god of fishes. The Mangaians said he was half a fish, and god of all fishes. He was born in spirit-land, and made of flesh torn from his mother's side.

Apparently the different tribes of Maoris worshipped different deities to help them when fishing.

If an eeling expedition failed to catch fish, the Maoris at once knew the gods were angry and it was no use going on trying until they went back to the *pa* and the *tohunga* had gone through fresh ceremonies and appeased their wrath. I was told this story in Wairarapa, where there are bare hills so steep that no vegetation clings to their naked sandstones. They are called *taipos*, or devils. If a Maori went fishing or birding between them in the Maungapakeha Valley, he might fail to get either birds or eels. The reason was that the Tinui *taipo* was angry, and would say to the Maungapakeha *taipo*, "This man has offended me; he shall catch no more eels or birds to-day." That Maori might try as he liked, he got no more that day. After returning to the *pa* and reciting *karakias* he might thus appease the angry *taipos*, and next day they would allow him to catch plenty.

THE CARVING.

This figure of an eel-god with the head of a man, and this excellently spiritedly carved body of an eel with legs and arms

of a man, is quite unique—the only figure of an eel-god in existence in New Zealand. There is no other specimen resembling it. It is 38 in. long by 10 in. wide. The head is very human, with a singularly broad, flat, dome-like forehead. The size of the forehead is the more remarkable because, as a rule, the forehead is neglected in Maori carving. This has the effect of giving the image a look of quite unusual intelligence. It is a forehead denoting great ability, and therefore is quite unlike any modern Maori carving. The mouth, as is usual in a god, is enormous—wide open, cavernous. The tongue is visible, but small, and does not protrude; at each side of the mouth one incisor tooth is carved—as is so often seen in old Maori carvings. The eyes, like those of all ancient Maori gods, are slanting—Mongolian. The nose is very flat. A thin line of tattooing is on each eyebrow, all over the nose, and a thin single ring surrounds the gaping mouth. This tattooing, as shown in the plate, is simple, and is evidently the work of stone and not iron chisels. The figure has two arms and two legs, each arm with three fingers and each leg with three toes—the one, unfailling, universal mark of a god. Three fingers or three toes on each limb, a wide-open mouth, and slant eyes are unfailling symbols of the prehistoric Maori deity. The limbs, too, are tattooed with the double spiral. At the point of the right elbow and right knee (the left elbow and left knee are omitted from the carving) is a curious hollow, and from the ends of each hollow is a curious tattooed little figure like an inverted capital C, and at the junction a quaint little knob. What this means I do not know. Something like it is seen in other Polynesian images. Arms and legs are covered with tattooing, chiselled out, but not fine and blackened as in modern carvings.

THE BODY.

The remarkable feature is the raised, sinuous, lifelike body of an eel, fat and big, arising from beneath the chin. The head is aslant, looking over the left shoulder, as seen in many *heitikis*. As the eel-like body then turns first to the right it may have been thus carved to give another turn to the sinuous look of the eel; but it may have been turned to the left shoulder for the same reason as *heitiki* heads are made to turn—a reason unknown to us. The body, like that of a real eel, is fat and round, and quite smooth, free from any trace of ornamentation. There is no tail; the body ends abruptly where the legs are set on, and at the end of the body is a hole going right through the board on which the figure is carved. This probably is meant for the anal and other apertures.

SUMMARY.

As a specimen of a Maori eel-god it stands alone ; it is unique. Mr. Hamilton showed me a figure in the Museum of a Maori god with a strange burly figure representing some unknown animal object, but certainly not an eel. A god with an eel-like body was worshipped in Samoa, and that is the only god I have found anywhere resembling this.

It is not surprising that Maoris should have carved an image of the god of eels, as they had so many religious rites in connection with eels and eel-fishing ; but it is singular that so far this is the only image of an eel-god discovered, and therefore, doubtless, even among the ancient Maoris, such a figure was very rarely depicted. Tinirau, god of fishes, was described as being a merman—"half man, half fish"; and this figure of an eel-god is embodied in this figure—half a god and half an eel.

ART. XXII.—*On the Musical Notes and Other Features of the Long Maori Trumpet.*

By A. K. NEWMAN.

[*Read before the Wellington Philosophical Society, 2nd August, 1905.*]

THIS 5-ft.-long black Maori trumpet was made either by the Arawa or by the Tuhoe Tribe. They were always extremely rare, and only a few exist in museums. I have asked Mr. Warren, an expert bugle-player and accomplished musician, to blow this trumpet for me to-night. [Mr. Warren here played a number of British and other army bugle-calls upon this instrument, fashioned by savages ; and on another occasion to a gathering of musicians, to the manifest pleasure of the audiences.] Experts declared that its tones were so clear and good that had they not seen the instrument they would have believed the sounds were made by a modern silver bugle.

Unlike the mouthpiece of a modern bugle, which is small and round, this is a long, wide slit, and Mr. Warren found it difficult to get his lips into shape. He suggests the opening was made to suit a wide-mouthed 17-stone Maori. He found it in consequence difficult to play long calls, and not until he had taken it home, lived with it, and practised with it for some time was he able to get the full tones out of it. Blown by a big-chested Maori giant, the sound of this instrument would travel an enormous distance.

I was anxious to learn what calls the Maoris played, but this is impossible. Many modern Maoris have never seen this