James Cowan:

The Significance of his Journalism

Volume Three:

'The White Slave' (1906)

By James Cowan

Critical Edition

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Introduction to the Critical Edition

'The White Slave' is firstly the story of a person, and secondly a partial history of the Taranaki Wars. This is the key point of difference between the serial and the later book version which significantly ramps up the historical elements of the story by incorporating the viewpoints of others from both sides. In contrast, 'The White Slave' is really a limited viewpoint compared to what is in the nine further chapters of the book version. The absence of those extra chapters in the serial is, I suggest, what makes 'The White Slave' so much more realistic as an oral testimony, for it does not attempt to fill in the historical gaps that Bent would have not known about. Taranaki war history takes a back seat to the anthropological experience of Bent becoming an 'outlander', a 'decivilised' man, as Cowan put it in his summary of Bent in the final chapter. For, as mentioned in the thesis, from one angle the text chronicles what happens when a 'civilised' man returns to the wilderness to become a hunter-gatherer. What elements of his former civilised world would he miss? Would he survive in the 'Crusoe' tradition?

Robinson Crusoe (1719) was written by Daniel Defoe and tells the story of a castaway who spends 28 years as a castaway on a remote tropical desert island, encountering cannibals, captives and mutineers before finally being rescued. Likewise Bent, was a 'castaway' from European civilization for almost 13 years, during which time he encountered cannibals and other deserters like him from the British Army – Defoe's mutineers. According to J. Paul Hunter in the abstract of his 1962 dissertation 'Tradition and Theme in Robison Crusoe', Defoe's story of Crusoe

> is structured on the basis of a disobedience – punishment – repentance – deliverance pattern, and all of the novel's events are interpreted retrospectively according to this pattern. … Crusoe begins as a wanderer, aimless on a sea he does not understand; he ends as a pilgrim crossing a final mountain to enter the promised land.[1]

[1] Hunter, J. Paul. 'Tradition and theme in Robinson Crusoe' (1962). Diss., Rice University. https://hdl.handle.net/1911/89406, Abstract.

Even though Bent's lot was vastly different to Defoe's Crusoe, the concept of the castaway in terms of being separated from civilisation is a common theme to both stories. For Bent also underwent a cycle of disobedience and punishment followed by a seeking of repentance once he left the forest (to borrow from Hunter's abstract). His 'final mountain to enter the promised land' of the Pakeha however set up new sets of dilemmas, however, in terms of where he ultimately belonged – with Maoridom or Europeans.

The value of 'The White Slave', then, is its readings on so many different levels – psychological, anthropological and historical – the first two themes stronger in the serial version and the historical theme much more pronounced in the book version. For the serial's focus solely on Bent becomes progressively diluted in the book version as more 'voices' are introduced. He may have met Te Ua Haumene, the leading prophet of the Pai Marire movement at the time,[1] and Riwha Titokowaru, considered by James Belich to be the greatest of the Maori generals of the New Zealand Wars,[2] but this is not meant to be Haumene's nor Titokowaru's story. They play central parts as high-ranking spiritual leaders, helping keep Bent alive while he lurches through a seemingly mystical world of Maoridom, Cowan bringing to the text a series of Bent's anecdotes about coping while under the threat of being continually threatened and how it affected him.

Another important aspect is that it has the unintended consequence of being about an experience that one can still identify with. Imagine disconnecting yourself from the world for almost thirteen years and relying solely on discussions in a village meeting house for information, information carried through the forest by Maori messengers. This was Bent's sole source of knowledge, and even then, he was only party to selected amounts because he was barred from most village meetings. 'The White Slave' certainly holds value as a privileged insider's view of the Ngati Ruanui tribe from South Taranaki and their allies during the war period, but whether Bent's outlook was that of a true-blue European is however suspect. He was certainly a rebel and criminal while in the British Army, and there is an inference that he used his American Indian bloodlines as justification for being a rebel. But while he was deciding

[1] Cowan writes Pai Marire as 'Pai marire'.
[2] James Belich, *The New Zealand Wars and the Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict* (Auckland: Oxford University Press), 1986, 203.

where his 'home' lay, Cowan and Bent combine to give the reader valuable insights into a Maori world on the other side of the Tangahoe River.

Methodology

'The White Slave' was published as a serial in 1906 in three newspapers, the *New Zealand Times* (Wellington), *Otago Daily Times* and *Auckland Star*. More than a century later, the digital transfer of the serial from these newspapers onto the 'Papers Past' website – an extremely valuable and highly accessible digital archive – has had mixed results. Only parts of the serial could be found from the *Otago Daily Times* and *Auckland Star*; the *New Zealand Times* version was fortunately complete but the blotchy type – one of the drawbacks of scanning early newspapers – meant that a new tactic was needed to obtain a readable copy of 'The White Slave'.

The following critical edition of the serial accordingly did not rely on computer scanning but was retyped from a hard copy archived in the Turnbull Library. Yellowing pieces of newsprint had been pasted onto cardboard chapter by chapter. Virtually impossible to scan, a photograph was taken of each piece which were then displayed on a computer screen where the image could be enlarged as much as 400 percent to help read the 45,000 words of text.

The original text also suffered from an inordinate number of hyphens, as was the style of the day in order to be published in narrow newspaper columns. That level of hyphenation might have been an accepted part of standard newspaper copy for the period, but when widened to the size of a standard book layout, or as A4 copy, the abundance of hyphens appeared unnecessarily cluttered. Hyphens for the critical edition have subsequently been reduced by about half from the original version.

Although the text remained consistent throughout the three newspapers mentioned, how each newspaper presented the serial depended on available space. The version presented here from the *New Zealand Times* was consistent with its publication dates, publishing the serial in blocks of two or three chapters at a time and appearing on Saturdays and Wednesdays. The publication date can be found in a footnote at the start of each chapter along with the time period Bent is recalling. Cowan's multiple subheadings for each chapter have been retained; he averaged writing about six subheadings for each chapter but in most cases the first sub-heading in the list covered the salient

part of the chapter. This style has its advantages by giving the reader an overview of the chapter's contents but suffers from an inability to grasp the material quickly, which only a single chapter heading can do. Cowan retained this style for the book version but he also finally added a major heading for each chapter. Lastly, footnotes have been added to clarify some of the text; it must be noted however that the Maori words being translated sometimes have multiple meanings depending on the context of the situation.

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3 (25)

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Introductory[1]

Many instances are recorded of white deserters from civilisation who have allied themselves with savages, adopting barbarous practices and forgetting even their mother tongue. In the old convict days in Australia escapees from the fetters of a more than rigorous 'system' now and again cast in their lot with the blacks. Renegades of every European nationality have been found living with and fighting for native tribes in Africa, the Far East, and the islands of Polynesia. But none of them had a wilder story to tell than has the man whose narrative will here be presented. Ever since 1865 he has lived with the Maoris. For thirteen years he was completely estranged from his fellow whites; a price was on his head. British troops and colonial irregulars alike hunted him and his fanatical Hauhau companions. His hairbreadth escapes were many; he carried his life in his hands very literally sometimes; he had to risk death not only from British bullet and bayonet, but also from the savage brown men of the forest with whom he lived.

When he last came out of hiding and dared once more to face those of his own colour, he had almost forgotten the English language, and could speak it but with difficulty and hesitation. He has been out of his bush exile many years but is still living with his Maori friends not far from the city of Wellington.

This adventurer's name is Kimble Bent. A soldier in Her Majesty's 57th Regiment, he deserted to the rebel Hauhaus after a court-martial and a military flogging. The soldiers serving in the Taranaki war, which was then proceeding, were convinced that Bent was fighting against his old comrades, but according to the man's own account, he did not take any more active part on the enemy's side than making cartridges and helping to build fortified pas. He says that he was treated as a slave and kept so close a prisoner that it was impossible for him to escape. But it was a case of 'between the devil and the deeps sea'. To return to his regiment meant a court-martial and death. The fact is, Bent found life with the Maoris, with all its privations and dangers, preferable to the rigid discipline of the British Army of those days.

After the war, he had become so thoroughly a Maori – wearing garments of dressed flax, going bareheaded, barefooted, and living with a dusky wife, practising the wild ceremonies of the tribespeople who had relapsed into

[1] *New Zealand Times*, 12 Sep. 1906, 5.

paganism – that he was forever beyond the pale. Henceforth his place was in the smoky reed-built huts of the Maori kainga.[1] Sometimes he ventures out to the city, unrecognised saved by one or two Pakehas who know his story and keep his secret. Secret no longer, however, for the old man has been induced to spin me his strange tale, not without many a question and cross-question, and to attest it on oath before a Justice of the Peace. In self-vindication too, he is anxious that his denial of the rumours that he shot his old officer at the storming of a Maori hill fort should be recorded.

Taranaki was the scene of Bent's thirteen years' outlawed life. In the war days of 1860–70 dense forests covered the wide plains of this district, where now most of the dark old woods have been hewn away and have given place to the pastures and homesteads of dairy farmers. The coast curves out and round in a sweeping semicircle from Waitara in the north to Wanganui in the south; the intervening region of forest, hill and plain was the theatre of war. High and central, Taranaki's grand mountain cone, which Pakehas call Egmont, swells to a height of over 8,000 feet – its base hidden in the forests, its snowy peak glittering far above the broad swathes of clouds – the sailor's landmark a hundred miles out at sea. On all sides Taranaki – the holy mountain of the Maoris – slopes evenly and gently to the plains, and from its recesses spring the headwaters of many a beautiful river. The mountain, massy yet exquisitely symmetrical, is revered by the old school Taranaki Maori as the mighty symbol of his nationality and is regarded as being in some mystic fashion the source of his tribal mana.

Under the shadow of Taranaki began the Ten Years War;[2] here the Hauhau fanaticism took its mad rise in 1864. From Taranaki's foot set out the Hauhau apostles, preaching a strange jumble of scriptural expressions and pagan Maori concepts, promising their converts that no Pakeha bullet would harm them it they but repeated their magic incantations; and brandishing before the ranks of their devotees the dried heads of white slain soldiers. The relapse into barbarism was more marked in Taranaki than anywhere else, and it is well known that the natives of that province are even at this day to a considerable degree passively inimical to the Pakeha. Te Whiti, the Prophet of Parihaka, still holds his court under the shadow of lofty Taranaki, and preaches his old

[1] kainga: settlement
[2] Ten Years War: The Taranaki Wars of the 1860s.

mysticism fortified by the towering presence of his mountain-god, cold and immutable, and all mindful of the Pakeha's march through the plains below.

The most remarkable portion of Bent's narrative is his account of the revival of cannibalism by the Hauhaus. Vague stories have been heard concerning the eating of soldiers' bodies by the bushman of the Ngatiruanui,[1] and of rites of human sacrifice performed in the woods of the Taranaki hinterland. But this account of Bent's is the first detailed description by an eyewitness of the man-eating practices in Titokowaru's camp. Many of Tito's Hauhaus are still alive; but they are very reticent on the subject of 'long pig'. For this reason, the old soldier's story is deeply interesting. It, moreover, gives a valuable picture of a wild life in the bush with the Hauhau rebels, and tells the story of the last war from the Maori side.

In Gudgeon's *Reminiscences of the War in New Zealand* (1879) it is stated that Bent was killed by the Maoris at Te Ngutu-o-te-Manu in 1868. Gudgeon, however, appears to have confused Bent with another Pakeha-Maori, who was executed by the Hauhaus about that time, on suspicion of treachery.

In confirmation and extension of Bent's story, the present writer has gathered much information at first-hand from Taranaki Maoris who fought under Titokowaru, and soldiers and settlers who fought against him; and these particulars – most of them here for the first time published – are embodied with the old Pakeha-Maori's narrative.

[1] Ngati Ruanui (contemporary spelling): a tribe traditionally based in South Taranaki.

Chapter 1[1]

Kimble Bent's Early Life – Navy and Army – The deserter – In a sinking ship – Rescued by an American brig – Arrest and punishment – Ordered to India – Sails for New Zealand – Army life in Taranaki – Disobedience and its sequel – At the triangles

A grey old man, spare of figure, not above middle stature, with straggling beard, a sharp and steady eye; a mild, low-pitched voice – this is Kimble Bent, the Pakeha-Maori. No man probably has lived a wilder life, using the term in the sense of an intimate acquaintance with primeval passionate savagery and with the ever-near face of death; a wild life that, like Thoreau's Indian fighter, led him for many a day on dim forest trails 'with an uneasy scalp'.

Possibly the revolt against civilisation that drove him to the blanket and the flax mat of Maoridom is due to the fact that he was a strain of American Indian blood. To the Maoris he is known as 'Tu-nui-o-moa', an ancestral name bestowed upon him during the wartime by Titokowaru.

Kimble is now about sixty-nine years of age. He is an American by birth – was born and brought up in Newport, State of Maine, U.S.A. His father was a well-to-do shipbuilder in the busy shipping town; his mother was a half-caste Indian girl of the Musqua tribe, of the Callis River, Maine. His wayward disposition soon manifested itself, for when about seventeen years old he ran away from home and went to sea.

He shipped on a United States man-of-war, the training frigate *Martin*, and spent three years aboard her, cruising along the Atlantic Coast most of the time and learning practical seamanship and gunnery. The young sailor returned to his home as unexpectedly as he had left, but the prosaic life of the old town was no more to his liking than when he first left home, and he soon took to the seas again, and as before without taking the trouble to say goodbye to his relatives. He just took his bundle and what money he could get together – a considerable sum, he says, for his father was indulgent – and took ship across the Atlantic, in his head some such unexpressed sentiment as Robert Louis Stevenson long afterwards put into verse in his 'Songs of Travel':

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 12 Sep. 1906, 5.
Period: 1837–65

The untented Kosmos my abode
I go a wilful stranger,
My mistress still the open road
And the bright eyes of Danger.

But no more man-of-war for him. The discipline was intolerable to his half-Indian soul. He booked his passage in a clipper barque sailing for Liverpool, resolved to see something of life in the Old World.

When he landed in the big city he 'made himself flash', to use his own expression, and 'went the pace' with a few like-minded young fellows, and one way and another his stock of cash soon vanished, and he found himself stranded, friendless, and alone – his companions of the 'flush' times had no more use for him. One day, as he wandered disconsolate along the streets his eye was taken by the scarlet tunic and lively bearing of a smart recruiting sergeant, and it did not take him long to make up his mind to join the Army. He took the Queen's shilling[1] and was enlisted in Her Majesty's 57th Regiment of Foot. This was in the year 1859.

The young Newport ex-sailor soon bitterly regretted the day that his eye was dazzled by the Queen's scarlet. The British Army was less to his taste than life in Uncle Sam's navy. He was sent to Cork[2] with a draft of 200 other recruits and the interminable drill soon gave him an intense disgust for the routine of barrack yard instruction. Four months of recruit drill – then one day Private Bent took a stroll down the Cork wharves and cast his eyes round for a likely craft in which to give the army, drill sergeants and all the slip.

A Boston barque, the *Maria*, happened to be lying at one of the tees, and her skipper, one Captain Cann, Bent, to his joy, found to be an old acquaintance. He unfolded his dejected tale and the skipper immediately proffered his assistance in rescuing a fellow countryman from John Bull's grip. That evening Bent stole away quietly from the barracks, boarded the barque and was stowed away safely below. He did not show his nose above hatches for

[1] Queen's shilling (or King's shilling when the reigning British Sovereign is male): During the 18th and 19th centuries to take the Queen's or King's shilling was a token payment and a binding agreement to serve as a sailor or soldier in the Royal Navy or British Army.
[2] Cork: in Munster, Ireland

two days; the barque by that time had left the harbour on her return voyage to Boston and the deserter was able to appear on deck a free man.

But not for long – Bent's misfortunes were only beginning. When about 350 miles off the land a furious easterly gale began to blow and the old barkey[1] sprang a leak. Hove to[2] in the storm, all the crew could do was stand to the pumps. The huge Atlantic seas came thundering on deck and more than once washed men away from the pumps. For six days and six nights they wallowed in the deep, all hands, sailors and passengers, taking turns at the pumps, working for their lives.

'One day,' says Bent, 'a German brig hove in sight and spoke[3] us. Seeing our signs of distress she asked the name of our barque and the number of the crew. We signalled our reply, and she answered that she could not help us; there was too much sea. Then she squared away and left us. All this time we were labouring at the pumps to keep the old barque afloat. Next day another brig, a Boston vessel, hailed us and stood by, signalling to us to launch our boats. This we did, after hard and dangerous work, and managed to reach the brig's side, where all the sixteen of us were hauled on board safely. About two hours and a half after we left our ship, we saw her go down.'

To Bent's intense disappointment he found that the brig that had rescued him was bound for the wrong side of the Atlantic. She landed the shipwrecked mariners at Glasgow. Bent was walking about the streets one day wondering however he was going to get a passage home, for he had no money, when he was arrested as a deserter – recognised by the description which had been posted. He was taken to the military barracks and then sent under guard to Ireland and down to Cork, where he was tried by court-martial and sentenced to 84 days in prison. When he had served his term, he was sent to India with his regiment, landing at Bombay, and for some time did garrison duty at Poona. The 57th spent two years at Poona, only just recovering from the terrible throes of the Mutiny.[4]

Then rumours came that a serious war with a wild native race was threatened in a distant country called New Zealand, far away down in the Southern Ocean, and the regiment was ordered to hold itself in readiness to go

[1] The ol' barkey: an endearing term for a ship.
[2] hove to: a vessel that has come up into the wind and stopped.
[3] spoke: signalled
[4] Indian Mutiny (1857–58): a rebellion in India against the rule of the British East India Company.

route-marching to Bombay, thence to sea. Marching orders soon followed, and the headquarters of the regiment sailed for Auckland; the company in which Bent was a private (No. 8 Company) was one of those left behind to look after the women and children. Orders for them also quickly followed and embarking on a troop ship at Bombay, Bent and his fellow soldiers sailed not unwillingly for a land spoken of by report as a country, which, though new and wild, was a pleasanter place to live in than scorching sun-baked India.

After a voyage of 89 days the troopship anchored in Auckland Harbour and her soldiers spent their first week on New Zealand soil in the old Albert Barracks, where the bright flower gardens and tree groves of a beautiful park[1] now crown the hill that in those troubled days was girt with a massive crenellated wall,[2] and was alive with all the martial turmoil of campaigning time. Then the new arrivals were sent down to Taranaki by sea to join the headquarters of the 57th.

To Bent, soldiering life by this time had become 'a little hell.' His longing for a free independent life became more intense than ever in this new country and he would gladly have exchanged camp life for even the perilous occupation of a frontier settler so that he were free. To him, the parade ground was a purgatory, and the restraint of discipline and the ramrod-and-pipe clay system of soldiering[3] were irksome beyond words. He was 'sick of being ordered about by sergeants and corporals and such.' He endeavoured to get his discharge from the regiment, but without success. His impatience of discipline led him into various more or less serious conflicts with the regimental authorities.

So things went on until March 1864, when the 57th were ordered from New Plymouth to Manawapou (not far from the present town of Hawera), near the Tangahoe River. The fanatic Hauhau faith had just been born amongst the Maoris, whose palisaded pas dotted the outskirts of the great forests on the further side of the Tangahoe, and whose war-songs could sometimes be heard from the white soldiers' camp. At Manawapou the regiment went under canvas, and now began the regular round of sentry-go[4] and outpost duty, and all the preparations for an advance on the rebel positions.

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[1] Albert Park
[2] crenellated wall: a wall with defensive battlements.
[3] ramrod-and-pipe-clay system of soldiering: antiquated and useless forms of drill, blind obedience to orders, ramrod-like.
[4] sentry-go: sentry duties

Meantime fighting was proceeding in the more northern part of the Taranaki province between the 57th camp and New Plymouth. There was the disastrous affair at Te Ahuahu, where Captain Lloyd and several others were killed, their heads were cut off and smoke-dried by the Hauhau savages, and were carried away to distant tribes by Kereopa, Patara and other rebel emissaries, the Hauhau recruiting officers.

Another momentous affair, which happened soon after the 57th took post at Manawapou, was the desperate assault on the British redoubt at Sentry Hill. A large force of Hauhau[1] warriors, deluded by their prophet Hepanaia into believing that his incantations rendered them invulnerable to the white man's bullets, rushed against the redoubt in open daylight one morning, but were beaten off, leaving some 50 of their number lying dead in front of the fort. It was in this engagement that Titokowaru – who was afterwards Kimble Bent's chief and master – lost one of his eyes through a bullet wound.

Bent kept his eyes open for a chance to leave the regiment, but his attempts at desertion seemed bound to be thwarted. At last something happened that finally settled things. One wet, cold day in camp Bent was ordered to by a non-com[2] to go out and cut some firewood in the bush. Irritated by the manner in which the order was given, as much as by the distasteful duty itself, he was imprudent enough to forget the bounds of discipline and to openly refuse to go. He was at once arrested, placed in the guard tent, and next morning was brought before a court martial and charged with disobedience of orders. The sentence of the court was that Bent would receive 50 lashes and serve two years in goal. The triangles[3] were then an institution in every military camp in the Waikato and in Taranaki, for those were flogging days, when even slight breaches of discipline were visited with this degrading punishment.

One of the regimental surgeons examined Bent, as was the practice before flogging was inflicted, and he reported that in his opinion the young soldier's constitution would not stand the 50 lashes ordered. The sentence was thereupon reduced to half the number. The regiment was paraded to 'witness punishment'. Bent was stripped to the waist, and tied to the triangles. The drummer of his company was the flagellant. Bent 'bit on the bullet', the 'cat'[4]

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[1] Hauhau: name of a movement founded in Taranaki in 1862 by Te Ua Haumene in response to Pakeha confiscation of Maori land and led to the establishment of the Pai Marire Christian faith.
[2] non-com: non-commissioned officer
[3] triangles: flogging posts
[4] 'cat': cat-o'-nine-tails, a rope whip with nine knotted cords.

swished through the air and across the shivering back, again and again, till the tale of 25 was complete, and the prisoner was cast loose – swearing in his pain and passion, he says, to have the drummer's life. A blanket was thrown round his quivering shoulders and he was escorted back to the barracks where the surgeon prescribed for him in rough-and-ready fashion, then to prison.

After Bent had served his sentence of imprisonment – the full two years' sentence – he joined his well-hated regiment. The shame of that morning at the triangles, with the regiment paraded to witness his disgrace and agony, was burned into him forever. He became morose and desperate. At last he resolved to desert to the enemy. He confided his resolve to his tent mates, and they, knowing that other soldiers had deserted to the Hauhaus and had not been killed, did not attempt to dissuade him.

'I cannot be worse off with the Maoris than I am here,' he told his comrades; 'if they do tomahawk me it will end all my troubles. I don't very much care.'

So he bided his time for a favourable opportunity to steal from the camp and cross the Tangahoe River – the frontier line – to the Hauhaus, and soon his chance came.

Chapter 2[1]

Bent Deserts to the Hauhaus – The chief Tito te Hanataua – Scene in a Maori pa – The ceremonies round the Niu – The man with the tomahawk – A white slave – The painted warriors of Keteonetea – The blazing oven

On the morning of the Twelfth of June, Bent, in uniform but without his arms, strolled out of the barracks and, unobserved except by one or two of his tent mates, who sympathetically watched him off, made his way towards the banks of the Tangahoe River. The undulating country surrounding the camp was covered with a growth of high fern, and in this he was soon concealed from view. The Tangahoe rolled along below, a swift, dark stream. The soldier entered the river and attempted to ford it, but it was up to his waist and almost swept him off his feet. Struggling ashore again he took to the fern and travelled slowly and painfully through it, keeping parallel with the course of the Tangahoe and heading downstream, forcing his way through the thick growth 'like a wild pig', to use his own bush simile. In this way he travelled a mile or so downriver, and then, quite exhausted, with torn clothes and thumping heart, he sat down to gain breath and strength. He pulled out his pipe, filled it and smoked awhile, and pondered over his plan of campaign.

Suddenly he heard a sound quite close to where he crouched – the trotting of a horse. Scrambling through the fern a little space he found that a narrow track wound along through the tangle of ten feet high rarahu,[2] and peering out from his shelter place he saw – first, the glitter of the muzzle of a long rifle above the fern; then next moment round a turn in the path came a mounted Maori, riding quickly – a tall black bearded fellow holding the rifle in his right hand, a cartouche belt[3] round his shoulders and another around his waist, from which hung a revolver in its case. A Hauhau scout, concluded Bent, venturing rather daringly close to the British camp.

Bent hesitated just a moment, then the next he boldly stepped out on to the track in front of the surprised Maori, who instantly pulled up and made ready with his gun. Then seeing that the Pakeha, though wearing a uniform,

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 12 Sep. 1906, 5.
Year: 1865

[2] rarahu (or rarahu): bracken; a common New Zealand fern that colonizes rapidly in open places and disturbed ground, growing to four metres.

[3] cartouche belt: ammunition belt

was unarmed, he brought his rifle down – butt on his thigh – and closely scrutinised the forlorn looking white soldier before him.

'Here you Pakeha,' he said in mixed English and Maori, 'you go back. Haere atu, haere atu! Hok aru ki te pariki! You, you haere go back!'

'I am not going back,' said Bent, 'I want to go to the Maoris. I have run away from the soldiers. I want to go with you.'

'You go back, you Pakeha fool! My tribe make – a kill you. Hoki atu!'

'I don't care if they do,' replied the deserter. 'I want to live with the Maoris.'

'E pai ana (It is well),' the scout said. 'All right; you come along.' He dismounted, ordered the Pakeha to get in the saddle because he looked tired, and turned the horse's head back towards the blue hills of the rebel country.

Travelling on in this way for some three or four miles, Bent on horseback and the saturnine[1] Maori scout striding beside him, the strangely met pair at length reached the ford of the Tangahoe. Here they crossed safely and presently fording a smaller stream, the Ingahape, and passing through a deserted settlement called Ohangai, with its tumbledown raupo huts and its old potato gardens, they came in sight of a high stockade enclosing a populous village, the Otiaiti pa – a pretty scene with its neat enclosures, its rows of snug whares, and its squares of maize and potato cultivations, nestling under the lee of a belt of dark forest.

Some little nearly naked children were playing about on the open space in front of the palisades. When they suddenly beheld a white man riding along towards them with a Maori walking by his stirrup, they stared wide-eyed and open-mouthed, and then rushed helter-skelter into the pa, calling out at the top of their voices, 'He Pakeha, he Pakeha!'[2]

What a commotion that cry of 'Pakeha' aroused in the slumbering pa! Men leaped from the flax wharikis[3] where they had been drowsing away the afternoon awaiting the opening of the steam hangis,[4] and poured out of the narrow gateway armed with their guns and tomahawks. When they saw that the European was a harmless unarmed individual, and that he was apparently the prisoner of one of their own people, they became less clamorous and escorted the soldier and his captor into the pa. Bent quickly perceived that his

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[1] saturnine: gloomy
[2] Pakeha: New Zealander of European descent, foreigner, alien (to Maori).
[3] Whariki: mat
[4] steam hangi: earth oven

companion was a man of some importance from the peremptory orders he issued and the alacrity with which they were obeyed. The scout was in fact the chief Tito te Hanataua, a rangatira of high standing in the Ngatiruanui tribe and one of the Hauhaus' best fighting leaders.

It was a wild scene that met the young soldier's gaze when he entered the stockade, and his heart sank before the savagely hostile gaze of a crowd of armed half-stripped warriors, the black-bearded and straggly-headed men of the bush, and their scarcely less savage-looking women.

Then a strange ceremonial began. In the centre of the village square or marae stood a rough-hewn pole or flagstaff about fifteen feet high, on which flew one or two coloured flags. This was the Niu, the sacred staff which the Hauhau prophet Te Ua had commanded his followers to erect as a pole of worship in each of their villages. (The Niu was in more ancient times the name of a peculiar ceremony of divination often resorted to by the tohungas or priests. It is perhaps worth noting, too, that in the Islands of Polynesia, the traditional Maori Hawaiki,[1] it is the generic name for the cocoanut tree.)[2]

All the inhabitants of the village, men, women and children, formed up and began to march round and round the Niu, with a tohunga[3] in their midst rushing frantically to and fro and brandishing a Maori weapon as he yelled a ferocious-sounding chant. The people, too, lifted up their voices as they marched, and after listening a while, Bent found to his astonishment that part of what they were chanting in a singular wild cadence were these words in 'pidgin English':[4]

'Big river, long river, big mountain, long mountain, bush, big bush, long bush,' ending with a loudly chanted cry, 'Rire, rire – hau!'

This meaningless gibberish formed part of the incantations solemnly taught to the Hauhaus by Te Ua, who professed to have 'the gift of tongues' of which the Pakeha's New Testament spoke, and his disciples fondly believed that they were endowed by their prophet's 'angel' with wonderful linguistic powers.

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[1] Hawaiki: ancient homelands from which Maori migrated to Aotearoa (NZ).
[2] cocoanut/coconut: botanical names for the same tropical palm; 'coconut' more widely used today.
[3] tohunga: skilled person, chosen expert, priest, healer, soothsayer.
[4] pidgin English: a grammatically simplified form of English that includes elements of the prevailing local language used for communication between people not sharing a common language.

The singular march suddenly ceased at an order from the shawl-kilted tohunga in the centre, and then the people filed into the village meeting house, a large raupo-reed-built structure, taking Bent with them. He was motioned to a seat beside a Maori whose name he afterwards found was Hori Kerei (George Grey), and who could speak English fairly well.

Sitting opposite Bent was a grey old fighting-man, a dour-faced savage, his brown face deeply scored with the marks of blue-black tattoo; his sole attire was a blanket; in his right hand and partly concealed by the blanket, he held a tomahawk. His hand twitched now and then as if he was about to flash out the tomahawk and use it on the Pakeha, from whose face he never withdrew his fierce old eyes.

A long korero began. Hori Kerei interpreted. The Maoris asked Bent why he had come to them, why had he run away from his own people. The deserter frankly told them that he was tired of being a soldier, that he had been ill-treated and imprisoned, and that he came to them for protection.

'Pakeha,' said Kerei, 'they want to know if you will ever leave the Maori and go back to the soldiers?'

'No,' said Bent, 'no, tell them I'll never run away from the Hauhaus; I want to live with them always; I don't ever want to see a white man again.'

'Kapai!' said Grey good-humouredly. 'That's the talk! All right, I tell them true.'

When Kerei had interpreted the white man's reply, the old man with the tomahawk leaned over and said very earnestly, tapping the tomahawk with his left hand as he spoke, 'Whakarongo mai! Listen Pakeha. You see this patiti in my hand? Yes. If you had not at once replied that you would never return to the white soldiers, I would have killed you. I would have sunk this into you skull!' After this brief speech, delivered with a fierceness of mien and roll of eye that made the refugee tremble in spite of his efforts to appear calm, the old barbarian shook hands with him.

Then Tito te Hanataua – the man who had brought the soldier to the pa – rose and said: 'E te iwi! Oh my tribe, listen to me! Take good care of the Pakeha and harm him not because our prophet told us that if any white men come to us as this man has done, and leave their own tribe for ours, we must not injure them but keep them with us and protect them.'

Tito's word assured Bent's safety, and the tone of the people changed to one of friendliness; many of them shook hands with the lonely white man. The women cooked some pork and potatoes for him in an earth oven, and he was given to eat, and received in the tribe. Henceforth he was as a Maori.

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Now began for the runaway an even harder life than that which he had endured in the army. He was virtually a slave amongst the Maoris. He had had fond imaginings of the easy time he would enjoy in the heart of Maoridom, but to quote from his own lips, 'they made me work like a blessed dog.' Soon after his arrival in the pa, a party of men was sent off to Taiporohenui – a celebrated old village and meeting place near the present town of Hawera – and he was ordered to go with them, and was set to work felling bush, clearing and digging, gathering firewood and hauling water for the camp. Tito was his master – not only his master but in hard fact his owner, with power of life and death over him. Bent divined the Maori nature too well to refuse 'fatigue duty', as he had done in the Manawapou camp. There would have been no court-martial in Taiporohenui – just a crack on the head with a tomahawk. So he bent his back to the burdens with what cheerfulness he might and was thankful for the good things Tito provided, though they took no more elaborate form than a blanket and a flax mat for a bed, and two square meals a day of pork and potatoes.

Tito was, says Bent, a man of about 45 years of age, a stern but not unkindly 'owner' with a pretty young wife of seventeen or eighteen whose big dark eyes were often turned with an expression of pity on the unfortunate renegade Pakeha. The people watched him closely, thinking no doubt that as the white man was being worked so hard he might be tempted to run away if he got the chance. And whenever he went out of doors the old man who had sat opposite him in the meeting whare at Otiaiti on the day of his desertion, followed him about, never speaking a word, with his brightly polished tomahawk in his hand.

The news that a white soldier had run away to the Hauhaus soon spread amongst the Ngatiruanui. One day a messenger from the large village of Keteonetea came to Taiporohenui and announced that he had been sent to fetch the strange Pakeha to that settlement.

'What do they want with me?' asked Bent, when Tito told him that the envoy was waiting for him.

'They want to see the colour of your skin,' replied Tito.

Bent, in alarm, begged Tito not to send him to Keteonetea, for he greatly feared that he would be killed.

Tito reassured the frightened Pakeha, telling him that the Keteonetea people were his relatives, and that he was not to be alarmed at their demeanour because they would not harm him.

The messenger and his white charge tramped away through the bush to the village, a lonely little spot hemmed in by the dense forest – long since hewn away and replaced by grassy fields and dairy farms. A palisade surrounded the kainga; within were clusters of large well-built reed whares,[1] and the inevitable Nui pole stood in the middle of the marae.

Bent found a large number of Maoris, about 300 he estimated, assembled on the marae. The scene still lives vividly in his memory – an even wilder more savage spectacle than that of his first day at Tito's pa. The men's faces were painted red in token of war – red smudges of ochre on their cheeks and red lines drawn across their brows; they wore feathers in their hair; their only clothes were flax mats. The lone Pakeha might well have imagined himself back in the days of ancient Maoridom before missionaries or traders had changed the barbaric simplicity of the aboriginal life. The only modern note was the firearms of the warriors: all the men carried guns (most of them double-barrelled shotguns, and a few rifles and carbines), and wore tomahawks stuck in their broad-plaited flax belts. Most of the women were as primitive in their garb as the men; their clothing consisted chiefly of flaxen cloaks; a few wore shawls and blankets.

'The people looked at me very fiercely as I came into the marae,' says Bent, 'and I felt my heart sinking low in spite of Tito's assurance.' They put him into a raupo[2] hut by himself, and fastened the door – a proceeding that did not at all tend to elevate his spirits.

The ex-soldier was left to himself in the dark whare for quite a couple of hours. He could hear the people gathered on the village square discussing him

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[1] whare: dwelling

[2] raupo or bulrush: a versatile wetland plant which can up to four metres tall. Maori used its stalks for thatching and its down to stuff bedding; the leaves were used for sails and kites, bundles of the stalks made temporary rafts, and the starchy roots and the plant's yellow pollen were eaten.

excitedly, one orator after another declaiming with frantic energy. At length a Maori unfastened the door of the whare and taking Bent by the hand, led him out on to the marae. The native could speak English; Bent afterwards found that he had been an old whaler and had lived amongst white people for many years; his name was Kere (Kelly). He told the Pakeha, with some show of kindness that he must not be frightened, that no one would harm him, but he must go to the sacred Niu and promise that he would never return to the Pakehas.

The first thing that met Bent's eyes on stepping out through the low doorway of the whare was a great fire blazing in the centre of the marae, surrounded by a ring of short stakes. Accustomed as he was by this time to sights of terror, this struck a fresh note of alarm.

'Good Lord!' he said to himself, 'are they going to burn me alive?'

The English-speaking native stopped and said: 'Look at that fire.'

'I see it,' replied the white man.

'Now, listen,' said Kere. 'If you say you think to go back to the Pakeha soldiers, you will die! The tribe will burn you in that fire! You remember.'

The Maori now led his companion up to the foot of the Niu pole, a tall ricker,[1] with rough crosstrees[2] and flag-halyards of flaxen rope. The villagers all gathered around him in a great ring. A tall old warrior stood in the middle of the ring, facing Bent – the prophet of the Niu. He was naked from the waist up; his face was completely covered with tattooing. He was a tohunga or priest, Bent afterwards discovered; by name Tu-ahi-pa, or Tautahi-ariki, a man held in much awe by the people as a worker of makutu[3] or witchcraft.

For a long time the saturnine tohunga closely eyed the pale-faced stranger before him. Then he said, through the interpreter, Kere:

'You behold this ring of the people, the people of Keteonetea?'

'Yes,' said Bent.

'I ask you this, will you return to your people or remain with us?'

'I will never return to the Pakehas,' Bent replied: 'I want to live with the Maoris and to make them my people.'

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[1] ricker: young tree

[2] crosstrees: a pair of horizontal struts attached to a sailing ship's mast to spread the rigging, especially at the head of a topmast.

[3] makutu: witchcraft, magic, sorcery, a spell.

'Good!' exclaimed the Hauhau priest. 'Now turn your eyes upon that fire burning there upon the marae. Well, if you had not promised to become a Maori and live with us, the tribe would have thrown you into that blazing oven. It is well that you have spoken as you have.'

This, to Bent's intense relief, ended the ordeal. The Hauhaus, at the cry from the priest, began their mad march round the Niu, men, women and children chanting as they went their singular karakias,[1] rolling their eyes and lifting their arms high in the air every now and again, they cried their wild refrain, 'Rire, rire, hau!' – the last word literally barked out from the hundreds of throats.

When the Hauhau ceremony was at an end, a young woman who had joined in the march round the Niu came to Bent, took him away to a hut and gave him a meal of pork and potatoes, and then led him to her father's house. The father was the principal chief of the kainga, and as it turned out, cousin to Bent's rangatira Tito. Here the white man spent the night, the chief's daughter lying across the entrance just inside the doorway, for fear – as the chief told him – that some young desperado might take it into his head to earn a little notoriety by tomahawking the paleface. Outside, the Maoris were gathered on the marae by the light of great fires, the chiefs making speeches and 'taki-ing'[2] up and down in excited fashion, weapon in hand, and now and again the fanatic crowd would burst into a loud Hauhau chant that echoed long amidst the black encircling forest. So, the wild korero[3] went on, far into the night.

[1] karakia: incantation, chant, charm, spell. Traditionally, correct delivery of the karakia was essential; mispronunciation, hesitation or omissions courted disaster. There were karakia for all aspects of life, including major rituals for the war party and the dead, for the weather, sickness, for curses and for overcoming curses. These enabled people to carry out their daily activities in union with the ancestors and the spiritual powers.
[2] taki: to recite, make a speech
[3] korero: meeting

Chapter 3[1]

The return from Keteonetea – The hill fort at Otapawa – A korero with the Hauhaus – Bent's one-eyed wife – The Wooing o' 't

Morning came at last, but the solitary white man in this nest of savages[2] had hardly closed his eyes. More than once he fancied someone was trying the low door of the whare, and he looked round the dimly lighted hut – a small fire was kept burning in the centre of the floor – in search of a weapon, but found none. The chief, no doubt, had his gun and war axe beside him under his blankets – as was the custom often in the times when no man knew at what moment of the day or night the enemy might be upon him. Bent lay there listening intently, and longing with an inexpressibly bitter longing for the old barrack life, hard though it was, and for a grip of a white comrade's hand. It had not always been 'pack-drill and C.B.'[3] in his army life, in spite of the tyrant sergeants. But now it was the bush and the whare for the rest of his days – or in other words, for just so long a period as he might be able to save his head from the tomahawk.

Daybreak – and no sooner was it light than the Hauhaus began to gather round the Pakeha's hut while the women were lighting the hangis for the first meal of the day. 'Come out to us,' they yelled; 'come out, Pakeha! Haere-mai, haere-mai!' They ran to and fro in front of the whare and raised barking cries that sounded fearfully menacing to the Pakeha sitting on his low mat-bed, and feeling not in the least disposed to respond to the invitation to come outside and be killed.

But the old chief speedily ended the uproar by opening the sliding door and shouting angrily. 'Haere atu! Haere atu!' An imperative phrase that the deserter had already learned to recognise as one that in his soldiering vernacular could be exactly translated: 'Clear out!'

Thereafter there was comparative peace. The ex-soldier was under the protection of the chief and was allowed to wander around the village pretty much as he chose, but he was warned not to go far or some warrior might take

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 15 Sep. 1906, 6.
Year: 1865
[2] savage: (chiefly in historical or literary contexts) a member of a people regarded as primitive and uncivilized.
[3] C.B.: confined to barracks

a fancy to his head. Four or five days passed without incident and then a horse was brought up for Bent, and he returned to Tito's kainga, escorted by the chief's daughter and ten armed men, all mounted. Tito seemed relieved to have his Pakeha back again in safety, and after feasting the Maori guard on the best the village women could lay on the dinner mats, he sent them back to Keteonetea loaded with new clothes and baskets of kumara (sweet potato) and taro – another tropic root-food brought from Polynesia by the Maori ancestors, but now no longer grown by the Taranaki people.

Soon Bent was on the tramp again. His chief, Tito, set off one morning taking his white man with him for a fortified village called Otapawa, where the Hauhaus were preparing to make a strong resistance to the British troops. Otapawa was about four miles away by a narrow and winding forest track. A small river, the Mangemange, had to be forded on the way, and here Bent had a taste of some of the minor adventures of the bush. Bent being rather a small man, and Tito a big powerful fellow, the Maori good-naturedly took his Pakeha on his back to 'pikau'[1] him across the stream. Bent was heavier than Tito had imagined, and after balancing to and fro precariously on a slippery place in the deepest part of the ford, the Maori's feet suddenly went from under him and he and his protégé were capsized in the middle of the creek. Tito however kept a tight grip of the white man, and though the stream was running swiftly they managed to struggle out to the opposite bank in safety, and after drying their clothes as well as they were able to, continued their bush journey.

About midday the Hauhau chief and his companion emerged all at once from the solitudes of the forest to find themselves in Otapawa clearing. A rounded hill, about three hundred feet high, rose like an island from the great rimu and rata woods that compassed it on every side. At the foot of the hill there was some cultivation; a steep winding path led to the top, where a ditch and a bristling stockade of tall tree trunks – set solidly in the ground and connected by cross-rails lashed with forest vines – surrounded the Hauhau village.

The only access to the interior of the stockade was through a low and narrow gateway surmounted by a grinning effigy, painted red and decked with feathers. A shawl-clad figure with a gun rose from a squatting position just

[1] pikau: (verb) to carry on the back, piggyback; (noun) backpack.

outside the pa gate as the two travellers walked out from the shade of the forest and began the ascent of the mound. A loud cry of astonishment and warning brought out the villagers, one after the other, bobbing their heads as they ran through the gateway. Then the shout was raised as they recognised Bent's companion: 'Aue! Here comes Tito with a Pakeha! A Pakeha.'

Waving shawls and blankets and weapons, the people called their greetings to the chief, and the white man and his protector passed between two lines of wondering men and women and children, who clamorously voiced their astonishment at the sight of a single unarmed Pakeha walking into their midst, and then pressed in close behind the visitors as they entered the palisaded pa.

A long, low-eaved, thatched house stood near the middle of the pa, somewhat apart from the smaller whares. Into this building Tito and Bent were taken, and finely woven flax mats patterned in black-and-white were spread out for them. To the quickly-crowded house Tito explained, with a good deal of pride, as Bent imagined, how he had become possessed of a live white man – a somewhat unusual acquisition amongst the Maoris in that unrestful period, for the impatient Hauhau was, as a rule, too fond of trying his new tomahawk on a Pakeha skull to think about taking prisoners. The korero over, food was brought in freshly plaited baskets of green flax – boiled pork, dried shark (a present from a seaside tribe), boiled taro and kumara – quite a bountiful meal for a wartime bush camp.

Up to this time the deserter's adventures had been, if not exactly tragic, at least of a severely unpleasant turn. Now, however, they took a humorous twist – humorous from an onlooker's view, though to the white man himself it seemed rather the final pannikinful[1] in the bucket of his misfortunes.

A woman was brought to the whare. She walked over and seated herself on the flax whariki by Bent's side. The white man turned and looked at her in some surprise at so unusual a proceeding. Her vision still haunts the memory of the old adventurer as that of a particularly ugly woman. She was not old, probably not above twenty-five, but she was blind in one eye, her lips were of negroid thickness – such 'blubber' lips as seen here and there among Maori tribes tell the tale of an ancient Melanesian strain in the blood of the Polynesian immigrants. She was tattooed on the chin and lips, and the deeply chiselled

[1] pannikin: a small metal drinking cup.

blue line on the inner cuticle of her lower lip had by no means enhanced its beauty. Her hair hung round her face in a tangled mop.

'Well,' said Bent to himself, 'she is no beauty.' The woman spoke some words of greeting to Bent, but he steadily gazed on the floor, and said nothing. Then a Maori sitting near by, who could speak English, said, 'This woman wants to marry you!'

'Oh, Lord!' exclaimed Bent. 'What for? I don't want to get married. Oh, Lord!' he ejaculated again to himself, 'haven't I got enough troubles?'

An old man draped from shoulders to ankles in a blanket walked up to the white man, and halting in front of him, pointed to the one-eyed woman. 'Pakeha,' he said, with a quiet grimace in his tone, 'this is my daughter. You must marry her (Me moe korua).'

Here was a dilemma, indeed! Bent had nothing to say. He looked at the woman by his side, and she smiled at him coquettishly as her one good eye allowed. He looked, and the more he looked the less he liked her. Then he glanced at the dour old father – what a father-in-law! – and cast his helpless eyes around the crowded meeting house. The men were glum and scowling; one or two of the young girls seemed to perceive the humour of the situation, for they giggled, and then hid their faces in their shawls.

Bent eyed his prospective father-in-law again. The old man was plainly impatient. He said again, 'Take my daughter as your wife.'

'Ae,' assented Bent, who could see no hope of escape. 'I'll take her.' So the young soldier was mated, to the satisfaction of everyone but himself. 'She wasn't my fancy, to put it mildly,' he says reminiscently. 'But I suppose it was her last chance, and the old man would have tomahawked me if I hadn't taken her. It was just my luck.'

Mrs Bent's wedding furnishings, which she bundled a little later with determined air into the corner of the whare assigned to the white man, were spartan and primitive in the extreme. They consisted solely of a large plaited whariki sleeping mat and a wooden pillow, which to the white man seemed alarmingly like a weapon of chastisement. Matrimony amongst the Hauhaus was simplicity itself. Bent was now given a Maori name. It was 'Ringiringi', a name he bore for two or three years until the war chief Titokowaru rechristened him 'Tu-nui-a moa'.

Chapter 4[1]

The Hauhau High-Priest and his Gods – The Pai-marire faith – 'Charming' the British bullets – Bent's interview with Te Ua – His life tapu'd – Preparing for battle – Life in a bush pa

About this time Kimble Bent became acquainted with a rather notable character, whose name has passed into history. The man was Te Ua Haumene, the founder and high priest and prophet of the Hauhau religion, or more correctly speaking, fanaticism. Te Ua came riding into the Otapawa village one day with a bodyguard of armed men. Bent describes him as a stoutly-built man of between forty and fifty, attired in European clothing and bearing in his hand a carved 'taiaha'[2] – a chief's halbert or broadsword of hardwood, flattened at one end in a blunt blade and sharpened at the other into a tongue-shaped point, and decorated with tufts of red kaka feathers; in a plaited flax belt round his waist was thrust a greenstone 'mere'.[3]

Te Ua was the man who taught the Taranaki rebels the karakia or incantations – some of them a curious medley of Maori and English – which they chanted in their wild marches round the sacred Niu in their village squares. These incantations and chants he professed to have heard from some supernatural visitants, the spirits who came on the four winds, and from the angel Gabriel,[4] who spoke in his ear as he lay asleep in his raupo hut and bade him go abroad and spread a new religion, which should band together the tribes of the Maori nation. Many strange tales Bent had heard about the prophet and his wondrous mana. Te Ua had succeeded in imbuing his fanatic disciples with an unquestioning Moslem-like faith in the potency of the Hauhau cult and its accompanying charms and magic formulae. He was the Mahomet[5] of the Taranaki people, and exercised an influence over the bush fighters of Ngatiruanui and allied tribes almost as great as that which Te Kooti,

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 15 Sep. 1906, 6.
Year: 1865
[2] taiaha: a long-handled staff for close-quarter fighting made from either wood or whalebone. It is used for short, sharp strikes or stabbing thrusts with quick footwork on the part of the wielder.
[3] mere: a short, flat Maori war club often made of greenstone.
[4] Gabriel: an angel of greater than ordinary rank (archangel) who typically serves as a messenger sent from God to certain people. In the Bible Gabriel foretold the birth of Jesus to the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:26–38); and appeared to Zacharias, father of John the Baptist; and to Daniel. In Islam, Gabriel revealed the Koran to the Prophet Muhammad.
[5] Mahomet: alternative spelling of 'Muhammed', the prophet who introduced Islam.

the Chatham Islands escapee, commanded a few years later amongst the warriors of the East Coast.

One of the most astonishing examples of the absolute faith the Hauhaus reposed in his precepts and his pretences to supernatural power has parallels in the records of the Mahdi's[1] wars in the Soudan,[2] and in other campaigns waged under the banner of Islam, and more latterly still in the Zulu rebellion in Natal.[3] He assured his followers that when they went into battle the bullets of the white soldiers would be turned aside in their flight if they but raised their right hands as if warding the ball off, at the same time repeating the words,

'Hapa! Pai marire! (Pass over me! Righteous and peace!)'

The expression 'Pai marire'[4] was adopted as one of the designations of the Hauhau religion, and the sign of the upraised hand became the outward sign and symbol of the warrior faith. To-day, should you visit the fine European-built house of Te Whiti, the Prophet of the Mountain, at Parihaka,[5] you will see a large picture of Te Ua on the wall of the 'speech-hall', his right hand raised to his shoulder, palm outwards, as if in the act of invoking his gods to turn the Pakeha bullets aside –

'Hapa! Pai marire!'

And many a deluded Hauhau fell to the rifles of the white men before the Maori confidence in the efficacy of the charm was shaken, for Te Ua had a very good explanation to offer for any casualties – that if the Pakeha bullet refused to be waved aside and insisted on entering the body of a 'righteous and peaceful' son of the faith, it was because the stricken man had lost faith in the karakia, and, very properly, suffered for his unbelief. A sublimely simple explanation and one that was perfectly satisfactory to the prophet and everyone concerned, except perhaps the Hauhau who had happened to stop the bullet.

Even when the glacis[6] in front of the Sentry Hill redoubt was strewn with the dead bodies of Hepanaia and fifty of his red-painted braves, the best manhood of Ngatiruanui and Ngaruahine – who fell in a mad charge upon the walled fort in open daylight chanting their 'Hapa! Pai marire! Hau!' – the faith

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[1] Mahdi: in Islamic theology the Mahdi is the prophesied redeemer of Islam who will rule for five, seven, nine, or nineteen years before Judgment Day and will rid the world of evil.
[2] Soudan: the former English name for Sudan.
[3] The Zulu rebellion in Natal was in 1906, against British rule.
[4] Pai marire, also Pai Marire: Christian faith developed by Te Ua Haumene in Taranaki. It flourished in the North Island from about 1863 to 1874 and is still practised by some.
[5] Parihaka is in South Taranaki.
[6] glacis: a bank sloping down from a fort which exposes attackers to the defenders' missiles.

in Te Ua and his charms was but little abated.[1] And, unlike the Moslem warrior, who fought to the death in the certain hope of a speedy translation to Paradise, the Maori fanatic expected no heavenly reward for his faith and his death-despising ferocity. No houris[2] with welcoming arms; no dreams of unending fleshly bliss. No, it was just utter blind bravery, a sheer trust in a mad creed of 'Death to the Whites' and 'Maori Land for the Maori Race'.

So, the visit of the high priest of Hauhauism was a great event in the bush pa. The prophet was received with a 'powhiri'[3] or chant and dance of welcome by the people of the village; then the tangi[4] and the doleful hum of weeping for the dead. The tangi over, the prophet addressed his disciples in the meeting house, and hearing that there was a white ex-soldier in the pa, he sent for Bent.

It was a curious interview. The white man no longer appeared in the soldier's uniform, which he had worn for some time after deserting. His sole garments were a shirt made of pieces of blanket and a flax mat tied round his waist. He entered the crowded council house and stood before the prophet.

'E noho ki raro (Sit down),' said Te Ua, pointing to the floor mat in front of him. By the prophet's side was a flax basket containing some potatoes and pork, with which he had been breaking his fast after his journey. This food being appropriated to his use was of course 'tapu'[5] in the eyes of the assemblage. Te Ua took a potato from the basket, broke it into two pieces, and gave one piece to Bent and told him to eat it; the other half he ate himself.

'Now,' said the prophet, 'you are tapu – your life is safe; no man may harm you now that you have eaten of my tapu'd food. Men of Tangahoe! This Pakeha is my Pakeha; and if any other white men should come to us as this man has done, fleeing from their people and forsaking the Pakeha camps for our pas, you must protect them, for the gods have sent them to us.'

'You are a Maori now,' added Te Ua to Bent,' and you must have a woman to cook your food for you.' Bent, in his imperfect Maori, informed the prophet that he had already been supplied with a wife by the Maoris, but for prudential reasons made no comment on her imperfections.

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[1] The Battle of Sentry Hill, near Waitara in North Taranaki, took place on 30 April 1864.
[2] houri: a beautiful young woman, especially one of the virgin companions of the faithful in the Muslim Paradise.
[3] powhiri: a ritual of encounter, welcome ceremony on a marae.
[4] tangi: a ceremonial Maori funeral or wake, shortened form of 'tangihanga'.
[5] tapu: sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden, under 'atua' protection.

'That's all tight then (E tika ana),' said the 'poropiti',[1] who now rose and began an earnest exhortation to the deeply attentive tribespeople, and Bent retired, feeling that for a while at any rate his head was secure on his shoulders.

During the next few days, before Te Ua returned to his home at Opunake, on the coast,[2] Bent had further interviews with the prophet, who treated him with kindness and gave him what was to the runaway a very welcome present – some Pakeha tobacco. Though something of a madman, like the generality of Maori prophets, Te Ua was of more benevolent spirit than his acolytes,[3] Kereopa and Patara, and their kin, who had been sent to preach the gospel of 'Pai marire' to the outer tribes. Had Kereopa, for instance, come to Otapawa, Bent would in all probability have fallen under the tomahawk as a sacrifice for the savage ritual of the Niu, and his head would have been smoke-dried and carried over forest trails from distant tribe to tribe, or stuck up like a scarecrow on a palisade pole.

Bent learnt a good deal of the personal history of the prophet, and of his peculiar delusions. Te Ua had fought the Pakeha soldiers at Nukumaru about a year before this, when a force of Hauhaus made a desperate attack on the camp of two thousand British troops under General Cameron, and killed and wounded nearly 50 soldiers before they were driven off with the loss of sixteen killed.[4]

The outward and visible sign of incarnation ('aria')[5] of Te Ua's deity was a ruru[6] or owl. This bird is sacred amongst Taranaki natives; they will not kill or harm one; they say it is an 'atua', a god, and has a hundred eyes.

An incident which Bent relates as occurring in another bush settlement, where he and Te Ua both happened to be staying, may be noted as illustrative of the prophet's peculiar respect for his owl-god. Just at dusk, when the evening meal was over and the night creatures began their roamings, an owl flew softly from the trees and settled just above the window of the house in which Te Ua was sitting.

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[1] poropiti: prophet
[2] Opunake is on the South Taranaki coast.
[3] acolyte: a person assisting a priest in a religious service or procession.
[4] The Battle of Nukumaru took place near Wanganui in January 1865.
[5] aria: physical representation of an atua.
[6] ruru: morepork, a native owl.

'Ha!' said the prophet, when he saw it, 'there is my atua.'[1] He recited an incantation, calling the ruru by name, and when the karakia was ended the bird as noiselessly flew back to the forest. Te Ua said nothing more till the next morning, when he announced that he would leave the place at once because his owl-god had appeared to him as a warning to return to his home.

Soon after the wandering prophet rode out of Otapawa, word reached the pa by a spy who had been in the British camp that the soldiers were preparing for an advance against the Hauhaus, and that it was probable the hill stronghold, being so close to the white men's base of operations, would shortly be attacked. All was excitement in the pa when this became known, and preparations were at once begun to make a stand against the white general. The palisading[2] of the pa was strengthened with stout timbers from the forest; trenches and rifle pits were dug within the walls. The natives worked away like mad, and Bent with them. He had caught the fever of the moment, and in all but skin was a Maori. He was not at all happy, however, at the news that his old regiment, the 57th, was expected to march on Otapawa, and he heartily wished himself far away from these scenes of constant commotion and terror. But for the present he was safer with the Hauhaus than with the men of his own colour and tongue.

Day after day passed and the Maoris lay behind their strong stockade waiting for the attack. The underground food stores were well supplied; water was carried in in 'taha'[3] or calabashes made by scooping out the soft inside of the hue gourd; bullets were cast and cartridges were made. Then, as no troops appeared, and the scouts who kept constant watch on the forest outskirts reported that there was no sign of immediate action on the part of the enemy, the tension of garrison life relaxed and the ordinary avocations of the kainga were resumed.

Behind the stockade, in a clearing hewn and burnt from the heart of the woods, were the cultivation grounds. Here all the able-bodied men of the fort

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[1] atua: ancestor with continuing influence, god, demon, supernatural being, sometimes also used for the Christian God, which is apparently a misconception of the real meaning. Many Maori trace their ancestry from atua in their whakapapa and they are regarded as ancestors with influence over particular domains. These atua also were a way of rationalizing and perceiving the world. Normally invisible, atua may have visible representations.

[2] palisade: a fence of wooden stakes fixed in the ground forming an enclosure or defence.

[3] taha: calabash (container) or gourd made from the Polynesian hue. Its smaller-sized fruits were eaten, while larger ones were used to hold water or preserved food by scooping out the soft inside of the gourd.

were set to work, turning up the rich black soil and planting potatoes, kumara and taro. Planting over, the lengthening days were spent in hunting wild pigs and in gathering wild honey, which was plentiful in hollow trees in the forests; or in strolling, pipe in mouth, about the pa; playing draughts on the marae in Maori fashion; singing songs and narrating old stories and legends. Night and morning there were long Hauhau prayers led by the priest of the pa, who was one of Te Ua's apostles.

Life in this bush fort presented to the lonely Pakeha a picture of barbaric simplicity, in which, indeed, he was the most interesting personality himself. Few of the people had European clothing; the men's working garb was just a rough flax mat hanging from the waist to the knees. They lived on the wild foods of the forest until their crops were ready for digging, snared kaka,[1] tui,[2] and pigeons, and shot or speared the pigs that abounded in the dense woods. Another food staple was 'kaanga-pirau',[3] or maize steeped in water until it was quite decayed. 'The smell of this Indian corn,' says Bent, with an emphasis begotten of unpleasant memories, 'was enough to kill a dog. Nevertheless, I had to eat it, and in time I got used to it.'

'I had at this time,' continues the deserter, recounting his wild days in Otapawa, 'no boots, no trousers, no shirt – just Maori mats to cover me, and a mat and a blanket for my bed. I had managed to procure some needles and thread, together with paper and pencil (I kept up a sort of diary now and then), and one or two other little things which I kept in a kit, thinking that though I had nothing to sew with the needles and thread, and very little to do with the other belongings, they might come in useful before very long. One of my greatest troubles was the want of salt; as for bread, I had not tasted any for many months.'

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[1] kaka: a large native forest parrot sometimes used as a general term for parrots (i.e. kakapo, kakariki, kea).

[2] tui: a large New Zealand honeyeater and renowned songbird with glossy blackish plumage and two white tufts at the throat.

[3] kaanga-pirau: stinking corn (kaanga: corn; pirau: stench). Maize steeped in water until it has decayed. Maori started soaking and fermenting corn as a food preservation method during periods of intertribal conflict in the early 19th century.

Chapter 5[1]

British Forces Attack Otapawa – The storming of the fort – Flight of the Hauhaus – Through the forest by torchlight – Doctoring the Hauhaus – The tangi by the river – The dirge of Sentry Hill

Summer was on the forest. The beautiful midsummer of Maori Land,[2] with its soft airs and brilliant sunshine, its blaze of crimson blossom on the grand old rata trees, and its showering of scented white peach-like flowers on the thickets of lacebark.[3] Birds flooded the outskirts of the bush with song; the early morning chantings and pipings and chimings of the tui and the korimako[4] made a feast of melody to which the brown forest men were in no way deaf, for they delighted as much as any Pakeha in the sights and sounds of the free, wild places, and the call of the creatures of the bush.

'Te Waha-o-Tane', literally 'The Voice of the Tree-God' – the Song of Nature – they called these morning concerts of the birds; it was their poetic expression in the classic tongue of old Polynesia for the sounds that betokened the daily awakening to light and life of the deep and solemn forest of Tane-mahuta.[5] Pigeons, 'kuku'-ing to each other, with blue necks and white breasts gleaming in the sun, went sweeping across the clearing on softly winnowing wings, and flapped from tree to tree and shrub to shrub in search of the tenderest leaves, for it was not yet the season of the choicest bush fruits, the big blue tawa berry, the sweet yellow koroi, and the aromatic miro.

Life went easily in the pa when the early harvesting was over. There was little to do but eat and sleep and lie about in the sun, or join in the daily prayers and the processions round the Niu pole, where the brightly coloured war flags hung. There was abundance of food in the camp – potatoes, potted birds, pork, maize, and dried fish sent as presents from the coast tribes. Early morning, and again in the warm golden evenings, long straight columns of pale blue smoke

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 15 Sep. 1906, 6.
Year: 1866
[2] Maoriland: a popular term in the press for 'New Zealand' between 1880 and the beginning of the First Word War. The term also reflected a nationalistic push in some literary quarters to create a distinctive New Zealand style of writing with the inclusion of more Maori content.
[3] lacebark: a group of small to medium-sized graceful forest trees whose inner bark is used for fine, decorative weaving.
[4] korimako: New Zealand bellbird.
[5] Tane-mahuta: atua of the forests and birds.

arose from the cooking ovens of the village and mingled with the thin vapours that crept about the tree tops; then little clouds of steam curled up as the women with lively chatter uncovered the hangis and arranged the well-cooked food in little round flax baskets, which they presently carried off, women and girls in a double line, keeping time with a merry old dance-song – the lilt of the 'tuku-kai', the 'food-bringing' as they marched on to the green marae and laid the steaming meal before their lounging lords.

It was all very pleasant and idyllic from the point of view of the brown bushmen. 'Ringiringi' the Pakeha-Maori, though he had by no means a hard life now that the heaviest work of the year was over, had an uneasy mind. He was – or had been –a civilised man, and he could not forget; moreover, he often woke from unpleasant dreams. One was a vision of a British regiment charging him with fixed bayonets, pinning him against the palisades of his pa. Fervently he hoped that he would not be in the fort when the troops marched to the assault, and that the Hauhaus would not compel him to level a tupara[1] against his onetime comrades the old 'Die-Hards'.[2]

This peaceful state of things did not endure long. In a few days – it was early in the year 1866 – the long-expected attack on Otapawa was delivered. Before the troops came, however, the prophet of the pa ordered that all the old people and most of the women and children to retire to the forest in rear of the fort, and told Ringiringi to accompany them. News had just been brought in that the scout out in the fern country had noticed signs of an impending movement in the British camp. The white man and the tribal 'encumbrances' pushed back into the bush for three or four miles, and camped in a quiet little nook by a creek-side with high forested hills towering around. The weather now became rather cold and bleak and there was little food to sustain the refugees, for the principal stores of 'kai'[3] had been left in the pa.

Early one morning the sound of cannon was heard in the distance, then heavy rifle volleying, followed by desultory firing. The Queen's soldiers were storming the fort. Nothing more was heard for several hours, but in the

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[1] tupara: double-barrelled gun.
[2] Die Hards: the 'Die Hards' of the 57th Regiment earned their nickname at the Battle of Albuera (in Spain) on 16 May 1811. The nickname is generally believed to have resulted from the actions of the regiment's commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Sir William Inglis, who remained at his post after being wounded and urged his men to 'Die hard!' in the face of a furious and prolonged French assault.
[3] kai: food.

afternoon and evening the warriors from the pa began to drop into the bush camp, exhausted, bloodstained, and angry. Many were wounded and some dead bodies were carried in on hastily-made litters of supplejack vines laced to poles. Then the story of the battle was told, while scouts and sentries were posted about the camp and up in the trees, for it was feared that the Government forces would follow up their retreating foes.

The pa had been attacked about daylight by a large body of British troops and a contingent of 'friendly' Maoris, or kupapas,[1] chiefly men from the Wanganui district, under the afterwards celebrated bush-fighter Kepa (Major Kemp).[2] General Chute[3] commanded the operations. An Armstrong gun[4] had been brought up to within a short distance of the hill fort, and several shells were fired into the stockade. The Hauhaus manned their trenches and rifle pits, and when the storming party of British soldiers doubled up across the clear front of the pa, a heavy fire was opened on them, and more than a score of Pakehas fell, amongst them an officer. But the soldiers rushed on, with fixed bayonets, slashed away at the palisades, and forced an entrance into the village and killed every Maori who remained to dispute possession with them. About a score of the Maoris were killed and many wounded. When the pa was abandoned, some brisk skirmishing took place in the bush between the Hauhaus and Kepa's kupapas, in which the former had the worse of it.

The British corps that stormed the pa, it may here be explained in amplification of the Maori story, were detachments of the 57th Regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel Butler and Major Hassard, supported by the 14th Regiment. Besides ten soldiers killed and twenty wounded, Major Hassard fell mortally wounded in the assault, and it was generally reported that he was shot by Kimble Bent. This, indeed, is stated in Gudgeon's *Reminiscences of the War in New Zealand* (1879).[5]

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[1] kupapa: tribes that supported the government during the New Zealand Wars.

[2] Kepa (Major Kemp): Te Keepa Te Rangihiwinui (1820s–1898), military leader, assessor, land purchase officer.

[3] General Chute: Major-General Sir Trevor Chute (1816–1886). His leadership of a six-week campaign during the Second Taranaki War was the last to be carried out in New Zealand by Imperial troops.

[4] Armstrong gun: a field and heavy gun designed by Sir William Armstrong and manufactured in England from 1855. The British in the New Zealand Wars used the comparatively lightweight field versions of the gun mounted on small horse-drawn carriages.

[5] *Reminiscences of the War in New Zealand* by Lieut.-Col. Walter Edward Gudgeon. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1879. (NB. His father, Thomas Wayth Gudgeon appears as the author.)

Bent strongly denies the statement, asserting that he was away in the bush camp at the rear, probably four miles from the pa, at the time of the engagement. 'I never fired a shot against the whites,' he says, 'all the time I was with the Hauhaus, and the charge that I killed my old officer is utterly untrue.'

It was a sad and angry camp, that remote pocket between the hills. Most of the Hauhaus came in nearly naked, just as they had jumped up when the first shot was fired in the grey dawn. They were desperately sullen and grief-stricken over their dead and the loss of their stronghold, which to them had seemed almost impregnable, for it was the strongest stockaded position they had yet built. Many a dark and angry look was bent upon the white man as he sat by one of the fires, not daring to speak a word.

That night the camp was suddenly abandoned by order of the Hauhau leader, who feared pursuit, not by the Imperial soldiers, who had no relish for 'bush-whacking',[1] but by Kepa's Government warriors, hereditary enemies of the Taranaki men. Hurriedly packing on their shoulders what few belongings they had managed to save from the pa, they set off in single file through the thick forest, making for the banks of the Tangahoe River, which they reached before daylight, and there halted. The wounded who were unable to walk were carried with difficulty through the tangled bush, where it was often necessary to cut away at the supplejacks and aka vines, so intricately interlaced and festooned across their path, before a passage could be made for the litter-bearers. There was no moon; it was an intensely dark night, rendered more Cimmerian[2] still by the unbroken roof of foliage overhead. The Hauhaus made torches of pieces of dry wood bound together with scraps of flax torn from their scanty mat-garments, and with these they managed to dimly light their way through the forest – a wild and savage-looking band, the warriors in front and rear, their cartouche belts over their naked shoulders and guns slung across their backs, or carried in their left hands, while in the right they gripped their tomahawks and slashed away at the twining impediments of the jungle.

A camp was made near the banks of the Tangahoe, and here as soon as it was light the Hauhaus mustered, and reckoned up their losses. There were about 350 of them now in camp – men, women and children. With wonderful celerity the forest men cut a little clearing and built wharau or rough huts of

[1] bush-whacking: negotiating bush country.
[2] Cimmerian: very dark, gloomy; in Greek Mythology a member of a mythical people living in perpetual mist and darkness near the land of the dead.

saplings, thatched with the fronds of the nikau palm[1] and the mamaku tree fern.[2] Here the wounded men were attended to as well as the primitive methods of the bush allowed. Women were sent out to search the riverbanks for flax plants; the flax roots were dug up, boiled, and the resultant mucilaginous[3] juice poured over the gunshot and bayonet wounds. This was the Maoris' most favoured method of treating injuries of this character, and it generally bore good results.

'Ringiringi' himself took a hand in the bush surgery, for he had watched army surgeons at their work, and the Hauhau wounded, though they preferred their own people's doctoring, were plainly grateful to the white man for his efforts to ease their sufferings.

A picked band of the fugitives scouted back through the forest and cautiously reconnoitred their captured fort, which had been set on fire by the troops, and was now a smoking heap of ruins. The Government force had by this time passed on to the attack of other pas, and the scouts re-entered their destroyed fortress and searched for their dead, whom they buried on the hilltop.

The scene in the camp by the Tangahoe waters when the war party returned from Otapawa was one that Ringiringi ever vividly remembered. It was the first great tangihanga or wailing over the dead that he had witnessed. The people gathered in the middle of the little clearing and for hours the sound of lamentation rang through the forest, often rising into a wild heart-breaking shriek as some blanket-draped or mat-kilted woman, her long hair unbound and her cheeks streaming with tears, cried her keening song for her slain.

At intervals a warrior would rise, some weapon in his hand, and recount the deeds of those who had fallen, ending his funeral oration with a chanted dirge. When the song was a well-known one, the whole tribe would join in and sing the lament with an intensity of feeling that made their very bodies quiver. It was the full and unrestrained outpouring of the soul of the savage.

*

[1] nikau: the only palm species native to mainland New Zealand and the world's most southerly growing palm.
[2] mamaku: black tree fern, a giant tree fern with black and very thick frond stalks and arching fronds. Common in damp forest gullies.
[3] mucilage: a substance extracted from plant roots, seeds, etc., and used in medicines and adhesives, as it relieves irritation of mucous membranes by forming a protective film.

One of the wild and beautiful death poems chanted by the fugitives that came to be familiar to the white man, for he heard it often afterwards under circumstances even more thrillingly tragic than those of the Tangahoe camp. It was a song that was on every Maori's lips in Taranaki, for it was a often-rehearsed waiata-tangi over the deluded warriors who had barely two years before fallen on the fatal glacis of Sentry Hill, when the rifles and the cohorn mortars[1] of the British garrison poured a shower of death on Hepanaia's charging fanatics. Today you may hear it sung in any of the villages of the Ngatiruanui and Ngaruahine on the Waimate Plains, and from Patea to the foot of Taranaki Mountain. It is Tamati Hone's lament for his sons and tribesmen who were killed at Te Morere, as the Maoris called the ferny mound (near the present railway station at Sentry Hill, North Taranaki) on which the redoubt of 1864 stood:

Lofty and lone stands Taranaki
In the West;
So tall and splendid thou, O Kingi –
And now thou'rt gone!
The lightning's spear darts redly down
On Turamoe's peak,
Portent of warriors' death and women's woe.
And thou, O Tiopira – why didst thou fall?
Why turned not the fatal ball aside?
Thou that stood'st so brave in war-array,
That red-eyed, furious, leaped in battle-dance!
And thou, Hapeta! Cold thou liest.
Death spread his lure for thee;
The dragon of the cave
Was loosed on thee.

~

Ah me, my children!
My flock of happy forest-birds,
That flew from tree to tree in brighter days –
Now fast in woodsman's snare.

[1] cohorn: a portable mortar mounted on a wooden block with handles.

My beautiful, my slender totara –
'Tis snapped by wintry gale.
My tall red-painted warrior-sons –
Alas, Alas!
How grand ye dashed upon the foe,
From Kuri-tangi's shady vale,
Below Morere's hill.
And I – I saw ye go;
I, too, rushed naked to the fight,
O sons – at Morere!

~

O heroes of my house! How grand
That charge!
Whakaahurangi's woods looked on that day
And wondered!

~

Revenge burns deep;
Lonely I lie within my forest-home
And cherish bitter thoughts, and ever weep –
My children!

~

Still o'er the forests, still above the clouds
Towers Taranaki;
But Kingi's gone. Foremost in council,
foremost in the fight –
I searched the fatal field, I found him dead
At Morere!

~

O restless sea
Beating for ever on the sounding sands
Below the cliffs of Wharau –
Like thee for ever I'll lament.
Oh son, arise! Return, return!
Cannot thy prophet make thee live again –
Restore thy breath, and bind thy wounds?

Ah me – my hopes!
The billows from the west roll in
And thundering crash on ‘Taraimaka’s shore –
There, too, my children fought,
In days gone by.

~

On Morere’s battle-hill they fell;
There shattered lay my tribe, Ah me!
O simple ones and brave!
How strong is Whiro’s snare –
The snare of Fate!
Ye charges along the path of Death,
Nor thought of home nor land nor life.
‘Twas that false one that led ye to the grave
The priest of Hau!

~

How vain your valour, vain your charge
Against Morere’s walls!
Wrecked in that red field of death
Are all my crews –
Tainui, Tokomaru, Kurahaupo, Aotea –
Ah me! My brave canoes
Lie shattered on the shore!

Chapter 6[1]

Bush Life with the Hauhaus – The forest foragers – Mac's woodcraft – Ringiringi the bird-snarer – The slayer of Broughton – Another runaway soldier – Bent's new owner

For some weeks the fugitives remained in their well-hidden camp by the Tangahoe's stream. When the wounded were able to travel 'Ringiringi' and his Maori companions took them a few miles through the bush to a place called Rimatoto, the overgrown site of an olden village. All the able-bodied men of the tribe now set to work to build a new settlement. Thatched nikau palm houses were quickly run up, and the forest rang day by day with the axes of the bush-fellers clearing the ground for potato planting.

As it was intended to make this a permanent kainga – always providing Kepa's dusky forest-rangers did not find their way to it in their scouting expeditions – a large clearing was made and the felled trees were allowed to lie for about three months until they were dry enough to be fired; then the potatoes were set in amongst the half-burned stumps and logs. In the meantime, the forest was scoured for food. Foraging parties were sent out to Turangarere and other villages on the outskirts of the forest and returned laden with pork and potatoes, strapped across their shoulders in the usual Maori pikau fashion.

Four miles away by a rough bush track, a track hardly discernible to any but a Maori, was the Maha village. There the white man was taken by his rangatira Tito after the bush-felling work was over, and three or four peaceful months were passed, varied only by occasional armed scouting expeditions to the forest edge, and by long fishing, birding, and pig hunting trips into the great wilderness of jungle-matted timber that hemmed in the lonely village on every side.

Bent had now been a year with the Maoris, and had thoroughly settled into the native life. He had quickly picked up the language of his adopted people, and there was nothing of the Pakeha about him but the colour of his skin, and that was browning with constant exposure and outdoor labour. A waist shawl

[1] *New Zealand Times*, 19 Sep. 1906, 5.
Year: 1866

or a flax kilt was his single article of everyday clothing; in cold weather a shoulder mat or a blanket was added. In this village of the woods there were few emblems of civilisation except the weapons of the warriors. Stories of battle and skirmish now and again reached the bushmen by messengers from the plains; and the white general's great march through the forest from Keteonetea to the New Plymouth side, when the soldiers fell so short of food that they had to shoot and eat their packhorses, was discussed many a night in the village 'wharepuni', the communal council room and sleeping house.

Bent's half-Indian temperament soon adopted itself to this wild life in the forest. No drill day after day, no parades, no sentry-go, no buttons to polish, and no uniform to mend – surely this savage life had its compensations? When the Maoris had urgent and laborious work on hand they worked like fury, and compelled – with the spur of a tomahawk – the white man to toil with equal industry, if not willingness. Fort building, trench digging, timber felling were undertakings in which the whole strength of the community laboured from dawn to dark, and the chiefs as hard as the common men and slaves. It was warriors' work. But there were periods of halcyon, lazy days in Maoridom, when 'Ringiringi' and his ragged comrades of the bush, their work over, could just 'lie around' and smoke and eat, and take no thought for the morrow as long as they could procure a pipe-full of strong 'torori'[1] or a square meal of potatoes and pork. Tito proved a not unkind master when he found that his white man neither attempted to escape from the tribe nor shirked the often-heavy tasks imposed upon him.

The pakeha soon became an adept in the woodcraft of the Maoris. He accompanied the young men of the tribe on their forest expeditions bird snaring and bird spearing; these camping out trips sometimes lasted for a week or more. Far into the solitudes of the great woods the little hunting parties penetrated, always armed, for they never knew when or where the Government Maori scouts might be encountered. The days were spent in birding and pig hunting, and the long nights by the blazing campfire, when the white man learned from his Hauhau comrades many a wild legend and folk story, hair-raising tales of witchcraft and mournful tangi-songs and love-ditties without end.

[1] torori: locally-grown tobacco.

Powder and shot were too valuable to waste on the birds of the forest those days. One of the Maori snaring methods as practised by 'Ringiringi' and his companions was to cut out wooden 'waka' or miniature canoes or troughs, fill them with water and place them in some dry spot in the forest where pigeons and tui were plentiful. Just over these troughs, flax snares were arranged, so that when the birds put their necks through them in an attempting to drink, they were tightly noosed. Other snares were set on the miro trees,[1] of whose sweet berries the pigeons and tui were particularly fond. 'Ringiringi' quickly learned the art of setting snares of flax or cabbage tree leaf with cunning slip-loops in the branches of the miro; in a clump of these fruit-laden pines he sometimes caught in a single day as many as 300 or 400 birds – kaka parrots, tui, and pigeon; for the forests were alive with feathered creatures, and in the autumn time, when the wild fruits were ripe and abundant, they were to be taken with little trouble; the noisy kaka parrot was the most easily lured of all. The only forest bird that was not welcomed by the hunters was the owl, or ruru; should one happen to be killed, it was never eaten because in Maori eyes it was an atua, a spirit or the incarnation of a tribal deity.

Bird spearing was another forest art widely practised in those times. Long slender limber spears of tawa wood[2] twelve feet long and more were used. These spears were armed with barbed tips, often of bone, sometimes of iron. The villagers trailed the bird weapons after them as they travelled through the forest until they came to some tree where the tui and pigeon perched in numbers; then the spear was slowly and cautiously pushed upwards until close to the unsuspecting bird, and a sudden sharp thrust impaled it on the barbed point.

The Pakeha was carefully schooled in the art of manipulating the spear, and was enjoined, above all, never to strike the pigeon full in the breast because the bone would often snap the barb-tip off; it must be speared in the side. In the late autumn the pigeons were 'rolling-fat', and many hundreds of them were preserved or potted in Maori fashion by the birding parties in taha, or calabashes (the hue gourd), which were hermetically sealed with the fat of the cooked birds.

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[1] miro: an evergreen canopy tree unique to New Zealand that can grow as high as 25 metres.
[2] tawa: often the dominant canopy tree in lowland forests in the North Island and northern South Island, whose dark fruit is a favourite of the kereru, or native wood pigeon.

One foraging expedition which Bent accompanied was further afield than usual, up northwards to the great Ngaere swamp, a huge morass near where the present township of Ngaere stands, and where dairy cattle now graze on fields that in those days of 1866 were seemingly irreclaimable bogs and wildernesses; lagoons where millions of eels crawled snake-like in the ooze, and where countless thousands of wild fowl and water birds fished and screamed and squabbled all day long. To the edge of the great swamp came the food hunters; they waded across to two islets which rose from the middle of the bog – ancient refuge places of fugitive tribes – and camped there, catching and smoke drying huge quantities of eels for winter food in the home kainga, and spearing many ducks and other birds. In this primeval spot the beautiful kotuku, the white heron or crane so famous in Maori song and proverb – and now never seen in the North Island – then abounded; the white man often admired this graceful bird as he stood on silent watch on the marge of some sedgy[1] pool, then, like lightning-flash, darted his long spear-bill on his prey. The kotuku was tame, and easily caught, and many were snared and eaten by the foragers. 'Ringiringi' captured some on the shores of the lagoon by the simple expedient of a bent supplejack[2] and an arrangement of flax loops set near the kotuku's daily haunts; a day seldom passed without a white crane being found flapping and choking, tightly noosed in the snares of the Pakeha-Maori and his fellow fowlers.

One day in the spring of 1866, when Tito and his hapu, their bird hunting expeditions over for the season, were gathered in their bush village Rimatoto, three strange Maoris, fully armed, entered the settlement. They had travelled overland from the King Country, far to the north, on a mission from Tawhiao the Waikato King who, after the conquest of the Waikato Valley by the white troops, had taken refuge with the Ngatimaniapoto[3] tribe. The envoys had been sent down to recover some Waikato war-flags which were in the possession of the Taranaki Hauhaus.

In the crowded wharepuni that night, when the Waikato warriors made their errand known, one of them caught sight of the white man, sitting silently

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[1] sedgy: covered with sedges (grass-like marsh plants), good for small fish to hide amongst.
[2] supplejack: one of the best known of climbing, woody plants, or lianes, which were a feature of the mixed forest throughout New Zealand. Its tangled masses of strong, tough stems formed an effective barrier to speedy progress through the bush.
[3] Ngatimaniapoto: contemporary spelling, Ngati Maniapoto.

in the corner, and asked who he was. When Tito explained, the visitor asked, 'Why don't you kill him?'

'He is my Pakeha,' said Tito, 'and I will protect him, because our prophet Te Ua has tapu'd him, and ordered us not to harm him.'

'That is indeed a soft and foolish way to deal with Pakehas,' exclaimed a fierce-looking young warrior, one of the Waikato trio. 'We don't take any white prisoners in our country. You ought to have his head stuck on the fence of your pa.'

Tito laughed. 'Ringiringi is going to be useful to us,' he said. 'Besides, he is a Maori now.'

Next morning Tito despatched the white man and an old Maori named Te Waka-tapu-ruru through the forest to Te Putahi, a stockaded village some ten miles away, with a message to the people of that pa requesting them to return the colours for which the King had sent. This mission accomplished, Bent stayed awhile in Te Putahi, where he was treated with much kindness because of his association with Tito.

On the morning after his arrival a man came to his sleeping hut and without saying a word placed on the mat before him a couple of blankets and a watch. The history of the watch was afterwards explained to him by Te Waka-tapu-ruru. This old savage, a tall tattooed fellow, told him, with a devilish grin on his corrugated face, that it had belonged to a white man called Paratene whom he – Te Waka – had shot the previous year at Otoia, on the Patea River. This Pakeha was Mr C. Broughton, a native interpreter who had been sent on a special Government mission to the Hauhaus, and was barbarously murdered while in the act of lighting his pipe in the village marae.

Broughton's slayer, despite his repulsive antecedents, became a friend of Bent's, and they were close comrades until 1869, when the old man was killed in the act of charging furiously on the armed constabulary as they advanced to the attack of Moturoa stockade.

At Te Putahi 'Ringiringi' was astonished to find another white man, clothed like himself in a blanket. This man walked up and greeted him, and the Pakeha-Maori recognised the longhaired rough-bearded fellow as an old fellow soldier. His name was Humphrey Murphy; he, too, had been a private in the 57th, and had become as dissatisfied with the life as Bent had done and deserted to the Hauhaus. Bent sums him up as 'a bad lot.'

Murphy, it appeared from his own story, had been taken over as a 'taurekareka', a slave, by one of the Hauhau chiefs when he deserted; and had been sent as a food-carrier to Te Putahi by his owner, who treated his 'white trash' with scant consideration. The deserter bragged to Bent, as they sat side by side on the village marae, that he would shortly return to his Maori 'boss', as he called him, and kill him, and take what money he could find as payment for his enforced labour.

While Murphy was speaking, a young Maori girl sat by quietly listening. When the runaway soldier rose and walked off to his hut, the young girl said: 'Ringi, I head what the taurekareka white man was saying. I have learned enough of the Pakeha's tongue to know that he is going to kill his rangatira[1] and steal his money.'

'Kaati! Don't say a word about it,' cautioned Bent.

But the girl rose up in the meetinghouse one night after 'Ringiringi' had departed to his home at Rimatoto, and repeated the threat she had overheard from Murphy's lips.

That settled the taurekareka's fate. Bent, some time later, inquiring about Murphy from one of Tito's men who had been on a visit to Te Putahi, was told that he had been killed. The Hauhaus had a short way with such as he. He was just quietly tomahawked one night as he lay asleep, and his remains dragged out and cast into the creek that ran below the village.

At this time there were at least four white men living with the Hauhaus in South Taranaki. One came to Rimatoto to see 'Ringiringi', and remained with him for a week. He seems to have been as worthless a character as Murphy, for not long after this he stole a sum of money and a pistol from a Maori who had befriended him in the Whakamara pa and fled into the bush, intending to make his way to a distant settlement. Whether he succeeded or not Bent never heard, but there is little doubt that this fellow too was speedily overtaken by the retributive bullet or tomahawk.

Another summer came, and the crops were gathered in, and the men of Tito's hapu, after nearly a year of comparative peace, wearied for the warpath again. Rimatoto and other small bush hamlets were deserted, and the tribes gathered in, bearing their food supplies to the Hauhau council village of Taiporohenui – close to where the town of Hawera now stands. Taiporohenui

[1] rangatira: chieftain.

was a famous name – a word of 'mana'[1] as the Maori would say – amongst all the tribes from Wanganui to Waikato. The name, say the wise men of Taranaki, goes back far beyond the days of the Maori migration to New Zealand in the canoes *Aotea*, *Tokomaru*, *Tainui* and other Polynesian pilgrim-ships. It was that of a great temple in Tahiti in the tropic isles of the Hawaiikian seas countless generations ago.

And in the latter-day Taiporohenui the Maoris, mindful of their ancient traditions, built another temple after the fashion of the aboriginal. This Hauhau praying-house and council-hall, constructed of hewn timber with thatched raupo-reed walls and nikau-thatch roof, is described by Bent as the largest building of native construction that he had seen. It was about 120ft in length. In front of it on the village square (marae) stood the sacred Niu pole, a pine flagstaff about fifty feet in length with a yard[2] like a ship's; the war flags of the Hauhaus were flown from the staff, and the people daily marched around its foot in their Pai-marire procession, intoning the chants the prophet had taught them. This Niu was one of the first worship poles planted in Taranaki by the Hauhau prophet's command, and it was the centre of many a wild fanatic gathering. It was the Maori custom when the centre-pole of a large meeting house, or the first big palisade post of a fort was set in position, to place a piece of greenstone in the form of an ornament, such as an ear-drop or a carved 'tiki' at its foot. This practice, says Bent, was observed when the Taiporohenui Niu pole was planted in the marae, and the ancient priestly formulae suitable to such an occasion were recited by the tohungas.

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About this time 'Ringiringi' changed hands, much as if he were a fat porker or a keg of powder or any other article of Maori barter. Rupe ('Woodpigeon'), a chief of Taiporohenui, made request of Tito – to whom he was related – for his 'Pakeha mokai',[3] his tame white man. He had never owned a Pakeha, he explained, and would like one all to himself, and he knew that 'Ringiringi' would be a handy man to have around, and keep his armoury of guns in repair, and to make cartridges for him. So 'Ringiringi' was passed over to his new

[1] mana: an impersonal supernatural power which can be transmitted or inherited.
[2] yard (nautical): a cylindrical spar, tapering to each end, slung across a ship's mast for a sail to hang from.
[3] mokai: pet.

owner, whom he served, with the exception of some short intervals in the wartime and in the period of exile on the Upper Waitara, until 1878.

Soon after 'Ringiringi' had become one of Rupe's household, his chief's son, a young lad, fell seriously ill. The white man doctored and carefully nursed the boy, and under his treatment he recovered. Rupe's gratitude for his mokai took a chieftain-like form. As payment, or 'utu',[1] for curing his son, he led up his daughter, a young girl of fifteen or sixteen, and presented her to 'Ringiringi' as his wife. The one-eyed Venus of Otapawa had some months previously left her white husband – much to his relief – and betaken herself to the camps of the Pakehas beyond the Tangahoe.

'Ringiringi's' second matrimonial experience was much more to his liking. His girl-wife was good-looking and pleasant-natured, a sprightly bouncing 'kotiro'[2] whom he had more than once watched and admired as she stood in the front rank of the village poi dancers, swaying from side to side the 'piupiu' kilt of rustling flax that dangled from her plump waist, and featly swinging her coloured poi ball in time to the leader's high chant, and beating out the haunting rhythm with quick and ever-repeated tap-tap-tappings on shoulder, breast and knee.

'Ringiringi's' connubial happiness however only lasted two or three months. His young wahine suddenly sickened – some of her relatives attributed it to makutu, the spell of the evil eye – and, after a very short illness, died.

Several skirmishes between the whites and the Maoris occurred in the winter and early spring of 1866, and one of these had some moment for the white man. About three miles away from Taiporohenui was a village called Pokaikai, to which 'Ringiringi' was sent for a while by his chief. While he was there the prophet Te Ua arrived. In a conference with the local Hauhaus the prophet counselled peace. He advised the Pakeha to return at once to Taiporohenui, and 'Ringi' obeyed. Three days, or rather three nights afterwards, a force of colonial soldiers under Colonel McDonnell unexpectedly attacked Pokaikai, and rushed the village, killing several Hauhaus. In some way the Forest Rangers under McDonnell's command had heard that the deserter Kimble Bent was in Pokaikai, and they were eager to capture or shoot him.

[1] utu: the maintenance of balance and harmony in relationships between individuals and groups and order within Maori society, whether through gift exchange or as a result of hostilities between groups. It is closely linked to 'mana' and includes reciprocation of kind deeds as well as revenge.
[2] kotiro: girl.

Some of them surrounded one of the whares in which they imagined Bent was staying. A young volunteer named Spain had just previously, unnoticed by them, gone into the whare to bring out a dead Hauhau, and while he was there the Rangers – hearing someone say there was a white man within – fired a volley into the hut, which, unfortunately mortally wounded Spain. This young soldier was the only European killed in the fight.

'Ringiringi', when he heard of the Pokaikai affair from the fugitives who fled through the bush to Taiporohenui, felt that the Hauhau prophet had indeed been his good angel, for it was only Te Ua's lucky injunction to return to the main Hauhau camp that had saved him from the vengeful bullets of his fellow whites.

Chapter 7[1]

The two eel-fishers – A Midnight Forest Adventure – The Waikato's tomahawk – Ringiringi's narrow escape

Far away to the east and north of the great Hauhau council camp stretched the forest, clothing hill and valley with one endless wavy garment of unvarying green. For weeks one might tramp through these vast jungly woods and not see or hear sign of man, or of any living thing but the twittering birds in the treetops and a stray wild pig rooting in the soft fern-matted earth or scampering away through the thickets. The free, unspoiled wilderness of Tane Mahuta.

Climbing to the wooded crest of some of the steep little hills that rose from the gently undulating plain, one might here and there through the gaps between the towering tiers of foliage catch narrow glimpses of the surrounding country, and perhaps far away to the nor'-west see between the branches, set like a picture in its forest frame, the pure white snow cone of tent-shaped Taranaki.

Deep in these bush solitudes one day, when the spring had come, the voice of man broke upon the silences. The wild boar stopped root foraging to listen, and then turned and crashed off through the supplejacks. A band of brown men, some clad in nondescript articles of European clothing, some wearing only a shoulder cape of flax and a shawl or blanket kilt, wound in single file through the bush, striking due east. Most of then carried weapons – double-barrelled guns and short-handled tomahawks, stuck in the waist belt of flax; all had large flax baskets, some containing gourd calabashes, across their backs. Some sang little lilts of Maori song, and some called now and again to the others, or mimicked the tui and the kaka parrot that cried above them in the trees. Midline in the filing score or so of men was a fairer-skinned young forester, barefooted like the rest, clad only in a 'home-made' shirt that seemed to have been cut out of a blanket, and a coloured shawl strapped round his waist. This was 'Ringiringi', the Pakeha-Maori, barefooted like his Hauhau companions, and to all appearances as seasoned a bushman as they, as he bent along the jungly way with the easy, noiseless jog of the Maori scout.

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 19 Sep. 1906, 5
Year: 1866

This party had been despatched from Taiporohenui by Rupe, to work inland through the bush to the vicinity of the Patea River, and scour the country for food supplies for the assembled tribes. They were ordered to bring home wild pork and wild honey, and to catch and smoke dry as many eels as they could carry. They travelled far into the heart of the bush, and then divided into small parties of twos and threes for eel catching in the creeks.

The white man's companion on the eel fishing excursion was an old Maori from Waikato, who had joined the Taranaki Hauhaus; a short but strongly built fellow of dark and sullen visage, rendered more forbidding still by the blue-black tattoo with which cheeks and brow and nose were scrolled and lined. The couple, leaving the others after arranging a general rendezvous for the following day, selected a small creek winding in a slow brown current beneath the roof of verdure, which the outstretching branches of the rata[1] and pines nearly everywhere held over it. They fished with short rods and flax lines, with worms for bait, and by the evening had caught between them about sixty good-sized eels.

The eel fishers bivouacked where the twilight found them, in a tiny nook where there was just room to build their campfire and spread their bush-couches of fresh-pulled tree fern fronds, between the buttressed ratas and the creek-side. 'Ringiringi' had a little cold food in his pikau kit, but was about to grill some of the fat eels on the fire when his Maori companion stopped him.

'E tama!' he said. 'Don't you know it is unlucky to cook the "tuna" in the night-time? Do not touch those eels until the morning: should you disobey it will surely bring heavy rain.' The superstitious old warrior was so insistent that 'Ringiringi', to please him, agreed to his wishes, and, contenting himself with the little he had in his kit, lay down on one side of the cheerily blazing fire with his Maori mate on the opposite side.

The warmth of the fire and the low murmurous singing of the little river – the 'wawara-wai', the babble of the waters, in the musical Maori tongue – pleasantly lulled the tired Pakeha. He lay there with his scanty bush ranging garments wrapped about him, listening half asleep to the lazy run of the creek, and to the songs that his savage old companion recited to himself in a

[1] rata: Northern rata, a huge forest tree endemic to New Zealand growing up to 25 metres. It usually begins its life high in the branches of a mature forest tree. Over centuries the young tree sends roots down and around the trunk of its host, eventually forming a massive pseudo-trunk composed of fused roots that supports it when the host dies.

monotonous chant as he squatted close to the fire. War songs of Waikato, songs which he and his Kingite comrades had shouted in many an armed camp before the white man drove them out beyond the 'aukati' line, the frontier of the Waipa. In one of these chants the eel fisher's voice was lifted in a sudden burst of passionate remembrance – a defiant haka song the Hauhaus of Taranaki, too, had adopted as a composition exactly expressing their opinion of Pakehas in general, and the Pakeha Governor in particular. It likened Governor Grey to a bush bullock devouring the tender leaves of the raurekau shrub – a Maori simile for the land hunger of the whites:

A he kau ra.
He kau ra!
U —— u!
He kau Kawana koe
Kia miti mai
Te raurekau.
A he kau ra,
He kau ra!
U —— u——u!

Ha! A beast art thou,
A beast that bellows –
Ooh —— ooh!
A beast art thou, O Governor,
That lickest in
The leaves of the raurekau.
Ho! A beast, indeed,
A beat art thou!
Oo —— oo —— ooh!

The old Hauhau, warming to the haka, almost yelled the virulent words. The chant broke the white man's drowsing, and he sat up and listened as his companion repeated the vigorous dance-song.

'Well, Pakeha!' he said. 'That is our Waikato ngeri, our war cry. That is what we think of the Governor – and of all Pakehas! I hate the white men! They

are thieves and pigs. I could cook and eat them all! All, every one! I would not leave a white-skin alive in this Island! They are slaves, taurekarekas – like you! Now go to sleep, for we must rise when the kaka cries, and pack our eel pikaus for the journey.'

A diabolical grimace gave ferocious point to the Waikato's outburst against Pakehas; and 'Ringiringi' found uncomfortable reflection in the fact that he was here alone far in the heart of the forest with a murderous old savage, who was armed with a tomahawk, while he, the weaker man, though the younger, had nothing with which to defend himself. By this time the runaway was familiar with the face of danger, and worked and slept in the midst of alarms; so simply remarking to the Maori, 'Friend, I am sleepy,' throwing some fresh fuel on the fire, he lay down again on his ferny whariki, and in a few moments his senses were lost in dreamless slumber.

The little dark brook went singing on beneath the forest; the fire blazed up brightly, then gradually burned lower and lower as the night wore on; the morepork now and then cried his sharp complaint of 'Kou-kou!' from the shadows. The two fishers lay silently, one each side of the fire; but one was wide awake, his memory roving back over years of war and turmoil, over the losses of land and tribespeople and brothers in the fatal campaign of Waikato; in his heart black, treacherous murder.

'Utu' – payment, satisfaction, revenge – summed up in a word the darker side of the Maori character. The lone Pakeha's head would be indeed a trophy to bear back through the wilderness to his tribe. He would be a hero; he would brag to the end of his days how he slew a white soldier in single combat, and none could contradict him. He saw himself already taki-ing and prancing up and down the home marae, before his admiring hapu [kin] the Pakeha's head in his hand, his tomahawk – the victor's tomahawk! – brandishing in air. Ah! That, indeed, would be utu – though long-deferred utu – for his kinsmen who fell at Rangiriri and Orakau!

In the Maori's eyes blazed the light of murder. He reached softly for his little axe that lay beside him and gripping it, slowly raised his head, and long and narrowly eyed the sleeping Pakeha. Then, quietly, cautiously, he began to creep towards his victim.

'Ringiringi' could never tell what awakened him that midnight in the forest – whether it was a sudden, sharp warning 'Kou-kou!' from a nearby night

bird, or the sound of the Maori's weapon striking against a stone or a fire log. All he knows is that he started up all at once wide awake, a sense of some unknown danger gripping him, just in time to see the Maori in the act of rising stealthily from his knees, tomahawk in hand.

Next moment 'Ringiringi' had thrown off his shawl and leaped for the savage.

The old fellow, when he saw the supposed sleeper spring up, flew at him with his upraised tomahawk glittering in the little light that the bivouac fire yet threw out.

But 'Ringiringi' was too quick for him. He ducked dexterously, and caught the Maori by the ankle, and, with a lightning twist that he had learned from his Taranaki people, threw him to the ground.

The murderer-in-intent fell on his back and almost on the fire, and the tomahawk dropped from his hand.

'Ringiringi' pounced on the furious old savage as he fell, and with a knee on his bare chest and one hand on his throat, reached out with the free hand for the tomahawk, which lay just within his grasp.

The Maori would have continued the struggle, and in the rough-and-tumble would probably have got the better of the white man had not 'Ringiringi', now roused to murderous mood himself, threatened to split his head in two if he moved, and emphasised his words by bringing the weapon down until the blade was within an inch of the old fellow's ugly tattooed nose.

The Maori sulkily promising to lie quietly in his sleeping place for the rest of the night, the Pakeha relinquished his grip of the old man and backed to his own side of the bivouac. He fed the fire with dry branches of pine and presently the little glade was a blaze of light again, and the black tree shadows danced like forest ghosts to the rising and falling of the flames.

The old Maori pulled his blanket over his face and pretended to go to sleep, but 'Ringiringi' did not take his eyes off him the rest of the night. He sat by the fire till daylight, the captured tomahawk across his knees.

In the morning the two enemies silently packed their takes of eels in their kits, and slung them on their backs by flax-leaf straps for the home journey.

'Walk in front of me,' ordered Bent when he had settled his pikau on his shoulders and stood, tomahawk in hand, waiting for the Maori to start.

So they made their way homewards, striking west through the pathless forest, wading watercourses and climbing and descending hills, until they emerged on the fern country. 'Ringiringi', immensely relieved, and weary beyond words, reported himself to his chief.

Rupe was furiously angry when he heard the story of the Waikato's attack on his Pakeha. 'The kohuru!' he cried as he leaped to his feet, 'the murderer! I shall slay him this instant, on the marae, though all Waikato come down to avenge him!' and seizing an axe from the wall, he ran out in chase of 'Ringiringi's' night antagonist.

The old fellow, when the chief rushed out at him like a madman, turned and fled from the village and ran for his life until he disappeared in the shelter of the bush. Rupe did not pursue him far; his fit of anger was soon spent, and he returned to his whare and made his white man relate again, with Maori wealth of detail, the story of the eel-fishing bivouac.

'Ringiringi's' would-be slayer was never heard of again; at any rate he did not venture back to the camp of the Hauhaus; and whether he ever succeeded in taking a Pakeha head in settlement of his utu bill, no man knows.

Chapter 8[1]

The Tattooers – Another White Deserter – The War-Chief and his Gods – Another white deserter – Making cartridges for the Hauhaus – A novel weapon

The year 1867 was one of little activity amongst the Hauhaus with whom 'Ringiringi' lived, except in respect of their interminable koreros and prophesyings and meetings. Hostilities had been suspended by both sides for the time, but the temporary peace was only the prelude to the fiercest fighting of the Ten Years War.

The white man worked for his master Rupe all that year, digging and planting, carrying wood and water, and performing, in fact, the duties of a household slave. But it was a slavery that had its privileges and its compensations, and there were long days of abundant food and little work in the intervals between the seasons of communal labour in the potato fields, and the periodical birding and eeling and pig hunting expeditions.

Amongst the primitive arts of the Maori with which 'Ringiringi' became familiar about this time was that of moko or tattooing. The 'kauae'[2] tattooing on – chin and lips – was still universal amongst the native women, though few of the men now submitted their faces to the chisel or the needle of the tattooing artist.

A popular form of tattooing amongst both sexes was that technically known as 'tiki-hope', the scroll patterns on the thighs and that part of the body usually concealed by the waist shawl. The white man saw numbers of women as well as men decorated in this fantastic fashion. In fact, he was so thoroughly Maori by this time that he was about to undergo the operation himself when living in the winter of 1867 at the village Te Paka, near the old fort Otapawa. He had the 'ngarahu', or 'kapara', the blue-black pigment, ready for the dusky engraver, and would shortly have been made 'pretty' for life in Maori eyes had not the tattooing been forbidden by Te Ua. The prophet, who happened to be in residence at Te Paka just then, reminded 'Ringiringi' that he had 'tapu'd' him, and explained that to 'moko' his skin would be a violation of that particular brand of tapu. To the white man this was not clear; nevertheless, he

[1] *New Zealand Times*, 19 Sep. 1906, 5
Year: 1867
[2] kauae: also known as or 'kauwae', or moko.

promised to obey the prophet's Mosaic command[1] to 'make no cuttings' in his flesh, and remained a plain, undecorated Pakeha.

However, he acquired some skill himself with tattooing instruments, and exercised it in printing names and sundry devices on the persons of the villagers. Here, too, he learned to manufacture the indelible ngarahu, or kapara pigment. In making this tattooing ink the soot from fires of white pine (kahikatea) wood was used. A cave-like hole was dug in the side of a bank, with an opening resembling a chimney in the top. A large fire was kindled in the cave or rua, and for several days was constantly fed with the resinous timber of the kahikatea. Above the earth chimney were arranged a number of twigs of the karamu shrub (a coprosma) with the bark stripped off, set up in the shape of a tent and covered with a layer of leaves. The dense smoke from the fire deposited a thick soot on the karamu sticks. For some days the fire was kept up, then the twigs were removed and the soot scraped off into wooden receptacles. It was mixed with water, and worked into little round balls. The soot-balls were then placed on a layer of poroporo leaves in an 'umu', or earth oven, and steamed for about three hours, when they were taken out and set to dry. In later times, after the war, Bent often employed himself in the manufacture of this tattoo dye, and was, he says, accustomed to receive ten shillings for a ball of ngarahu the size of a peach.

To Te Paka village there came one day another renegade white man, an Irish soldier named Charles Kane. He had been a private in the 18th Royal Irish Regiment, and had, like Bent, revolted against army discipline and deserted to the Hauhaus. The Maoris had christened him Kingi. He lived in Bent's whare in Te Paka for some considerable time. He was exceedingly bitter against his old officers, and in fact against his fellow whites in general; so much so that he boasted of his intention to fight against them; and, as will be seen later, actually did so in the attack on Turuturu-mokai redoubt. Like most of the soldiers who traitorously deserted their colours in those war days, he was in the end killed by his Hauhau companions.

It was while living at Te Paka that 'Ringiringi' became well acquainted with the celebrated Titokowaru, the great war chief of the Hauhaus. 'Titoko', as his name was usually abbreviated, came riding into the little bush village one day at the head of an armed band of Ngatiruanui and Ngaruahine men,

[1] 'Mosaic command': in the stern style of Moses and the Ten Commandments.

and held a meeting in the marae urging the people to renew the war. He was travelling from village to village, haranguing the Hauhaus and explaining his new plan of campaign, which briefly was to make surprise attacks on small isolated redoubts garrisoned by the white soldiers, and not to build any more stockaded forts in positions where the Europeans could easily reach them, but to entice the troops into the midst of the forest, where the Maori warrior would have the advantage. This scheme met with general approval, and the tribespeople signified their intention of joining Titoko and fighting in his battles for him whenever he gave the word to begin.

Titokowaru was the most brainy as well as the most ferocious of the Taranaki chiefs who led the Hauhaus against the whites. It was his strategy that was responsible for the most serious defeats inflicted on the Government forces in the war of 1868–9. In appearance he was a stern commanding man, with a countenance disfigured by the loss of an eye – reminder of the Battle of Sentry Hill. 'When roused,' says Bent, 'he had a voice like a roaring lion.' In his attire he was often quaintly Pakeha, for he frequently appeared in a black 'hard-hitter' hat,[1] and a full suit of European clothing. He carried no weapon but his sacred taiaha, his tongue-pointed staff of hardwood, ornamented with a plume of red kaka feathers.

The war-chief revived many a half-forgotten savage practice in the campaign that followed. Besides being a Hauhau 'prophet', he was a tohunga or priest of the ancient Maori religion, and was well versed in the olden heathen ceremonies and incantations. Before despatching a war party he invariably recited the customary spells (karakia), to ensure their success, and the worship, or rather placation and invocation of Uenuku, the war god was resuscitated in every armed camp and on every battlefield.

Titoko possessed what the Maoris termed 'mana-tapu' in a strong degree – personal tapu or sacred prestige, heritage from his priestly forefathers of Ariki rank. His body was sacred in Maori eyes, and he was accredited with many a singular supernatural attribute. 'Even the winds of heaven are his,' said the Hauhaus. When the 'whakarua', the north-east breeze, blew, it was a fitting time for the war parties to set out, for the Whakarua was the breath of Uenuku, Titoko's deity, and his familiar spirit, and it was an omen of success in battle.

[1] hard-hitter hat: bowler hat.

Bent gives some curious instances of Titokowaru's mana-tapu. Once when the white man was travelling through the forest with Titoko and his band of Hauhaus, the chief's shoulder accidentally struck against a flax kit containing some cooked potatoes, which an old man was carrying on his back. Titoko immediately ordered the man to throw the potatoes and basket away, for the food had become infected through contact with the priest with the mysterious and deadly microbe of the tapu, and consequently unfit to be eaten; so the old fellow had to cast his day's rations into the bushes and go fasting.

Titokowaru would suffer no rivals in the pa. Now and then it happened during the war days that some budding tohunga would arise and prophesy things in bold opposition to the chief, and announce that his familiar spirit, or his ancestral gods, had conferred priestly powers upon him. Titoko had 'a short way with dissenters.' His usual and most effective method of silencing the pretender was to take a basket of potatoes in his hand and seek out his rival.

'What,' he would say, 'have you then an atua, a god of your own?'

Should the Hauhau be so imprudent as to answer 'Yes,' Titoko would lift his potato-kit and set it on his rival's head.

'That for your atua!'

It was enough. The other's tapu – if he ever had any – would be immediately destroyed by such an act, for the head of man must not be touched by food, and any self-respecting atua would desert a tapu-less Maori without delay. But no man dared by way of retaliation to try the potato basket trick on Titokowaru.

'Ringiringi' had now been nearly three years with the Maoris, and spoke their language well. 'I lived exactly like a Maori,' he says; 'worked like a nigger,[1] and always went barefooted. They would not give me a gun, nor did they make me fight, but I had to make cartridges for them. They managed to get plenty of gunpowder; I have seen it brought in in casks and in 25lb weights. They got a good deal of it from the neutral tribes, who procured it from the Pakehas. I know there was a white man, Moffatt, living on the Upper Wanganui River, who made a coarse powder for the Hauhaus there, but I don't think any of it came our way. I had a wooden cartridge-filler, and we always had plenty of old newspapers to make the cartridge cases. Bullets were plentiful, too, as a rule; but sometimes in the bush, when the Hauhaus ran short they would use old

[1] A common term for the period.

iron, stones, and even pieces of hard wood. I have sometimes loaded my cartridges with bits of supplejack, cut to size, when I had no lead bullets.'

In those bushwhacking days the Hauhaus made use of some remarkable devices against their enemies. One of these Maori engines of war was called a 'tawhiti', or 'trap'. It was a sapling of some tough and elastic timber, matipo for choice. When a suitable one, about ten feet long or so, was found growing in a likely position outside a pa or alongside a bush track by which the enemy were expected, it would be stripped of its branches and bent down and back without breaking it until it was lying in as near as possible a horizontal position, so that it would sweep the road. The end was fastened with flax in such a way that any unsuspecting person marching along the track or approaching the village and touching the trap would cause the flax to slip, and release the tawhiti. The tree in its rebound would inflict a terrible blow. A tawhiti set at Keteonetea in 1866, close up to the pa, is said to have severely injured several kupapas belonging to the Government force.

Chapter 9[1]

In 'The Beak-of-the-Bird' – The forest-stockade – Titokowaru's war parties – The rites of the Whare-kura – The heart of the Pakeha: a human burnt offering

Early in 1868 'Ringiringi' and his Hauhau comrades took up their quarters in the stockaded village of Te Ngutu-o-te-manu ('The Beak-of-the-Bird'), soon to be the scene of the sharpest action of the war. This settlement was deep in the rata forest, about ten miles from where the town of Hawera now stands, in the direction of Mount Egmont. Out on the fern lands on the edge of the bush were the European redoubts of Waihi and Tuturu-mokai; the smaller of these, Turuturu, was singled out by Titokowaru as a position which could apparently be easily stormed; he therefore laid his plans to attack it, and gathered in the best fighting men in the forest fort.

The Ngutu-o-te-manu was now the headquarters of the Ngatiruanui and Ngaruahine belligerents, and all hands were set to work to fortify the village, and to gather in food supplies for the hapus who crowded the 'Bird's-beak' pa. The front of the village faced a cleared stretch of fern land, but the forest surrounded it on the other sides; at the rear ran a little creek. There were no trenches or earth parapets; the principal defences were stout palisades: solid tree trunks and split timber, eight to ten feet high, sunk firmly in the ground and connected by cross-ties of saplings fastened to the posts with forest vines. Close to the palisades were some great rata trees, very ancient, and hollow; these the Hauhaus converted into miniature redoubts. Many of the hollow trees were cunningly loopholed for rifle fire, and within them stagings were made for the musketeers; rough platforms and stages too were constructed up among the rata branches, where the dense foliage and the interlacing boughs formed a perfect shelter for the brown-skinned snipers.

At one end of the village was the large Hauhau meeting hall and praying house called 'Whare-kura' ('House of learning', or 'Red-painted house'), after the olden Maori's sacred lodges of priestly instruction. This building, built of sawn timber in semi-European style, was about seventy feet in length. It was erected by Titokowaru's working party in six days – in obedience to the

[1] *New Zealand Times*, 22 Sep. 1906, 13.
Year: 1868

Scriptural command 'Six days shalt thou labour'; they finished it on the sixth day and religiously rested on the seventh – and for many days thereafter. The Whare-kura was consecrated by Titokowaru in the ancient heathen fashion; it was the temple of the Hauhau ritual, and here the high chief assembled his men when he wished to select war parties for assaults and ambuscades. At the rear end of the great house was his sacred seat and sleeping place, laid with finely woven flax mats and hedged by the invisible but potent barriers of tapu.

As often happened in Maori warfare the first intimation the Hauhaus gave of their intention to renew the fighting was the murder of two or three incautious Pakehas on the frontier. Then one winter morning, just at dawn, they attacked and very nearly captured the isolated little post of Turuturu-mokai.

Titokowaru's war parties despatched on special missions usually numbered 60 men. Though consisting of this number, they were termed the 'Tekau-ma-rua' or 'The Twelve' – after the Twelve Apostles! Singular heathen ceremonies were practised in the selection of these war parties. The spirit of ancient Maoridom was but slightly leavened by Pakeha innovations and missionary teachings; and the savage gods of old New Zealand took fresh grip on the heart of these never-tamed forest men.

'Ringiringi' on several occasions witnessed the rites of the Whare-kura, including the time the one-eyed general picked out the soldiers of the Tekau-ma-rua. On the day before an armed expedition set forth from 'The Beak-of-the-bird', the people would assemble in the great meeting house and seat themselves on the mat-covered floor, the fighting men of the tribes in front. There they sat, silent as death, awaiting the will of Titoko's war-god, and the divination-by-taiaha.

The chief stood, grim and stern, facing his people, his sacred carved hardwood taiaha called 'Te Porohanga' in his hand. His wild eyes glittered as he recited in quick sharp tones his invocation of the war-god Uenuku and the battle spirit breathed on the wings of the whakarua breeze. Then balancing his long plumed weapon in a horizontal position on his thumb and forefinger, the tongue-shaped point directed at the warriors, he stood stiff and motionless as in a trance. He was awaiting the message of the atua, the guiding breath of Uenuku.

Suddenly, apparently of its own volition, and without any visible movement or effort on the part of the chief, the weapon would move. It would slowly, slowly turn – watched with intense, breathless, earnestness by hundreds of fanatical eyes – until its tongue pointed so as to indicate some particular man. Ha! 'Twas the breath of Uenuku, deity of blood and fire, that gave it its impulse; Titoko was but the medium of the gods!

The warrior indicated would be questioned by the war-chief, and asked whether his 'heart was strong' within him. If his answer were deemed satisfactory, he would be told off[1] as one of the sixty for the trail.

Again and again this strange method of divination was repeated, the balanced weapon indicating – to the perfect satisfaction of the superstitious Hauhaus – the men whom the Maori war-god desired as the instruments of vengeance on the whites. Name after name the priest and chief pronounced, as his taiaha pointed along the squatting ranks, until the tally of barelegged warriors was complete.

Then, when the 'taua', or war party, had filled their cartridge belts and seen to their weapons, there was a ceremony of a livelier sort. The women and girls of the pa attired themselves in their waist piupius of coloured flax, decked their hair with feathers, dabbed ochre paint on their cheeks, and lined up on the marae for the poi dance, to send the warriors off 'in good heart', as the Maori has it. Hakas, too, were danced by the men and boys of the village, and the merry poi songs and the loudly-yelled war chants put a brisker jig into the feet of the brown soldiers as they marched out of the settlement and struck into the forest, hunting for Pakeha.

As the men of Tekau-ma-tua left the stockade, Titokowaru himself would loudly farewell them, shouting in his terrible gruff voice the ferocious injunction: 'Patua, kainga! Patua Kainga! E kai mau! Kaua e tukua kia haere! Kia mau ki tou ringa.' ('Kill them! Eat them! Kill them! Eat them! Let them not escape! Hold them fast in your hands.')

Should the Tekau-ma-rua meet with success in their murderous raids, it was usual for the leader of the party to call out as the home palisades were neared, 'Tenei te mea kei te mou ki toku ringa,' meaning that he had in his hand a portion of the flesh of a slain Pakeha. This would be called the 'mawe';

[1] told off: assigned.

it was an offering to the god of war. The mawe was almost invariably a human heart, torn from the body of the first man of the enemy killed in the fight.

On two or three occasions Kimble Bent witnessed the ceremony of the offering of the mawe. The heart (manawa) or other piece of human flesh was brought into the marae and given to a man named Tihirua, who was the priest of the burnt sacrifice. He was a young man about twenty-five years of age, belonging to the Ngatimaru[1] tribe, of the Upper Waitara.

'He would take the heart in his hand,' says Bent, 'and strike a match, or take a firestick and singe the flesh. When it was slightly scorched he would throw it away; it was tapu to Uenuku. This was an ancient war-custom of the Maoris; Titokowaru adopted it because he believed it would cause the Pakehas to lose strength and courage, and become unnerved in time of battle. After one fight, at Papatiakiaki, in 1868 (after we had left Te Ngutu), I saw this man Tihirua cut a white man's body open outside the marae, pull out the bleeding heart, hold lighted matches underneath it until it was singed and then throw it away.'

[1] Ngatimaru tribe: contemporary spelling, 'Ngati Maru' whose traditional lands occupy inland Taranaki.

Chapter 10[1]

The attack on Tuturu-mokai redoubt – A heroic defence – The heart of the captain – The killing of Kane: a traitor's end

One biting cold evening in July 1868 the whole population of the 'Bird's-Beak' pa gathered in the marae to watch the departure of a fighting column launched by Titokowaru against the whites. It was a night fitter for the snug raupo whare than for the warpath, but the omens were propitious for the expedition, and the war-god's sacred breeze, the whakarua,[2] breath of Uenuku, blew across the forest.

The sixty warriors of the Tekau-ma-rua took the trail with the lilt of the dance girls' poi-chant in their ears, and the war-choruses yelled by their comrades in the village gritted their battle-spirit. They were fittingly and thickly tapu'd for the night's work, karakia'd over with many 'hardening' and bullet-averting karakias, and, in short, thoroughly Hauhau-bedevilled for the fight.

Some of the warriors, belted and painted, carried long Enfield muzzle-loaders, some double-barrelled guns, some stolen or captured carbines, and a variety of other firearms. Each rifleman's equipment included a short tomahawk thrust through his flax girdle; a few – the storming party – were armed with long-handled tomahawks, murderously effective weapons in a hand-to-hand combat. Though a winter's night, most of them were scantily clad, as befitted a war party. Some wore shirts and other part-European dress; some only flax mats and waist shawls.

Up and down the village square, as the Hauhau captain Hauwhenua led his band out into the forest, strode Titokowaru in a blaze of fanatic exaltation, crying his commands to the warriors. Waving his plumed taiaha, he shouted his savage 'Kill them! Eat them! Let them not escape you!' And as they disappeared in the darkness, he returned to his place in the great council-house, where on his sacred mat he spent the night in commune with his ancestral spirits and in reciting incantations for the success of his men-at-arms.

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 22 Sep. 1906, 13.
Year: 1868
[2] whakarua: a northeasterly.

In single file the Hauhau soldiers struck into the black woods. As they entered the deeper thicknesses of the forest, where not a star could be seen for the density and unbroken continuity of the roof of foliage above them, they chanted this brief karakia, a charm invoking supernatural aid to clear their forest path of obstructions and smooth their way:

Wahi taratara e—i,
Me tuku ki te Ariki
Kia taoro atu e—i,
Nga pukepuke i noa.

Away through the bush they tramped, lightening the march with old war songs and with latter-day Hauhau chants, until their objective was neared – the little redoubt of Turuturu-mokai.

Marching with the savages of the Tekau-ma-rua was a white man – Charles Kane, called by the Maoris 'Kingi', the deserter from the 18th Royal Irish. He was armed with a gun, intending to assist his Hauhau friends in their attack on his fellow whites. Kimble Bent, it was reported afterwards in the Pakeha camps, also accompanied the warriors, but he denies this, asserting that he did not stir from the pa all night. Kingi, he says, was a ferociously vindictive man, and swore to have a shot at the white men from whom he had cut himself off forever.

Emerging from the forest, the warriors stole quietly down over the fern-slopes, and worked round to the front of the little parapeted fort that stood in a singularly unstrategic position on a gently rising hillside, close to the celebrated ancient pa Turuturu-mokai. Hauwhenua passed round the word to hide in the fern and remain in cover there as close up to the redoubt as possible, until he yelled the 'Kokiri' cry – the signal for the charge.

The Turuturu-mokai redoubt was but a tiny work, so small that the officer in charge, Captain Ross, had to live in a raupo hut built outside the walls. The entrenchment, consisting of earth parapet and surrounding trench, was being strengthened by its garrison of twenty-five Armed Constabulary, and the work was not quite finished when the Maori attack was delivered.

The night dragged on too slowly for the impatient and shivering warriors. Some wished to rush the white man's pa at once, but Hauwhenua and his sub-

chiefs forbade it till there was a little more light. Several of the younger men began to crawl up through the fern towards the wall of the little fort. The form of a solitary sentry was seen, pacing up and down outside the walls. He could easily have been shot, but the Hauhaus waited. Suddenly the sentry stopped, alarmed by some movement in the fern, and then quickly raised his carbine and fired.

The darkness – it was not yet dawn – was instantly lit up by the blaze of a return volley, and with a fearful yell the host of half-naked Maoris leaped from the fern and rushed for the redoubt.

The white solders, roused by the firing, rushed from their sleeping quarters and manned the parapets and angles of the work so furiously assailed by the forest men.

Their captain ran out from his whare armed with his sword and revolver and clothed only in his shirt. He just managed to cross the ditch by the narrow plank-bridge and get inside the gateway, which he defended until he was killed. A Hauhau charged right into the redoubt after him, tomahawked him, and making a clean cut in his breast, pulled out the heart, a trophy for the terrible ceremony of the mawe offering, but a lucky bullet knocked him over and the captain's heart was discovered after the fight, lying on the blood-stained ground outside the trench some yards away from the brave officer's corpse.

For two hours it was desperate work. The Hauhaus charged up to the parapet and many of them jumped into the ditch, whence they attempted to swarm over the walls, but were beaten off again and again by the little garrison. An endeavour to rush in force through the gateway of the redoubt did not succeed; several of the Hauhaus were shot in the attempt. Titokowaru had warned his men not to assault the entrance, which was certain to be stubbornly defended; 'if you do,' said he, 'the lion will close his mouth on you.' The impulsive young men however did not heed this advice, and it was in this tomahawk charge at the fort gate that most of those who were killed, fell.

Failing in his first attempt to take the redoubt by assault, some of the Hauhaus took post on rising ground a little distance off, where they could fire into the work, and one after another the defenders dropped, shot dead or badly wounded. The ditch was full of Maoris, only the narrow parapet separated then from the whites, and they yelled at the defenders and shouted all the English 'swear words' in their vocabulary. The Pakehas 'talked back' at them – says one

of the few survivors of the heroic garrison – and called out 'Look out! The cavalry are coming!' but the Hauhaus only laughed and said, 'Gammon, Pakeha, gammon! (Nonsense!)' They started to dig away at the wall with their tomahawks, and succeeded in undermining the parapet in several places.

Any man who showed his head above the parapets was quickly shot down. Ten white men were lying dead, and six more were wounded. One young soldier, Private Beamish, who fell mortally wounded while helping to defend an angle of the fort, told his brother, John Beamish (now a resident of Patea), who was fighting by his side, just before he died, that he believed it was a white man who shot him. Bent says that the deserter Kane, while taking part in the attack, was wounded in the right cheek by a Pakeha bullet, and then retired from the fight. John Beamish was struck by an Enfield bullet and severely wounded about the time his brother was shot, but though then unable to shoulder his carbine, he passed cartridges to Gill, the only unwounded man in his angle of the redoubt, until the end of the combat.

Grey morning broke on the battle-hill, and those of the garrison who could still shoulder a carbine were wondering if help would ever reach them. They knew the flashing of the guns must have been seen, and their reports heard at Waihi redoubt, only three miles away.

Suddenly the Maoris ceased firing and retired into the bush. Their sentries had given them warning that troops were coming.

As the Hauhaus dropped back the survivors of the garrison rushed out of the redoubt after them and gave them a parting shot or two, and then Von Tempsky and his A.C's.[1] arrived at the double and the fight was over. The redoubt had been saved by the valiant work of a little handful of colonial soldiers. A few minutes more and the Hauhaus would have succeeded in undermining the parapets sufficiently to force an entrance, and the defenders would have fallen to the last man, and the whole of their arms and the post's supplies carried off to Titokowaru's fort in the forest.

Hauwhenua withdrew his disappointed Tekau-ma-rua, carrying those of their wounded who were unable to walk and marched back to Te Ngutu-o-te-manu. The 'lion' of Titoko's speech, though sorely wounded, had in truth closed his mouth on some of their most daring braves.

[1] A.C.: Armed Constabulary.

As for the renegade Charles Kane, or Kingi, when he fled from the fight after receiving his bullet wound he made his way to Turangarere village, and announced that he would not return to Te Ngutu-o-te-manu. The Maoris, however, took him back to Te Ngutu, and he and Bent were brought before Titokowaru, who was sitting in the Whare-kura.

Bent appears, from his own account, to have now wearied of his terrible life amongst the Hauhaus. The war-chief fiercely questioned Kingi, who he suspected of an intention to return to the European camps. Then turning to 'Ringiringi', he said:

'E Ringi, speak! Do you ever think of leaving us and running away to the Pakehas?'

Bent hesitatingly confessed that he now desired to return to the men of his own colour, adding, 'but I will never take arms against you.'

Titokowaru glared at the white man, then rising he went to the door of the council-house and called to the people in the marae to enter. When they were all in the big whare, Titokowaru ordered them to close the door and the sliding window. In the gloom of the praying-house, the people sat in terrible silence, and the white men trembled for their heads. Titokowaru, fearfully stern and menacing, addressed the Pakehas:

'Whakarongo mai! Listen to me. If you persist in saying that you wish to return to the white man, it will be your death! I will kill you both with my tomahawk, now, in this house, unless you promise that you will never leave the Maoris! I will slay you, and your bodies will be cooked in a hangi!'

'Ringiringi', in real fear of his life, made answer that he would remain with the Hauhaus if Titoko would protect him, for he dreaded some of the chief's fiercer followers. Kingi, too, hastened to give the required promise, but – unlike his fellow Pakeha – broke it at the first opportunity.

When the people had left the Whare-kura, Titoko spoke to 'Ringiringi' in a more friendly and reassuring tone, saying that he wished the Pakeha to remain with him in the pa, and that in order to assure his life against the wilder spirits in the tribes gathered under his command, he would tapu him, as Te Ua had done two years before. For his tapu, he explained, was a far more effective and binding one than that of the Opunake prophet, a spell that no man dared break on pain of death.

Not many days later the traitor Kingi deserted from the pa, taking with him a watch, a revolver and some clothing, which he had 'commandeered' from the natives. For some little time nothing was heard of him. At length the warriors of Tekau-ma-rua, while out scouting one day in the direction of Turangarere, discovered on the track leading to the settlement a note addressed to the white soldiers' commander at Waihi, stating that the writer (Kane) and Bent were at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu, awaiting a favourable opportunity to tomahawk Titokowaru, cut off his head, and bring it in to the Government camp. Kane was evidently clearing the way for his return to civilisation, and this note – which he had left in a spot where he hoped the white troops would come across it – was obviously intended as a palliative in some measure of his military offences.

The deserter's letter was brought to the 'Bird's-Beak' pa, where it was translated by an English-speaking Maori. 'Ringiringi', questioned, disclaimed any knowledge of it, and as to the incriminating reference to himself, he assured Titokowaru that Kingi was lying.

Titokowaru immediately despatched the white man and four armed Maoris after Kingi. They found him at Te Paka village, but he disappeared that evening, and was at last caught by a party of seven Maoris at Taiporohenui. Closely guarded, the traitor to two races was marched through the bush to Turangarere, where the Hauhau guard confined him in a raupo hut.

They killed him there that night.

Bent was lying half-asleep in a whare in the settlement when the seven Maoris who had brought Kingi in entered in an intensely excited state, sat down and asked him if he had heard of the judgement on his fellow white. Then one of them said, 'Kingi is dead.' Another man, leaning forward until his passionate face almost touched Bent's, exclaimed, 'Ringi, had you done as Kingi has done, we would not have killed you in the ordinary way. Your fate would have been burning alive in the oven on the marae!' Then the seven, after a conversation between themselves in a strange language the white man could not understand, listen as he would – the Maoris sometimes improvise a secret tongue, by eliding certain syllables in words and adding new ones – the executioners rose and left the whare.

It was not until next day that 'Ringiringi' learned the details of the deserter's end. Kingi, after being given a meal, was left alone in the hut, but

was watched through crevices in the wall until he sank to sleep, fatigued with his enforced tramp. He lay with a blanket partly over his head. One of the Hauhaus stole quietly into the whare and attempted to deal him a fatal blow with a sharp billbook.[1] The blow however only gashed his nose, and he leaped up and grappled with his assailant.

The Maoris outside, hearing the noise of the scuffle, rushed in. An old man seized the white man by the leg, brought him down, and aimed a terrible blow at him with an axe, as he lay on the floor. The other Hauhaus completed the work with their tomahawks, and the dead body of the renegade Irishman, almost cut to pieces, was dragged out and thrown into a disused potato pit on the outskirts of the village.

[1] billhook: similar to a machete but with a blade ending in a hook for lopping vegetation.

Chapter 11[1]

Stalked by Hauhaus – Old Jacob to the Rescue – Battle of Te Ngutu-o-te-Manu – How Von Tempsky fell – The white forces repulsed

When 'Ringiringi' returned to the 'Bird's-Beak' stockade he found himself in a position of extreme peril. The Hauhaus, excited by the news of Kane's treachery and summary execution, were fiercely hostile in demeanour, and some of the young bloods came dancing about the white man as he walked into the village, with menacing shouts, emphasised by savage thigh-slapping, 'pukana'-ing[2] and grimacing with outthrust tongue and rolling eyes, and similar demonstrations of derision and hatred.

A council of the people was held on the marae on his return, and the killing of Kane was narrated in minutest and barbaric detail. Then several Hauhaus rose in turn and demanded the death of Ringiringi on the principle that all Pakehas were unreliable, and that it was a foolish policy to keep one in the camp who might sooner or later betray them.

'Let us lead him outside the pa and shoot him,' proposed one truculent young warrior of the Tekau-ma-rua.

'Kaati!' said Titokowaru, in his great roaring voice, as he rose with his spear-staff in his hand. 'Ringiringi is my Pakeha. I have tapu'd him, and I have told him that his life is safe. If you want to shoot him – well, you must kill me first!'

Then, turning to the white man, the war-chief took him by the hand, led him to his own house and shut the people out. He told Ringiringi that in the present temper of the tribesmen he had better remain as much as he could in the whare, and that, at any rate, he must not venture far from the door unless he, Titoko, were with him, or in view.

Some days later, Ringiringi, imagining from the more settled and pacific attitude of the Hauhaus that he no longer ran any risk in taking his walks abroad, wandered a short distance outside the stockade into the forest, and seating himself on a fallen tree trunk, filled his pipe for a quiet smoke. Suddenly, he heard a cough. He looked about him, but saw no one.

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 26 Sep. 1906, 5.
Year: 1868

[2] pukana: stare wildly to add emphasis to particular words of speech.

'Who's there?' he called out.

A voice close to him replied, 'It is I – Hakopa.'

'Ringiringi' looked up quickly and saw an old tattooed man named Hakopa (Jacob) perched on the lowest branch of a rata tree with a double-barrelled gun in his hand. Hakopa was a tall, straight old fellow, a veteran of the ancient fighting type. Bent had a thorough admiration for him as a man of singular courage, without the braggadocio of the young 'toas';[1] Hakopa had for a long time exhibited a kindly leaning towards the white man, and had been a firm friend of his all through the troubled days in the pa.

'Quick, quick!' he said in a low, cautious voice. 'Hide yourself, Ringi! When you walked out of the pa, I heard two men who were watching you say that they would follow you up and kill you as they had killed Kane. They went to their whares for their weapons; and I followed you quickly to warn you. I saw you standing there and climbed on this branch to see what those men are doing. E tama! Conceal yourself! They are coming!'

The white man hastily selected a hiding place. Close to the rata tree was a greatly jungly mass of springy mangemange creepers and thorny 'bush lawyer' growing close to the fern-matted ground. Throwing himself on his face he crawled underneath the brambly shelter, disregarding many a scratch from the prickly 'lawyer' on his bare limbs.

Hardly had he reached this place of concealment than two villainous-visaged young Hauhaus walked quickly along the track from the pa gateway. Both swung tomahawks as they came, and one carried at his girdle a revolver – a trophy taken from some slain white officer. Seeing Hakopa descending from his tree-perch, they stopped and asked:

'Where is the Pakeha? Did you see him pass?'

'Why do you ask?' said the old man.

'We have come to kill him,' replied one of the men. 'Where is he?'

Hakopa instantly put his cocked tupara to his shoulder and levelled it at the foremost of the Hauhaus, the man with the revolver. 'Haere atu!' he said sharply. 'Go! Leave this spot at once or I will shoot you. Ringiringi is my friend.'

The old fellow's determined air quite overawed the Pakeha-hunters, and they sulkily and silently returned to the pa. Jacob watched them off, and when

[1] toas: braves.

the white man had crawled out again from his hiding place, he escorted him back to the pa, walking in front of him with his gun cocked, on the alert for any attack on his protégé. He took Ringiringi to his house and then informed Titokowaru of the incident.

The chief showed genuine anger. He assembled the fighting-men and sternly ordered them to molest the white man no more. 'If you harm him,' he said, 'I shall leave the pa and return to my own village. Listen! Ringiringi is henceforth my mokopuna – my grandchild – and I now give him another name, the name of one of my ancestors. His name is Tu-nui-a-moa.'

Thereafter Bent went about in safety under the protecting mana of the war-chief, and his old name of 'Ringiringi' was heard no more.

During the month of August, when Bent and most of the Hauhaus were absent from the pa, 'The Bird's-Beak' received a surprise visit from the colonial soldiery. Colonel McDonnell and Majors Von Tempsky and Hunter led a force of two hundred men – Armed Constabulary, Wellington Rangers, and Wellington Rifles – through the forest from Waihi, rushed the stockade, drove out the defenders, shooting several of them, and burned some of the whares and palisading.

A much more serious engagement however was fought here about three weeks later, when the Pakehas again attacked the stockade (which in the meantime had been repaired and strengthened), this time from the rear. Early one warm spring afternoon, when the vast forest lay steeped in calm, and Taranaki's sentry-peak rose like an ivory tent out of the blue haze that bathed its wooded base, the sound of heavy rifle-firing suddenly broke the quiet of the wilderness.

The shots came from the Mountain's side of the pa, the opposite one to that by which the troops had advanced on the first occasion. The piquets[1] of the Hauhaus in rear of the fort had unexpectedly been attacked by Colonel McDonnell and a column of A. C.'s and volunteers and friendly Maoris, in all 270 men, from Waihi. The natives fell back on their defences and the white soldiers, advancing in skirmishing order, soon saw here and there through the trees and undergrowth the irregular tops of the palisade-lines.

[1] piquet (Fr.) or picket (Eng.): lookouts; a small unit of soldiers placed on a forward position to warn against an enemy advance.

Titokowaru, when the first shots were heard as the column advanced on the pa, ran to direct the defence of the pa. Seeing Bent on the marae of the village, he ordered him to follow his elder relative, an old man named Te Waka-Takere-nui, and retire into the bush in the other direction until the fight was over. So the white man and old Waka and most of the non-combatants of the pa – old men, women and children – hurried away to a sheltered place in the thicknesses of the woods, and remained there all that afternoon and night.

While Bent was busying himself in putting up a rough wharau, or shed of saplings and fern tree fronds, for the shelter of himself and some of his companions, his fellow Pakehas were in desperate case. Before they could reach the stockade a terrible fire was all at once opened upon them by invisible enemies.

The Hauhaus had taken to their tree redoubts. Every rata and pukatea that grew about the pa held its little garrison of savage bushmen – some ensconced within the hollow trunks, standing on rough stages and levelling their guns through the loopholes they had cut; some perched up in the forks of the great crooked branches, sheltered by the foliage and nearly blending in colour with the tree trunks.

The treetops spat leaden death. The white men, assailed by so hot a fire from such well-hidden foes, were bewildered. Then, as they took cover and dodged from tree to tree, firing at anything that might indicate a Hauhau, they caught glimpses here and there of brown figures flitting like forest demons from cover to cover close to the stockading, and here and there a naked brown limb showing in a tree fork, as some incautious Hauhau momentarily exposed himself.

Upon these trees some of the veteran bushfighters under McDonnell and Von Tempsky directed their return fire, and an occasional dead or wounded Hauhau, his gun dropping from his hand, came toppling to the ground. One young A.C. officer shot two or three Maoris in one tree.

The Hauhau snipers seemed to specially single out the white officers, who were conspicuous in their silver-laced caps. One of Titokowaru's lieutenants, a man named Wairau, is mentioned by the Maoris as having carefully reserved his fire – from a post in a huge old rata tree – for the officers.

Some of the officers wished to storm the pa, but McDonnell, seeing the strength of the position, refused, and proceeded to extract his out-manoeuvred men as best he could from the trap into which they had fallen.

The marksmen in the rata trees fired without yelling or war cries, and in most cases there was little to indicate their position but the puffy clouds of smoke that hung about their leafy redoubts. But loud shouts and calls of encouragement from the chiefs came from the stockade, behind which many of the Tekau-ma-rua had taken post, and were throwing bullets into the white ranks as fast as they could fire and reload.

Sword in hand, Von Tempsky,[1] the doyen[2] of the Forest Rangers, stepped out of cover to cut away some brushwood in order to get a clear view of the pa, when he fell, shot dead by a Hauhau hidden in a rata. Hero of half a dozen campaigns, this picturesque dashing soldier of fortune was the central figure in countless stories of daring and adventure, the adored of his veteran bushwhackers, and the terror of the Maoris – to whom he was known as 'Manorau', and who told wondrous tales of his prowess with his throwing-knife and his long crooked sword. He had begun soldiering life as a Prussian Chasseur[3], had served under the Emperor Maximilian in Mexico, and in sundry Central American wars, as well as the Waikato campaign under General Cameron; he was a clever artist, and a travel writer little less than brilliant – and he fell at last to the bullet of a naked savage perched like a monkey in a tree above a Maori bush-stockade.

Other officers dropped, and the retreat began. With appalling yells the Hauhaus rushed from their pa and their tree forts and pursued the retiring whites, who made their way slowly off the field encumbered with many wounded. The dead had to be left where they fell.

The story of that terrible retreat through the forest by night has been told by several survivors, some of who now farm their peaceful lands almost within view of the historic battleground of Te Ngutu-o-te-manu. One of these is Mr James Livingstone, of the Waingongoro, who in Captain Roberts' gallant little rearguard helped to hold the pursuing Hauhaus in check, and whenever a man fell near him, smashed his carbine against a tree so that it would not be serviceable to the enemy.

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[1] Von Tempsky: Gustavus Ferdinand Von Tempsky (1828–68).
[2] doyen: the most respected or prominent person in a particular field.
[3] chasseur: light infantry or cavalry equipped and trained for rapid movement.

Twenty-four of the colonial soldiers – five of them officers – were killed and twenty-six wounded in this fatal attack on the 'Bird's-Beak' pa.

In the early morning after the battle, a messenger from the village sought out Bent and his companions in their forest refuge and informed them that the Pakehas had been beaten off, with great loss. All hurried back to the pa.

The white man found the bush village in a fearful state of excitement – a delirium of triumphant savagery. Yelling like furies, shouting ferocious battle songs, waving their weapons in the air, dancing hakas, the whole of the victorious Hauhaus were there with their spoils of war – carbines, swords, revolvers, soldiers' caps and belts.

And, in a most frightful scene of all, in the centre of the marae were laid in a row the bodies of many white men, stripped naked – the fallen heroes of Te Ngutu-o-te-manu.

Chapter 12[1]

The sword of 'Manu-rau' – Cannibals of the bush – A soldier's body eaten – Why Titokowaru revived cannibalism – A story of the first Maori King

Immediately Kimble Bent entered the gateway of the 'Bird's-Beak' pa two or three of the Tekau-ma-rua warriors took charge of him, and marching him to a small thatched hut on one side of the marae, shut him in by himself and fastened the door on the outside. For a little while the white man sat in the gloom of the windowless whare, listening to the demoniac shouts of the Hauhaus outside, and wondering what would come next – whether, indeed, his own body would not shortly be added to the terrible pile of Pakeha soldiers on the marae.

At last, hearing Titokowaru's great voice raised in commanding tones, Bent's mingled curiosity and fear impelled him to search for a loophole from which he could see what was going on. Discovering a small crevice in the nikau-leaf walls of the hut, he enlarged it sufficiently to gain a good view of the assemblage on the village square.

The whole of the inhabitants of the bush pa were there, men, women and children, their faces smudged with charcoal or red ochre, the paint of the warpath. They squatted on the ground in a great half-circle, facing the nude corpses of the white officers and men. The frightful clamour of the savages had given place with strange suddenness to a dead silence as they listened to their war-chief's harangue and watched him quickly pacing to and fro with his sacred taiaha in his hand, now carrying it at the trail in the taki attitude,[2] now dandling[3] it high in the air as he broke into a chant to his battle-god Uenuku.

'Bring out the Pakeha,' Titokowaru cried, when he had ended his speech. A Maori rose, and unfastening the whare door, led Bent out on to the assembly ground. He was taken up to the corpses of the slain soldiers and one of the Hauhau chiefs asked him if he knew any of them.

The only body Bent could identify was that of Major Von Tempsky, lying there, naked with the others. Before disclosing his recognition of the white

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 26 Sep. 1906, 5.
Year: 1868
[2] 'the taki attitude': the traditional speechmaking position.
[3] dandle: to move something lightly up and down.

warrior's remains, he turned to the people and asked if any of them had taken from a Pakeha officer a sword with an unusual curve in it, and a cap with a brass band.

A Hauhau came forward, and said, 'Yes, I have them.'

'Show me which Pakeha you took them from,' said Bent.

The Maori, with Von Tempsky's sword in his hand, pointed to the Major's corpse.

'Well,' said Bent, 'that is the body of Manorau, whom the Pakehas called Von Tempsky, and that is his sword.'

A great 'Ah–h' went up from the people, and the exultant possessor of Manorau's sword of wondrous mana went bounding down the marae flashing the weapon above his head, turning his painted face from side to side in the hideous grimaces of the pukana, and thrusting out his tongue to an extraordinary length.

The Hauhaus were in a frenzy of excitement when they realized that the renowned Manorau was indeed lying dead before them. Some of them proposed to drag the body out and cook it in the hangi so that they might have the satisfaction of devouring their most dreaded enemy. But Titokowaru, raising his taiaha said, 'No – let us wait a while; there is no need for such haste.'

Bent was now ordered to return to his hut and the door was again fastened on him. The proposal to cook and eat the bodies of Von Tempsky and his comrades was discussed in a wild korero. Bent, from his eye-hole in the wall of the whare, saw Hauhau after Hauhau, the orators of the tribes, jump up, tomahawk or gun or sword in hand, and furiously declaim as they went leaping and trotting back and forward in the open space between the ranks of the victors and the dead; and the deeds of the battlefield were told again and again.

At last, several men jumped up and seizing one of the white corpses, dragged it away across the marae to the cooking ovens in rear of the dwelling-huts. 'I could not say whose body it was,' says Bent, 'but it was a man in good flesh, and, if anything, under the middle height.'

When the body had been hauled away to the hangis for the terrible feast, Titokowaru rose and cried in a great croaking voice:

'E koro ma, e kui ma, tena ra koutou! Tanumia te hunga tapu, e takoto nei; e tahu ki te ahi. Kaore e pai kia takoto ki runga ki te kino. Te mea pai me tahu ki te ahi!'

('Oh, friends, men and women – I salute you! Bury the sacred bodies of the slain, lying before us here. And burn them with fire! It is not well that they should be left to offend. They must be consumed in fire!')

At this command, the people dispersed to collect fuel for a funeral pyre. They brought logs and branches of dry timber from the surrounding bush and from the firewood piles in the rear of the whares, and a huge pile of wood was built in the centre of the marae. Even the little nearly naked children came running up with their little hands full of sticks to cast upon the heap.

All the mutilated bodies of the white soldiers – except the one that had been dragged away – were lifted up and placed on the roughly levelled top of the huge pyre, and on top of all was heaped more wood. Then the Hauhaus set fire to the pile.

Bent's whare door was now unfastened and the natives called to him to come out. What he saw is perhaps best told in his own words:

'When I walked out on to the marae I met two Patea men I knew from Hukatere village. They had come to Te Ngutu-o-te-manu with a gift of gunpowder to Titokowaru. With them I presently went down to the cooking-quarters to see what had become of the body that had been dragged away. There we found a large earth oven full of red-hot stones, and there they were engaged in roasting the white man's corpse. They prepared it for cooking in the usual way and were turning it over on the hot stones, scraping off the outer skin. The cannibal cooks looked round and asked me savagely what I wanted there. They threatened that if I did not leave instantly they would throw me into the oven too, and roast me alive.

'I returned to the marae and was sitting amongst the crowd there some time later, perhaps and hour, when I saw a man's hand and ribs, cooked, carried up. The human flesh was placed in front of the two powder-carriers from Hukatere, who were sitting close to me. The meat was in a flax basket, and a basket of cooked potatoes was set down with it. The present of food was out of compliment to the visitors.

'The two Maoris refused to touch it, saying, "No, we will not eat man!" So the other natives ate it. The rest of the body was also served round, and the people consumed the whole of it. Titokowaru never took any of the human flesh himself. His reason for abstaining was that if he ate it his mana tapu – his sacredness – would be destroyed.'

While the frightful meal was being consumed, the people sat round, silently watching the burning of the other white men's corpses. Far above the trees of the surrounding forest rose the thick column of smoke from the blazing pile. 'Now and then' says Bent, 'a body would burst and the blaze of flame and the smoke would leap straight up, high into the air.'

For hours the Hauhaus sat there, replenishing the fire with dry logs as it burned down, and late into the night the dreadful crematory blaze lit up the palisade marae.

This revival of the ancient practice of cannibalism was the most hideously savage feature of Titokowaru's system of warfare. It was not meat-hunger in this case; it was a battlefield rite. In olden Maoridom war was war to the death, and to the ovens; it was no use beating your enemy unless you killed him, and no use killing him unless you ate him. The eating of soldiers' bodies not only glutted racial revenge; it also – in Maori eyes – destroyed the prestige of the whites, it ruined their mana as men and as warriors.

Te Ngutu-o-te-manu was by no means a solitary instance of man-eating in the war of 1868–69. On various occasions the bodies and limbs of Europeans killed were taken to the Maori pas and cooked and eaten. A singular little anecdote is told by the Taranaki Maoris when discussing these man-eating rites in Titokowaru's camps. Titoko, say they, in allowing some of the bodies from the battlefields to be consumed as food, was only putting into practice the spirit of a speech made by the old King Potatau te Wherowhero a decade or so before.

Potatau – grandfather of the present 'King' of Waikato, Mahuta Potatau te Wherowhero, M.L.C.[1] – was a warrior of exceeding renown three-quarters of a century ago, and a cannibal of cannibals. Te Wherowhero 'Kai-tangata' – 'man devourer' – he was called. Many a time he raided Taranaki with his war parties of Waikato and Tainui, and on one occasion at Pukerangiora, about 1830, slew hundreds of tribespeople, and with his warriors cooked and ate them. Nearly thirty years later he was set up as King over the confederated Maori tribes in the centre of the Island. When the Maori kingdom was first established, the then Governor of the colony visited old Potatau and discussed the Maori aspirations for independence. The Governor, according to the Maori story, endeavoured to show the King the folly of opposing the sway of the white man; if it did not come to warfare – which was not then contemplated by either side

[1] M.L.C.: Member of the Legislative Council.

– the British soldiers would soon make a 'clean sweep' of the ill-armed and ill-provisioned Maori.

'You are wrong,' said Potatau; 'it will take you many a year to sweep away the Maoris – you will never do it.'

'But,' said the Governor, 'suppose we fight you, and drive you into the forest, far away from your cultivations, what will you do for food?'

'Why,' replied the old King, 'I have plenty of food even in the bush – the berries of the tawa and karaka trees, the heart of the mamaku tree fern, and the nikau, and other foods of the forest. We can live on those.'

'And suppose I chase you with my soldiers, and fight you in the forests, and pursue you so that you cannot even get those things to eat, the berries and the mamaku, what then will you do for food?'

Said old Potatau, grinning: 'Then I'll eat you!'

This half-defiant, half-jocular speech of the venerable warrior of Waikato was repeated word for word as it is given here in every Kingite village, and in the Hauhau pas of after years; but it was left for Titoko's bushmen of Taranaki to put into actual execution their old foeman's commissariat methods.[1] 'Titokowaru heard it,' say the Maoris, 'and when the war began, and he became a fighting-chief, he did as Potatau would have done – he fought his enemy in the forest, and slew him there, and ate his flesh for food.' And – as Potatau had predicted – it was many a year before the war was ended – and even then Titokowaru was never caught.

[1] commissariat: a system for supplying an army with food.

Chapter 13[1]

On the march again – Pakeha in pickle – Skirmishing and fort-building – A new stronghold

The famous 'Bird's-Beak' pa, made so memorable by the terrible scenes enacted around and within its stockade, was soon deserted. Titokowaru, not long after the Hauhau victory and the savage rites narrated in the last chapter, issued an order that the village must be evacuated, and a new position selected for a bush fort, in which to withstand the attack that must inevitably be delivered against him by the Government. So one day the whole of the inhabitants of the Te Ngutu-o-te-manu – men, women and children, and the solitary Pakeha, having gathered together their belongings, marched out of their village and tramped away through the bush eastwards.

The armed men of the Tekau-ma-rua preceded them to make sure that the way was clear of the Pakeha enemy. At the village of Turangarere and Taiporohenui they dwelt for a while, and the warriors scouted out day after day in the vicinity of the European redoubts. A little skirmishing occurred; some shots were fired at the Turuturu-mokai redoubt, now re-garrisoned, and a sniping party amused themselves with the Manawapou Camp[2] as a target. Before very long Bent and his companions were once more on the move, swagging[3] through the bush to the Patea Valley.

The scene of war was now the Lower Patea and the Waitotara, whence Titokowaru, it was believed, intended to raid the town of Wanganui.

For some weeks Titoko and his Hauhaus camped in Oruatihi Pa, then shifted to Otoia near the banks of the Patea, where they built a redoubt from which they could fire into the European position of Manutahi. The fortification was finished in a day and a night, all hands, men and women, toiling at it, and Bent amongst them. Some dug the trenches with their spades; some carried earth in flax baskets, and piles of flax and fern, and built up parapets.

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 29 Sep. 1906, 13.
Year: 1868
[2] Manawapou Camp: the European military encampment at Manawapou.
[3] swagging: carrying their belongings.

Early in the morning after the pa was completed, there was a brush with the Government forces. A column of Armed Constabulary and Wanganui Maoris made a reconnaissance up the cliffy, forest-fringed banks of the Patea in the direction of the Hauhau redoubt, and Titoko's men attacked them, lining both sides of the river and keeping up a brisk fire. The troops retiring to their tea after a pretty little skirmish, the Hauhaus marched back to the pa in high jubilation, singing war-songs, waving their guns, and bounding about and grimacing like a company of fiends. Then the steaming pork and potatoes, and speech making and howling hakas around the great campfires; from the Maori point of view, quite a pleasant day's sport.

During the two months following the bush fight at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu no serious engagement occurred, but Titokowaru's war parties scoured the district for many miles, laid ambuscades on the tracks between the European redoubts, burned settlers' homes, and bagged a stray Pakeha or two. One incident of this period illustrates the peculiar ghoulish humour of the Hauhau savage. Two friendly Maoris, mail carriers in the Government service, halted a while at Manawapou one day, while on their way to Patea, and searched the settlement there for the wherewithal for a dinner. A cask stood beside one of the whares, and on taking the top off they found it to be a barrel of brine[1] containing meat – apparently pork. Anticipating a good meal of salt pork they fished up some of the meat, when they found to their disgust that it was human flesh! 'Long-pig!' Not being Hauhaus or cannibals, they dropped the 'man-meat' – white man – back into the cask and stayed their hunger on good honest potatoes.

The question was, who pickled the Pakeha? A Hauhau prisoner subsequently enlightened the Government Maoris. A scouting party from Titoko's camp had dodged down to Manawapou and discovered there, not far from the redoubt, a new-made grave. Opening it, they disinterred a white man's corpse. In sheer 'devilment' they cut it up, put it into a cask of brine that stood handy, and then re-covered the cask and left it. It would have been an exquisite joke from the cannibal Hauhau viewpoint had the Government soldiers inadvertently helped themselves to a joint of white man!

Titokowaru's entrenched position at Otoia was not a strong one, and presently, after a council of war with his principal men, he decided to abandon

[1] brine: water strongly impregnated with salt in which food is preserved.

it and build a new bush pa, which should be nearly as impregnable as a Maori fort could be. So one morning a long line of Hauhaus of all ages and both sexes – the armed men in front and rear – bearing their simple belongings in flax basket pikaus on their backs, issued from the Otoia redoubt and marched away through the bush to a spot about twelve miles from the mouth of the Patea River, and a mile-and-a-half from the old Okotuku pa, which had been attacked by the troops two years previously. At this place, Papa-tiakiaki, also known as Moturoa, the war-chief ordered that the new fort be constructed.

The position was on partially cleared land, nearly level, surrounded by the forest. The men, after hastily constructing huts roofed with the fronds of tree fern and nikau, set to work with their axes to hew out a large clearing. Titoko marked out the lines of the entrenchments and palisades. The forest trees quickly fell before the practised assault of many bushmen, and the shrubby cover in front of the pa was carefully burned.

Then came the setting up of the stockade. Tawa and other trees of small size were cut into suitable lengths for the palisade posts. These posts, from eight to twelve inches in diameter, were sunk solidly in the ground, forming long walls some ten feet high. Then saplings were cut to serve as crossties or rails to lash across the posts, and with supplejack and aka vines the whole were bound strongly and closely together.

Kimble Bent, as usual, worked with the Hauhaus – toiling like a navvy[1] cutting timber, setting up the great posts, lashing the palisading and digging trenches. He wore nothing but a rough flax mat round his waist – trouserless, bootless, hatless. In everything but skin a Maori. 'It was exciting,' says the white man, 'but nonetheless it was slavery. Many a night those times when I lay down on my flax whariki, though I was dog-tired, I could not sleep – thinking, thinking about the past, and dreading what the future might bring for me. Many and many a time I wished myself dead and out of it all.'

What furious, what Homeric toil[2] was that pa building! Those wild brown men, spurred by the reports of speedy attack, labored with incredible energy and swiftness. The Papa-tiakiaki fortified hold[3] was completed in less than three days – stockaded, trenched, parapetted and rifle-pitted – ready for the enemy! Behind the strong tree trunk stockade there were trenches and

[1] navvy: traditionally a labourer employed in road, railway, or canal construction.
[2] Homeric toil: toil on an epic scale.
[3] fortified hold: fortress.

casemated[1] rifle-pits from which the defenders could fire through the lower interstices in the great war-fence; behind the trenches again was a high parapet from which a second line of Hauhaus could deliver their fire over the top of the palisade. It was one of the strongest works yet constructed by the Maoris, and one that was not likely to be stormed except at the cost of many lives.

Though the people worked in a fever of excitement, the customary ceremonies to ensure the successful occupancy of a fighting pa were not forgotten. Titokowaru recited the appropriate invocations to the gods of his ancestors, and the usual 'luck'-offering, termed a 'whatu', was buried under the foot of one of the large angle-posts. This whatu, as in the case of the offerings buried beneath the Niu flagstaffs, was a greenstone ornament. This custom is a modification of the olden practice of human sacrifice on the occasion of the completion of any important work. Formerly, a slave would be killed, and his body buried beneath the central house-pillar, or at the foot of a big angle-post of a pa. We Pakehas have survivals of the same custom amongst ourselves, such as the placing of coins of the realm under the foundation stone of a new building.

[1] casemate: a small cavity in a wall of a fortress with openings from which guns could be fired.

Chapter 14[1]

Fight at Papa-tiakiaki – Government forces repulsed – Maori brave's desperate feat – Over the palisades – A scene of terror – A soldier's body eaten

'The soldiers! The soldiers!' A Hauhau scout, racing in from the edge of the bush, raised this reveille of alarm just at misty dawn one grey November morning. 'The soldiers are coming! White men and Kupapas. They are by now entering the bush! To arms and man the trenches!'

The fighting men of Papa-tiakiaki pa poured out of their sleeping huts, snatching up their weapons and accoutrements[2] as they came, and ran to their places in the pits and ditches behind the stockade. They hastily loaded their tuparas,[3] their rifles and their carbines, and peering eagerly through the defence-works sought to penetrate the raw damp morning mist that shrouded their front.

'They're coming! They're coming!'

'Kia tupato! Be wary and don't fire too soon!'

'Don't fire till we have them close to the palisades.'

'Silence! Let them think us asleep!'

These cautions ran down the lines of fierce dark figures, crouching in the trenches with their gun muzzles at the roughly loopholed palisade. The whole bush-castle was alive and ready. Every man and boy who could shoulder a gun was in the well-hidden firing lines. The old people and the women and children were ordered to take shelter in the underground chambers and trenches. The white man, who made himself useful by preparing cartridges for the Hauhaus, was sent with the non-combatants and took a post in a shallow trench.

The wet mist slightly lifting as the morning light came, the musketeers presently saw dim figures moving out from the dark forest on their front and right and left flanks. Moving quickly, half running in a cautious crouching gait, they flitted from tree to tree, and burnt stump to stump, nearer and nearer to the stockade.

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 29 Sep. 1906, 13.
Year: 1868

[2] accoutrements: additional items of dress or equipment.

[3] tupara: shotguns.

Not a sound came from the breathlessly waiting warriors, nor from the ghost-like figures that now sank to the ground, each behind a log or a great blackened stump, or the butt of a standing tree.

Gun in hand, finger on the trigger, the Hauhaus waited.

The apparitions were picked bushfighters of the New Zealand forces commandeered by Colonel Whitmore, seeking to surprise Titoko in his forest den. Advancing silently in skirmishing order through the bush, they took cover, waiting for light enough to fight by. There were detachments of four divisions of the Armed Constabulary, many of them veteran bushfighters, and men of the Patea Rifles and Patea Cavalry. There, too, came Kepa's Wanganui Maoris, with rifle and tomahawk, old hands on the war trail and eager for a brush with their ancient enemies of Taranaki.

There were two hundred Government men fronting the fort, and probably more than that number of Hauhaus behind the palisades, each with levelled gun, squinting for a sight of Pakeha.

Crack! Crack! Went an impatient warrior's tupara, and the death-like stillness of the forest clearing gave place on the instant to appalling notes of war.

Just as the Hauhau fired, 50 or 60 blue and grey figures sprang from the half-burned cover in front of the pa and charged for the stockade. They were within a few yards of the high palisading when suddenly the whole face of the war-fence flashed fire, and a thundering volley crashed in terrifying reverberations through the forest.

Nearly half the storming party of A.C.'s fell before that fearful volley. The remainder instantly dropped to cover amongst the logs and stumps that cumbered the pa front. Here they returned the fire as well as they could, but one man after another was hit without being able to see one Hauhau of the many scores that lined the palisades.

Meanwhile a brisk little fight was going on along the flanks of the pa between Kepa's kupapas and a party of warriors who made a sortie from the stockade. Kepa was furiously assailed by the bushmen, leaping from tree to tree, yelling their frightful Hauhau cries; and it was as much as the plucky Wanganui men could do to hold their own. Their attempt to take the pa in the rear had failed, and they at last withdrew to support the shattered ranks of their white comrades.

For several hours the bush fight continued. The A.C. supports had come up and a heavy fire was concentrated on the stockade, but to little purpose. It was impregnable to rifle fire, and in their pitted works the defenders were able to pick off the white skirmishers in perfect safety.

Bullets swept the clearing in every direction, and through the infernal music of the forest battle, the white soldiers heard the loudly-yelled war cries of the chiefs and the shrill voices of the Maori women as they encouraged their warriors, husbands, and brothers, and screamed them on to slaughter with all the fury of brown tattooed Hecate.[1]

All this time Kimble Bent was squatting in a trench and peering over the bank at the fight. Bullets zipped and sang over him. A woman quite close to him was shot dead through the head as she incautiously rose in her excitement to wave her shawl and yell a fighting cry to the men at the palisades.

Just after the fight began, Bent was an eyewitness of the most desperately daring deed he had ever seen. A fiery old tattooed warrior by name of Te Waka-tapu-ruru – the Hauhau mentioned in an earlier chapter as the man who had killed Mr Charles Broughton, Government native agent, on the Patea River in 1865 – was in a quiver of excitement while the garrison awaited the attack, and could hardly be silenced until the attack was delivered.

When the pakeha storming party rushed up at the double, the old man could no longer be restrained. Perfectly naked, except for the broad flax waist girdle, which held his short-handled tomahawk, and gripping his double-barrelled gun, the tall old savage took a great running jump at the stockade from the inner parapet, and leaped clean over it! Yelling a Pai-marire battle cry as he rose from the ground after his extraordinary leap, he snatched the tomahawk from his belt, and charged straight for the advancing whites. It was a fit of 'whakamoremore' – sheer blind desperation, utter recklessness of death. Possibly the furious old fanatic imagined that his Hauhau angel and his mesmeric password, 'Hapa! Pai-marire! Hau!' would avert the bullets of the Pakeha. But he was killed in the very charge – the first Maori shot that day. A Pakeha ball took him square in the forehead, and with a convulsive bound and a half-choked barking 'Hau!' on his lips, the tattooed brave fell dead amongst the foremost of his enemies.

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[1] Hecate**:** A Greek goddess from the Homeric tradition variously associated with ghosts, necromancy and sorcery.

It was just the death that he desired – face to the foe with his war-axe in his hand – the death of a true Maori toa! This savage hero's son, Ratoia – now living in the village of Taiporohenui – a young boy at the time of the fight, saw his father's great leap over the palisade, and saw him killed.

Bent tells of a curious 'matakite' or prophetic dream, which Te Waka-tapu-ruru had on the night before the battle. The old man was a close friend of the white runaway, and they were accustomed to sleep side by side on the wharikispread floor of the communal wharepuni. He dreamed that he saw his face reflected in a Pakeha looking-glass, and that he was combing his hair. The vision disturbed the old man, and deeming it an omen or a warning from the unseen world, he asked Titokowaru – just when the approach of the troops was first announced – what it might portend. The war-chief interpreted the dream as an omen of death, and warned him not to leave the shelter of the stockade during the impending engagement or he would be killed. But he disregarded this in his fit of whakamoremore and ran amok, and so he fell.

Finding it impossible to take such a strong and well-defended position by storm, the white colonel withdrew his forces. There were dead and wounded lying all over the place. The Pakehas succeeded in carrying off the wounded and some of the dead – including the gallant Major Hunter, who fell while leading No. 3 division of the A. C.'s to the assault. A number of dead however had to be left where they were lying, for it was death to attempt their removal from under the muzzles of the Hauhau guns.

The colonial soldiers retired, fighting a hard rearguard action in order to find time for the wounded and dead to be carried out of the forest to the Wairoa redoubt. The Hauhaus followed close upon them, skirmishing out to the edge of the bush where the firing ceased. The battle of Papa-tiakiaki, more generally known as Moturoa, was over – almost as severe a repulse for the Government men as the engagement at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu a bare two months before. One fifth of the force engaged was on the casualty list – 25 killed and over a score wounded.

What scenes of horror followed that battle in the bush! The Hauhaus were in a delirium of triumphant savagery. Like frenzied things they came dancing and yelling back to the pa after pursuing the Constabulary and kupapas to the fringe of the bush. Singing war-songs, shouting 'Pai-marire' cries, dancing their weapons in the air, projecting their long snaky tongues and rolling their eyes

till only the whites were visible, set in a petrifying glare – the grimace of the pukana – it was a sight that brought fear to the heart of the lone white man, accustomed though he was by this time to spectacles of barbaric ferocity.

The women were almost as wild and savage-looking as the men – their dark eyes blazing with excitement, their loosened hair flying behind them, many of them nude from the waist up, waving shawls, mats, tomahawks in welcome to the returning warriors, shouting, singing, screaming!

Outside the front fence of the pa, just as they fell among the logs and stumps and on the bloodstained ground, lay the corpses of the men whom the retreating A.C.'s had been compelled to leave on the battlefield. There were seven of them.

Upon these fallen soldiers rushed the Hauhaus. They tied flax-leaf ropes round the necks of the bodies, and hauled them away to the gateway of the pa. As they dragged the corpses off, leaping from side to side as they hauled in a fury of blood-madness, they shouted out such sentences as these:

'Taku kai! Taku kai! E hara ka kite noho koe taku kai, taku tika. Taku he! Nau te kino, naku whakahoki tou kino. Taea hokitia – te mahi o te atua a Titokowaru!

(My food! My food! Behold my food; behold the right and wrong of it all. 'Twas you' – addressing the slain – 'that wrought the evil work. And I have returned your evil. Behold the work of the god of Titokowaru!')

A young Hauhau, huge-limbed and naked but for a very brief waist mat of dangling flax, leaps to the side of one of the white men's bodies, just as it is harnessed in so revolting a fashion preparatory to being dragged into the pa. His tomahawk flashes in the air above him as he stoops over the fallen soldier – once, twice, thrice!

He rises – he thrusts his tomahawk back into his girdle, he comes bouncing from the corpse, waving something dripping red in his hand, swinging it round his head. His fiendish yells ring echoing over the forest clearing.

What is it he flourishes so exultantly?

It is the white man's heart!

This is the young warrior Tihirua, the priest of the burnt sacrifice. He has torn out the 'manawa' of the soldier as a mawe – an offering to the God of War! At his waist, buckled to his flax girdle, is a leather pouch, such as were generally used for carrying percussion caps. Out of this he takes a box of matches –

Pakeha matches! Striking match after match, he holds them underneath the bleeding heart until it is singed, and dark smoke goes up from it – incense to Uenuku, the war-god who appears to his savage worshippers in the arch of the rainbow.

The heathen rite performed, Tihirua flings down his terrible trophy and then directs the hauling of the bodies into the palisade inferno.

Bent, standing just outside the pa gateway, watched the bringing in of the bodies of his fellow whites – prelude, he too well knew, to a cannibal feast. He turned to enter the village when an old Maori, tugging madly at a flax line which he had made fast to a Pakeha's neck, caught sight of him and shouted: 'You Pakeha! Come and give me a hand. Help me to drag in my food!'

'What do you want?' Bent heard a rough voice ask. He turned and saw the war-chief Titokowaru standing at his side.

'What do you want of this Pakeha?' he asked again, sternly, addressing the old Hauhau who had called to Bent.

The man replied that he wished the white man to help him haul the soldier's body into the marae.

'No!' cried the chief in his great hoarse voice. 'No! You must not call upon my Pakeha to help you. He shall not touch the bodies of his countrymen.'

So the war-leader and his cartridge maker stood by watching the frightful procession of Hauhaus and their prizes. The seven bodies were dragged into the pa and laid out on the centre of the marae. The excited people all gathered in a great circle around the bodies. One after another the orators leaped out from the squatting ranks, their eyes flashing wildly in the pukana glare; they bounded to and fro and cut the air with their tomahawks as they narrated the thrilling episodes of the fight.

Then they discussed the human battle-spoil before them – the 'Fish of Whiro',[1] food of the Fates.[2] Some of the Maoris proposed that the corpses should all be burned or buried. But a man of the Waitotara tribe – ever the fiercest of warriors and cannibals –stepped forward and said: 'We must have one body to cook in the hangi!'

'Yes,' said another of the clan, 'the customs of our fathers must be observed. What is the use of killing so many Pakehas if we cannot have one to eat?'

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[1] Whiro: the Lord of Darkness, in Maori legend, the embodiment of evil; when people die, their bodies descend into the underworld, where Whiro eats them.

[2] Fates: three goddesses in Greek mythology who control our destiny from birth to death.

No man making further objection, several Hauhaus jumped up and ran to the heap of slain. They selected the body of a Constabulary man and dragged it off to the cooking place at the rear of the marae.

All eyes watched them, but no man said a word.

Bent, after a while, rose with some of his Hauhau companions and walked over to the cooking hangis and watched the cooks at their horrible work. They were roasting the white man's body on a great fire of hot stones in a hollowed-out earth oven. 'It was being cooked,' says Bent, ' much as you would roast a piece of mutton; they turned it over and over until it was thoroughly done, and then they cut it up for the feast.'

When the cannibal meal was ready, it was brought to the marae with much ceremony in flax baskets. Potatoes had been steam-boiled in other hangis at the same time, and these were carried to the assembly ground to be eaten with the 'man-meat'. Bent saw the flesh of the soldier eaten. The man-eaters, he says, all belonged to the Waitotara tribe. Ten of them consumed the Pakeha, or as much of him as was borne to the marae; the rest of the people did not share in the feast. Titokowaru himself would not eat human flesh because of his tapu.

Then Titokowaru rose and in a loud voice ordered the people to bury or burn the rest of the corpses so that they should not defile the marae. The bodies were stripped of their clothing. The Maoris gave Bent three pairs of soldiers' trousers, four shirts, and some boots. 'I tell you I was pleased,' says the old Pakeha-Maori, who had no inconvenient scruples on the subject of dead men's clothes, 'for a long time I had been wearing only Maori-made garments of flax.'

A great pile of tawa and other wood was collected, heaped up six or seven feet high, and in the evening, as darkness fell, the bodies of the Pakehas were placed on this funeral pyre and burned. The people sat round – as they had at a similar ceremony in the 'Bird's-Beak' pa – and watched the flames devour the corpses. And by the light of the great fire roaring away there on the marae, Titokowaru taki'd up and down, addressing his followers and bounding and parading to and fro, his sacred feather-plumed taiaha in his hand. He recited incantations and chanted songs, and exhorted the Hauhaus, bidding them to be of good heart and fight to the bitter end.

And other speeches of savage, boasting jubilation were made – 'great swelling words.' But from a lone little thatched hut on one side of the crowded parade ground came a long-sustained crying sound, a sobbing heart-breaking

dirge, rising and falling like a Highland coronach[1] – a tangi for the dead. A widow made lamentation for her warrior slain.

Of one of the few Maoris who met their deaths that day, Bent tells a singular story. The Hauhau, a man named Taupo, was struck in the chest by a bullet, which passed right through his body and out his back. That evening the white man found him lying on a mat in his whare, groaning in agony. With each breath he drew, a gush of air came from the wound in his chest; he had been shot through the lungs.

He asked Bent to cut out something, which was giving him great pain in the back. Taking a small pocket knife, Bent told the Hauhau to turn on his left side, and making an incision where a swelling of the muscles appeared, a piece of pawa (haliotis) shell about two inches long came out. (The pawa[2] is a mussel-like shellfish; the iridescent shell is often used for inlaying Maori carvings.) In some strange way the ball, striking the pawa-shell in its course, had driven it through the man's body.

The sorely wounded man was much relieved and thanked Bent.

'Some time later on in the night,' says the Pakeha-Maori, 'he called me to his side and said, "Kai pai — ko au ka mate ('Tis well — I am dying)."

I bade him goodbye and in a few moments he expired.'

[1] Highland coronach: Scottish funeral song.
[2] pawa: known more commonly as 'paua'.

Chapter 15[1]

Another fighting pa – The watcher on the tower – In the trenches –The cannonade – Titokowaru's fall from grace – The pa abandoned

Just on the edge of the great forest, on the south side of the Waitotara River, stood the old trenched pa of Tauranga-ika. In front, fern and grasslands stretched away to the sand dunes of the seacoast; in the rear was the dense bush – a perfect and safe retreat for the defenders of the fort in the event of defeat. The pa itself, memorial of the olden days of intertribal warfare, was on the farm of a white settler who had been driven off by the Maoris; Wanganui town was only a day's march away.

This old-time parapetted hold was fixed on by the Hauhau war-chief as the site of his new fighting pa, for he had abandoned Papa-tiakiaki soon after the repulse of the Pakeha forces at that strong stockade. With the wariness of the Maori strategist, he avoided a second attack in any one entrenchment, and sooner than risk another, and possibly disastrous engagement at Papa-tiakiaki, he took the trouble to construct an even stronger fortification, a splendid example of native military engineering genius.

In the building of this new pa, Kimble Bent and his Hauhau comrades toiled early and late until it was completed. It was of large size, fully defended with palisading, trenches, parapet and rifle pits. It was between two and three chains in extreme length at the rear, with a somewhat narrower front. The ground in front was clear of high cover; on the flanks were burned clearings dotted with blackened tree stumps and cumbered with logs; then the forest with some beautiful groves of mahoe on its outskirts.

Two rows of palisades, high and strong, were erected around the position; the posts, solid tree trunks, were from six to twelve inches thick and ten to fifteen feet high; the rows were four feet apart. The spaces between the larger stockade posts were filled in with saplings set upright close together, and fastened by cross-rails and supplejack ties; these saplings did not rest in the ground but hung a few inches above it, so that between them and the ground a space was left for the fire of the defending musketeers, who were enabled to

[1] *New Zealand Times*, 3 Oct. 1906, 4.
Year: 1869

pour volleys from their trenches inside the war-fence on any approaching enemy with perfect safety to themselves.

Behind the inner stockading was a parapet about six feet high and four feet wide, formed of the earth thrown out of the trenches. The interior of the pa was pitted everywhere with trenches and covered ways, so that in the event of attack the defenders could literally take to the earth like rabbits and live underground secure from rifle fire, and even from artillery. The place was a network of trenches with connecting passages roofed over with timber, raupo and toe-toe reeds and earth. To any assault that could be delivered by the Government forces then available, the fort was practically impregnable.

In one corner of the pa the Hauhau garrison erected a roughly timbered watchtower about thirty-five feet in height. This tower, or 'taumaihi', was a feature of the ancient pas of Maoridom; on its upper platform a sentinel was posted day and night to give warning of the approach of the enemy. In front of the pa a tall flagstaff was set up, and on this staff the Hauhau war-flags were hoisted.

There were two gateways in the rear stockading, giving access to the bush. In one end of the pa near the rear was a small tent occupied by Titokowaru. Bent the cartridge maker lived in a little rush-built whare towards the other end, near one of the gateways.

When the fort was finished the garrison gathered in their food supplies, saw to their arms, and for many weeks waited for the Pakeha. Hauhau scouts and small war parties daily sallied out from the fort seeking game in the shape of stray Pakehas. One of these savage man-hunters, a cannibal of the Ngarauru tribe, returned to the stockade in a huge jubilation one day, bearing as a trophy a white man's leg! He had, says Bent, scouted down for several miles in the direction of the Pakeha settlements when he spied a white settler in a grass paddock carrying a rifle. Down he crouched at once, and stealthily stalked the Pakeha. Just as the unsuspecting settler came to the paddock gate, the Maori leaped out from behind the fence, with a furious snatch tore the rifle from the man's grasp, and shot him dead with it. He cut off one of the Pakeha's legs with his tomahawk, and brought it home as proof of his success on the warpath as proudly as any Indian ever flourished his take of scalps. Up and down the marae of the pa he bounded, exhibiting the captured rifle and severed limb,

yelling his war-song and loudly boasting that he would that night cook the Pakeha's leg – quite a Hauhau delicacy – and eat it all himself.

But the warrior's braggadocio received a sharp check from Titokowaru. He disapproved of this sort of thing on the part of irresponsible young 'free-lancers'. 'No man must bring white man's flesh into this pa,' he said, 'unless he is one of the Tekau-ma-rua – the war party sent out by me. Take that Pakeha leg back again at once and place it alongside the body.' And soon thereafter the disgusted scout, his ardour for 'long-pig' so unexpectedly dampened by Titoko's code of cannibal etiquette, was seen to be trudging back along the track to the Pakeha farm, with sulky visage and reluctant gait, and a white foot and leg – raw – projecting from a flax basket strapped to his brown shoulders.

By day the scouting parties of the Hauhau 'Twelve Apostles' scoured the country; by night the people gathered round the fires on the marae or in the big sleeping whares, and talked and sang and danced the hakas of which they never wearied. Wild night scenes those on the stockaded marae, with the crowds of blanketed or flax-coated men and women, their wild faces illumined by the leaping flames, squatting in great circles round the campfires, while half nude figures leaped and stamped and slapped their limbs and chests with resounding slaps, and expelled the air from their lungs in wolfish 'Oohs!' and 'Hau-haus!' as they trod the assembly ground in all the fury of the war dance. A warrior orator would rise, weapon in hand, and throwing off his blanket for freedom of action, go bounding along the marae in front of the assemblage shouting short, sharp sentences as he taki'd to and fro, his athletic figure untrammelled except for a waist shawl or short dangling mat, fire in his movements and ferocity in every gesture and in every cry – the embodiment of belligerent Maoridom in its savage prime.

Like defiant replying shouts from some hidden foe in the blackness of the forest, which rose in a solid wall above the stockade, came the clear echoes of the roaring haka choruses. And so the wild night passed until the campfires died down and the tribespeople sought sleep in their packed wharepunis; and the melancholy 'kou-kou!' of the 'hundred-eyed' ruru, the bush owl, was heard, as the bird-sentry of the night hours cried his watchword from the forest, or a perch on some tall palisade post.

Yet not all eyes were closed in the pa, for the Hauhaus, grown wise by much hard experience, did not neglect the posting of sentries, and a sentinel

watched from the platform in the angle-tower. At intervals he cried his watch-cry, or raised his voice in a weird night-song that rose and fell in slow measured cadences like a tangi wail. The most dreaded hour in Maori warfare was the dark, dank hour just before dawn, and then it was well to be on the qui vive,[1] for Kepa's dusky forest-rangers from Wanganui[2] and their white comrades the A.C.'s had a truly unpleasant fashion of attacking their enemies at most unholy, shivery times, when man slept soundest. So the watchmen in the tower were enjoined to extra vigilance in the early morning hours. And as in the olden Maori days, out rang the voice of the high sentinel chanting his ancient 'Whakaara-pa', his 'All's well' song to Tariao and Kopu, the first and morning stars.

This is the pa!
These the high palisades,
Bound with the forest vines.
Here on the walls am I
Singing my song.

Shine brightly, O Tariao!
Thou first and fair morning star!
Keen blows the western wind
Wafting a sound of war.
My comrades, my toas, be strong;
Fill ye hearts with fire!
Aid us, oh shades of our sires,
Ahi-koriki, Rongotaha!
Here on the watch am I
High on the fortress tower
E —e! i aha ha!

Foemen that creep in the dark,
Foemen that hide in the fern,

[1] 'on the qui vive': on the alert.
[2] The Forest Rangers disbanded in 1867, two years before the attack on Tauranga-ika; hence the reference here to Kepa's 'forest-rangers' has been put in lower case because they were not part of the original squad under Jackson and Von Tempsky. They had a similar bush fighting style however, hence the presumably description of them by Cowan as a 'forest-ranger'.

Spies at out fortress gate
Hearken to this my bold song!
Wakeful on guard am I,
Fired with hot courage our braves,
Ready to rush to the fight,
Charge on the thickets of spears!
Here I fling challenge abroad
E–-e! i –-i aha—ha!

Keen for the conflict are we.
Hot for the slaying of men,
Hungry for eating of men!
Like a ngarara [reptile] monster our host!
Lo! The murderous sweep of its tail!
The snapping, the foam of its jaws!
The wide-open mouth of the grave!

Kopu beams forth in the sky;
Here on the watch am I
Singing this song!

Late one night as the Hauhaus lay behind their palisades, Colonel Thomas McDonnell – one of the best of the Pakeha bushfighters, and a man who spoke Maori like a native – rode boldly up to the pa wall with his escort and asked for Titokowaru. He called out in the native tongue, 'O, Titoko – where are you?'

Titoko, summoned from his tent, went down to the stockade and answered, 'I am here.'

The white officer cried: 'Titoko, I have been trying to find out your atua, the god which guides you in your battles. Now I have found it – I know where you get your mana from. When the wind blows hard from the whakarua, I know it is the breath of your god, the wind of Uenuku!'

Spoke Titoko angrily, 'McDonnell, go! Depart at once! If you do not ride away directly, there will be a blazing oven for you!'

McDonnell rode away, and the angry chief returned to his tent. Why McDonnell should have paid this daring night visit to the stockade is not quite

clear, but the incident is given just as Bent narrates it. He and his companions on the marae heard the dialogue, and Bent says the old fear struck to his heart when he heard Titokowaru menacing the white officer with the oven. The Taranakis[1] seem to have been particularly addicted to the 'ordeal by fire'. 'The oven is gaping open for you!' was their customary threat. Their tribal history abounds, too, in tales of how some obnoxious neighbours or other, Ngati-so-and-so, had been effectively disposed of by the simple process of surrounding there wharepunis while they slept, fastening the doors and then setting fire to the houses. The only objection from the Maori point of view was that it 'spoiled the meat'!

Colonel McDonnell was so thoroughly conversant with Maori 'tikanga' – customs, rules of life and ways of thought – that he was by way of being a tohunga Maori himself, and his dramatic twitting[2] of Titokowaru with the fact that the reputed source of his fighting mana was within his (McDonnell's) knowledge was a circumstance that hugely annoyed the old war-chief. It was as if so much of his 'mana-tapu' had passed to his white foeman – to the rival maker of strong 'war-medicine'.

Occasional skirmishes with the white cavalry patrols enlivened the three months' sojourn in Tauranga-ika. In one of those rencontres,[3] a young Wanganui trooper – now a resident of Wellington – won his New Zealand Cross. This was William Lingard, a member of Captain John Bryce's troop of Kai-iwi Cavalry. Out scouting one day, Bryce took a party of his men boldly up to the front of the stockade on a reconnaissance; the pa was so unusually quiet that it was thought the Hauhaus might perhaps have deserted it. One of the cavalrymen, Sergeant Maxwell, leaping a ditch and hedge that intervened between the farmlands and the pa, raced right up close to the stockade and fired at it. Trooper Lingard, also leaping the obstacles with the rest of the detachment, rode up past the pa. Lingard, though he could see nothing of the Maoris, raised his carbine and fired a shot.

The next instant the whole palisade-front – just above the ground, where the interstices[4] were left for musketry – was a blaze of fire, and a storm of lead sang over the little troop. The Hauhaus, hidden in their trenches and

[1] 'the Taranakis': the Taranaki tribes.
[2] twitting: taunting.
[3] rencontre: chance meeting.
[4] interstice: small, intervening space.

preserving complete silence, had waited till the patrol was within murderously close range. The daring Maxwell was mortally wounded, and several horses were shot and fell. One trooper, Wright, was pinned to the ground by his horse falling on his leg, and was unable to extricate himself, but nevertheless drew his revolver and kept popping away at the palisades.

The whole pa was now in a roar of battle excitement. The Maoris, as they fired, raised their fearful yells and war-shouts, an infernal din that almost drowned the cracks of the firearms. A burly-framed Hauhau, a herculean savage known as Big Kereopa, leaped out from the stockade armed with a long-handled tomahawk and rushed at the helpless Pakeha.

Trooper Lingard instantly put his plunging horse at the Hauhau and cut at him with his sword. Another trooper, Cummins, took a hand in the combat and with a shot from his carbine disabled the charging Hauhau. Lingard, leaning over, got Wright by the hand, and though almost dismounted himself, succeeded in dragging his comrade from under the fallen horse. Then, noticing a white horse – which was usually ridden by one of the Maori scouts – tethered to a tutu bush a short distance from the palisades, Lingard galloped at it, cut the tether-line with his sword, and soon had Wright mounted again and riding down the hill out of range, with the Hauhau bullets whistling close around their heads.

Lingard's rescue of his wounded comrade was a remarkably plucky bit of work, and for the few moments that the exciting encounter lasted, it was 'touch-and-go' with the whole of the Pakeha party.

An incident of life in Tauranga-ika, illustrative of the pitiless savage character of the olden Maori, is told thus by Kimble Bent: 'While we were living in the pa at Tauranga-ika, a Hauhau fighting-man named Taketake quarrelled with his sister. She threatened that she would run away to the Pakehas, and tell them of the cannibal practices of the rebels. He warned her that if she did, he would shoot her. That evening she left the pa and started for the white soldiers' camp. Taketake loaded his gun and followed her. Overtaking her on the road he shot her through the back and killed her. He returned to the pa and reported what he had done. A party of men went out and brought back the murdered woman's body and that was all there was about it. No one interfered with Taketake, or considered what he had done was a crime. All they said was 'Kaitoa! (Serve her right!)'

While the Pakeha attack was awaited, Bent and his companions spent much of their time in the forest at the rear of the fort catching eels in the creeks, hunting wild pigs and gathering wild honey for the garrison food supplies.

At last, early in February 1869, the Government troops attacked the pa, and the Pakeha-Maori added to his other untoward experiences the sensation of being a standing target[1] for cannon fire. Skirmishing up over the fern-slopes came Whitmore's[2] Armed Constabulary and Maori auxiliaries – Kepa's kilted guerillas from the Wanganui. Some of the A.C.'s advanced to within about two hundred yards of the stockade, and took cover in a ditch which ran parallel with the front palisading; from here they opened fire. The main body had pitched camp about half a mile from the pa front. At the same time Armstrong guns were brought up, posted on the left front of the stockade, and shellfire was opened on the rebel position at a range of about five hundred yards. For some time, until darkness came, the cannonade continued, the shells screaming and whistling into and over the rebel position, and a sometimes right through the elastic sapling palisade, but without doing much damage.

Most of the Hauhaus were safe in their trenches and their covered ways, and the shells and bullets passed harmlessly over them. A few of the young bloods danced and yelled defiantly from above ground, and one made gestures of defiance and derision from a perch in a ngaio tree which grew outside the stockade. In the top of the watchtower the Hauhaus had rigged up a dummy figure, which they worked in marionette fashion by means of ropes that led into the trenches below. This dummy was intended to draw the Pakeha fire, but it hardly deceived the veteran A.C.'s and Kepa's kupapas, versed in all Hauhau ways that were dark and tricks that were vain.

Bent was underground, listening to the bang of the Armstrongs and the whistle of the shells, and now and again squinting through the palisades at his white adversaries. One Maori, who was standing in an angle of the pa, was wounded in the head by a sharp splinter knocked off one of the palisade posts by a shot from an Armstrong gun. The same shell, whizzing through the pa, ripped a hole in Titokowaru's tent.

When night fell, no appreciable breach had been made by the shellfire; it was now decided to storm the pa at daylight in the morning. Some of the A.C.'s

[1] 'a standing target': a static target.
[2] Whitmore: General George Whitmore.

crept up with their trenching tools to within thirty yards of the stockade and dug out shelter trenches.

The pa was remarkably quiet during the night. It was reconnoitered when daybreak came, and found – empty. The Hauhaus had, for some mysterious reason, deserted it under cover of darkness and taken to the bush.

So fell the strong pa Tauranga-ika.

Bent explains this unexpected abandonment of Titokowaru's most formidable entrenchment. The eternal Feminine was at the bottom of it. The chief of blood and fire, with all his 'mana-tapu', was vulnerable to the artillery of a dark wahine's eyes and soft wahine blandishments. He was detected in liaison with another man's wife. This misdemeanor was, in Maori eyes, fatal to his prestige as an Ariki[1] and a war-leader. He had trampled on his tapu, and his Hauhau angel, which had so long successfully guided his fortunes, now deserted him. His run of luck had turned.

A council of the people was held to discuss the 'cause celebre',[2] and many an angry speech was made. Some of the chiefs went so far as to threaten Titokowaru with death. At length a chieftainess of considerable influence rose and quelled the storm of violent words. She appealed to the aggrieved husband's people not to attempt Titoko's life, but urged that the garrison should leave the pa – it would be disastrous to make a stand there after their tohunga had lost his 'mana–tapu'. This met with general approval and on the night of the attack the people packed their few belongings on their backs and struck into the forest for the Waitotara. Titokowaru, with forty warriors, covered the retreat.

Afterwards, says Bent, 'when we had taken safe shelter in the Upper Waitara, Titokowaru regained his tapu by means of incantations and ceremonies performed by another tohunga. But by that time the war was over.'

So to the wilderness fled Titokowaru and all his people, and hard on their tail, when the pa was found deserted, came the A.C. scouts and Kepa's head-hunters, in lightest marching order for the chase, tracking the retreating Hauhaus far into the forest.

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[1] Ariki: high priest.
[2] cause celebre: a controversial issue that attracts a great deal of public attention.

Chapter 16[1]

The Headhunters – Wild life in the bush – The eaters-of-mamaku – Bent's forest adventure

The deep and roadless forest was now the scene of war. The Hauhaus built no more stockades, but trusted to their ancient of refuges, the 'Nehenehe-nui' – the great woody wilderness. From one hiding place to another they fled, with the Government bush fighters ever on their heels.

Through the huge and tangled woods they scrambled – hunters and hunted. Now along some narrow trail, hardly discernable to the untrained eye; now dashing straight through networks of supplejacks and brambly shrubs and great snaky lianes that looped from tree to tree in bewildering coiled intricacies. Down into steep and narrow watercourses, swinging down one after another by the hanging vines and tough tree creepers, up rocky gorges and jungle-clad cliffs. For endless miles upon miles the great solemn woods covered the face of the rugged land; beneath the shadows of the thick, dark foliage loped the blood-avengers. Silently, stealthily as Indians on the war trail, they tracked the flying enemy. Some of them were white, some brown and tattooed; they were kilted like Highlanders – for the A.C. bushmen had taken to the waist shawl as a fighting and marching costume – and all they carried were their rifles and ammunition.

It was a picturesquely savage chapter of the war, that chase of Titokowaru and his scattered Hauhaus. There was more than a touch of the barbaric in it, for the Government forces reverted to the primitive war methods of the Maori himself. Between the moccasined hero of the war trail in Fenimore Cooper's and Captain Mayne Reid's romances of Red Indian days,[2] and Kepa's Maori guerrillas and some of his white comrades, there was, after all, only this difference: One took the trail hunting for Scalps, the other for Heads!

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 6 Oct. 1906, 13.
Year: 1869

[2] • James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) was a prolific and popular American writer of historical romances of frontier and Indian life in the early nineteenth century.
• Thomas Mayne Reid (1818–83) was a Scots-Irish American novelist who wrote many adventure novels in the style of Robert Louis Stevenson.

For some time a reward was paid for all Hauhau heads brought into camp – a barbarous but very effective way of squaring accounts with Titokowaru's cannibals. Kepa's kupapa Maoris, recruited from the Wanganui, Ngatiapa, Ngatiraukawa and other 'friendly' tribes – only friendly to the Pakeha by reason of their deadly animosity to the Taranaki tribes – were little less savage than the Hauhaus themselves, and this man-hunt under the mana of the Government was just the work that delighted them. They were stripped to a gantlin' for the bush chase – simply a waist mat or shawl and a cartridge belt and a pouch for their percussion caps. And some of the white bush scouts were just as eager on the headhunting trails. One or two of them marched barefooted like the Maoris, and added to their arms a tomahawk.

Many heads were severed from Hauhau shoulders during the month or so after the abandonment of Tauranga-ika. Some fell in skirmishes in little clearings in the bush; some in surprise attacks by the Government forces on their well-hidden camps and villages; some were shot up trees while attempting to repeat the tactics of Te Ngutu-o-te-manu. These heads were brought into camp in flax kits, and faithfully paid by the white authorities; some the Wanganui Maoris preserved as 'mokai-kai', or mummified heads, by smoking and a process akin to embalming. The Wanganuis also preserved in this way the heads of several of their own men who fell in sundry forest ambuscades, and sent them home to their kaingas by the great canon river[1] for the tangi-rites and decent sepulture.[2]

On the afternoon of the day that Tauranga-ika pa was found deserted, Titokowaru's rearguard made a bold stand near the edge of a bush clearing against their A.C. and Maori pursuers, and for two or three hours the forest rang with the rattle of rifle fire. This enabled the main body of Hauhaus – with whom was Kimble Bent – to retreat across the Waitotara River northwards, and make in the direction of Patea. In that afternoon's skirmishing, Kepa and a few of his more active men had a close-quarters combat with some of Titoko's warriors; Kepa himself had a very narrow escape.

In one of the bush battles about this time, says Bent, discoursing on the headhunting predilections of Kepa's scouts, a prominent Hauhau named Matangi-o-Rupe was shot. He belonged to Titokowaru's hapu, Ngatimanu-

[1] 'the great canon river': the Whanganui.
[2] sepulture: internment.

hiakai – 'The Tribe of the Hungry Bird'. A Ngatiraukawa soldier in Kepa's contingent cut off the Hauhau's head with his tomahawk, and duly delivered it at the Pakeha camp. Matangi's son, Takuku – now living at the village of Taiporohenui – on learning of his father's fate, swore to have utu, and vowed to Bent that if he ever encountered the man who beheaded his parent, he would 'slice him to pieces like a piece of beef.'

Some years after the war, Bent, while on a visit to a Maori settlement at Oroua, in the Manawatu district met the Ngatiraukawa headhunter – 'an ugly tattooed old villain,' as he describes him. The Pakeha, by way of imparting an interesting bit of news, informed the old warrior of Takuku's threat, but the tattooed veteran only smiled. That utu account has not been squared, but only because of the inconveniently peaceful rule of the Pakeha. Takuku has by no means forgotten or forgiven the man who mutilated his father and sold his head to the Pakeha.

'After we deserted Tauranga-ika,' says the old Pakeha-Maori, 'we led a miserably rough life in the bush. We were as near starvation sometimes as we could well be. Kepa's kupapas and the white scouts were hunting for us, stalking us like wild beasts, and we were hiding in the forest and living on what we could pick up. We scattered in parties. I and some of the Hauhaus selected a safe spot in the deep bush, built whares to shelter ourselves, and then went out to the edge of the forest digging up fern root for food. We scoured the bush for the mamaku fern tree, and cut out the white pith of the tree; it was one of our principal foods at that time. It has a peculiar effect on anyone who eats much of it – it makes them strangely drowsy and sleepy. Sometimes, too, we had to eat the wharawhara and similar mosses that grew on the trees.'

Titokowaru's warriors also ran short of ammunition. In making cartridges Bent sometimes had to use small pieces of hardwood cut to the proper size, instead of bullets. The natives were also often short of percussion caps; they used to save the exploded ones and cut off match heads and insert them in the caps. A box of caps was a great prize to a Hauhau those days. This ingenious use of match heads was a common practice in the later days of the war; and many a box of Pakeha matches found their way through ostensibly 'friendly' Maori hands into the rebel camps.

For three or four weeks the Hauhaus concealed themselves in the forests between the Waitotara and the Patea rivers, their warriors making occasional

sorties and laying ambuscades for straggling whites. Not only was Bent in daily and nightly danger of death at the hands of his enemies, the Government men, during this period of hiding and starving in the bush, but in one of his adventures he narrowly escaped the tomahawks of his own companions, the Hauhaus.

Bent and a party of about twenty Maoris set out one day from the camp of Rupe – the Pakeha's rangatira and owner – on a food-hunting expedition into the great trackless forests in the rear of their hiding place. They travelled half a day's journey into the rugged bush country, a lone region where no booted foot had ever trod. They fished for eels in the creeks, and climbed for wild honey wherever they saw the bees buzzing round their hives in the hollow trees. The men had with them taha (calabashes made from the hue gourd); these they filled with honey. When they had collected as much as they could carry they started on their return tramp to the kainga. Bent's pikau consisted of about 30lb of honey in a taha, and two large eels, all in a flax basket.

When the party left their camping place the white man went on ahead, and was soon out of sight of his companions. After a while he found that he had missed the route by which he had come the previous day. He pushed on and on, hoping every moment to catch sight of a broken branch or a footprint or a tomahawk 'blaze' on a tree that would indicate the trail.[1] He wandered about, up and down hill, crossing creeks, and tearing what little clothes he wore in the tangled bush, until he had not the least idea where he was.

He was lost in the forest.

Night came on while the lonely white man was still toiling bewildered through the dense woods. He spent the hours of darkness crouched under a tree, sleeping little and shivering with the cold, for he was thinly clothed and had no blanket, and no matches with which to light a fire for warmth and cooking.

Early next morning Bent climbed a tall rata tree near his bivouac and scanned the wild country round. Nothing but forest, forest everywhere – vast waves of deep verdure sweeping away and away as far as the eye could see. No sign of human life – no guiding landmark. Somewhere beneath that impenetrable pall of green that clothed everywhere were his people. But where?

[1] to blaze a trail: to mark it out by notching trees so that others could follow.

Ah! What is that blue thin coil rising slowly out of the forest far ahead, westward? A curl of smoke! A Hauhau camp; perhaps some hunting-party cooking their morning meal. The white man joyfully descended from his tree perch, and quickly getting into his pikau straps again, set out at as fast a pace as his load would allow him, steering in the direction of the smoke. He toiled on and on, breaking through jungles of undergrowth and clinging vines, over logs and through watercourses, until suddenly he found himself at the foot of a rocky wall, which rose perpendicularly above him for about thirty feet.

He endeavoured to clamber up the precipice, assisting himself by the forest creepers, which hung in trailing coils down its face, but they gave way under his weight when he had ascended but a few feet, and he found himself at the base of the cliff again, debating whether to try the climb again or make a long detour and perhaps lose the run of the point for which he was heading.

Suddenly, high above him a voice said, 'Who's there?'

The startled white man, peering through the tangle of foliage and creepers, saw a man standing on the clifftop – a Maori girt with a flax mat, a gun in his hand. It was Rupe, his chief.

The Maori was looking down. He had heard the noise made by Bent in his attempt to scale the cliff, and he noticed the shaking of the bush vines and leaves that screened the lower part of the wall, but the white man was hidden from his vision.

Bent called to him: 'Don't fire, Rupe! It is I, your Pakeha – Tu-nui-a-moa.'

'E tama!' cried the old chief. 'I am glad indeed! I came out searching for you, for your life is in great danger.'

The Pakeha, changing his position so that Rupe could see him, explained his predicament.

'Remain where you are,' said Rupe, 'and I will lower a rope to you.' In a few minutes a line made of split leaves of the harakeke flax, knotted together, was thrown down the cliff to Bent. The upper end of this hastily made bush rope the old man had made fast to a tree on the clifftop.

'Send your pikau up first, and you can follow,' ordered Rupe.

Bent tied his flax basket of eels and honey to the line. Rupe hauled it up, lowered the line again, and Bent tied it round his body below the arms. Then the chief, a muscular man in spite of his years, hauled the lightweight Pakeha safely to the summit of the wall.

The old man wept as he took Bent's hand, so great was his relief at finding his Pakeha safe and sound. He told the white man that he feared he was dead.

'Why?' asked Bent.

'Why? There are a score of armed Hauhaus searching the forest for you, and if they had found you before I did, they would have killed you!'

The old chief explained, further, that when Bent did not return to the bush-village the previous night, his fellow eelers had come to the conclusion that he had given them the slip on the journey home, and had made off to the Pakeha camp. So at daylight a party set out to scour the forest round the kainga, fully intending, if they found the deserter in hiding, to summarily execute him. Old Rupe, too, had taken to the forest – before daylight – but for a different reason: he did not believe his Pakeha would desert him, and as he concluded Bent had lost himself in the bush, he had kindled a fire on a hillside in the forest in the hope that the wanderer would see it and make his way towards it.

His bush craft was successful, and no doubt it saved Bent's life, for had he gone wandering on he would most probably have run into the arms of his hunters. So the two men – the rangatira and his 'tame white man' – travelled homeward as quickly and as quietly as they could, seldom speaking to one another for fear some prowling Hauhau should hear them.

'Even now, if they find you out in the forest,' said Rupe, 'I may not be able to save you. Be cautious, for this may be your last day!'

At last the refuge-camp of the fugitive rebels was reached, and Bent was safe. Titokowaru, just back from a scouting expedition to the forest edge, was in the village. The grim war-chief was genuinely pleased to see the white man back again, and safe. 'E Tu!' said he; 'it was fortunate indeed that Rupe met you in the forest. Had any of the others found you – my men of the Tekau-ma-rua – then you would have been a dead man!'

Chapter 17[1]

A battle in the fog – The surprise of Otautu – Hakopa the 'toa' – Hauhaus on the run – The forest chase – End of the war

A foggy morning in the forest. A little Maori hamlet – just a collection of thatched huts, in a small clearing enclosed on all sides by the dense woods. In the rear a deep ravine, jungly with thick undergrowth, then the winding snag-strewn Patea River. This was Otautu, Titokowaru's refuge-camp. It stood on a plateau – now a richly grassed farm; scattered over the clearing were potato gardens. No palisading or rifle pits, it was an ordinary residential kainga; the fugitive Hauhaus trusted to the tangled forest as their best defence.

Grey dawn. The raw morning mist hung low on the sleeping village – a mist so thick that it shrouded from the view objects even a few yards distant. It lay like the winding bank of fog that marks the course of a forest stream early on a summer morning; the black treetops stood out clear above the pall of damp, cold vapour. Not a sound from the slumbering kainga, where some three or four hundred Hauhaus – Kimble Bent amongst them – lay packed in their nikau-roofed whares.

A solitary Maori sentry, a young man with a gun across his shoulder, kept perfunctory and semi-somnolent guard at the edge of the clearing, just where a track led into the forest in the direction of the Lower Patea.

Suddenly out of the dark forest appeared a body of armed men. They came in Indian file; they broke into a stealthy run as they left the shadow of the trees. Their bodies were bent eagerly forward; they carried their rifles 'at the trail';[2] they uttered not a sound. They were the Maori advance guard of Colonel Whitmore's expeditionary force of 400 A.C.'s and kupapas. After weeks of bush scouting, a Government column had at last happened on the Hauhau hiding place.

The sentry had been dozing, but he was all in an instant wide awake. At that moment he was very near to death. He was fired on by the advance guard, but racing round a clump of shrubbery, discharging his rifle as he ran, he was swallowed up in the fog.

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 12 Oct. 1906, 9.
Year: 1869

[2] carried 'at the trail': when a rifle is gripped at its balance point (approximately its centre).

The discharge of the rifles rolled crashing through the forest. Startled kaka parrots flew from their tree perches, screaming discordantly at their rude awakening. The clear notes of a bugle rang out – it was the 'Advance' and 'Double!' The active little colonel rushed his men up at top speed, extended them, and advanced on the hidden camp, and a strange combat began.

At the first crack of the firearms the kainga was awake; and what a scurry there was! The Maoris poured out of their whares just as they leaped from their sleeping mats – some wearing only a shawl or ragged mat, some entirely naked. Some of the women rushed out of their huts without a shred of clothing on, screaming and shouting, and running for their lives. The men snatched up their guns and tomahawks and their cartouche belts, and though at first bewildered by the unexpected attack, quickly took post to defend their position and give time for their women and children to retreat in safety.

'The moment the alarm was given,' says Bent, 'I jumped up from my sleeping place in one of the huts, grabbed my little kit, and barefooted with nothing on but my shirt, ran to the bank at our rear and jumped down the cliff. I went tumbling and scrambling down to the river, and then travelled up along the banks for a considerable time as fast as I could go. All I had saved from Otautu was what I had in my kit – some papers, a little money, needles and thread, and so forth. As I ran up along the riverbanks I fell in with some of our people. We went on until we found a canoe tied up on the bank, and we crossed the Patea in her, ferrying four across at a time, until all were safely over. Those who were with me were non-combatants, like myself, mostly women and other unarmed people of the tribe. The fighting men remained and put up a little battle with the Pakeha.'

While the unarmed people of the camp were making good their escape, the Otautu clearing was the scene of severe fighting. The Hauhau warriors took post just at the edge of the little plateau, where the thickly timbered ground suddenly fell away to the ravine at the rear. Sheltered by the fall of the ground, they swept the clearing with their rifles and smooth-bores. Some of them climbed into the branches of the rata trees and delivered their fire; some extended in true bush-skirmishing order on either flank; and both sides – Pakeha and Maori – peppered away briskly at each other for half an hour or more.

It was a singular skirmish, for the dense fog still shrouded the hilltop and the Government men, who were being punished severely by the Hauhau fire, could for a long time see nothing of their enemies. Many A.C.'s dropped, some shot dead.

The Government Maoris, the kupapas under the celebrated Kepa, advancing from tree to tree round the edge of the clearing, came to close quarters with the Hauhaus. One of Titokowaru's veteran warriors performed a deed here, which is still told and retold with loving admiration by the old Taranaki Hauhaus. He was the old man Hakopa, or Jacob, the Maori who had taken a friendly interest in Kimble Bent, at Te Ngutu-o-te-manu, and saved the white man from two savages who stalked him there, as narrated in a previous chapter. Hakopa was a tall athletic man of spare frame and well tattooed. He was about seventy years of age, a true type of the olden Maori toa, and had acquired a virtually complete Pakeha uniform from a dead Constabulary man after the fight at Papa-tiakiaki.

While the skirmishing went on in the dim foggy morning, Hakopa was dodging from tree to tree out on the flanks of the clearing, making good use of a recently captured carbine. In the uncertain light it was difficult for the Government men to tell friend from foe, and Hakopa's Pakeha uniform seems to have completely deceived some of the kupapas. As he leaped from tree to tree and stump-to-stump he shouted, 'Raunatia! Raunatia! (Surround it!)' to induce the belief that he was one of the Government force.

At last all Hakopa's cartridges but one were gone. A prudent warrior would have retired at this stage – but not Hakopa. He did not like the idea of retreat while he had a shot in his locker, and he determined to bag something in the way of a kupapa or a Pakeha with his last charge. He waited until the leading men of Kepa's party were within close 'potting' distance, and as one of them unsuspectingly approached him he quickly threw up his gun, shot him dead, then turned and bounded into cover, and rejoined his comrades in the defile,[1] unhurt, highly delighted with his exploit.

'You young men waste your cartridges,' he said reprovingly, after the fight to some of the youthful braves of the Ngatiruanui. 'Look at me! I know the value of good powder and lead too well to fire them away for nothing. For every cartridge I used I hit a man!'

[1] defile: a steep-sided narrow gorge requiring troops to negotiate it in single file.

It was a determined, plucky stand, that defence of the Otautu clearing by Titokowaru's warriors. Every minute they held out, they knew, was giving their women and children and old people a better chance of safety.

At last the fog lifted, swept away from the clearing by the morning breeze, and the sun shone out. Now for the first time the Government soldiers saw the village, The bugle sounded the 'Advance' again, and at the double the A.C.'s swarmed into the empty kainga, to find, to their astonishment, that it was neither rifle-pitted nor parapeted.

The Hauhaus, their resistance broken, took to the forest, racing down the steep gully in rear of the village and up along the banks of the Patea. Kepa's Maoris were in hot pursuit, and shot two or three of the fugitives. The main body crossed the Patea safely and rejoined their womenfolk and children and camped, hungry, weary, and with limbs and bodies torn and bruised in their flight, in a well-hidden nook deep in the forest on the north bank of the river.

'From this time on' – to continue Bent's narrative – 'we were safe neither night nor day. Even when far in the depths of the bush we were always on the lookout for danger – for we never knew when we might have a sudden volley poured into our midst. Major Kepa and his friendlies were continually scouring the country for us. We retreated north and west through the forest till we reached a settlement called Whakamara. Two nights we were on the track; all we had to eat were a couple of potatoes each. At Whakamara we found many pigs, and were able to fill our stomachs once more.

'But early one morning the soldiers were on us again. A Maori, the warrior Katene Tu-Whakaruru, out scouting on horseback, discovered the troops lying in ambush just outside, waiting to attack the village. He galloped back to us firing his revolver and waving us to fly.

'So, off we went again, running for our lives with Whitmore's troops close behind us, firing as they ran. Titokowaru and all his men fled, after a very short fight. We took to the bush just like wild pigs racing before the hunters. Kepa and his men followed us up and shot two or three of our people. We travelled for all we were worth, half-naked and foodless, tumbling over logs, scrambling in and out of the creeks, and made no halt until we found ourselves once more at Rimatoto, my old home of 1866.'

This Whakamara fight (18 March 1869) was Titokowaru's last engagement. His 'mana-tapu' was gone, and there was nothing for it but to take to the bush

and hide himself and his men in the wilderness. So he and his tribe left Rimatoto with their arms and ammunition and swags and marched for Ngaere swamp, where they were nearly caught by Whitmore and his men. Then they made off for the Ngatimaru Country on the upper waters of the Waitara, thirty or forty miles away, over terribly rough country – an almost trackless forest.

'A party of forty or fifty of us,' says Bent, 'remained in our little settlement of Rimatoto, always on the alert against surprise by the troops, until the anxiety of our position became too much for us, hardened as we were. We packed up our belongings and swagged them inland, far up the Patea River. In a lonely valley in the bush we camped and made a little clearing in order to plant food. When we had felled the bush with our axes, twenty men travelled across to the Upper Waitara to procure seed potatoes from our friends, and we planted our crops, and waited.'

In this remote valley of refuge, far in the forest, the white runaway and his Hauhau companions – he was still with his chief Rupe – remained for many weeks, living the loneliest life conceivable, hearing nothing of the outside world, and existing precariously on the foods of the forest.

Titokowaru was safe in the fastness of the Ngatimaru country; his days of warfare were over.

Chapter 18[1]

Retreat to the Upper Waitara – Life in a bush kainga – Rupe and his white man – A Maori Donnybrook affair – A husband's revenge – The taniwha of Kopua

One day three Hauhaus, exhausted and half starved, entered the little bush camp in which Bent lived; refugees from the Lower Patea. They warned the white man and his Maori comrades that Kepa and his Wanganui Maori scouts were still hunting for them, and would have their heads to a certainty should they happen on the trail to the refuge-place.

The old feeling of terror came over Bent and his companions at the mention of Kepa's name. That night Hauhau piquets kept watch on the edge of the clearing, and more than once they imagined they heard stealthy footfalls, the breaking of branches, the whispers of enemies in the woods. These dangers however were things of their disordered imaginations. Nevertheless it was an anxious night in the lonely kainga, and when morning came the people decided to abandon camp and bury themselves still deeper in the wilderness.

In a very short time the men and women of the settlement were on the march, laden with their flax pikaus containing such belongings as they thought worth removing. They took to the forest in a due northerly direction bound for that Alsatia[2] of rebels and Hauhaus, the remote and rugged Ngatimaru country up on the headwaters of the Waitara – Titokowaru's hiding place.

Two days Bent and his friends spent on that terrible trail – the roughest, wildest part of the Taranaki hinterland. Fording rivers, pushing through matted jungles, climbing wooded precipices, lowering their swags down perpendicular cliffs and swinging themselves down by forest vines and creepers – they emerged at last a weary little band on the banks of the Waitara, about thirty miles from the mouth of that river. All around towered the densely forested blue ranges; the high banks of the winding Waitara fell precipitously to its rapid-whitened waters.

On the clifftop where they left the forest there was a little Maori camp. Here the fugitives were met and ordered to Kawau pa, a settlement in a

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[1] *New Zealand Times*, 15 Oct. 1906, 5.
Period: 1869–76

[2] Alsatia: an area in London during the 17th century reputed as a sanctuary for criminals and debtors.

strategically chosen position overlooking the river. At the Kawau Titokowaru and the bulk of his followers were assembled, and the arrival of their long-expected friends from the Patea was made the occasion for great rejoicings in the way of dancing of war dances, the chanting of powhiris of welcome, and the inevitable finale, a tangi for the dead warriors of the tribes.

As Rupe and his Pakeha Bent and their companions marched into the marae of the war-chief's camp, their eyes on the ground, the village women and girls waved green branches and shawls as they retired before them, singing all together the famous old greeting song, 'A-a, Toia mai te Waka (Oh, haul up the Canoe)', likening the guests to a canoe-party of visitors arriving from a distant shore. Then as the women fell back, the whole force of Titoko's warriors leaped to their feet, and swinging their firearms this side and that, threw themselves with martial fury into all the thrilling action of the war dance. The ground shook under the mighty tread of many scores of brown feet, and the forest sang with the huge chorus of the war-song, and then the reverberating discharge of many guns. And then, when the dance was ended, the 'hongi-ing' of long-severed friends, the pressing of nose to nose, and the pitiful weeping for the dead.

For quite two hours the great tangi lasted. When it ceased one of the headmen of the river tribes sent the new arrivals to his own camp, close by the Kawau; the village women came in procession to the lilt of the 'tutu-kai' song,[1] bearing their baskets of food, steaming hot from the hangi, and the half-starved Pakeha and his friends were soon enjoying a bountiful feast after their long enforced existence upon the meagre rations of the bush.

Kimble Bent lived in this securely hidden refuge in the Ngatimaru country from the end of 1869 until about 1876. He was now a Maori in all his ways; he planted food crops and harvested them, snared birds, fished for eels, paddled his canoe on the river, joined the Hauhaus in their songs, and danced with them in their hakas; he wore as little clothing as any savage in the camp.

Life did not go too easily with the white man those days on the Waitara. He was still Rupe's bondservant, and his master and owner sometimes took fits of ungovernable passion – though ordinarily he was a not unkind rangatira. Rupe one day ordered his white man to go down to a creek which ran into the Waitara below the Kawau pa, and clear out the little dam in which the

[1] tutu-kai: to summon to eat.

household were accustomed to steep their Indian corn, their kaanga-pirau. Bent was working away clearing out the steeping pool when his chief came up and found fault with him because he was not working hard enough. 'I made him some answer which didn't please him,' says Bent, 'whereupon he flew into a terrible rage, and rushed at me like a tiger. I stooped, and caught him by the leg, and he fell into the muddy pool. Up he jumped in a foaming passion, and ran to the pa, got out his gun, and loaded it to shoot me. But his wife rushed at him, took the gun out of his hands, and told me to hurry down to the other village, where I would be safe. So I ran to the riverbank, loosed a small canoe, and paddled down the river to the lower pa, where I was kindly received and taken into my old friend Hakopa's house, and lived and worked there for some months.'

Meanwhile, Titokowaru wearied for the trail again, unable to bear seclusion in the wilderness of the Waitara. His tapu status had been restored by a Waitara priest with the appropriate karakias and invocations. Gathering together a band of his warriors – the remnant of the once ever-victorious Tekau-ma-rua – he paraded them in the marae of the Kawau pa, and farewelling his people, took his old place at the head of the taua, and led them off in a grand war dance. A truly savage figure, that stern old chief, as he leaped to the van of his war party, and danced his sacred taiaha in the air, his waist girt with a coloured shawl, a rich feather cape of native make fastened over the left shoulder and under the right, his grizzled head decked with white plumes. And with loud cries of 'Haere ra! Haere ra!' the villagers farewelled the great war-chief as he paraded his armed men out of the pa and struck into the forest, bound for the open lands of South Taranaki and his ancestral home.

But it was no longer the war-trail, for Titoko and his henchmen fought no more, but betook themselves to the great camp of Te Whiti the Prophet, who preached peace, peace, and prophesied sundry supernatural ways by which the Maori would come into his own again.

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A quaint incident of those wild old days on the Waitara, narrated by Bent, is worth telling as an illustration of the whimsically variable temper of the Maori, and of his truly Hibernian[1] love of a 'free fight'. The war had been long been over, and some hapus of the tribes on the upper river talked of selling their

[1] Hibernian: Irish.

lands to the whites. Certain of the chiefs had been down at Waitara township and in New Plymouth, and there they had been approached by the agents of the Government. But the more conservative of the Hauhaus stoutly held out against land selling, and against any 'truck'[1] with the hated Pakeha; and the difference of opinion led to frequent quarrels.

One day a council of all the inhabitants of the Kawau and neighbouring villages was held on the marae of that pa, with the object of discussing the land selling proposals. Long and bitter were the speeches; speaker after speaker taki'd up and down the marae and worked himself up into a fury of excitement. Two old chiefs, tattooed veterans of the war, their long hair adorned with feathers, native weapons in their hands, angrily assailed each other. One advocated the sale of land; the other vigorously opposed it, and insisted on the principle of 'Maori land for Maori men.' From argument they came to hurling abusive threats at each other. At last one of the old fellows, in a fury, hurled his weapon – a sharp wooden spear – at the other, who dodged it, and cleverly caught it near the butt end as it whistled past his shoulder. He instantly smartly returned it to its owner, spearing him through the leg.

Next, two women went at it, women of rank, these, who considered themselves entitled to equal debating voice with the menfolk. Their powers of rhetoric and invective exhausted in succession, they fell on each other literally 'tooth and nail', biting, hair-pulling, scratching, screaming. In their struggle they tore most of each other's clothes off, and two pretty-well nude Amazons raged around the marae.

One of the wild women, a young chieftainess, her long hair streaming behind her, her pendant breasts quivering, her shoulders bleeding, seized a canoe paddle and struck her antagonist across the naked back with it. Then the whole tribe was into the battle, with sticks, paddles, spears, and any weapon they could lay their hands on, men and women alike. It was a real faction fight. Fortunately, the people had left their guns in their whares, and were too intent upon their hand-to-hand encounter to think of firearms.

Kimble Bent stood on one side watching the squabble. He was close to the riverbank, where the canoes were tied up. Presently, one of the Maoris ran down to the waterside with an axe, and began furiously cutting away at his antagonists' canoes. Others ran to the cooking hangis, and with burning sticks

[1] truck: barter.

from the ovens set fire to some of the thatched houses in the kainga. Soon there was a pretty blaze, and half the village was burned down in a few minutes. The whare in which Bent was living was fired and destroyed, but he ran up and was just in time to save what few clothes he possessed.

In half an hour's time the people had cooled down, and the trouble was over. Then – a quaintly Hibernian people the Maori, surely! – they began to weep over their quarrel, and fell on each other's necks – or, rather, pressed each other's noses – to make up for the hard words and blows they had just exchanged in their hasty anger.

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Another characteristic incident of those wild, rough-and-ready days in the bush is thus briefly recounted by the old Pakeha-Maori:

A Hauhau named Rongowhenua, who was a resident of the Kawau kainga, eloped into the bush with another man's wife. The husband took his gun and went out hunting for the couple. After travelling some ten miles through the bush he saw a curl of smoke rising near the top of a hill called Taramauku. He stalked his game, and on reaching the camp found his wife and lover lying asleep under a tree. Raising his gun, he shot Rongowhenua dead, through the head. Then he took his terrified wife back with him to the settlement.

The couple afterwards went to Parihaka, Te Whiti's village, where the wife died; according to Maori report, she was fatally bewitched (makutu) by her husband in punishment for another act of misdemeanor.

The minds of these isolated forest dwellers were saturated with superstition, with strange beliefs that were a reflex of the vast wild places in which they lived. The white man, too, almost came to believe in the tales of saurian-like[1] taniwhas and water demons, in the patupaiarehe and maero, the forest-fairies and forest-giants, in the occult malevolence of the tapu and makutu spells. Night after night in the crowded wharepunis the tales of old were told until every person in the community became perfectly acquainted with the folklore and the unwritten history of his tribe.

One story related by Bent is illustrative of the Maori belief, up to quite modern days, in malignant beings, which made their homes in lonely waters and in caves – the dreaded 'taniwha':

[1] saurian-like: reptile-like.

One day – this was also in the early 'seventies', an old man named Te Maire left the Kawau landing in his canoe and paddled down the Waitara to a place called Kopua, the site of an ancient village. The object of his expedition was to procure dry resinous strips of the rimu pine for the purpose of making torches to be used in catching piharau (lampreys)[1] in the river at night. After getting the wood he required, he started on the return paddle to his home. On the way to the Kawau he disappeared and was never seen again alive; no doubt he overbalanced and fell into the river while poling his canoe up one of the small rapids near the Kopua.

That afternoon a canoe crew of five men from the Kawau, including Kimble Bent, was paddling down the river to a settlement a few miles distant, when they caught sight of the old man's empty canoe drifting down with the swift current. As they approached it, it sped away rapidly before them, and at last stranded on a shingle bank in a bend of the river. In it they found Te Maire's gun and a young pig, which the vanished man had evidently caught in the bush while on his torch-making expedition.

Bent's Maori companions immediately solved in their own way the mystery of their tribesman's disappearance. 'There is a taniwha there,' they said, 'a fearful water monster which dwells in a deep still pool under Te Kopua's banks. He has stretched forth his long claws and dragged the old fellow down to his den.'

The Maori canoeists made haste to quit the dead man's craft, and plied their paddles with unusual energy until they reached their destination on the shore below. They told their story, and that evening a meeting of the village people was held in the wharepuni to discuss the mystery. For hours the wiseacres of the bush hamlet solemnly debated the circumstances, and each canoeist in turn had to give his account of the affair and advance his theory.

At last it was decided that there was no possible doubt that the taniwha of the river had seized Te Maire and drowned him. There must, of course, be a reason, for no taniwha of any repute would take such an extreme step without some good cause: Te Maire had violated the tapu of the deserted village; he had in all probability taken some dry rimu from an old house that stood there, and which was sacred because a chief had died in it – goodness knows how long

[1] lamprey: a slender eel-like fish that has a sucker-like mouth instead of a jaw and spawns in small bush streams.

ago, and the river god had very properly punished him with death – it was the penalty of infringing the law of tapu.

The next day and for some days thereafter canoe crews hunted the river for the old man's body, but found it not. At last a woman at the lower settlement, on going down to the river one morning to draw water, spied the body of the missing man hanging in the branches of a prostrate kahikatea tree on the opposite side of the river about four feet above the water. The question was, how did the body get there, entangled in the branches that height above the river? For there had been no flood, and no noticeable rise or fall in the level of the river.

The answer was plain to the mind of the Maori. He summed it all up in two words: 'Te Taniwha!' The river monster, after grabbing Te Maire from his canoe and detaining him awhile in his watery grave, had dragged the body away downstream and hung it up in the tree branches opposite the village, so that the dead man's people should have no difficulty in recovering it, and in giving it decent burial.

A truly thoughtful and considerate taniwha!

Chapter 19[1]

Bush life on the Patea – Bent the canoe-builder – The voyage to Hukatere – Out of the forest exile – The white medicine-man – The end

At last – about the year 1876 – the Upper Waitara was sold to the Government and the Pakeha-Maori and his people journeyed back through the forests to their old lands in the valley of the Patea. Bent was still Rupe's servant. The old chief and his household and a few Hauhau relatives, armed and carrying their belongings on their backs, trudged through the wilderness until they reached Rukumoana, a quiet little bush-walled nook on the bank of the Patea about thirty miles from the sea. Here they halted and built their little hamlet of saplings and thatch, and an old overgrown clearing was burnt off and planted with potatoes and maize.

It was an even lonelier spot than the refuge camps in the Ngatimaru country; life here was simple and primitive in the extreme. They tended their little plots of food crops, shadowed by the dark rimu forest; they snared and speared the forest birds, they hunted the wild pig and climbed the hollow trees for wild honey.

For nearly two years the Pakeha-Maori lived with his little tribe in well-hidden Rukumoana. At the end of the first harvest season, Rupe led his white man out into the forest one day, and halting before a tall, straight totara pine that grew near the steep bank of the Patea, he said:

'This is my canoe! Hew it down and carve it out! In it we will paddle down the river to Hukatere, and you shall look upon the faces of your fellow Pakehas again.'

So now behold Bent the canoe builder. There above him towered the Tree – Tane the forest-god in concrete form. In his hand was his broadaxe;[2] with it he must make his rangatira's riverboat.

He felled the tree and lopping off the upper part began the laborious work of dubbing out the waka. The upper side of the trunk he levelled off with his axe and then gradually cut it into hollowed shape, under the direction and instruction of his chief. For this portion of the work an adze was chiefly used,

[1] *New Zealand Times*, 15 Oct. 1906, 5.
Period: 1876–1906
[2] broadaxe: an axe with a wide head.

a steel blade lashed to a wooden handle in the old Maori style. He trimmed and shaped the ends into bow and stern, and day by day the canoe assumed more shapely proportions until at last it lay complete – a craft of about twenty-five feet in length and three feet in beam, rough and undecorated, it is true, but still a ship of the Maori, fit to carry cargo and paddlers and run the rapids of the swift and broken Patea. Ropes were made of stout supplejack vines, and with Rupe and his family, the white man lowered the canoe down the high bank to the water-edge. 'Te Riu-o-Tane' lay ready for its crew – 'The Hollow Trunk of Tane'.

Then paddles were shaped out, and Bent and his companions set to work catching and drying eels and gathering wild honey in preparation for the voyage down the river to Hukatere village, where the main body of Rupe's tribe resided.

About this time the white man entered upon his third matrimonial experience. His chief's granddaughter, a good-looking girl of about eighteen, came to the little village with a visiting party of Ngatiruanui. She had already had a husband, but he had quarrelled with her, and attempted to kill her; she, therefore, returned to her old 'tupuna',[1] Rupe, who now gave her to Bent as his wife.

All was ready for the voyage, and the Pakeha-Maori and his companions loaded their canoe and embarked for Hukatere. The Patea was a very winding stream, flowing between high forest-covered banks; its course was impeded by frequent rocky shoals and accumulations of sunken logs, which formed rapids. All went well for about eight miles; then, in shooting a rapid, the canoe struck a rock, swung broadside on to the swift current, and immediately capsized. All hands reached the shore safely, and hauled the canoe up on to a shingly bank. Fortunately, all the cargo – the baskets of dried eels and calabashes filled with honey – had been made fast to the thwarts in anticipation of some such accident, and so was saved; but old Rupe lost a little kit – his bush savings bank – containing a sum of money, which he had acquired at the Waitara. On the bank a fire was kindled by means of flint and steel – commonly used amongst the Maoris in those days, and still occasionally seen in use in remote forest districts such as the Urewera Country. By the blaze of the great fire the wrecked

[1] tupuna: grandparent.

canoeists dried themselves and their garments, and they camped there that night.

At daylight next morning they embarked again, and another day and a half at the paddles took them to Hukatere kainga, a large settlement of raupo-thatched houses, and a Hauhau praying-house, standing on the left bank of the river in a beautiful bend with the lofty forest-fringed cliffs of Pariroa jutting abruptly on the opposite shore.

The approaching canoe, its eight paddles flashing in the sun, and dipping again all together, was seen from the kainga while still some little distance up the river, and the men and women of Hukatere gathered on the waterside and cried and waved their welcome to the long-absent people of the bush.

'Kumea mai te waka!' they chanted, and the women waved shawls and green branches in the poetic greeting of the powhiri:

'To–o–oia mai te waka! O haul up the canoe! Draw hitherwards the canoe. To the resting-place, the canoe. To the resting-place, that canoe! To the sleeping-place, that canoe! O welcome, welcome, strangers from the forestland! Urge swift your paddles, for home darts your canoe!'

So chanting their very ancient song, the villagers received the new arrivals, and still waving their garments and their leafy branches, retired slowly before them as they landed and walked up the sloping banks, until the open marae in the centre of the kainga was reached. Now the powhiri was succeeded by the doleful sounds of the tangi, and one after another the Hukatere tribespeople pressed their noses to those of Rupe and his household, and they wept long and unrestrainedly for the dead, for those who had passed away since last they met.

And then the feasting. The bush family and their 'tame white man' enjoyed a meal of truly huge proportions and variety in comparison with the meagre forest fare to which they had been confined so long. And when the Pakeha tobacco and Pakeha grog came out – unwonted luxuries to the 'mohoao', the bush people – old Rupe and his household were indeed in the Promised Land for which they had longed for many a month; they had all that the heart of the Hauhau could desire.

The feast over, the canoe cargo of dried eels and honey from Rukumoana was brought up the marae and distributed amongst the people of the village,

and the canoe itself was ceremoniously presented to them as a gift of 'aroha'[1] from Rupe. In return the men of Hukatere placed before the visitors their gifts – five pounds in money (representing the sum total of the Pakeha cash in the village), and blankets, shirts, and other articles of clothing of which Bent and his companions were much in need after their rough life in the bush.

'While I was in the kainga,' says Bent, 'the local chief went down to the town of Patea, a few miles away, to get me some European clothing. He informed some people in the town that Tu-nui-a-moa, the Pakeha-Maori, who had been with the Hauhaus for twelve or thirteen years, was in his kainga, and next day about twenty Europeans rode up to the settlement out of curiosity to see me. We had a long talk, and they gave me some articles of clothing, and told me all about the white man's world from which I had cut myself off. That was about the year 1878.

'After a month's stay we returned to our own village in a canoe belonging to the Hukatere natives, loaded with goods and "tucker". Five days' paddling and poling upriver took us to Rukumoana. Planting season came round again; then we whiled away the time in Maori fashion – hunting wild pigs, snaring and shooting birds, catching eels and getting honey – until the crops were harvested. And not long after that we bade farewell to our old kainga for ever, loaded our canoe for the last time, and once more paddled down to Hukatere.'

From Hukatere the Pakeha-Maori and his girl-wife went to Taiporohenui – Bent's old home in the war days. There he lived for a year or so, blanketed like a Maori and working in the cultivations. Here, too, in the long nights he was much with the old men of the kainga, and from such learned men as Hupini and Pokau – true tohungas, or priests and soothsayers – he learned much of the strange occultism of the Maori. He saw singular ceremonies, the rites of the makutu, the black art. He learned scores of karakias – incantations, mantrams, useful in Maori eyes for all sorts of purposes, all conditions of war and peacetime.

Some of these were makutu spells by which the wizard could slay an enemy by witchcraft and the power of the evil eye. Many a case of death from makutu came under Bent's observation during his life among the Maoris. Old Hupini, says the Pakeha-Maori, undoubtedly killed men with his makutu – from a combination of three factors: projection of the will force, the malignant

[1] aroha: love and affection.

exercise of hypnotic influence, and sheer imagination and fright on the part of the person 'makutu'd'.

Many Maoris believe to this day that witchcraft can be worked by an adept or tohunga by taking some of the hair or clothing or even remains of food of the person intended to be slain, and pronouncing the appropriate powerful karakias and curses over it. The enemy's 'hau' – his life-essence, his vital force – then lies in the hollow of the tohunga's hand. A tohunga can take the 'hau' of a man's footprints and thereby makutu him; he can even makutu an enemy's horse so that it will fall sick and not be able to travel!

Amongst the prayers and ceremonies which old Hupini taught Bent were the karakia for combating the evil spell of the makutu and for restoring a bewitched and ailing person to health and safety – to the land of Light and Life, the Ao-marama. One of these rites he describes in true Maori fashion:

A person is taken seriously ill – it is the makutu. The wise man is called in; he divines that the illness is caused by another tohunga's witchcraft. At daylight in the morning the sick man is carried to the waterside. The wise man then takes three sticks or twigs (rito) – fern sticks will do – and sets them up by the side of the river or pool. One of these sacred sticks represents the invalid, one the tribe to which he belongs, and one the mischief-working wizard ('Te tangata nana te makutu'). A charm is said over them and then two are taken away, leaving only one – the 'wand of darkness'.

An incantation beginning 'Toko i te po, te po nui, te po roa' is repeated over this wand. When this is said the priest conducts the sick person to the edge of the water and sprinkles water over his body, repeating as he does so a charm to expel the makutu spirits from his body, ending with a curse upon the malevolent wizard – 'Eat that tohunga makutu, let him be utterly eaten and destroyed.'

When this is ended, the patient is taken back to his house. He is told that the wise man has, by virtue of his very strong charms, seen the rival 'tohunga makutu', and that it will not be long before that evil man dies. The curse falls; the wizard is himself 'makutu'd' and the invalid – perhaps – recovers.

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About the year 1881, Bent – now able to venture into the towns of the Pakeha again in safety – left Taranaki and travelled to Auckland and up to Waikato. Then he went on to the West Coast and spent some months amongst the

Maoris of the Ngatimahuta tribe, living in the historic old settlement Maketu, on the shores of Kawhia Harbour, close to the legendary landing place of the famous Tainui canoe – the Waikato Maoris' Pilgrim Ship. Tawhiao, the Maori King, was then living at Kawhia, and he asked Bent to remain with him and be his 'Pakeha' and interpreter. The white man was now, however, wearying to be back in his old home, Taranaki.

'Tawhiao,' says Bent, 'insisted on me remaining with his tribe, but I repeated a Maori incantation which I had been taught by the tohungas in Taranaki, a karakia used as a charm by strangers (tangata tauhou) who may desire to leave the place where they are staying on a visit and proceed to a new pa, and who fear obstruction. The charm begins:

'Ka u, ka u, ki tenei tauhou / Ki tenei whenua tauhou.'

'When the old King heard me repeat the incantation, he exclaimed, "Ha, so you are a tohunga!"

'I replied, yes, I was.

'Then the old man said, "Kua tuwhera te rori mou. (The road is open to you.)" He permitted me to return to Taranaki and sent four of his men to escort me through the King Country to Waitara.'

The last quarter-century of Kimble Bent's life has been devoid of incidents of much moment. Living amongst the Maoris, he acquired some reputation as a medicine man. During his wild life in Maoridom he had become expert in the rude pharmacopoeia of the bush, and learned to extract potent medicines from the plants of the forest. Native herbs and tree bark and leaves, prepared in various ways, are valuable remedies. The knowledge of these herbal remedies, gained from many a tohunga and wise woman of the bush tribes, the white man now turned to practical account. His fame as a doctor reached Parihaka, the village of Te Whiti, the Prophet of the Mountain. The Prophet's people sent for the white medicine man to come and heal ten sick. He spent a week in Parihaka, and returned to his Taiporohenui whare with more money in his pocket than he had possessed since he left his old home town of Newport to see life in England.

'And I was luckier than most Pakeha doctors,' says the old man, 'for none of my patients died!'

So we will take our leave of the old Pakeha-Maori Kimble Bent, the sailor, soldier, deserter and outlaw, Hauhau cartridge maker, pa builder, slave,

medicine man, and what not – smoking his pipe in the midst of his Maori friends. He is still living with the natives; working in their food gardens, fishing with them, house building for them. At the age of seventy-seven he is still an active man and able to 'knock about' as he puts it, in spite of his singularly hard, rough life. But now the old man's thoughts go to his boyhood's home in the far-off State of Maine, and he often expresses a wish to reach his homeland again.

'If I could only get a berth on some American sailing vessel bound for New York or Boston, I'd work my passage home,' he says. 'I'd like to die in my mother's land.'

The tale of Tu-nui-a-moa is told. Its period covers one of the most romantic and at the same time tragic epochs in the story of New Zealand. The events of that era are but imperfectly recorded in history; the published narratives of participants in the forest campaigns of the Ten Years War are few. Kimble Bent is the sole living white eyewitness of the Hauhau war-rites; the only white man able to tell of those terrible deeds in the bush; his is the only narrative we have of the last Taranaki war from the Maori side – from the inner side. And it is perhaps well that one has been enabled to place on record before it is too late this story of wild forest life from the lips of one of the last singularly interesting type of outlander – the 'decivilised' man, as someone has called him – the Pakeha-Maori.