ADVENTURES IN GEYSERLAND

ALFRED WARBRICK

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ADVENTURES IN GEYSERLAND

His Excellency the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, and Mr. Alfred Warbrick, fishing at Kariri, Lake Tarawera.

ADVENTURES IN GEYSERLAND

Life in New Zealand's Thermal Regions, including the Story of the Tarawera Eruption and the Destruction of the Famous Terraces of Rotomahana

Told by

ALFRED WARBRICK

(Patiti)

Formerly Chief Government Guide

With a Preface by

JAMES COWAN

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NO1 APPROX POSITION WHITE TERRACES

NO2 " " PINK TERRACES

SKETCH MAP OF THE ROTORUA LAKES AND VOLCANIC REGION

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

by permission

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY LORD BLEDISLOE

Governor-General of New Zealand

In grateful acknowledgment of his generous interest in the Narrator's Story of Life and Events in Geyserland and of his Suggestions and Kindly Service in revising the contents of this Book for Publication.

Preface

(BY JAMES COWAN.)

OF all the men I have known who have faced strange hazards and many perils in New Zealand and the South Seas, there is none who has lived a more adventurous life than Alfred Warbrick, the veteran Chief Guide who lately retired from the Government Service at Rotorua. Forty-five years Mr. Warbrick spent in guiding and exploring in the Wai-ariki country, New Zealand's hydro-thermal and volcanic region, and his climbing and camping and pathfinding carried him from end to end of it, from Tarawera to the snows of Mt. Ruapehu. Patiti, as he is known to his Maori people and his old Pakeha friends, is a man with wide experience of his fellows in many walks of life. His long career in our Geyserland holds many an episode of daring and enterprise in the face of danger and a terrible death; episodes whose theatre was the Tarawera-Rotomahana-Waimangu volcanic zone, an unrestful territory

through which he has in his time guided thousands of travellers.

When first I knew the Warbrick family, Alfred was a perfect type of an athletic young New Zealander, stalwart, eager for any enterprise calling for decisive action and promising the adventure that is the spice of life. There was more than a touch of the daredevil in his temperament in the era of the semi-primitive Rotorua. The passage of forty years since that day has steadied down Patiti's impetuous nature; old gypsy Time has greyed his hair, and he plays the Rugby game by proxy now. But get him on the old trail and lost youth is revived. And years bring the compensation of ripe and profitable experience. Alfred Warbrick can truly say

"I am a part of all that I have met."

From the wild, inspiring country that has been the scene of his life's work he has unconsciously assimilated something of a special genius, a character that marks him as an exceptional man, one fitted above all others to interpret, if anyone can, the moods and temper of this fitful, brooding, strangely painted land of his.

In his day Warbrick has been a great athlete, yachtsman and footballer; he was a

MR. ALFRED WARBRICK

LADY BLEDISLOE TROUT-FISHING
At Kariri, . . . A first lesson by "Patiti."
Photo by Lord Bledisloe

member of the first Maori Rugby team to tour England. He was a builder of yachts and boats in Auckland, and a smart sailor, an expert handler of small craft under sail. Then came his opportunity in another sphere. A series of chances set him guiding in Geyserland—it was at Government suggestion that he took it up soon after the eruption of Mt. Tarawera in 1886.

It was in the first search expedition across Lake Tarawera, a few days after the eruption, in which more than 150 people lost their lives, that he got his chance of displaying his courage and gift of leadership. A few weeks later there came his daring descent into the active crater of Rotomahana, where the lake had been blown up by the tremendous explosion of steam following on the bursting-out of Tarawera Mountain. This exploit stands out as probably the most courageous and dramatic feat ever performed in the history of the Thermal country. Patiti's deed at Waimangu in 1903, when he and a companion launched a dinghy on the boiling surface of the geyser and rowed about the terrible pool, was a thrilling act of daring, but was in my view transcended in bravery by the Rotomahana episode.

It need not be imagined from this reference to acts of conspicuous fearlessness that Mr. Warbrick's life has been a series of exploits demonstrating his indifference to danger, challenges to Fate. In his official capacity in the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, he carried out a great deal of useful work in developing Geyserland for the world's travellers. When that vigorous pioneer of the Department, T. E. Donne—now Captain Donne, C.M.G., late Secretary to the New Zealand High Commissioner's Department in London—was General Manager of Tourist and Health Resorts, he quickly came to appreciate the value of Patiti's experience, technical knowledge, good judgment, and resourcefulness in emergency. Under him Mr. Warbrick was entrusted with some important missions in the breaking of the trail, and was placed in charge of the quickly expanding system of land and lake tours in the Geyser Country. It was due to his care and efficient control of the boating services and the other arrangements for travel that so many thousands of people were carried through the heart of New Zealand's thermal-volcanic zone in safety. A man of great personal charm, and one who has

known many of the great ones of the earth in his professional duty, he is an identity of Lakeland and Geyserland whose acquaintance is a memory treasured by travellers from far and near.

It has been a great pleasure to me to help to place on record this story of an unusual life, a career at once useful and exceptionally adventurous, in a landscape setting of wonder and beauty.

—JAMES COWAN.

Wellington, N.Z., 1934.

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CHAPTER I.

Early Days

My earliest memories are of Pakeha-Maori life, the old home on the beautiful sunshiny shores of Tauranga Harbour. My father, Abraham Warbrick, who came to New Zealand in 1849, had lived for some years at Matata, further down the Bay of Plenty coast, but shifted to Tauranga for the greater convenience of his business. He came of an English Midland family whose heads were manufacturers of cotton machinery. He had been studying for the profession of medicine, but the attractive reports of life in the far distant new countries of the world at a time when pioneering was the vogue among Britain's most adventurous spirits induced him to give up the prospects of a doctor's career in England and seek his fortune overseas. Soon after his arrival in New Zealand he set up as a trader on the coast of the Bay of Plenty. He made his home at Matata, at the mouth of the Awa-a-te-Atua, the headquarters of a large Maori population, whose

language he soon learned. So capable a linguist was he that in a few years he became a licensed Native interpreter, and acted as the intermediary between Government and Maori in many land-purchase transactions. He married a young chieftainess of the Ngati-Rangitihi (a sub-tribe of the Arawa), named Karauna, daughter of the warrior leader Paerau Moko-nui-a-Rangi, who was distinguished for his enterprise and daring in the first half of the last century. This high chief was the principal spirit in the defence of the Arawa Country against the Ngapuhi warriors under Hongi Hika in 1823, when the famous island of Mokoia, in Lake Rotorua, was taken by the musket-armed men of the North.

I was born on the shore of Lake Rotomahana, near the famous White Terraces, on the 24th February, 1860, and the old Maori guide Kate, of Te Wairoa, used to tell me how she helped to give me my first bath, heated by nature, in one of the lovely terrace basins. My mother Karauna (or more correctly Nga-Karauna) died at Matata, after rearing four sons—Albert, myself,* Joseph,

* Mr. Warbrick's name in full is Alfred Patchett Warbrick. His Maori name "Patiti" is the native pronunciation of Patchett. The literal Maori meaning is "tomahawk."

and Arthur. My father married her cousin, Harina, daughter of Riini Kaipara, a chief of Tarawera. My mother was buried in a cave on Wahanga, the north-west part of Mt. Tarawera, the lofty, rocky bluff overlooking Tarawera Lake. There were two sons of the second marriage, William and Fred. Joe Warbrick, at one time an "All Black" Rugby footballer, became a farmer at Matata. He met his death in a tragic manner at Waimangu, as hereinafter described. My youngest brother, Arthur, an athlete like all the family, was drowned in a boat accident at Ohiwa, on the east coast, where he was ferryman at the entrance to the estuary. Albert, the eldest, is now farming a family land grant at Otamarakau, on the Bay of Plenty coast.

When I was about fourteen years old, a man who was to have a deciding influence on my career visited Tauranga. This was Sir Donald Maclean, the great Minister of Native Affairs in the 'Seventies. Sir Donald was a son of the Western Isles of the Scottish Highlands, a big burly man. He had been in New Zealand ever since its foundation as a British Colony, and he was greatly liked by the Maoris. The old chiefs found him a

kindred spirit, the better able by reason of his Celtic birth and mentality to enter into their ways of thought and sympathise with their racial beliefs. He and my father were old friends. On this occasion when he came to our house he had a long talk with my father, who told him, in course of conversation on a variety of topics, that he was concerned about my future, and that of my brothers. "My boy Alfred is growing up and is already quite a big fellow," he said. "What is to become of him in life?" It was a question, he said, whether I was to continue in the easy-going Pakeha-Maori life; should I not rather be taught some calling by which to make my way in the outside world?

I was not in the room when this conversation began, but Sir Donald asked my father to send for me. I came in and stood somewhat shyly before the great man. He said to me in his deliberate way, after looking me over for some moments:

"I have sent for you, my boy, because we have been discussing your future, and I should like to help you. Now sit down and listen to what I have to say. I want you to choose for yourself the trade or profession that you would like."

I looked out of the window, near which Sir Donald was sitting, wondering what reply I could make to this question thus unexpectedly put to me. The house was on a hill; Tauranga Harbour lay spread out below. As I looked over the water, speculating what answer I should give, I saw a man rowing a boat across the bay to a beach below our house. That sight gave me the cue for my reply. Being intensely fond of boats and the water, I said to Sir Donald: "I should like to build boats."

"Then I'll help you to become a boatbuilder," Sir Donald immediately replied. "I will assist you to learn your calling in Auckland."

And so it was settled. My father discussed it in detail with the Minister, who, once he had offered to help me, went into the matter with characteristic thoroughness. I was taken up to Auckland, where we visited the shipyards. There was in those days a big industry in building vessels, large and small. I was in due course apprenticed to an experienced boatbuilder, Charles Bailey, senior, in order to learn the construction of rowing and sailing boats, yachts, and other sea craft.

This was my trade for ten years. I learned the shipwright's business thoroughly, and eventually became foreman in Bailey's yard. I was keenly interested in everything that had to do with boats and yachts, from building them to sailing them, and yachting was at once my work and my pleasure. Racing was my delight, and the quick judgment and decision developed in yacht handling in all weathers served me well in after years on the lakes.

In 1886 I went to Rotorua, where I had decided to set up as a boat-builder. I had, moreover, been requested by my mother's people to represent the family interest at a Native Land Court investigation of the titles to the Rotomahana Block. Thus it happened that I was at Te Wairoa, destined to become tragically famous as "The Buried Village," a short while before the Tarawera eruption. In 1888, I went to England, a member of the Maori Rugby football team, and toured Great Britain, playing in many successful matches. Thereafter I returned to the Thermal district of New Zealand, where my life has ever since been passed.

CHAPTER II.

Old Wairoa, and the Terraces of Rotomahana

THE village of Te Wairoa, the headquarters of the Tuhourangi, sub-tribe of the Arawa, was a pretty place in the semi-primitive period before the great eruption which devastated it and caused the surviving Maoris to abandon it for ever. There were houses of Maori and Pakeha type scattered over a considerable area between the outlet of Roto-Kakahi Lake and the edge of the high land overlooking Lake Tarawera. Cultivations extended over the level ground adjoining the lake and the gentler slopes, and there were many fertile fruit orchards. A carved house, "Hinemihi," stood by the wayside near the entrance to the principal part of the settlement, where the two hotels and the store were situated. On a commanding terrace called Te Mu, just above the village, was the Maori mission church, with a stained-glass window at the end overlooking the lake. Visitors were always taken there to admire the view

of lake and mountain through this window. In the early years much wheat was grown on the flat, and it was ground in a small mill driven by a water-wheel in the stream which flowed out of Roto-Kakahi. The old water-wheel was still to be seen a few years ago, protruding from the volcanic mud deposited by the great eruption of 1886.

There was a considerable tourist traffic to Te Wairoa, which was the starting point for the excursion by whaleboat and canoe across Tarawera and Rotomahana to the famous Terraces, then the principal objective of every visitor's travels in Geyserland. There were two quite celebrated native women guides there in those days, Kate and the half-caste Sophia Hinerangi. They used to steer the tourist boats, rowed by Maori crews, and escort the visitors over the Terraces.

The white pioneer of Te Wairoa was a missionary for whom I had a great admiration, the Rev. Seymour Mills Spencer; his grave is at Kariri, overlooking Lake Tarawera. Kariri was his first station in the Lakes country. He was a truly grand old man, of benevolent countenance, with a patriarchal white beard. He was the first missionary to the Maoris of the Tuhourangi

tribe, of Tarawera. The Rev. Thomas Chapman had settled in the country earlier; his station was at Te Ngae, on the east side of Rotorua Lake. Mr. Spencer and his wife were Americans; they left their native home in Illinois, in order to qualify in England as Church of England missionaries for work in New Zealand. They came out from London in 1842, and two years later made their home on the beautiful peninsula of Tauaroa, close to the Tuhourangi village called Te Rua-Keria, on the west shore of Lake Tarawera, about two miles from Te Wairoa. They called the station Galilee, or, in Maori, Kariri.

The only road to Tarawera in those early days was a foot track which entered the district from Rotorua by way of Lake Okareka. Later on, in 1852, when many of the Maoris cleared land for settlement on the site where Te Wairoa now is, the Spencers moved there from Kariri. On the terrace of Te Mu, a church and a frame house were built, with the help of two Pakeha carpenters. This house, long after the Spencer family had left Te Wairoa, was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Way, Mr. Spencer's daughter and son-in-law, but they were fortunately absent from home when the Tarawera eruption occurred.

Present-day visitors to Te Wairoa may walk over the top of the ruined church deeply buried under the volcanic ash.

One of the earliest Pakeha visitors to Rotomahana and the White and Pink Terraces which were the chief beauty and wonder of Geyserland in its primitive state, was Sir George Grey, during his first Governorship of New Zealand. The account of the tour, which is contained in a now rare little book entitled "Journal of an Expedition Overland from Auckland to Taranaki," published in Auckland in 1851, is the first detailed description which we have of the lake and its thermal marvels. It was written, at the direction of the Governor, by his assistant private secretary, Mr. G. S. Cooper, and there is a Maori version, by the Governor's interpreter, Piri-Kawau. Grey and his party made the journey in the summer of 1849-50. After visiting the resident missionaries, the Rev. Thomas Chapman at Te Ngae, and the Rev. S. M. Spencer at Kariri, Tarawera, the Governor crossed Lake Tarawera in a large war-canoe on the 28th December, 1849, accompanied by the chief Te Rangiheuea, and landed at Te Ariki village. Next day the party pitched their camp

on the shore of Rotomahana, close to the foot of Te Tarata, the White Terrace.

"The first thing which attracted our attention," the chronicler of the expedition wrote, "was naturally the immense and beautiful hot spring, Te Tarata, near to the base of which our tents were pitched. . . . We had all heard it said, previously to our leaving Auckland, by some travellers who had visited this part of the country not long before us, that to convey to one's mind an idea of the springs of Rotomahana, one had to imagine an overgrown lime-kiln. How such an idea could suggest itself to anyone certainly did appear to all of us a matter of much wonder. The spring of boiling water is at a height of about eighty feet from the level of the lake, and is contained in a large and nearly circular basin, surrounded by a steep cliff at the back; but on the side nearest the lake a regular succession of small semi-circular basins, one below the other, like steps of pure white marble, descend to the level of the lake. These steps have been formed by a deposit left by the water, which is constantly overflowing from one basin to the other. This deposit is perfectly white. . . . So great is the quantity held in solution by the

water which issues from the spring that, with the reflection of the blue sky overhead, it has exactly the hue of opal and is semi-opaque; so thick is it that it is impossible to see the bottom of any of the basins, the depths of which vary from eight feet to eighteen inches. The process of incrustation which is constantly going on (for the water is incessantly overflowing from one range of steps—so to speak—to the other, and so down to the lake) is so rapid that anything left on the edge of one of the baths where the water will be constantly flowing over it, becomes completely encrusted in a few weeks. A young duck was once found here, in a state of perfect preservation, entirely covered as with a coating of hoarfrost with the deposit of the waters. The temperature, of course, varies in each terrace or range of baths, that at the top being beyond boiling-water heat, whilst at the bottom it is almost cold, so that the traveller may have, with the greatest ease, a bath of any degree of heat he pleases. While rambling about here we found a small imitation canoe made of raupo leaves, such as the Maori children make for playthings, beautifully encrusted."

Next day, after exploring the shores of the lake and seeing innumerable boiling

TE WAIROA BEFORE THE ERUPTION OF MT. TARAWERA, 1886

springs and geysers, the Governor and his staff visited the Pink Terraces. They thought this marvel of nature even more beautiful than the White Terraces, as the following description indicates:—"Instead of the incrustation being entirely white as at Te Tarata, it is at the bottom white as marble; a little higher up it becomes pinkish, then of a beautiful salmon colour, which deepens to the roseate hue as the spectator casts his eye upward from terrace to terrace. Near the top it gradually becomes mingled with a yellowish tinge, until at the upper range of all the rock is of a delicate primrose colour. Another difference between this and the other *puia* is that instead of the water being, as at Te Tarata, semi-opaque, it is perfectly transparent. In the baths on the terraces it is of a light sky blue colour, but in the upper receptacle (which contains the boiling water and is quite circular and very large) may be seen every shade from a light cerulean tint, in the shallow water at the edges, to a strong cobalt, where it becomes deep in the centre of the cauldron. Having examined and sketched this superb sight, and parboiled ourselves in the baths, we returned to camp."

The Governor was greatly interested in the wildfowl life of Rotomahana—the swarming ducks of several kinds, the *torea* or stilt, and the *pukeko* or swamp turkey. They were in immense numbers and very tame, breeding among the rushes and raupo on the borders of the lake. In the breeding season and until the young were quite fledged the birds were all protected by a most rigid *tapu* called a *rahui.* Then periodically, such of the tribes as had proprietary rights in the lake assembled at Te Ariki—which was also called by the missionary natives Piripai (the equivalent of the Biblical Philippi)—for the purpose of having a feast, when the number of birds killed and eaten was enormous.

Another early visitor to Rotomahana in the Spencers' time was Mr. S. Percy Smith, afterwards Surveyor-General. Early in 1858 he and his cousin, Mr. C. W. Hursthouse (the "Wirihana" of the Maoris) walked up here from Taranaki and Taupo. Mr. Smith described the beauty and interest of the place in his diary (lent to Mr. Cowan), in which he illustrated the appearance of Rotomahana and its islands by some sketches, one of which is reproduced in this book.

"In the middle of the lake," Mr. Smith wrote, "are the pretty Chinese-looking islands of Puwai and Pukara, covered with houses and manuka." These islets, with the Maoris camped on them—the chief Rangiheuea was on Puwai with several other people—were blown into the air in the twinkling of an eye when Rotomahana and the Terraces were destroyed in the eruption of 1886. Mr. Smith was charmed with the abundance and tameness of the birds of the warm lake, especially the "elegant little *torea*." "These *torea*," he notes, "are lucky rascals, protected by the *tapu* (the close season lasts nearly all the year). They have nothing to do but hop up and down all day long, first on one leg, then on the other, warming their feet in the water, and then jumping into the air with a loud scream."

The islet Puwai was a favourite resort of the Maoris for the healing hot springs, and many of them were in the habit of camping there. It was the "Singing Isle" of the poet Alfred Domett in "Ranolf and Amohia." This poetical name was not inappropriate, as the vocal sound of steaming water and escaping vapour was always to be heard there. One visitor to Rotomahana in

the old days (Lieut.-Col. St. John) compared a night's camping on Puwai to sleeping on the top of a steaming tea-kettle. Domett described the camping ground of his romantic lovers on the Singing Isle. They heaped

> " Elastic fern and broom to keep
> Down to a pleasant warmth the heat
> The ground gives out."

There they were lulled to sleep

> ". . . . by that low changeless churme,
> The hissing, simmering, seething sound
> That sings and murmurs all the while
> And ever round that mystic isle."

Puwai, with its Maori campers, and pretty Pukara islet were utterly destroyed when Rotomahana exploded and was blown into boiling mud and ash on the fateful morning of the 10th June, 1886.

One of the sketches in Mr. Smith's journal shows that beautiful little lake, Okareka, between Rotorua and Tarawera. There is a canoe on it with sail set. There were in those days two or three Maori villages on its shores, which were wooded nearly everywhere, relieved by beautiful white beaches and headlands. The missionary family entertained the travellers very hospitably at Te Wairoa.

One of the breaks in the round of olden life at Te Wairoa, in which the Spencer missionary family shared, was the annual gathering of all the Maoris who had interests in Rotomahana, in order to catch the wild duck, *torea* and *pukeko*. Throughout the year, as already mentioned, Rotomahana was carefully guarded; no one was allowed near it except by special permission. Dogs and guns were not permitted, in fact even in the short open season no shooting was allowed. About the end of February, however, the assembled Maoris on a given night set to at snaring the birds, or catching them by hand with the help of specially trained dogs. Nearly all the edge of the lake was thickly clothed with raupo and bulrushes, amid which in the shallow water the snares were set, consisting of rows of running nooses or slip-knots set across the innumerable runways and channels along which the waterfowl swam or waded. For some days and nights the hunting went on. Not a shot was fired. Indeed, nothing was done to frighten away the birds. Their numbers were quietly lessened by some thousands. The catches were cooked in the many steam holes and hot springs along the lake edge, and were rendered down in their own

fat and potted in bark containers and other receptacles, in which they would keep for many months. Then the lake would be closed against fowling for another year.

The Spencer family, until the Maori war, often accompanied their Maori friends on these picnic excursions by canoe. They enjoyed bathing in the glorious warm pools of the Otukapuarangi and Te Tarata terraces, and their womenfolk returned with an abundance of feathers for bedding purposes.

Such were some of the diversions of life in the days of old-time Lakeland.

CHAPTER III.

The Eruption of Mt. Tarawera

I WAS one of a party who had been out all day shooting wild pigeons in the deep forest known as Makatiti, which covered the country between Lake Tarawera and the Rotoiti and Rotoehu Lakes. Lake Okataina was on our west; southward lay Tarawera, with the grim old burial mountain sacred to the Maori race looming over its southern side. It was the 9th of June, 1886. The day was dull and misty with light rain. There were four of us—Glen Barclay, and two Maoris named Ihakara and Te Tuhi, besides myself. Ihakara was a Maori of Wai-iti village on Lake Rotoiti; he was a wood-carving expert. These forests were his ancestral lands, and he had come with us at my request in order to show us the best shooting grounds.

Late in the evening we returned to our bush camp, with our pigeons, cooked our meal and made ourselves comfortable for the night.

Our shelter was a small slab hut, roughly built but strong. This quality of strength in roofing and walls was important to us, as events proved.

After turning in I was strangely restless, and could not sleep. It was perhaps a premonition of the catastrophe so suddenly and swiftly to descend upon us. After a while I got out of my blankets and went outside the hut and walked about for some time. It was, however, a cold night, in the middle of winter, and feeling chilly I was glad to return to my bed on the fern-strewn floor but could not sleep.

While lying there, wondering what made me so restless, I felt a tremor of the earth. It was a slight shake, but other tremors followed and became more violent. I looked towards my friends, but as they still lay peacefully slumbering, tired out with the day's activities, I did not disturb them. I silently awaited further developments. Soon, after a brief cessation of tremors, the ground beneath me began to jump about. Then a terrific roar burst through the night. It was then 1.40 o'clock in the morning, as I estimated when looking at my watch a little later.

My companions jumped out of their blankets, bewildered by the terrifying noise. The ground was shaking, the slab whare was shaking too. The roar did not cease as suddenly as it began; on the other hand it seemed to increase. Fearful and inexplicable sounds stunned the ear.

"What's the matter?" shouted one of my friends.

"Go out and see," I said.

Ihakara the carver, who was a church lay-reader, asked me to pray. I said in English, "Not now."

As soon as we opened the door we were amazed at the sight that met our gaze. The whole country round was lighted up by an unearthly glare and glow. "The sky is all on fire!" yelled one of the men, as he put his head out.

I saw instantly that Tarawera Mountain, right in front of us across the lake, had burst out in eruption. Our camp was on the edge of the bush directly facing the lake, which lay considerably below us, and on its further shore was the mountain apparently in a blaze. It sent up sheets of flaming matter to an enormous height, great quivering masses of fire. The flames went up in quick spasms of expulsion. White-hot ash and stones and

debris were hurled far into the sky. The ground was rolling, the shaking and jumping were ceaseless. We could not stand up without holding on to something. We clung to the front of the slab whare. We tried to speak to each other, but our voices were quite inaudible amid that terrific roar.

I was well acquainted with the topography of Tarawera, and I saw that the mountain was vomiting flames and glowing rock and ash from four distinct places. Wahanga was the nearest to us, the bold battlemented peak overlooking the lake. As I watched that sacred burial mountain of our ancestors rent asunder, throwing forth its flames and rocks, I thought of my mother who had been laid to rest in the cave on its shoulder and of the innumerable dead whose last home was shattered and hurled aloft in that fearful blast. Wahanga was the first centre of volcanic explosion, then came two distinct points of eruption on Ruawahia, the middle peak, and on Tarawera, the farthest peak, overlooking Rotomahana, there also developed a flaming crater.

As I watched this fearful spectacle there was a thundering roar of still greater intensity, if such were conceivable, and I saw the

south end of Tarawera peak split right down and open up, vomiting forth an immense volume of flame. We could not see then the direction of the split, but the fact was that the explosion burst a great rift down into Rotomahana Lake and up three miles towards the south-west. The whole of that huge earthquake rift and the volcanic craters from Wahanga to the present site of Waimangu were belching into the sky liquid ash and incandescent rocks. The four craters on Tarawera range extended for more than three miles. The Rotomahana rift was eight miles long and two miles at its widest. Thus there was a length of between eleven and twelve miles of country in eruption at once. Of course we did not comprehend this at the time; we could only gaze in amazement beyond words, and surmise the extent of the disaster. We watched the sight for about half an hour, but it was at times too awful to contemplate.

As we watched, the flames from the craters in the mountain gradually died down; they disappeared, and all was darkness. Rotomahana lake-bed was by this time, although we did not know it, the centre of activity. The steam forces in its bottom, with

enormous pressure were scattering vast quantities of mud all over the countryside.

It was dark all that day. It remained dark continuously for thirty hours. The whole heavens were thick with the dreadful dust of the eruption. We remained in our camp all that day and night. We were very anxious about our friends at Te Wairoa and along the shores of Lake Tarawera, but could not move away to inquire for their safety; we were enveloped in that fearful gloom and the falling volcanic ash.

We managed to get out of our little hut on Friday morning (about thirty hours after the first outburst), by making a hole in the roof and crawling through it. The daylight showed us that the country around us was entirely changed. The bush in which we had been shooting on Wednesday was stripped of all green foliage; the standing trees looked dead. Wild cattle were out in the open all covered with mud and wandering about terrified, aimlessly looking for food. It was then that we first thought of food ourselves, having eaten our last meal thirty-six hours previously. After we had assuaged our hunger, our thoughts were to get away to Rotorua.

We first tramped out through the bush to Ruato, on Lake Rotoiti, where we secured a boat which had been half buried in the mud, and rowed up the lake. We called first at Kelly's timber-mill at Tapuwaekura, where the men were digging the mud from the roofs of their houses. I went on shore and the manager of the mill, Mr. McCausland, told me that he had just returned from Rotorua and that in the reports of the disaster my name and those of my friends were given as killed. He urged me to hurry to Rotorua. He also told me that many people at Wairoa were killed.

It was blowing a gale and as Lake Rotorua was rough, our little boat was often nearly swamped in crossing it. At 8 p.m. we managed to reach Ohinemutu thoroughly exhausted.

It was bright moonlight that evening, and on my way to the village, where I knew that all the people had assembled, some Maoris who were standing gazing out towards the scene of the eruption saw me approaching them. When they recognised me they ran to the meeting-house and told the people that they had seen my ghost walking towards the village.

My uncle left the house and came forward to meet what he thought was my ghost. On discovering that I was my real live self he greeted me enthusiastically, amazed and greatly relieved to find that I and my companions were safe and unharmed. He advised me not to go to the meeting-house that night, because I had been mourned as killed, but that at daylight in the morning I would be brought before the full assembly.

In the morning I met all the villagers. It was a most poignant, sorrowful time. Everybody was crying and wailing for the dead. After things had quietened down, I asked whether anybody had made an effort to find out what had become of the people at Moura and Te Ariki, on the shore of Lake Tarawera. The reply was that no attempt had yet been made. I immediately said I would go and find out. The people were all against my doing so after what I had gone through. However, having told them that I would go, I rode out on horseback to Te Wairoa to see if it were possible to cart a boat along the road to Lake Tarawera.

When I reached Wairoa the body of young Mr. Bainbridge, who was killed in the Hotel, had just been found. I saw that it

was possible to get a boat out but that there must be no delay, as the mud was getting softer each day. After gathering a few clothes from my home (which had been demolished by the weight of volcanic mud) I returned to Rotorua to secure boats and volunteers for the search expedition.

CHAPTER IV.

Some Stories of the Eruption

THE first news that the world outside the Thermal Region received of the disaster was a message dispatched by Mr. Dansey, the Government telegraph officer at Rotorua, and circulated throughout New Zealand. In Auckland (150 miles away) the explosions of Tarawera and Rotomahana seemed like heavy gun-firing at a distance, and looking southward from the hills of the city flashes like those of artillery were distinctly seen by some of the inhabitants who had been aroused by the sound. It was thought by many of the citizens that a vessel had been wrecked on the Manukau bar, and memories of the loss there of H.M.S. *Orpheus* in 1863 were recalled. There was a Russian warship, the *Vestnik*, expected on the coast, and a report was spread that she was ashore and was firing distress guns. However, these rumours were dissipated when, commencing at 8.30 in the morning of the 10th June, the following

THE RUINED VILLAGE: TE WAIROA AFTER THE ERUPTION

telegrams were received in rapid sequence from the Rotorua telegraphist:—

"We have all passed a fearful night here. The earth has been in a continual quake since midnight. At 2.10 a.m. there was a heavy quake, then a fearful roar which made everyone run out of their houses, and a grand, yet terrible sight for those so near as we were, presented itself. Mt. Tarawera, close to Rotomahana, suddenly became active, the volcano belching out fire and lava to a great height. The eruption appears to have extended itself to several places southwards. A dense mass of ashes came pouring down here at four o'clock a.m., accompanied by a suffocating smell from the lower regions."

"The immense black cloud, which extended in line from Taheke to Paeroa Mountain, was one continual mass of electricity all night, and is still the same. The roar of the thunder, the roaring of the three or four craters, the stench, and the continual quaking of the earth, made everyone alarmed. Several families left their homes in their nightdresses, with whatever they could seize in the hurry, and made for Tauranga. Others more lucky, got horses, and left for Oxford. Judging from the quantity of ashes and dust here,

I fear serious trouble to people at Te Wairoa and all natives round Tarawera Lake."

"Hundreds of new boiling springs have broken out all round here, some in the middle of the roads."

These telegrams were at short intervals followed by others as follows:—

"The schoolhouse at Te Wairoa was fired by the lightning, and then smothered in mud and stones. The two hotels there are all ruins. Twenty bodies have been recovered at Wairoa. Mrs. Haszard, wife of the schoolmaster, has just been rescued, but is injured. Four of her children were found dead alongside of her. Mr. Haszard is missing."

"It is reported that all Rotomahana has disappeared. Telegraphic communication is interrupted north of here. The whole of the roads and surrounding country are covered with blue mud three feet deep. In the Te Wairoa township it is ten feet deep, and the houses are covered up to the eaves. The lovely Tikitapu bush is like a desert waste. The trees are stripped of their foliage with the weight of the mud. Many of the gigantic ones are levelled to the ground."

Next morning an eye-witness telegraphed the following account from Rotorua:—"We

have just passed through a most terrible time. The Tarawera mountain and its twin cone, Ruawahia, which many persons have classed as extinct volcanoes, suddenly burst into activity between one and two o'clock this morning. Seen from this place the spectacle was fearful, and it reminded one of Bulwer Lytton's description of 'The Last Days of Pompeii,' and of Martin's celebrated picture of the 'Last Day.' Until about five o'clock, there was a constant succession of earthquakes. Immense volumes of flame were projected to a great height, and dense clouds of smoke, steam, mud and ashes covered the sky, and thunder and lightning were almost incessant. Flashes of lightning played through the pall of smoke. Shortly before six o'clock showers of ash reached here, but, fortunately, the wind shifted round to S.W., and blew for a time with almost hurricane force, completely turning the dense cloud before much damage was done. When the grit began falling, many persons who had passed the night with fear and trembling thought they were about to be overwhelmed, and then began a stampede. Half-dressed women and children were to be seen flying for their lives along the Tauranga road towards Te Awahou to seek shelter in the

native schoolhouse there. Some did not think themselves safe even there, and continued their flight towards Oxford and Tauranga. The lake rose considerably, and a great many new springs burst up, which added to their fear of being engulfed."

After that various other reports poured in, hurried, and disjointed, breathing a spirit of terror and confusion. Mr. Dansey stuck to his post, and a few like-minded cool people organized search and rescue expeditions to the devastated region. Auckland newspapers quickly despatched members of their staffs, and soon coherent and illuminating accounts were published of the strange changes in the face of the country.

At Te Wairoa the survivors of the Haszard family were rescued. The following was Mrs. Haszard's statement of that night of tragedy: "My two daughters, Clara and Ina, escaped into a detached portion of the house. While sitting in my chair, with my three remaining children around me, I was pinned to the floor by the leg, through the roof falling in, and I believe that it was at that time my husband was killed. I had my youngest child, Mona, a girl aged four, in my arms, a boy aged ten, Adolphus, on my right, and a

younger child, aged six, on my left. Mona who was in my arms, cried to me to give her more room, as I was pressing her against the beam, but the load of volcanic mud pouring down on me prevented me from being able to render any assistance, and the child was crushed, and smothered in my arms, and died. Adolphus said to me, 'Mamma, I will die with you,' and I think he died shortly after. He did not answer again. The little girl, I think, died shortly after, as she said, 'Oh my head!' as the mud was beating down on her, and she spoke no more. During my entombment I thought a search party would come to search the room. I cooey'd to the first people I heard about the place. Mr. Blythe, the surveyor, and others got me out, bruised and cut, after being entombed for several hours."

The above-named Mr. J. C. Blythe, a surveyor, who with his assistant, Mr. H. Lundius,* was with the Haszard family on the night of the eruption, in describing his experiences said:—"After the outburst of the volcano, there were for some hours earthquakes at exactly ten minutes' intervals. It

* Mr. Lundius is now (1934) living in Wellington.

was at half-past three that the fearful catastrophe which caused the death of five of us occurred. Mrs. Haszard and the younger children got into the centre of the room for safety, the rest of us being in another room, when the roof, on which a coating of mud had accumulated in unknown tons, fell in with the enormous weight. I was standing near the outer wall, and the roof fell clear of me. Miss Haszard escaped. We then tried to find shelter for the young lady by going to the old house at the back, the roof of which had fallen in, but which afforded shelter from the fiery projectiles and stones which were being showered down all round, and here we left Miss Haszard, and went back to the house to try and save the inmates, if still alive. Mr. Lundius and I called and shouted but could get no reply, and believing them to be dead we turned our attention to getting the girl to a place of safety. Just at this moment a ball of fire set light to the old house in which they were sheltered, and we had then to make for the road, as our only means of escape. The ash was lying four feet deep, but on the road was a buggy which had been brought up by Mr. Robertson, into which we placed Miss Haszard, and we then made

another attempt to save anyone alive in the house. The house had been saved from ignition by the fire in the old house owing to the thickness of wet ashes which had settled round it. Mr. Lundius heard a cry of distress inside, and kicked in a window, whereupon an old Maori woman, Mary Mohi, a servant of the family, came out dragging with her Mr. Haszard's second daughter, Ina, a girl of seventeen. Mary Mohi had pluckily kept the latter alive by scooping the volcanic debris away from her face as she lay crushed down towards the floor, and so preventing her from being suffocated. A further search discovered Mrs. Haszard, still alive, with her youngest children dead, the one in her lap, and the other crushed at her feet."

One of the most vivid descriptions by an eye-witness was given by Mr. H. R. Burt, native agent, who at the time of the eruption was out on the plains between Tarawera and the Rangitaiki River. He was awakened from sleep by a rumbling noise like that of an earthquake. He went outside, but could see nothing, although it was a clear night. The noise came from Tarawera. Looking round again, he saw a huge mass of flame rise into the heavens, and instantly lava and smoke covered the ground. Soon afterwards

a volume of flame issued from Ruawahia. Balls of fire were thrown from its gaping mouth towards Taupo, accompanied by loud reports which shook the whole place. Forked lightning followed close upon the balls of fire, resembling the wriggling of snakes; it appeared to return to the crater, forming in its course the shape of the letter V. It was a scene to unsettle, said Burt, the nerves of the strongest man. The roar was tremendous, resembling the heaviest thunder. As each piece of hillside slipped into the open basin large clouds of black dust rose out of it, and ascended to the sky. The fall of earth into the open crater seemed to stop the fiery balls from coming up, but forked lightning still continued. Dense volumes of smoke issued from the crater. When Ruawahia ceased sending forth its balls of flame a huge white cloud issued from Rotomahana, and heavy booming was heard, followed by dense volumes of steam. It rose with terrible velocity, and seemed to be going towards Okaro Lake. This lake, about five miles from Lake Rotomahana, became a huge boiling cauldron, bubbling in all directions. Lightning then shot out from Mt. Kakaramea. On the side towards Okaro Lake, it resembled a

sheet of flame, formed of red-hot pieces of iron. From the whole mountain there came sheets of flame and myriads of shooting stars like large rockets. Shortly afterwards shocks of earthquakes were felt, accompanied by a noise resembling minute guns, but louder than the roar of the heaviest artillery. The country all round began to get dark. In half an hour it was so densely black that no one could see his hand in front of him. While this was going on a shower of pieces of lava, the size of peas, came down with terrible swiftness.

Mr. Burt said that the Maoris in the village where he was staying, near Galatea, all assembled in a large meeting-house. They had three *tohungas* (priests) in the middle of them and the natives were in a state of panic, some crying, some praying, and others rushing about in all directions. Mr. Burt spoke encouragingly to them, trying to persuade them to be calm, and advised them to go up Horomanga Gorge towards the Urewera Country, whither he was proceeding himself. Despite his utmost efforts, however, he could not induce one of them to move. He immediately started for Horomanga himself, but had hardly got a mile along the road when the dust and smoke became so suffocating that for self-protection he dropped down between

some manuka bushes. To avoid suffocation he kept his mouth close to the ground but could scarcely breathe. Stones fell with great force upon him. The lumps of lava seemed to be increasing in size, and as he was becoming enveloped by them he was compelled to leave his shelter. Although it was seven o'clock in the morning there was no sign of daylight. At 9.20 a.m. a small streak of light appeared over Taupo. After much exertion he made his way to where he had parted from the natives, and found them still terror-stricken in the same place. They entreated him to stay with them, but he decided that it would be better for him to go to Galatea. The Ngati-Manawa tribe there, on the Rangitaiki, were all assembled in a large house. They said they had all passed a dreadful night. There were about seven inches of volcanic deposit at Galatea. Mr. Burt journeyed across the Kaingaroa Plain, and after many adventures reached Rotorua safely.

CHAPTER V.

A Search Expedition

TUHOTO THE WIZARD, AND THE STORY OF THE PHANTOM CANOE.

FOR our search mission to the villages on Lake Tarawera I secured a large boat from Mrs. Robert Graham of Ohinemutu. It was a 24-ft. whaleboat. I had also a light skiff of my own, a racing boat 16 feet long; this I intended to use as a despatch boat if required. The next requirement was a waggon to take the boats out. This I obtained from a Mr. Crimmons of Rotorua, and late on Saturday the 12th June, 1886, I had my volunteers and everything ready for an early start on the following (Sunday) morning, the 13th. I was fortunate in having my brother Arthur to help me. We started out from Ohinemutu at 10 a.m. It was said that the six fine draught horses would not be able to pull the wagon through the mud, but we got to Te Wairoa all right late in the evening. The two boats—the skiff inside the larger boat—were somewhat damaged on the way out, as the wagon

had to be jacked over fallen trees in the Tikitapu bush, the whole party walking alongside it.

Camp was made in Sophia's hut at Te Wairoa. With the help of my brother I soon mended the boats, and had them ready to be lowered over the Wairoa cliff into Lake Tarawera. We had a very lively night. With the roaring from the Rotomahana craters and the earthquakes almost every few minutes, we got very little sleep. After an early breakfast we set out for the cliff where the boats had to be lowered down the precipitous face, which was deeply covered with mud and silt. The boats having been lowered with ropes, by half-past nine o'clock we had them afloat on the lake all ready for the start. The volunteer crew for our large boat consisted of Captain Gilbert Mair, N.Z.C., the Maori War veteran (steersman), Alfred Black, Ted Insley, Edwin Harrow (of Lake Takapuna, Auckland), and Ben Edwards (half-caste), a native interpreter. In my small boat, a two-oar skiff, built for racing, Harry Taylor was steersman and my brother Arthur and myself were at the oars. Just as we were all ready to start, a messenger arrived from Rotorua with a request to me to hold the

search expedition back, as Dr. James Hector, the Government Geologist, who had been sent up from Wellington by the Government to enquire into the disaster, was on his way out to Te Wairoa.

During the delay occasioned by compliance with this request I turned my thoughts towards old Tuhoto Ariki, the venerable *tohunga* of Tuhourangi, who lived by himself in a little hut on the brow of the hill overlooking the lake. And here I must look back, and tell the story of the premonitions of the catastrophe and of the appearance of the phantom canoe on Lake Tarawera. Ten or eleven days before the eruption, two boat loads of people from Te Wairoa went across the lake to the Kaiwaka portage and thence visited the Pink and the White Terraces at Rotomahana. Most of the passengers were oversea tourists, and the crews were Maoris, together with the two celebrated guides Sophia Hinerangi and Kate, each of whom was steering a boat. A friend of mine, Willie Quick, an Auckland lad, son of Mr. Quick of the old-time line of mail and passenger coaches, was one of the passengers. When the boats had proceeded for about a mile out in Tarawera Lake, headed Kariri point, and

opened up Waitangi on the north-west side of the lake towards Okataina, one of the passengers happened to look across the water towards the Waitangi arm. "My goodness!" he exclaimed, "look at that big canoe coming along there."

All the people in the boat looked out in that direction and saw the canoe. It was to all appearance a war-canoe of the olden time, with a crew of paddlers. It had the projecting bow-piece and the high sternpost that were fitted in large canoes of the *waka-taua* or war-canoe type.

The strange canoe was discussed by Pakeha and Maori. The hour was early in the forenoon. The Europeans thought that it was a real canoe, but the Maoris realised that it was an apparition . They all were aware of the tribal tradition of a death-canoe, a phantom craft—*waka-wairua*—which was sometimes seen heading towards the sacred burial mountain, a portent of many deaths to come. The strange craft was approaching the boats, whose people could see the crew's heads and bodies bowing and rising in the action of paddling. The courses of the canoe and boats converged until the *waka-taua* was about half a mile distant. It appeared to have

twelve or thirteen people in it. Then, all at once the war-canoe vanished. It melted away like a mirage. The Maoris' belief was confirmed. It was a phantom from the spirit world.

The boats went on up the Ariki arm, and the passengers and guides visited Rotomahana and the Terraces. When the party returned to Te Wairoa that night the story of the apparition was told and debated all over the village. Young Willie Quick said to me after his return from the trip: "Warbrick, I saw that canoe as plainly as I see you now. It came to about half a mile from us and then it disappeared."

Old Tuhoto Ariki, the reputed wizard, was walking along the road that evening when he came to a group discussing the canoe vision. He was passing when a woman asked him: "Have you heard of the spirit-canoe on the lake to-day?"

"Yes," said the ancient man (he was said to be more than a hundred years old). "Yes, I have heard of it."

Then the woman asked him: *"He tohu aha? He aha te tohu o tera waka?"* ("Is it an omen? What does that canoe portend?")

To which the sage replied, in his strong rather harsh voice: "*He tohu tera, ara ka horo katoa tenei takiwa.*" ("It is an omen; it is a sign and warning that all this region will be overwhelmed.")

This oracular deliverance very soon became known throughout Te Wairoa, and some of the people were deeply concerned about it for a time, but as none could say from what quarter the blow would come it eventually lost its first impressiveness. But it was remembered by all Tuhourangi after the disaster.

It was also remembered that Tuhoto, who was very much feared by the Maoris of the whole district, had prophesied disaster. About two weeks before the eruption of Tarawera and Rotomahana, he was very much annoyed at the treatment which he had received from one of his grandsons, and he told the people of Wairoa that a great disaster would overtake them and punish them for their misdeeds. The Maoris at the time were much troubled at what he had said. When the outburst came they said that the *tohunga* by his magic mana and invocations had caused Tarawera and Rotomahana to break into flame; and when some of the first Maoris came out to Wairoa and found that

McRAE'S HOTEL, TE WAIROA: After the eruption

THE BOAT SEARCH PARTY,
Lake Tarawera, 1886

Standing—C. Taylor, Arthur Warbrick, E. Insley, A. Black
(Absent—Captain Mair)
Sitting—Alfred Warbrick, B. Edwards, E. Harrow

THE TERRACES HOTEL, TE WAIROA, AFTER THE ERUPTION

RUINS OF THE OLD MILL, TE WAIROA

he had been buried in his whare by the heavy fall of volcanic mud, they gloatingly expressed their pleasure at the news.

To return to the day of our search expedition.

I knew old Tuhoto well; he was in fact a relative of mine, and he called me his *mokopuna* (grandchild). I told my friends and volunteers the story of the *tohunga* and asked them to dig down into the mud on the site of his house and get his body out.

They agreed, and I took them to the spot. There I left them and walked over to a place where Constable Cavanagh, the Rotorua policeman, was sitting. After talking to him for a few minutes I suddenly heard a shout. On looking round I saw the search party running over to me looking terrified. On my asking what was the matter, they exclaimed: "The old devil is still alive." By this time some Maoris who were at Te Wairoa came along. They asked me to leave Tuhoto to die.

I took no notice of their appeal and walked out to where the men had been digging. Jumping into the hole which they had excavated I started to pull some thatching from part of the roof of the whare which had

fallen in. While I was doing so I heard the old chap, who was somewhere down below, calling out. I told the people who had gathered round on the surface that Tuhoto was there and alive.

In a short time I had the front of the hut cleared, and formed an entrance large enough to enable me to crawl in. In the far corner the old fellow was sitting. He appeared quite contented. I crawled to within reach of him, and said. "*Homai to ringa.*" ("Give me your hand.") His reply was "*Kao*" ("*No.*") I repeated my request, and he again said "*Kao.*" Then he said: "*Waiho noa ahau. E ono aku atua. E kore ahau e mate.*" ("Leave me alone. I have six gods. I shall not die.")

I took hold of his hand, and backed out, pulling the old man with me. When I had got him out, he looked all round him in wonder. Everything appeared to him so strange; he could scarcely believe that he was still at Te Wairoa.

I tried to get him to talk, and asked him if he knew me. He lifted his head, looked at me, and nodded his head affirmatively. After thinking a while he said: "*He uri koe naku.*" ("You are my descendant.")

I shall always vividly remember that weird discovery in the little crushed-in whare overwhelmed by the load of volcanic mud. Tuhoto was a large-boned, very tall man, with a slight stoop. He must have been 6 feet 6 inches in height. As his sole covering when I found him was about half of an old opossum rug, I obtained a blanket for him.

I was quite satisfied that the old man's mind was clear. I fetched him some brandy and water and a few biscuits, and left him in charge of the police, with instructions to send him to Rotorua. He was taken to the Government Sanatorium, where he only lived for about a fortnight. He died feared by all the Maoris; they continued to believe that he had by his curses brought about the catastrophe.

CHAPTER VI.

Seeking the Lost Villages

A Boat Cruise on Lake Tarawera.

Just after I handed over the ancient *tohunga* to the care of the police, Dr. Hector arrived at Te Wairoa. First he urged me not to attempt to cross Lake Tarawera, as it was almost certain death. I told him that I must go, as someone might still be alive on the other side and in want of help. I then asked my volunteer search party if they would consent to go. They all promptly replied, "If you are prepared to go, we intend to follow you." So we started to lower ourselves by ropes over the cliff, below the ruined village, and reaching our two boats, rowed out into the lake. As we pulled out from the bay breathing became very difficult owing to the strong sulphur fumes. In order to get over this I instructed my companions to tear part of their shirts into broad strips and fasten them around their faces, so as to cover mouth and nose. By this means we were able to go

on. As we neared Tarawera Mountain the outlook was far from encouraging. We could see black smoke issuing not only from the craters but from the slopes of the mountain-side facing us. Some of the party wanted to return, but I urged them to go on as upon their efforts would depend the rescue of any possible survivors.

We rowed on, towards Te Ariki.

When we reached the site of Moura, the first kainga on the lake shore, no trace of the village was to be seen—nothing but a vast pile of mud covering its houses to a depth of some 75 feet. The inhabitants who numbered thirty-nine, were all buried under the mud. This once pretty village and its whole population had entirely disappeared.

Similarly, two miles further along the shore on the Ngutuahi arm of the lake, where Te Ariki village had stood only three days before, we found nothing but mud, in this case to the depth of about 250 feet. The whole country around here was changed beyond all recognition and heartbreaking to the sight of those who, like myself, were familiar with its once picturesque beauty. The desolating ash hurled from Rotomahana was still falling lightly from the great murky clouds.

I jumped out of my boat, thinking that I might reach the site of the village, but, finding the ground roasting hot, had to return. The total number killed in this Maori settlement was fifty-two, including one European (Sam Brown, a surveyor's assistant).

While we were here we heard the report of a gun. Waiting for a while, and looking back towards the lower slopes of Mt. Tarawera from which the sound appeared to come, I saw a flash and heard another faint report. We thereupon pushed off and rowed over to the spot whence they came. There we found nine Maoris, who had journeyed over the ash-covered country from Matata on the sea coast to Tapahoro, a distance of about forty miles, and then along the base of the volcano-riven mountain for some five miles. How they ever reached the place where we found them, travelling over the hot stones, is a mystery.

As they were very thirsty we gave them some water which we had brought with us, for the muddy water of the lake was not fit to drink. They told me that they had come to see if they could save any of their relatives who lived in the lakeside villages. It was my sad task to tell them that all were killed and

deeply buried beneath the volcanic debris. I shall never forget the heartbreaking wailing of those poor men when I told them that their loved relations were beyond all human help.

I told them that if they would come down to the boats I would land them at the head of the lake and thus save them from again walking over the hot stones and ash disgorged from the fiery heart of Mt. Tarawera. While in the boat they told me of the terrible experiences which they had passed through on that perilous journey. Our arrival saved them four miles of the worst part of their walk home. In fact it must have saved their lives, for it is incredible that they could ever have returned by the way that they had come. When we reached the east end of the lake at Tapahoro, we provided them with food which they badly needed and sent them on their homeward journey.

It was now getting late in the afternoon, and as we could do no good by remaining longer in that locality, we started to row back the nine miles to Te Wairoa, reaching there at 9 p.m. All of us were very tired and racked with thirst. We were glad to lie down and rest, but could not sleep because of the frequent severe earthquakes.

Early in the morning we all started to walk to Rotorua. The mud was very soft, and kept sliding down off the steep hillside, making walking very dangerous. At Rotorua the Maoris were very anxious to know the result of our trip. The grief of the people after I had described all that we had seen, was pitiful to witness. There was nothing left them now to do but *tangi* for the dead.

Most dreadful of all was the fate of a whole family of eleven, who were camped on the little island of Puwai in Lake Rotomahana—Niheta Kaipara with his wife and children, relatives of mine, of the Ngati-Rangitihi section of the Arawa tribe. They had canoed over to the islet, a famous health resort of the Maori (as described in a previous chapter) a few days before the fatal 10th June, intending to remain for a week or so enjoying the agreeable hot waters. The island was in the very centre of the outburst of the lake, and the whole family were overwhelmed in the most awful form of death conceivable. The steaming islet collapsed in the waters of the lake when the earthquake rift dropped the waters of Rotomahana into the superheated depths below. The fragments of Puwai and the lake bottom were

hurled thousands of feet into the lightning-split sky, and rained over the land in devastating showers of boiling mud.

It was on the summit of the Tarawera Range, the highest point of which is 3,770 feet, that most of the dead of the tribes of the district around the mountains were buried for many generations before the eruption. Wahanga Bluff, with its caves, was the burial place of the Ngati-Rangitihi (my mother's clan). There was high forest growing on parts of Mt. Tarawera up to the time of the eruption. On the eastern side of the same range, towards Putauaki (Mt. Edgecumbe) there is still in the valleys some of this ancient forest. There are *matai* (black pine) trees there 100 feet high, once magnificent timber trunks surmounted by a canopy of foliage, but now straight, lifeless, leafless poles, blasted by the volcanic showers.

The destruction of the sacred high place where the bones of so many of the tribal dead were laid heightened the grief and horror with which the Maori people's hearts were filled. These sentiments were voiced in poignant laments (*tangi, mihi,* and *apakura*). This is a *tangi* of the Arawa tribe for the multitude of their dead; it was contained in a letter

written by Rangori te Ao shortly after the disaster:

"O Moko-nui-a-rangi,* sleep on in the heart of the earth at Tarawera! Farewell, fathers and mothers and sons and daughters! Buried you lie at Moura beneath your own mountain, which has been rent asunder, scattering the bones of your ancestors. It was the gods of darkness that overwhelmed you. It will now be understood by the Pakeha that we have a marvellous power which has brought about the deaths of you all, buried under your ancestral land, the mountain of Ruawahia. I weep for the calamity which fell upon you when the mountain burst forth. Gone are ye from our view, O fathers and mothers and sons and daughters! With you are lost the lordly plumes that adorned the Arawa canoe. Depart, depart to the depths below, to be gazed upon by your ancestors. Go ye in a body to present yourselves. There will ye be greeted by those who have gone before, and by your ancestors of fame, Rongomai and Hue."

* Great-grandfather of Alfred Warbrick.

CHAPTER VII.

Down the Crater of Rotomahana

A Search for the Lost Terraces.

The wintry weather and the continuance of volcanic conditions combined to prevent close exploration of the country affected by the great eruption for several weeks after its occurrence. In July of 1886 I was asked to assist in obtaining definite information about the fate of the world-renowned Rotomahana Terraces. This request was made to me by the late Sir Henry Brett, chief proprietor of the "Auckland Star." That enterprising newspaper firm had, from the first news of the disaster, taken a very keen interest in the exploration work, and its editor, the late Dr. Thomson W. Leys, was a member of the first party which shortly after the disaster set out from Rotorua to discover the condition of affairs at Te Wairoa and in the district beyond. While Rotomahana was still in eruption, he telegraphed from Auckland asking me if I would be willing to undertake the task

of exploring the country in that locality, and if so, undertaking to send a special correspondent of his journal to accompany me. I consented and Mr. J. A. Philp* was sent along in that capacity.

We set out from Rotorua, Mr. Philp and I and two Maoris named Toko and Hau-tehoro, riding by way of Pakaraka to Pareheru (not far from the present route to Waiotapu) where I made camp on the edge of the volcanic ash field. I had engaged the Maoris to attend to the camp and also to assist me, if necessary, in the exploration work at Rotomahana. As it was still early when we reached Pareheru, and as Mr. Philp was anxious to obtain a near view of the site of the blown-up lake, we started out to walk over the mud field. It was hard travelling, but by the afternoon we had successfully clambered to the top of the high hill, or rather mountain, known as Te Hapé-o-Toroa, which overlooks the south-west side of Lake Rotomahana, close to the site of the Pink Terraces. From that point Mr. Philp had a wonderful view of the fuming interior of Rotomahana. Returning to Pareheru, at dusk, we found the two Maoris had pitched the camp and prepared a good hot dinner.

* Mr. Philp is now a leading journalist in Queensland.

At daylight next morning the four of us set out for Rotomahana. When we reached the Hapé-o-Toroa I decided to go down into the steaming chasm on the edge of what had once been the lake in order to see if I could locate the Pink Terraces. After reaching a position on the range above the spot where I thought that the Pink Terraces were, I set to work to lower myself by a rope into the smoking *kopu*—the "belly" of Rotomahana. I told Toko to unwind the coil of one-inch manilla rope which I had brought out for this purpose. This we secured, fastening one end to a large stake driven firmly down into the mud, and the coil I then threw over the edge of the cliff.

Lowering myself down the steep cliff with a tight grasp on the rope I was hidden from the view of my mates after descending about fifty feet. The depth was much greater than I had expected, but once started I had no option but to continue my descent until I reached the foot of the steaming cliffs.

At the bottom visibility was fairly good, but it was very hot down there. Fortunately, however, the ground was firm under foot in most places. There were streams of thick hot mud running across it here and there,

like little rivers. I crossed one of these hot mud streams to have a look at a mound, thinking that it might be the Terraces covered with volcanic debris, when I suddenly heard a fearful roar. I immediately rushed for the rope, and started to climb out and up to my friends. The ascent was no easy task, especially as the height from which I had descended proved to be about eight hundred feet. However, clinging firmly to the rope as I struggled up the cliff, I reached the top safely.

On rejoining my mates, who were anxiously awaiting my return, I looked back and saw that the whole of the south-west end of the crater where Lake Rotomahana had formerly been had burst into violent eruption, a truly terrifying spectacle. Mr. Philp and the Maoris were greatly relieved to see me safely up out of that awful hole. But as it turned out, we all found ourselves in almost as tight a fix on the surface as I had been in down below.

After rapidly surveying the possibilities of escape, I decided to work around the hills more in the direction of the site of the White Terraces. In doing so we came into the thick of the worst outburst since the first great explosion of Rotomahana. The crater threw

up huge rocks thousands of feet into the air, as well as showers of stones and mud, while the dense cloud of steam rose to an enormous height. We learnt afterwards that the inhabitants of Rotorua were watching this fresh eruption; they could even perceive, over the intervening hills, the rocks being thrown into the sky. The only thing to do was to stand and face it, and this we did.

I lined my mates up behind me, and on my instructions, as I moved one way or the other, they did the same. The whole of my attention was concentrated upon watching the direction in which the stones were coming. This we did for four hours, during which the stones and volcanic mud were falling without cessation all around us. At the end of this period I saw that the main force had spent itself, and realised that we were providentially saved from death. During the whole of those four hours not a single word was uttered by any of us.

When the volcanic storm had well-nigh ceased, and while we were quietly sitting on the mud partaking of some food which Toko had carried, we saw a party of seven Maoris coming over the hill towards us from Te Hapé-o-Toroa. They came hurrying along

towards us and shouted out with genuine pleasure when they saw that we were still very much alive. On enquiring from these Maoris what had induced them to come out and search for us there, one of them—Taranaki—replied that when the outburst took place it was so plainly seen in Rotorua that they greatly feared for the safety of myself and my companions. In fact they felt confident that under such conditions we were bound to have been killed. So they got horses and rode out to Pareheru whence they hurried over the ash-fields on the chance of securing our bodies before they were buried out of sight by the falling mud. Most warmly I thanked these brave and considerate comrades for their kindly thoughts of us in our time of peril.

As our exploration thus far did not entirely satisfy me, I clambered further round the shore of the lake in the ebbing hope of still finding the White Terraces. However, all that I could discover was innumerable hills of volcanic ash and mud. As Mr. Philp was by this time satisfied that the Terraces were no longer visible, we made our way back to our camp, and thence to Rotorua, after what was certainly a most exciting trip.

SILICA BUTTRESS

On the upper part of the White Terrace,
Lake Rotomahana

THE WHITE TERRACE, LAKE ROTOMAHANA

(From photo in 1883)

THE PINK TERRACES, ROTOMAHANA
(From a photo in 1883)

PUWAI ISLAND, ROTOMAHANA
From a Sketch by Mr. S. Percy Smith in 1858
(See description, pages 35-6)

Thus ended the "Star" expedition of July, 1886. I can remember everything as vividly as though it were only yesterday that I went down into that big hole, and that Philp, my Maoris and I stood on the brink of the crater, never knowing when we might be overwhelmed by the showers of ash and stones.

CHAPTER VIII.

Phases and Effects of the Eruption

WHEN it became possible for scientific observers to explore the Tarawera range and make close investigation of the scene of the great outburst, one of the first questions asked (and answered) was whether true lava had appeared in the craters. These craters were of great depth; the one blasted out of the south side of Ruawahia was 800 feet deep, and the summit of the mountain (3,770 feet) towered 1,500 feet above the bottom of the rift. The line of craters, extending four miles across the Tarawera Range, was closely explored by Professor A. P. Thomas (Geologist, Auckland University College), Mr. S. Percy Smith, Assistant Surveyor-General, as well as others, and detailed reports were presented to the Government.

Professor Thomas found that true lava welled up in the great fissure in a molten state, but it was so highly charged with superheated steam that it did not escape as a lava

stream, but was hurled out explosively and piled up in vast layers of black and red scoria around the fissure. Bombs of the modified lava were found in many places; these had assumed a spherical form whilst cooling from the molten condition in their passage through the air. At the bottom of one of the craters the rocky walls had been splashed with the molten lava, which had moulded itself in cinder-like, slaggy forms around the projecting crags. Along the upper margin of the Tarawera Chasm the same moulding of the lava around projecting rocks was observed, showing that the ejected lava had fallen there while in a state of fusion.

Enormous quantities of volcanic ash bombs, scoria, and fragments of rock of all sizes up to blocks ten feet in diameter were ejected from the volcano during the eruption. The material is known to geologists as rhyolite (of which the mountain is formed), augite-andesite bombs, scoria and dust. There was also a vast quantity of mud and shattered rock ejected from the basin of Rotomahana. The disruptive action of steam had the effect of reducing much of the rock to a very fine dust. The latter was carried more than 150 miles by the strong south-west wind which

sprang up immediately after the eruption. The ash and mud and stones which had overwhelmed the Maori villages continued to fall for several hours. For many weeks after the eruption a vast cloud of dark steam, charged with dust, hung over the scene of the eruption. The black smoke spread out like an umbrella, and attained an enormous height; it was visible more than a hundred miles away.

The scientists made calculations as to the quantity of mud and ash ejected from Mt. Tarawera and the bed of Lake Rotomahana. Professor Thomas estimated that from these two sources no less than 1,960,000,000 cubic yards (nearly two-fifths of a cubic mile) of mud and comminuted rock was rained over the surrounding country. The total area of land over which the ash fell was calculated at not less than 6,120 square miles. The area covered with ash over three feet deep, was estimated at 82 square miles. From this central area of destruction the deposit diminished gradually as it neared the coast. Much was blown out to sea; and Captain Fairchild, of the Government steamer *Hinemoa* found the deposit a quarter of an inch thick on Mayor Island, 16 miles distant from

the mainland, in the Bay of Plenty. On Whale Island, off Whakatane, it was over two inches thick. A little of the ash fell as far away as Tolago Bay township, on the East Coast, 30 miles to the north of Gisborne. The northern limit of the deposit was near Tairua, in the northern part of the Bay of Plenty. Ash fell on the steamer *Southern Cross* while off the East Cape, 122 miles distant from the scene of the eruption.

The temporary effect of the fall on vegetation was ruinous, but trees and grass, as well as fern, made a quick recovery. The destroyed forests although robbed of their fine timber trees, rapidly revived and their growth became more vigorous than ever. The ash eventually proved of considerable fertilising value to pastures all over the affected country. "The recent ash," Professor Thomas wrote, "contains a large proportion of basic rock, and when this decays under the influence of the atmosphere and vegetation it may be expected to yield a distinctly richer soil than the pumiceous one existing before." This prediction has proved to be correct.

There was, however, heavy temporary loss, and the Rotorua Maoris were in great distress for want of food. Supplies soon

came in from all parts of the country; Pakehas and Maoris alike were generous in their gifts for the relief of the homeless and foodless refugees, from Te Wairoa and other villages in the vicinity of the disaster.

The action of the rain on the deposited ash was a particularly interesting evidence of the rapidity with which denudation can proceed in a district like this. The water wore channels in the ash coating of the hills, and with every heavy rainfall these channels were deepened. Great dry gullies were worn in the soft surface of the earth, and the faces of the hills were soon seamed with a countless succession of alternate trenches and ridges. The vegetation which presently sprang up helped to prevent further denudation. Immense quantities of ash and mud were carried from the hillsides into all the lakes, some of which remained a turbid milky colour for many years after the eruption. The scouring out of the hillsides caused great damage to the roads, and even in 1894 (eight years after the disaster) it was only possible to reach Te Wairoa on horseback, on account of the quantities of rock and earth which had been washed down on to the shore of Lake Tikitapu (which the road skirts) and elsewhere along the route.

Discussing the question as to whether another eruption of Tarawera was likely to occur, Professor Thomas wrote in 1887: "Such an event is not improbable, but the present state of our knowledge affords us no clue as to when it may occur. It is, however, satisfactory to reflect that the history of other volcanoes shows us that if the recent eruption be succeeded by another within a moderate number of years, the intensity of the eruption will probably be much less, and it is not likely to be attended by the production of such immense quantities of ash, so that the disturbance to the surrounding country will be comparatively slight. The intensity of a volcanic paroxysm is generally greatest after a long period of rest, and the severity of the late eruption may be ascribed to the long interval since Tarawera had been active, so that the tension of the vapour in the heated rock below had to accumulate to a high degree before it could overcome the resistance of the cooled lava above."

Tarawera Mountain, with its great rift or fissure, will always be a place of deep interest to geologists as well as to the ordinary traveller. It was many a year before the shattered volcano cooled; and even now there is a place in the fissure where the rocky bottom is warm,

Mr. S. Percy Smith, the Assistant Surveyor-General, discussed with me the all-absorbing question whether the world-renowned White and Pink Terraces had actually been destroyed and not merely buried out of sight. He thought that both had been blown up. I did not agree with him. I wanted to know why, if they had been destroyed, nothing of their remains had been found anywhere. This, he admitted, puzzled him too. I had been searching the country for weeks, and not an inch of the Terrace formation could I find. I had taken to Rotomahana several of the old Maoris who had spent most of their lifetime there, and they, too, were all of the opinion that the Terraces were still there, but buried in the mud; they declined to believe that they had been blown away. Mr. Smith ultimately conceded that they might have escaped the destruction and have been covered up. I asked him whether Rotomahana had been surveyed prior to the eruption. He replied that most unfortunately it had not. Had it been there would have been no difficulty in locating the position of the Terraces, by reference to other points accurately determined by the survey.

I still hold to the view that some trace of both the Terraces will be discovered and that in any case the Pink Terraces have not wholly been destroyed. I have for many years urged that the old Kaiwaka channel to Lake Tarawera should be re-excavated, or a cut made which would release part of the waters of Lake Rotomahana, thus lowering the lake surface to the level which it occupied before the eruption. Even if this course did not reveal the lost Terraces, it would obviate the chances of a sudden breakaway of the flooded lake in the future, and stimulate geyser action along its shores. A partial unwatering of Rotomahana cannot at any rate do any harm, and may disclose information interesting alike to geologist and traveller.

CHAPTER IX.

Incidents of the Guiding Life

Soon after the eruption I took up the occupation of guiding travellers about the Lakes and through the thermal region, in particular the Tarawera-Rotomahana zone. It was the Hon. John Ballance (then Native Minister) when he visited Rotorua in the winter of 1886, who suggested to me that as I knew the district so thoroughly and was well equipped for the task, I should undertake the guiding of tourists over this part of the country. The prospect appealed to me as I liked the guiding and camping life, and I therefore accepted the post. During 1886 I took many people up to the summit of Tarawera Mountain to view the wonderful, although tragic, scene visible from there.

Many members of the Tuhourangi tribe did not approve of my new activities; they were jealous of my entrance into the vocation of a guide, and they used to chop about the rowing boats which I kept on Lake Tarawera.

Once they attempted to stop me by force from going out from Rotorua to Te Wairoa in the execution of my new duties. I was taking some tourists out on horseback, and as I had been warned beforehand by a girl at Ngapuna to beware of trouble on the road, I went prepared. I told my companions that I had received a warning to be on my guard, and they promised in that event to stand by me. I took a loaded revolver in my coat pocket. When we reached the shore of Lake Tikitapu I saw three men ahead of us. They were armed with guns and stood blocking our advance along the narrow road. One of them caught hold of my bridle. I ordered him to leave go of it, whereupon he told me to turn back instantly or be prepared to face the consequences. I promptly pulled my revolver out of my pocket, and put the muzzle of it right into his ear. It was a mercy that I did not press the trigger. As I was hot-blooded and impetuous and extremely angry at being stopped I do not know to this day how I restrained myself from doing so. My assailant immediately dropped my bridle and I replaced my revolver in my pocket. His companions with their guns moved to the side of the road to let us pass and we rode on to

Te Wairoa. After this incident there was no more trouble with the Tuhourangi.

In the following years I covered all parts of the thermal and volcanic area of New Zealand in the course of my work as a guide, proceeding sometimes as far south as Tongariro, Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu Mountains. I took many people round the various lakes on sailing and shooting expeditions, particularly that gem of them all, Rotoiti, which in those days was a place of primitive charm, with many pretty native village on its shores. One trip further afield was in the company of my old friend, the late Tom Ryan ("Darby" of football fame), the artist, whom I took up into the Urewera Country in 1890, to obtain sketches for the "New Zealand Graphic." The Governor of that period, the Earl of Onslow, was anxious to make a journey through the Urewera mountains, but the time was not propitious. The Maoris were thorough Hauhaus, and Te Kooti was at the time at Ruatahuna opening with ceremonious ritual the great carved house "Te Whai-o-te Motu" which had recently been built for him. I was officially asked to be His Excellency's guide, but I strongly discountenanced the trip and suggested that the Governor could with greater

safety meet the Maoris at Ruatoki, on the Whakatane plain, outside the mountain region; as it turned out, this course was adopted. In order, however, to test the loyalty and pacific attitude of the Maoris in the interior I went with Ryan to Te Whaiti, the first settlement in the mountain ranges. There, in the large kainga of the Ngati-Whare tribe on a terrace above the Whirinaki River, we had a meeting with the people of the tribe, during which some hostile speeches were delivered. They confiscated Ryan's sketching materials and refused to let him proceed any further. I myself rode on towards Ruatahuna, along a terribly rough track winding in and out of the river-beds. There was, however, no object in my continuing the expedition alone, as the people were naturally friendly enough to me, and my presence among them would not achieve its intended object. So I turned back, picked up Tom Ryan, who secured some drawings after the Ngati-Whare returned to him his sketch-books, and we rode back to Rotorua. Five years later the Urewera and Ngati-Whare tribes obstructed the entry into the territory of some Government survey parties, and

threatened to fight them, but they were pacified, and a road was then begun which developed into the present through motor highway to Lake Waikaremoana.

In my time I have guided a large number of distinguished people through the Thermal Regions, including several Royal princes and all the successive Governors and Governors-General of New Zealand. Many of the travellers were great lovers of sport, especially of angling, and they all expressed their delight with the incomparable trout-fishing in our lakes and streams.

One of my visitors in the 'Nineties was that grand old man, and most notable of our Governors, Sir George Grey. He was fond of coming to the Lakes, which he had visited first in 1849. He used to come to my house for a talk, in the years from 1889 to 1894, when he finally left New Zealand for London. I remember that it was one of his ambitions to climb Tarawera Mountain, but when he asked me to take him on this expedition, being then an old man and not in robust health, I told him that it was impossible. "Why," he asked. "Well," I said, "if you attempt the ascent I shall have to take a dozen Maoris to carry you up. You certainly cannot do it

otherwise." "Not at all, no, no," he said, in his characteristically quick impatient way. "Why, when I was a young man I could walk for weeks and climb anywhere." With difficulty I persuaded him to abandon the idea, as his young vigorous days were far behind him.

He was a most interesting man to talk with, wonderful old Sir George. In course of conversation he told me much about his earliest days in New Zealand, when he took command of the field operations in the final days of Hone Heke's war in the North. He described in vivid language the historical siege and capture of Ruapekapeka pa, deep in the forest south of the Bay of Islands. He talked, too, about the old primitive days in the thermal regions and his first visit to Te Wairoa and the Rotomahana Terraces.

One day, some years after the eruption, I was out in my skiff exploring the northern coast of Tarawera Lake when I noticed, as I looked through the branches of some pohutukawa trees, a cave in the cliff. Peering into it, I saw a gigantic lifelike Maori staring at me out of its recesses. It was a mummified corpse, apparently perfectly preserved. The mummy was that of a man who

must have been eight feet in height. The head was of enormous size, and it was covered with rusty reddish hair, *urukehu* as the Maoris call it. The teeth were exposed in a weird grin. The skin, still in perfect condition, covered the whole body. How the old Maoris preserved the corpses of their honoured dead I do not know; it was a mystery of the vanished *tohungas*. In further recesses round the sides of the cave I discovered what appeared to be a number of bound-up bundles, which were no doubt also human bodies. I did not disturb the sacred remains.

After casually mentioning my discovery one day to some Pakehas at Rotorua, I was strongly urged by certain persons in authority to bring out the giant mummy for exhibition in a museum. This I refused to do, as I was deeply averse from interfering with the Maori dead, deeming it to be desecration. I was repeatedly pressed to remove this unique mummy from the cave. At last, feeling that I must put a stop to all this importunity and its possible results, I quietly visited the cave one day, and putting a rope around the mummy, conveyed it in my boat to the deepest

part of the lake, where after fastening some heavy weights securely to it, I dropped it into the depths. "No one will ever disturb the old fellow now," said I.

CHAPTER X.

Tarawera's Warning

THE STORY OF A NARROW ESCAPE.

TOWARDS the end of October, 1886, a party of scientists arrived at Rotorua from Wellington, with the intention of ascending Mt. Tarawera, and studying from various scientific aspects the effects of the eruption of that mountain and Rotomahana. The party consisted of Dr. McGregor, Government Director of Hospitals, Professor Hutton of Christchurch, Dr. Brown of Dunedin, and two University professors from overseas. At their request I undertook to guide them to the top of the mountain. Before starting I gave them to understand that the ascent of the mountain was certain to be very difficult owing to the exceedingly hot nature of the ground. Although more than five months had elapsed since the eruption the whole surface of Tarawera was still so hot that if one put an alpenstock into a crack in the ground it would immediately begin to blaze with a roar as from a blast furnace below.

When we started out from Rotorua the morning was fine, with the promise of a beautiful day. We rode as far as the destroyed bush near Lake Tikitapu. Here our horses had to be left until we returned, as it was impossible to get them any further through the soft volcanic mud. We walked from Tikitapu to the site of the buried village of Te Wairoa, and thence down to the lake where my boats were lying. In one of these we crossed the lake to the foot of the mountain with a Maori crew, and set out for the summit. The ascent took us two hours and a quarter. The ground was very hot, and when we reached the peak, overlooking the tremendous rift—the scene of the explosion of the 10th June—we had to keep continuously moving about, to prevent the soles of our boots from being burnt through.

Shortly after we gained the summit and while we were standing on a point of rock where we could obtain a splendid vista of the whole surrounding country, I felt a peculiar tremor in my legs, and a slight thud in the ground under my feet. I am very sensitive to such earth tremors. I can feel the slightest subterranean tremblings, portents of imminent

danger, when most people would be unconscious of them. I had not noticed any similar sensation on my previous climb to the same spot.

Naturally I became very anxious for our safety. I knew only too well that that thud was caused by the force of confined steam. My companions who were absorbed in the wonderful view spread out before them—the torn-out heart of volcano-land—had not felt it. I walked away a little distance and down into a small ravine near the main rift. Obtaining two flat stones which were not quite so hot as the rest of the surface deposit, I bent down with my hands upon them, put my ear to the ground, and listened.

The sound was unmistakable, a slight but regular thump-thump beneath me. I at once decided to get my party away from the mountain-top and down to the lake as soon as possible.

I went across to where they were standing absorbed in contemplation of the grand panorama and in discussing the geographical effects of the eruption. As I approached them, Professor Hutton, noticing that I was anxious and disturbed about something, enquired what was the matter. I told him of

the subterranean warning signal, describing the ominous thudding that I had heard.

"What had we better do?" he asked.

"Why, clear off this blessed mountain as quickly as we can skedaddle and away in the boat," I replied.

This we promptly did, descending the mountain-side in three-quarters of an hour, by the same route as that by which it had taken us two hours and a quarter to ascend. I expected an upheaval every moment.

We entered the boat and had not pulled half a mile out in the lake towards Te Wairoa when we heard an explosion accompanied by a tremendous roar. Looking up at the mountain-top which we had just quitted we saw a vast cloud of red dust and rock flying high into the sky. It was a grand sight, the reddish top of the peak overlooking the crater glowing in the sunshine and the blood-red scoria hurled into the air. The red oxide left by this explosion is plainly to be seen there to this day.

After returning safely to Rotorua the Professors and Dr. McGregor while thanking me most warmly for taking them to such a wonderful viewpoint, expressed profound relief that my acute sensibility to seismic

tremors had cut short their contemplation of it and by quick retreat saved them from a fatal ending of their scientific quest.

The following day I crossed Tarawera Lake with my Maoris, unaccompanied by the scientists, and climbed the mountain to see what had happened. I found that the spot upon which we had stood overlooking the crater in order to view the great rift was no more. The whole of the surface had been blown away. But for that trifling indication of coming disaster we should all have been blown to atoms, and Rotorua would have been searching for five eminent men of science and for Warbrick the guide, and it would have been a million to one against anyone ever finding a scrap of us big enough for the coroner to hold an inquest upon.

CHAPTER XI.

The Way to Wairoa, Tarawera, and Rotomahana

For nearly ten years after the great eruption of 1886 the only means, except for ardent pedestrians, of reaching the buried village of Te Wairoa and the scenes of volcanic devastation was on horseback from Rotorua. The roads were destroyed, and in such localities as the shore of Lake Tikitapu, where the range of hills on the north comes steeply down to the water-side, with only the path between, the track was blocked with great boulders and masses of earth and fallen trees, through which horses had to pick their way with great precision. Nowadays there is a good motor road, and a constant traffic of visitors making for Te Wairoa and the Rotomahana thermal zone.

For nearly thirty years I was in charge of the Government travel-route through this district, embracing the Wairoa, Tarawera and Rotomahana Lakes, and the Waimangu geyser valley. This is a one-day tour of forty-two miles, presenting the sightseer with a

series of very weird and wonderful scenes and experiences. I usually accompanied the trips myself, from my headquarters at Te Wairoa and back, or sent competent assistants in my place. I was able, when accompanying visitors, to describe the events of the eruption from the standpoint of an eyewitness.

The traveller's car from Rotorua speeds up into the fern-covered hills, after crossing the sulphurous Puarenga stream which flows down through the Whakarewarewa geyser valley, and skirts the new experimental Government plantations of exotic trees which cover all these valleys and slopes up to the bush of Moerangi mountain. Although pumice-floored gulches scored by the rains are still visible, most of the scenes of bare ruin have long since been clothed with vegetation, and the hills are once more richly green. As we top the range and look back at Rotorua Lake sleeping in the sunshine, a road can be seen on our left which leads off to a pretty lake, Okareka, secluded and forest-bordered; it is not visible from the main road. Descending thence, we pass through the Tuwiriwiri bush, a beautiful tract of woodland. It was destroyed by the eruption, and for several years showed no signs of fresh growth.

Now it is a quite luxuriant bit of indigenous forest, mossy, fern-decked and alive with birds. The sylvan avenue through Tuwiriwiri opens out to disclose a view of a glassy lake, from whose clear waters fern and forest-covered hills slant up steeply. This is Tikitapu, a lake of poetic legend. Its waters are of a turquoise hue. It is not surprising to learn that associated with it are strange stories of a magic past, for it looks an enchanted place. The most famous is that of Kataore, a terrible *ngarara* or reptilian monster of old, which was accustomed to waylay and devour Maori travellers. This dragon-like creature was killed at last by a band of Rotorua warriors who prepared strong snares of flax rope among the trees and then lured the monster from his den. Rushing at his foes, he was entangled tightly in the meshes of the rope snares; and the warriors attacked him, and clubbed and speared him to death. The surface of beautiful Tikitapu is 1,358 feet above sea-level. Crossing a short steep ridge we wind down along the shore of another lake, Roto-Kakahi (1,294 feet). It is three miles in length and green in colour. Roto-Kakahi means "Lake of

Shellfish." The Maoris were once very numerous round this deserted lake, and one of their food delicacies was the *kakahi,* a small shellfish which was found in large quantities on the sandy bottom. The native fished for this fresh-water mussel with ingeniously constructed *rou-kakahi*—rake-dredges with nets attached. Near the south-west shore is the round green island Motutawa, famous in local Maori history. It was once the home of a strong *hapu* of the Tuhourangi tribe, now living at Whakarewarewa, and fleets of canoes navigated the waters of Kakahi Lake. A dark episode in the history of the island was the massacre there of a band of Ngapuhi from the far North, who were on a visit to the lakes. This treacherous deed led to the undoing of the Arawa, for it was in revenge for this wholesale murder that Hongi Hika and his Ngapuhi army invaded Lakeland in 1823 and captured Mokoia. On the green shores of the lake, opposite the island, is Kaiteriria, a noted pa of ancient days, and a military station during the last Maori War; it was the headquarters of the Arawa Constabulary force.

A mile further along the valley we reach Te Wairoa after driving parallel with the

river Wairoa ("Long Stream") which flows out of Roto-Kakahi close to our road. Nowadays the place is a wild tangle of trees and shrubbery, European and native, poplars, elders, cherry-trees, and the soft green prickly acacia, whose blossoms diffuse in the season of flowers a delicious perfume, in riotous companionship with briars and a jungle of native shrubs. The now vacant site of McRae's Hotel, Guide Sophia's whare, the schoolmaster's house, the church and other buildings of over forty years ago are pointed out by the guide. Scarcely any of the remains of the demolished and burned buildings are to be seen. The broken tops of the mission church windows on the terrace of Te Mu are still to be seen just level with the ground. Beyond is the way up to the old mission house, through a shady avenue, formed by a double line of great ti or whanaké, cabbage-trees, planted there three-quarters of a century ago. Up yonder, in those flower-decked shades, where wild strawberries and blue columbines grow, one hears in the spring of the year the call of the shining cuckoo, the *pipi-wharauroa*—"*Kui, kui, whitiwhiti ora, tio-o!*" to the Maori ear —sounding clear and sharp as a Navy

bo's'n's pipe, high amidst the leafy rigging of the bluegums.

Through the avenue of tall poplars and acacias we pass to the edge of the hill overlooking Lake Tarawera, where an extensive panorama meets our gaze. The lake stretches away from the long sandy flat below for nine miles. On each side high hills sweep down to meet the lake To the right front, ten miles away, grey and bare, is the grim palisade of Tarawera Mountain. Blue in the far distance, beyond the eastern end of the lake, rises a conical peak, with a well-marked crateral basin top. This is Mt. Edgecumbe, the Putauaki of the Maori. Over to our left is the high point of Kariri, partly covered with a growth of acacia, the scene of the missionary Spencer's first station.

Power launches have long superseded the old-time whaleboats as the means of transit across Lake Tarawera. The course taken down the lake heads for the great mountain, now shattered and reft of its ancient forests. Beautiful pohutukawa trees once fringed the shores of the lake. Most of the majestic old trees were destroyed by the eruption, but their offshoots soon sprang up through the ash and mud, and at Christmas time the fine

trees delight the eye as of old with their crimson blossoms. We pass on the right the site of the lost village Moura, whose people were overwhelmed in their huts by the volcanic rain. The village stood by the lakeside, and was a regular place of call on the tourist track to Rotomahana and the Terraces. The village women used to bring kits of potatoes and crayfish to be cooked in the springs at the White Terraces. Pushing along for another two miles we reach the Ngutuahi or Te Ariki Arm, a long bay of the lake, into the head of which once ran the Kaiwaka stream of hot water from the lake of the Terraces. Te Ariki village, a kainga and notable fortified pa in old times, once stood here on the water-edge. The fern and tupakihi now grow green over the tomb of the lakeside arcadians.

Towering over us now is Tarawera Mountain, imminent and dominating, its flanks slashed in a thousand gullies and couloirs, the work of countless rainstorms. Sandy ash, loose scoria, great blocks of rhyolitic rock, black and grey lava cover the mountain-side. Climbers who wish to see the great crater rift must climb up from the narrow neck between the two lakes. It is a

steep ascent to the rim of the chasm blown out by the terrific force of suppressed steam, leaving only narrow walls of adamant rock standing here and there. This chasm, piled with shattered rocks and volcanic debris, extends through the mountain heart into the bottom of Rotomahana Lake and beyond. The summit reached, a wide expanse of ash and rock drops to the lake level from our feet. The soil has clothed itself again in vegetation, relieving the monochrome of grey ash and rock. These thickets are now so dense in places that they have become a haunt of wild pigs. On such a height as Tarawera, commanding an extensive prospect away to the distant sea, one realises the appropriateness of the expression "Lakeland" as applied to this region. There are lakes large and small, green-hued, opal, blue and silver, lakes indeed of all colours, contours and dimensions, resplendent to the eye of the onlooker from this volcanic Pisgah. Puffs, wreaths, and clouds of steam rise in innumerable places in the wilderness, and conspicuous below is spread out the most fascinating of all water-sheets, the warm lake of Rotomahana.

On the south side of the narrow isthmus, travellers embark in another motor launch

which is steered up Rotomahana towards Waimangu. After skirting the northern shore passengers are almost immediately in the very heart of startling thermal phenomena. The Rotomahana of to-day is wholly different from the old raupo-fringed lagoon on whose steaming margin the glorious Terraces once gleamed through their rainbow haze. The immense chasm five hundred feet in depth formed when the lake blew up, became a hissing and roaring furnace of craters hurling up showers of stones and mud at intervals, and emitting clouds of steam which hung like a funeral pall over the grave of the murdered Terraces. For seven years the crater of Rotomahana was emptied of its water. For five years of the seven I used to take travellers on to the floor of the present lake. At that time many hundreds of spouting mud geysers were in action, very thrilling to those who dared to traverse the crater floor. After the seventh year, boiling water began to come through the floor of the crater in large springs, and within two weeks the whole crater floor was covered. It gradually rose higher and higher and eventually the present lake was formed. Old Rotomahana, shallow and reedy, covered 284 acres, with a

depth of 32 feet. The new lake covers 5,600 acres and is 789 feet deep. Its surface is 1,146 feet above sea-level, 140 feet above that of the old lake, and 100 feet above that of Lake Tarawera. The waters are still thickly charged with earthy sediment, washed down from the ash-coated hills. Wild duck are numerous on the lake, and are to be seen swimming about in places which one would imagine might be uncomfortably warm for them.

It is along the south-western side that our course now lies, and we steer boldly into a wholly thermal region, far surpassing in its astonishing phenomena anything that we have previously seen. There is no more wonderful boating trip in the world. A great cliff on our right is steaming from waterfront to summit. Thousands of blow-holes and boiling jets send their white clouds into the air. The Pink Terraces, once situate at its base, were known in Maori as Otukapuarangi, or "the cloud of heaven," owing to this cloud-like vapour poured forth from the geyser-fountain. Rising behind it is the steep hill Hapé-o-Toroa. We head straight for the steam veil which obscures the cliff and passing through it enter a marvellous region. Warm

billows of swirling vapour close round us; the water under our launch's keel begins to simmer. There are roaring, buzzing and hissing indescribable. Close by, but hidden in the recesses of the cliff, fumaroles are emitting steam with the shriek of countless syrens. Springs of boiling water line the shore, and scalding cascades leap into the lake from niches in the sulphurous wall. Even in this seething area of perpetual boil and bubble there is luxuriant plant life. Feathery ferns of tender green as well as bright mosses and algae, whose tints are enhanced in vividness by the perpetual warm moisture of their environment, climb from the water's edge to the range summit and insinuate themselves into every nook and crevice of the heat-riven precipice. It is a fairyland whose charms of jewelled moss, drooping fern and leafy shrub are intensified rather than dulled by their veil of vaporous haze. Part of the lofty hillside is suffused with a delicately warm colouring. The chemical agencies which gave the old Otukapuarangi its gorgeous tints are still at work. The silica-charged waters impregnated with oxides of iron, manganese and other minerals which in course of ages built up the Terraces still

percolate through the quaking earth in steaming jets and tiny runnels and are gradually dressing the hot soil and rocks with a thin pinkish coating. Some of the boiling springs along this shore are submerged; we feel the impact of their furious upward boiling as we coast along the cliff shore. Others, untrammelled, play irascibly in little bays here and there, while others again pump methodically like little paddle-steamers. Caged fountains, confined in rock, spout ferociously against their prison walls, which they are gradually undermining.

From the dazzling white sands of the landing place at the south end of Rotomahana, there is a walk of a mile and a half to the hill overlooking the Waimangu Geyser, through a wild water-gouged and steam-riddled region. In one place we see a small new terrace, in the process of gradual aedification; it gives the visitor an idea of the beginning and development of this beautiful silica formation. Then there is a stream heavily charged with iron. There is an iodine spring, which may become of great medicinal value some day. A little further along is the place where the bodies of the four victims of

the Waimangu disaster in 1903 were discovered after having been washed down for half a mile in a boiling muddy river, the outflow of the waters of the mighty geyser. A steady climb sets the traveller on the summit of a hill, 1,555 feet in height, on whose far side a column of steam is ceaselessly rising. There is a resthouse on the hill-top. From here one looks right into the geyser lake of quiescent Waimangu, 320 feet below. Shortly before reaching this point, the track passes the crater of an ephemeral and now extinct geyser which burst into violent eruption and played to an estimated height of 700 feet, but for one day only.

Waimangu's crater-lake when active covered an area of two and a half acres. It was towards the end of 1900 that this huge geyser suddenly commenced to play. It was given the name "Waimangu" (meaning "inky-black water"), because when in action it hurled a mass of black water together with mud and boulders into the air, the column sometimes rising to a height of more than a thousand feet. Shots occurred almost daily. Often the mud and rocks would be scattered over a radius of half a mile. In the winter of 1903 Waimangu eclipsed all its previous efforts by

rising to a height estimated at 1,500 feet. This grand spectacle was photographed by a spectator, Captain Scott, from the safe distance of nearly a mile.

The geyser crater, surrounded by a natural amphitheatre of scoria-coated hills, deeply furrowed everywhere by rainstorms, was a basin measuring when at low water level 138 yards in length by 84 yards in width. Measurements of the crater-lake were obtained at great risk to our lives by myself and a companion, as narrated in the next chapter.

VIEW FROM MT. TARAWERA,
Looking across Lake Tarawera towards Rotorua

MT. TARAWERA AND THE EXPLOSION CRATERS,
and the new lake Rotomahana formed after the eruption.

WAIMANGU GEYSER IN ERUPTION, 1903

CHAPTER XII.

Twelve Minutes on a Geyser

An Adventure at Waimangu.

In the winter of 1903, after having recently joined the Government Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, I happened to be visiting Auckland on business connected with the tourist traffic. At that time there was much public interest in the little craft *Tilikum,* the British Columbia Indian canoe rigged as a schooner, which had reached Auckland from Vancouver, sailed by Captain Voss on a daring voyage round the world. While in Auckland Mr. Buckeridge, the sailing companion of Captain Voss, met a number of people interested in yachting and other sports, including my friend Mr. Ernest Davis, and in course of conversation between them one morning reference to the voyage of the *Tilikum* led on to discussion of other venturous exploits involving similar risks.

Mr. Davis, participating in the discussion, expressed the view that there was only one man in New Zealand who would not flinch at any kind of danger, and that was Alf Warbrick, the guide, who was then in Auckland. (I am just repeating the conversation as it was told to me afterwards.)

One of the party thereupon said: "Alf Warbrick is no doubt a brave man, but there is one thing that he would never dare to do, and that is to cross Waimangu Geyser* in a boat."

To which Mr. Davis promptly rejoined, "I know Alf Warbrick well, and I am certain that crossing the Waimangu Geyser wouldn't frighten him. Let us go to the hotel where he is staying, and one of you can put the question to him." I happened to be in the hotel lounge, reading, when a party of seven or eight men entered. Mr. Davis introduced me to them and, after we had liquid refreshment together, told me of the discussion which they had had regarding various human risks and ended up with the question, "Alf, would you be afraid to cross Waimangu in a boat?"

*Waimangu was at that time at the height of its fame; it was belching forth the contents of its great pool, or small lake, more than a thousand feet into the air.

"Certainly not," said I, accepting the challenge, for that was what it amounted to. I also said that if Mr. Davis would send his yacht dinghy to Rotorua for me to use on the geyser pool, I would undertake the adventure on the following Sunday; I was returning to Rotorua on Saturday. (It was then Thursday).

To this Mr. Davis agreed. I then said that I should like to have a companion in the boat, if anyone would consent to join me. Mr. Buckeridge at once said that he would gladly be my mate in the dinghy.

Next day (Friday) the Auckland papers published the news of my coming challenge to Waimangu. During that day numerous people begged me not to attempt the feat of crossing the geyser pool in a boat, as it would be certain death. My reply was that not only had I given my word that I would do it but that as the newspapers throughout the country had made public my intention, I obviously had no option but to go through with it.

On Saturday morning there was a crowd at the Auckland railway station to see us off. I was again urged by a large number of people not to attempt the feat. In reply I simply pointed to the little boat on the train.

Just before I boarded the train, Bishop Lenihan, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Auckland, came to me and said, "I have heard all these kind people asking you not to carry out this foolish and dangerous undertaking, and I have heard your reply. As I see that you are quite determined, I will say nothing to deter you. But, as I understand that you propose crossing the geyser tomorrow, Sunday, I would like you to alter the date to Monday." This I readily agreed to do.

When the train reached Rotorua that evening, many of the local people, who had heard about the geyser expedition, were on the platform, as they wanted to see the boat. Very few of my friends would speak to me. I candidly admit that by this time I was feeling the nervous strain of all this friendly anxiety for my safety. But I was all the more determined to go through with the exploit. I had said that I would cross the geyser at three o'clock in the afternoon, and I was resolved to do so at the time fixed. I could not decline the challenge.

Early on the Sunday morning, Buckeridge and I went to Waimangu, taking the dinghy. During that afternoon the geyser was very active and burst into eruption every few minutes; some of the explosions of the crater lake sent the water, mud and stones about a thousand feet into the air. Quite a crowd of people came out, but I kept away from them, as I did not wish them to speak to me. I camped that night in the Government accommodation house on the hill above the geyser. I slept fairly well, and was awakened in the very early hours of Monday morning by the noise of visitors who had come out betimes from Rotorua and the surrounding district, so as to be sure of seeing me cross the geyser. By noon there were nearly two hundred people, most of them women, on the hills and slopes around the geyser basin. My workmen had come out early in order to carry the dinghy to the edge of the basin and wait for me.

My mate Buckeridge was in the crowd when I went down to the side of the geyser at half-past two in the afternoon. We had

a good look at the pool. It appeared very turbulent; the water was in a most angry state. Buckeridge's first words were: "Surely you are not going out on that!" I said: "It has to be done."

We both removed our coats and vests, and in less than one minute we were out on top of the geyser. The big muddy pool was boiling and seething under us. It might, I realised, work up into an explosion any minute; although I had deliberately watched for a period when it would be likely to be quiescent for a little while. I had taken some light ropes with me as measuring lines, as I wished to take the measurements of the geyser basin. I would not trust the rowing to Buckeridge, because this geyser work was quite novel to him, so I took the oars myself, and gave him the measuring lines. At my direction he took soundings. When he was hauling up the lines after doing so they were so hot that he hurriedly dropped the rope in the boat to avoid scalding his hands.

A few moments after we put out from the shore, we were immersed in steam rising

in thick clouds from the boiling water, and the heat was almost intolerable. However, I succeeded in rowing safely across and about the pool, and altogether we were about twelve minutes on the water. We found that the length of the lakelet was 184 yards, and the width 84 yards. The deepest sounding we got was only 48 feet, which surprised me very much.

Having achieved our task, we drew again into the side from which we had started. It was with tremendous relief to us both that we stepped once more on to solid ground, and got the dinghy hauled up to the shore.

Out of more than two hundred people who gathered on the slopes of Waimangu that afternoon, only about forty actually saw me rowing on the boiling water. On enquiry why the others had not witnessed our adventure, I was informed that when they saw me and my mate preparing to embark it was too much for their nerves. They turned away and retired into the ravines between the hills until they were told by the watchers that it was all over and that we were safe on the shore again.

Soon after we had returned from our warm excursion the geyser burst into active eruption and threw its waters and mud hundreds of feet high.

ALFRED WARBRICK AND BUCKERIDGE IN A DINGHY
ON WAIMANGU GEYSER, 1903

CHAPTER XIII

Eruptions of Waimangu

The Tragedy of 1903.

Only a fortnight after the somewhat foolhardy invasion of the heart of Waimangu as described in the last chapter, it asserted its ferocious *mana* by taking toll of four lives. One of them was my brother Joseph Warbrick. It seemed to be exacting a demoniacal revenge. An eruption overwhelmed the four spectators as they stood on a low ridge immediately overlooking the cauldron, and they were swept down into the boiling torrent beneath to a fearful death.

It was on Sunday, the 31st August, 1903, that a party of visitors set out from Te Wairoa to make the round trip of the thermal areas, by way of Wairoa, Tarawera and Rotomahana, under my charge. The party was too large for all to be accommodated

simultaneously in the one boat which was on Rotomahana, so I divided it, taking half across at a time. One of the first to cross was my brother Joe, who was a farmer on the Bay of Plenty coast. He wanted to see Waimangu, not only on account of its eruptive activity, but also because it was the scene of my adventure on the boiling basin. While I returned across Rotomahana for the other members of the party, the first half went on, according to instructions which I gave to my brother. In the second contingent were Mrs. Nicholls of Timaru and her two daughters.

When the latter were crossing Rotomahana I saw that Waimangu had started to play, and the travellers became very excited, eager to get rapidly across the lake and to reach their destination. I told them that there was no need to hurry, as the geyser would continue in eruption for some hours; I knew Waimangu's habits. When we reached the landing the two Miss Nicholls jumped out and hurried off up the valley for Waimangu. I followed with the remainder

of the party. When we arrived at the top of the hill overlooking Waimangu, I saw that my brother had gone some distance down the slope, and I followed with my party to where the firstcomers were sitting. The geyser was playing every four or five minutes, but throwing its hot water and steam to a height of no more than 400 feet. After I had been watching its movements, I told my party that it would continue to give small shots till about 4 p.m. It would then play a very big shot and stop until the next period of its activity, for about 36 hours' rest. I saw three men walking round the slope of the hill to what I knew to be a dangerous spot. I called to them to go back, which they did.

A few minutes afterwards my brother rose from where he was sitting and walked down the track, followed by the two young ladies, a young man named McNaughton, and two youths from Sydney. They deliberately went over the spot which I had cautioned the three men not to approach. When I saw where they were going, I called out to them that they were going to a dangerous place. I knew that the geyser was liable to play a

big shot at any moment. I then turned round to my party and said, "Let us go on," thinking it would induce the others to follow. When we reached a point opposite to where they were standing, overlooking the geyser, I again called to them, but in vain. When I failed I asked Mrs. Nicholls to call her daughters. The elder girl replied, "It is all right, mother."

Becoming very anxious, I pushed my party on. Having landed them in a safe place, and cautioned them to follow the track, I went back for the others. Mrs. Nicholls accompanied me. The time was now 3.45 p.m. When we searched the hill overlooking Waimangu, I suddenly discovered them and shouted "There they are." No sooner had I uttered the words than the geyser burst into eruption. That was the last we saw of them alive.

Mrs. Nicholls and I were in the thick of the falling ash and wet mud, but luck was with us as no stones came our way. I carried the woman out into safety and handed her over to two of the party, who, fearing for our safety, were running back in our direction.

I then hastened with the utmost speed to the spot where I had last seen my brother and his companions, but there was no sign of them. The gorge was now a river of boiling, seething water, rushing down the valley with immense force towards Rotomahana.

Running down the hill I found the two young Australians lying stunned in a deep wash-out. I jumped into it and found that they were alive but could not speak. Realising that they would soon recover, I left them and ran along the boiling river-bank. About 500 yards from the spot where the party had been overwhelmed, I found my brother, dead. His coat had caught on a stump, and had arrested further progress down the mountain torrent. After some little time I managed to lift him on to dry ground.

About a hundred yards further down I found the elder of the sisters. Her body was jammed between two big rocks. I liberated her body and placed it on the bank. When I looked out into the open valley, I could see the body of the other girl lying on the sand. By this time the volume of water in the river had somewhat abated. I ran down, picked

up her corpse and carried it up the bank. Then I turned back to obtain assistance. After going some distance, I saw that the hill overlooking Waimangu was crowded with people. I waved to them for help. While some of them were coming towards me they found the body of a man in a big hole, and told me. It turned out to be that of Mr. McNaughton. Descending to the river I recovered it. Under my supervision the bodies were carried to the accommodation house—itself a difficult task—and arrangements were made for taking them to Rotorua.

At the inquest on the bodies of the victims at Rotorua, witnesses testified to the fact that I had warned the people several times not to venture into the dangerous places. One eye-witness stated that, had notice of the warning given by Guide Warbrick been taken, the accident would not have happened and no lives would have been lost. There was plenty of time to get away. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that Kathleen Nicholls, Ruby Nicholls, David McNaughton, and Joseph Warbrick, on the 30th day of August, 1903, at the Waimangu Geyser, were accidently suffocated and killed by boiling water

or steam, or both steam and water, combined with shock, from an eruption of the geyser. The jury added: "We further find that no blame is attachable to the Government guide, Alfred Warbrick, who repeatedly warned the parties aforesaid and others not to approach too near to the geyser, and pointed out the spot he considered dangerous."

The Eruption of 1917.

Just to the south of the Waimangu geyser pool was an area of level rock, sand and silt which we called the Frying-pan Flat. The ground was all pitted with small steam holes; it was frizzling and hissing with countless numbers of little spitting jets of vapour, tiny fumaroles, infantile geysers. Steam-clouds enveloped it, and all around was a sizzling sound as if, to use a visitor's simile, a thousand frying-pans were on the fire at once.

This uncanny place, across which many hundreds of visitors had walked, was the scene of a terrific eruption on the morning of the 1st April, 1917. At 6.30 a.m. the whole crater and the flat burst into violent eruption, sending clouds of steam, mud, and rocks into

the air for many thousands of feet. The accommodation house situated on a hill-top over half a mile away was completely wrecked by the great blast of hot air caused by the first outburst of the explosion. In the house at the time were Guide McCormack, his wife, and his little son. Mrs. McCormack and her son were badly injured and died from shock the next day in Rotorua.

At Te Wairoa, where I was at the time, I could see the huge black clouds caused by the outburst. The eruption was plainly visible from Rotorua, 17 miles away. I hastened to the scene of the outburst, and reached Waimangu at 9 a.m. The whole place was in violent eruption. Mud and stones were thrown into the air for thousands of feet, and it was most difficult and dangerous to pass along the track on my way to the accommodation house, where the first several disturbed Rotorua visitors were just arriving. Hot stones were falling in thousands all round, but I managed to get past without being struck. The scene from the wrecked house was simply appalling. It reminded me of Rotomahana when in eruption, but on a

smaller scale. The roar coming from the bowels of the earth was deafening and terrifying. We could see the hills around us being covered by the heavily descending mud, and thousands of huge rocks bursting in the air and destined to fall on the hills and soon afterwards be buried by the showers of mud. Everything in the house was covered with wet mud.

I was compelled to return home that day to Te Wairoa. When I returned the place was still in violent eruption. That day about 2,000 people arrived from all parts, travelling all the previous night in their cars. Late in the afternoon I ventured down to see if the site of the Waimangu Geyser had been affected, but found it untouched. I discovered that the great rock face which we called Gibraltar was still standing, but more of the rock surface had been uncovered. The rock still stands, but it will assuredly be blown into thousands of fragments one of these days, as sure as my name is Warbrick. Crowds of visitors were still coming from every direction. In the afternoon the eruption, I could perceive, was gradually abating.

I had food and bedding sent out, so that I could stay in an old hut behind the ruined accommodation-house. My friends were strongly opposed to my doing so, but I remained there alone. I had an awful evening. The eruption became very violent, and continued until 9.45 p.m., when it began to subside, but the ground was still thumping and vibrating.

The next day no mud was ejected, but enormous clouds of steam were still rising; the crater was not yet visible. When the steam clouds cleared, and the first view of the crater was obtained, it was evident that great changes in the scene had been effected by the eruption, and it became quite safe to walk around the rim of the blown out Frying-pan Flat. Within three weeks after the eruption the new crater began to refill with boiling water, and after a few weeks it became the present boiling lake, the site being still known as "Frying-pan Lake."

Walking up the pumice valley from Rotomahana, the traveller passes the South Crater on the left and can look down into it. This crater is the extreme south end of the

great Tarawera and Rotomahana rift of eleven and a half miles. The wrecked Government accommodation-house has been left standing as it was, for visitors to see the effects of an eruption. Another house for travellers' use has been erected just behind the old one.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Psychic Sense of the Maori

The Gift of Matakite.

A persistent racial trait of the Maori, as of the Scottish Highlander, and the Irish people, is the belief in second-sight or clairvoyance —*matakité** as our people call it. A primitive or semi-primitive race like the Maori, a race that, as a writer once said, "has not yet become commercial," is more receptive to the spiritual, is in closer tune with the mystic and the unknown, than matter-of-fact, super-civilized Europeans. What is ignorantly called superstition, we contend, is simply a more acutely developed sense of intimacy with the world that lies beyond the veil. But belief in supernatural warnings, in wraiths, in spirit voices, and so forth, is by no means confined to primitive races.

"Oh, spooks!" said a listener once, when we were discussing this subject.

* *Matakité*—literally "the seen face." Usually an apparition, often a face seen in a dream. Also a seer.

"Call them spooks if you like," said I, "but listen to some of my personal experiences, things which I can swear to. I am a *matakité* myself; I have not only had strange premonitions that proved to be accurate, but I have seen the dead as if they were living. When I was a hot-blooded irresponsible youngster, I used to make great fun of all these beliefs, but I know better now."

Here is one instance of *matakité,* an incident in broad daylight in Whakarewarewa about twenty years ago. I was walking towards my home in the afternoon with a friend of mine, a young Englishman out here on a holiday tour. We were passing along the road from the middle of the kainga, to the hot pool Roto-a-Tamaheke, when I saw an aged Maori woman walking towards us. She was a resident of the place, the mother of Maggie Papakura, once the famous guide, who died in England some years ago. She walked slowly with a slight stoop as if she were very tired and eventually disappeared from sight, passing apparently into the small shrubs that grew about the path. All at once I heard shrieks from a group of women who were standing on the side of the track, and

on stopping to enquire what it was all about, I could get no answer from them for some time but "A spirit, a ghost!" Then they gave me a description of what they had seen and it exactly tallied with what I, and others present, had witnessed. A few minutes afterwards we heard over the telephone that the old woman had just died in the town, two miles away.

Now, I did not know that the person, or semblance of a person, walking along that road was not real flesh and blood. Indeed I assumed that she was alive. But the Maoris on the roadside knew by the way that she vanished that she was a *wairua*, a spirit form. They made certain of this, in fact when she had disappeared, by searching among the rocks and bushes in the vicinity to make sure that no one was there. They knew (which I did not) that the old woman had been lying sick in the town. Her death actually occurred at the very moment that we saw her spirit figure walking in the road.

On another occasion when I was down at a village near Te Teko, towards the Bay of Plenty, and a party of us, mostly young men and women, were walking along a path

near the kainga in the dusk of the evening, suddenly the foremost of the party rushed back and called to us in a tone of great excitement: *"He wairua!* Look, there is a spirit form of a girl walking on the path." Now, instead of running away in fright, all the party wanted to know who it was, as they assumed at once that some one of their acquaintance had died and were therefore greatly concerned.

The leader of the party said in a low, tense tone, " Now that I'm close up, I can feel the spirit pressing on me." The apparition kept its shoulder half turned away and face averted. It was a curious fact that although a spirit, the leader of the party could feel it pressing its shoulder and arms against him. " Try to see the face," the others exclaimed.

When at last the spirit turned its face, it was that of a girl whom my companions knew well, one of their tribe. The apparition then vanished. Soon afterwards we learnt that the girl had died at about the time that her wraith had appeared, at a village some distance away.

It is difficult to find a scientific explanation for these phenomena, but their occasional

occurrence cannot be questioned. Is it not possible that the last intense thought of the dying person projected a vision before her friends?

There was, too, that strange portent on Lake Tarawera, to which I have referred in a previous chapter, the phantom canoe that appeared some ten days before the eruption in 1886. That apparition was actually seen by several persons whom I knew well, and who reported it to me and others a few hours after. It was seen by two boats' crews and passengers on their way to the Rotomahana Terraces, and it was in the daytime, about nine o'clock in the morning. Both Pakehas and Maoris on that occasion saw on the surface of the lake the semblance of a war-canoe of a type which had long ceased to exist. As a rule omens and portents are not heard of until after the disaster has happened. But this Tarawera canoe, the forerunner of death, was seen and its appearance was discussed some days before there was any indication of a disastrous volcanic outburst.

The Maori has a very strong spiritual sense, and this makes him receptive in a high degree to psychic influence, and to the power

of religious suggestion. This belief in the power of the unseen was a corrective to the rule of physical force. The mystic law of *tapu* policed the old-time community. Auto-suggestion was a power among the people. Faith-healing is a natural development of the widespread belief in the supernatural. The *tohunga* with his magic and spells has been succeeded by the religious leader who uses the Pakeha Scriptures and impresses upon his disciples the virtues of prayer. Of the many faith-healers who have risen to celebrity among the tribes in recent times, one is Wiremu Ratana. His *mana* as a healer has extended even to the European; some instances of benefit to white people have been recorded. He is the head of the Ratana Church, a sect with a very large following.

Te Kooti, a grimmer and more commanding type of Maori than the amiable Ratana, was also a faith-healer of high *mana* in his later years. After he made final and lasting peace with the Government, in 1883, when he was granted amnesty for his offences of war, he was continually on the move for some years, visiting one tribe after another, as head of the Wairua Tapu cult, successor of the

original Ringa-Tu faith, the gospel of the Uplifted Hand. The expression Ringa-Tu, once synonymous with the blood and fire of a political religion, was revived after his death, and it is to-day the designation of a Church recognised by the Government whose ministers are licensed to perform marriage. Te Kooti was a man of extraordinary personal magnetism. For twenty-five years, in war and peace, he exercised complete control over several thousands of people, as their military and spiritual leader, even many of his old opponents coming under his influence, and beseeching his help in time of sickness. In 1888-1889 he came to Rotorua at the invitation of some of the principal inhabitants, and many of the Arawa became converts to the Ringa-Tu beliefs. His aid was invoked in cases where people believed that they had been *makutu'd* (bewitched), and parents who had lost several children appealed to him to prevent further deaths. His intercession was popularly believed to be of infallible efficacy.

After Te Kooti had been encamped near the Puna-a-Tuhoe (the Fairy Spring), Rotorua, for some time in 1889, I met him and he seemed to take a fancy to me, for he asked

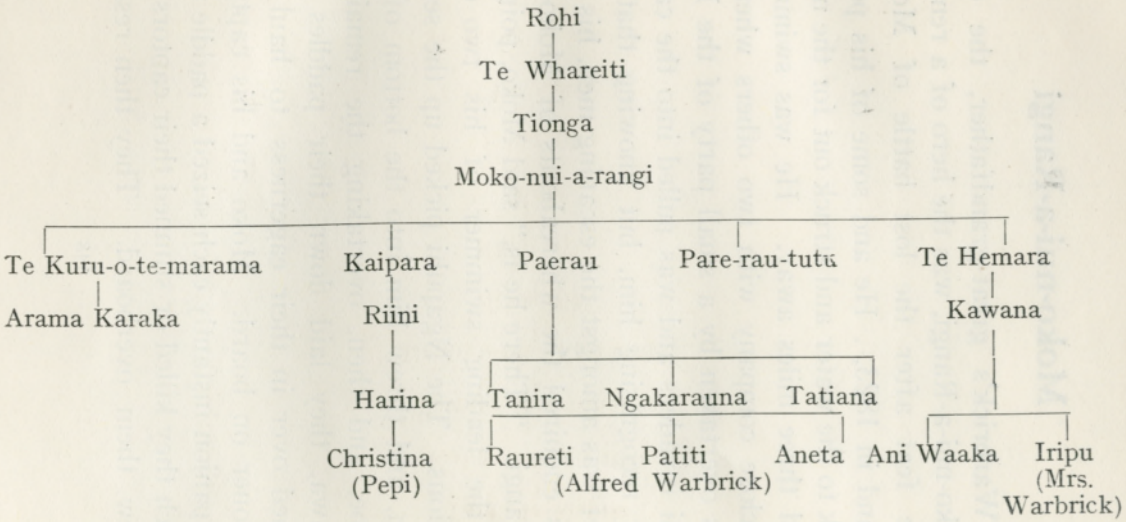
me to go and live with him at Ohiwa as his secretary. Although I had a great regard for the old warrior, I declined his invitation. He died at Ohiwa, Bay of Plenty, in 1893. I believe that much of his success in avoiding death or capture in his three years' bush war with the forces of the Government was because of his possession of that unusually keen extra sense which the Maoris comprehensively term *matakité*. Some subtle instinct warned him of danger, or of the approach of his enemies.

APPENDIX

Alfred Warbrick's Genealogy

This *whakapapa* or genealogical list shows Alfred Warbrick's descent on his mother's side. The first ancestor on the pedigree is the Polynesian chief Tama-te-Kapua, who was the commander of the sailing canoe Arawa on the voyage from Tahiti to New Zealand six centuries ago. The famous ancestor Moko-nui-a-Rangi, who was Warbrick's maternal great-grandfather, had three sons and one daughter, Pare-raututu. Iripu, collateral descendant of that chieftainess, is Warbrick's wife.

Tama-te-Kapua
Kahu-mata-momoe
Tawake-moe-tahanga
Uenuku-mai-Rarotonga
Rangitihi
Rangiaohia
Mahi
Rongomai
Te Apiti
Te Rangiwhakatara


Rohi
Te Whareiti
Tionga
Moko-nui-a-rangi
Te Kuru-o-te-marama
Arama Karaka
Kaipara
Riini
Harina
Christina
(Pepi)
Paerau
Tanira
Ngakarauna
Tatiana
Raureti
Patiti
Aneta
(Alfred Warbrick)
Pare-rau-tutu
Te Hemara
Kawana
Ani Waaka
Iripu
(Mrs.
Warbrick)

Moko-nui-a-Rangi

Warbrick's great-grandfather, the chief Moko-nui-a-Rangi, was the hero of a remarkable feat after the lost battle of Mokoia Island in 1823, . He and some of his people took to the water and struck out for the mainland three miles away. He was swimming in close company with two others when he was overtaken by a small party of the Ngapuhi invaders and was pulled into the canoe. Not recognising him, but knowing that the chief was amongst the escaping men, his captors enquired the whereabouts of Moko-nui-a-Rangi. "There he is," said Moko, pointing to the leading swimmer of his two companions. The Ngapuhi picked up the second man, and threw him into the bottom of the canoe, and then, overtaking the remaining Arawa, they laid down their paddles and leaned over in their eagerness to haul the prisoner on board. Moko and his captured companion instantly each seized a paddle with which they killed or stunned their captors and threw them overboard. They then rescued

their comrade, and reaching the shore in safety, disappeared into the friendly woods.

It was Moko-nui-a-Rangi, too, who when pursued by a band of Hongi's men to Lake Tarawera, turned and confronted his enemies on the summit of Moura Bluff, near the present water-route to Rotomahana. He challenged the Ngapuhi *toa,* or leading brave, to mortal combat, and in the space between the opposing forces he fought and killed the northern warrior. Thus emboldened, the Arawa fell upon the Ngapuhi, who broke and fled.

Moko-nui-a-Rangi (the name means "Great Tattooing of Heaven") was shot dead in the 'Fifties in a little war between two clans of the Arawa. The Ngati-Pikiao from Lake Rotoiti attacked the Tuhourangi and Ngati-Rangitihi (Moko's own clan), and they were repulsed with considerable loss at Te Ariki, on Lake Tarawera. Unfortunately, however, the last shot fired by the retreating foe killed Moko-nui-a-Rangi. His body was placed in a cave on the shore of the lake. Alfred Warbrick was taken to that cave when he first went to Tarawera, and he saw the old man's head-comb and some other relics laid there with his bones.

Moko-nui-a-Rangi's pa was Tapahoro, at the eastern end of Lake Tarawera. It was the headquarters of the Ngati-Rangitihi subtribe of the Arawa, until the year 1864, when the tribe were given the conquered land at Matata, as a reward for their military services to the Government. It was a large well-fortified pa in the fighting days. The village stood on a terrace about twenty feet above the lake and was surrounded by three lines of stockading. In the rear of the pa there was level land for about five miles extending towards Putauaki (Mt. Edgecumbe), that splendid symmetrical extinct volcano which you can see from Tarawera filling in the view at the far end of the lake.

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