

God in whom he so believed had held their hands from pulling the triggers at him (his worshipper). Residing within the pa at this time was a priest from Hawaii, who assumed to himself the power of charming the life of any person from cannon shot and musket balls by chewing a piece of stick and rubbing it over the man; absurd as this may appear to a European, many of the Natives in the pa believed in him, and through faith in his charms exposed themselves fearlessly to the firing of our troops; nor was it until they had fallen that the rest awoke to the murderous imposition practised on them. Another impostor named Papahurihia promised by the aid of his gods and the power of his incantations to protect from the power of cannon shot a house built by his command in the pa of Ohaeawai as a Council chamber for the Chiefs: the house was built, and eight Chiefs were sitting in it when a cannon ball passed directly through it, shattering the muskets which were piled within; the seer said that some one had smoked a pipe inside and his gods were angry. Another house was built with the same promise of protection; this was struck by a shell and unroofed, and Papahurihia now attributed his failure to cooked food having been taken in the house, not perhaps in the hand but in the mouth, which would have the same effect in polluting the place. This second failure however was a death blow to his pretension, and the Council house was not re-built.

We will now speak of the sorcerer, and his witchcraft; the power possessed by the sorcerer of inflicting death upon such as had either insulted him or others, no doubt gave him great influence with the people, and few or no insults were offered to him; still it must be admitted that his life was only held on a precarious tenure, for it has frequently occurred that his nearest relation, even his own son or grandson, (to say nothing of members of another tribe,) would murder a man accused of bewitching one of their relations. We will give one or two anecdotes on this head, and then give one incantation from one of each of the different modes of divination, for the ceremonies differ according to the circumstances of the case. In November last, while engaged in the Kaipara district, we came to a Native settlement where three days previous to our arrival a young Chief had died of consumption, of which disease his brother and sister were also dying. The Natives of this district had for more than fifteen years observed all the outward forms of Christianity, yet on retiring to our tent we overheard them relating to the Chiefs who accompanied us, the cause of the young man's death, which of course was the result of witchcraft; the proof of this was, that about three months previous to his death the young man and an elderly Chief were jointly cultivating a piece of ground, when they had some trifling dispute respecting it; the younger asserted that the crop of wheat would not grow for want of drainage and that it would be washed away, to which the elder replied "you will never see it"; shortly afterwards the young man on an excursion with his brother and sister got very wet with rain, and being of consumptive tendency all three took colds, the cause of death to him, and most likely to prove fatal to the other two. When the young Chief died, the words uttered by the old man were remembered and were considered an indisputable proof that he had bewitched the whole family on account of the words the one had uttered to him in conversation in the plantation. Formerly the sorcerer might not have escaped so well, for in the year 1844, a slave and his wife were killed in Hokianga for the supposed crime of witchcraft: these two poor beings had been taken from the Rotorua tribes in the wars of the noted cannibal Hongi Hika, and as the Rotorua people are noted for their knowledge of sorcery, these two slaves of course must share such knowledge. Most of the principal Chiefs of the Hokianga district having died in the space of five years these slaves were charged with having bewitched them, and on the mere supposition they were put to death. Even in these days of comparative civilization of the Maori, the lives of the nearest relatives are sometimes sacrificed to the still strong belief in these Satanic rites; and for the supposed crime of witchcraft murder is still perpetrated. Since November last there have been no less than four such murders, one of which took place within a few days' journey from this city; in that month a man named Hakaraha was killed at Rotorua by a person of the name of Hura, who supposed the other had bewitched his wife Roka. It appears that Hakaraha and Roka had not been on friendly terms, and that he had said "may earth be laid on Roka," shortly after which the woman died: Hakaraha's wish was sufficient evidence to warrant his seizure and execution, which took place accordingly. At Whaingaroa, in September last, an old man and his wife were strangled for the imputed death of a Chief's son, one of the executioners having been baptized, as also the victims. The old man and his wife had been taken slaves by the Ngatihourua tribes from the Ngatikahungunu in Hawke's Bay; and Chiefs having died in the tribe of their masters, these two were accused of sorcery and sold to the Ngatimahanga for a gun. Whilst among them, a son of the Chief William Naylor having quarrelled with his own wife had thoughtlessly kicked her arm, which the two slaves bathed with warm water: while doing so it is supposed they uttered the incantations of witchcraft against the husband. Shortly afterwards he died, when the slaves were summoned to appear before a superstitious semi-cannibal assembly of men, women, and children, who constituted themselves judges, jury, and witnesses; judges without the knowledge of the rights of man, jury reckless and utterly incapable of estimating the value of human life, and witnesses devoid of any evidence but the mere presumptions of superstition. The pre-judged victims being by these questioned as to their knowledge of witchcraft, repeated the incantations for a curse: this was sufficient, they were ordered to forget such knowledge, which they could not promise; they were then told "they were given up to the evil world, the dark world, and to wickedness;" this was understood by the young men, and accordingly a few days afterwards, while the poor old man and his wife were cooking their evening meal, unconscious of their fate, two men named Wapu and Hakopa entered the hut and strangled them. Shortly after this, and even nearer to Auckland, an old man named Ruharuha was murdered at Waiuku by his own grandson (Pita Te Whareraukura). Pita's