

separate apparitional soul. Trees were also protected by forest elves called the Hakuturi. "The Hakuturi folk re-erected the tree felled by Rata because he had not placated the forest deities ere felling it." In the last hundred years hundreds of thousands of trees have been felled quite without ritual, and the Hakuturi are at least a century behind their job.

Man and the tree belong so close to each other, it is natural (though not practical) to correlate the berries of the tree with inhabitants of the human head. Thus: "Rehua seems to have represented forests or trees. Birds are said to have eaten the parasites of the head of Rehua; such parasites, we are told, were the berries of trees." Laments Elsdon Best: In these days "the forest of Tane has largely disappeared, torn from the breast of Papa the Earth Mother by an intrusive and utilitarian people."

Maori tribalism was a check upon trespass on a tribe's forests by unauthorised persons of another tribe. "Many such trespassers have been slain." The tameness of native birds when the white man came to New Zealand seems to throw light on the Maoris' care for bird survival, and on the silent nature of their bird-taking (snares, spears, etc.) in the absence of gunpowder. "Old fowlers have told me (Best) that, when attending snares at a creek, they have occasionally had pigeons settle on their shoulders. The pigeon was one of the least shy in the days when the shotgun was little used, or not at all." By covering creeks with thick branches, but leaving access points set with snares, the Maori snared thirsty birds. Sometimes water was put in wooden troughs erected in the trees, and there the birds, thirsty with berry-eating, again met the Maori fowler's snares. The spear could also be used from platforms in trees. A wooden spear might be 30 feet long.

## EVEN WHALES KNOW EROSION

It is a far cry from the Urewera of the nineteenth century to the man-made erosion of today. Man-made erosion is seen at its best (or worst) on the Waioeka Gorge road between Opotiki and Gisborne. Futile attempts to make farms in this gorge serve to underline the evils of deforestation and the madness of trying to grass steep slopes. The autumn of 1948 brought record floods to the lowlands on both sides of Hurarua range, to Gisborne on Poverty Bay, also to Opotiki and other Bay of Plenty townships.

The hinterland of Poverty Bay and other bays has special mass movements of earth peculiar to the district. These were probably in slow motion before the white man, but he has been an accelerating agent. Cumberland ("Soil Erosion in New Zealand") states, with fair reservations, the case concerning man-made erosion. And it is a convincing case. "Natural movement," writes Cumberland, "was not sufficiently rapid and disruptive widely to disturb the indigenous bush cover." With fire and steel man more effectively disturbed it. After him, the deluge.

Of course, the north-east shoulder of the North Island has no monopoly either of deforestation or erosion. The daily Press even announces that the Tory Channel whalers in August—not for the first time—were hindered in their search for whales through "flooded rivers again discolouring the waters of Cook Strait." It may be remembered that a generation ago Cook Strait navigation was rendered temporarily impossible by smoke from the great Raetihi bush fires. The smoke disappeared soon, but erosion in the denuded headwaters of the Wanganui and other streams in the fire area goes steadily on. Cook Strait feels it still; and if, as the daily Press suggests, the whales have benefited, they surely are the only beneficiaries.

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