LIFE IN A MAORI KAINGA.

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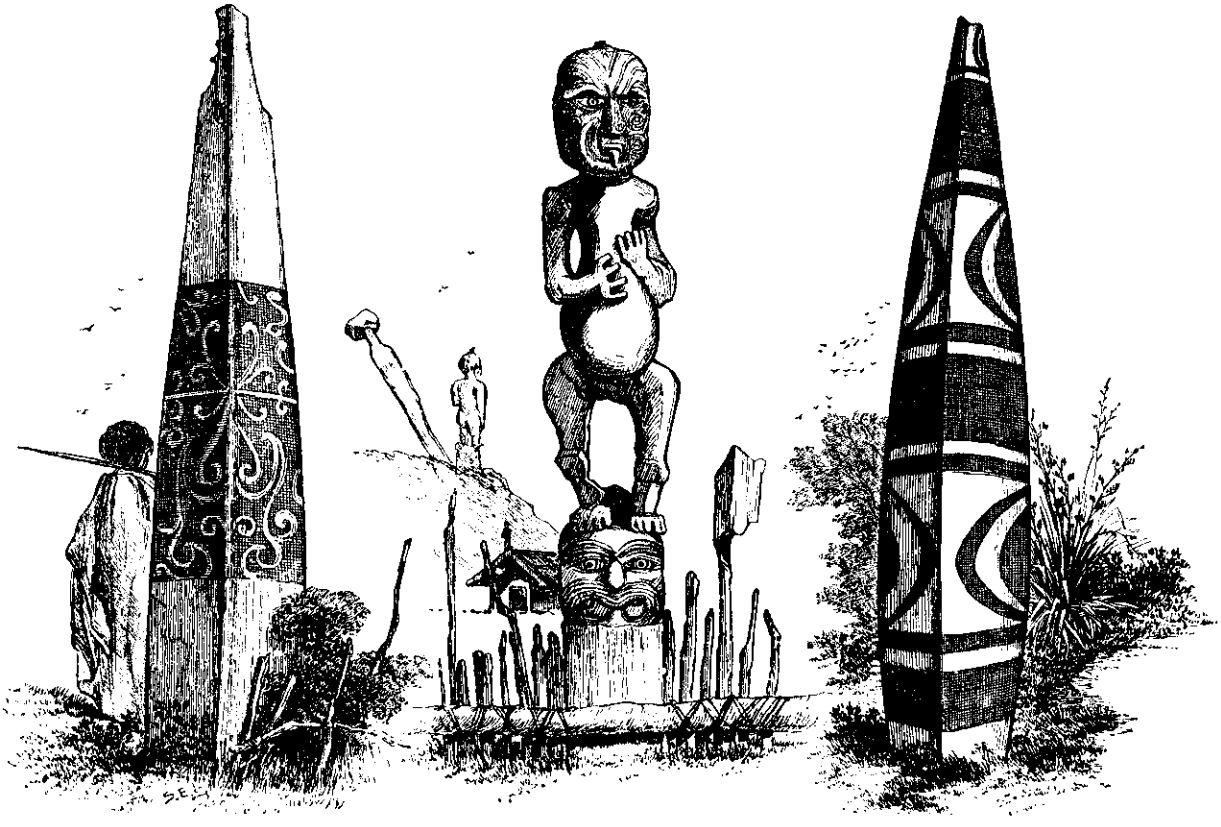
(CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE.)

DO not say this of all, but it is the prevailing type. So with the young Maori of the present race: a new era has dawned on him with a new language opening out vistas of unexplored knowledge and possibilities, to which the old race are utter strangers. He looks on the history, traditions, etc., of his ancestors with half contempt as old women's tales, and has few ideas in common with the old stock who still survive. He is no longer ruled by the wise precepts of his ancestors, and has really no moral law but expedient. Instead of industrious cultivation of the land which was enjoined and insisted on under native rule, he passes his time in loafing, smoking, riding about, and villages which were at one time surrounded with cultivations supplying the inhabitants with a rough plenty, are now without any signs of culture, the owners living, not answer except in tribal relations, where there is a community of property to a great extent, and young and old share alike. For the first part, sin is the transgressor of the law, and as neither the law of nature, nor the tribal law was transgressed there was no sin.

With regard to the second, referring to the marriage state, the commandments were made by the Deity for a wise purpose, and though the rulers of this people knew not His laws, as in this case the Seventh Commandment, they thoroughly understood that it was essential to the well being, in fact, to the very existence of tribes that held right by might that the rising generation should be numerous, strong and healthy, hence their strict laws with regard to those women set apart for purposes of procreation. Nominally the Maori now follows the customs of civilised life, really they are much the same as ever, with this difference, that there being only pakeha laws now to enforce marriage fidelity (which laws are a mere farce) there is not much of it, and promiscuous intercourse is leading to the gradual extinction of the race. Old Tamihana Pakoro advocated habits of industry and cultivation of the ground, both by precept and practice, though formerly such work would have been beneath his dignity as



MAORI TOMBS.

or half-starving, on money accruing from the sale of tribal lands or rents of the same. If some are inclined to be industrious others are not, and those who cultivate would have to share with loafers, on the ground that the land belonged to the tribe, whereas native law compelled all to cultivate, as the sustenance of the tribe depended on it.

Referring to the relation of the sexes, according to Maori custom unmarried girls were, from a very early age, permitted to receive the attentions of the other sex at pleasure. If in consequence a contraband baby occasionally presented itself, it was looked upon as one of the tribe, and no discredit or detriment to the damsel. Certainly the girl's parents had a right to destroy it if the connection was particularly obnoxious to them, but this was seldom done. When the girl married it merged into her husband's family, and as polygamy was the rule, all young women got married sooner or later. The consequence was that there were (and are) no old maids or celibate bachelors amongst the Maoris, and many evils were thus avoided, which civilisation entails. Once married, infraction of the marriage laws was punished by death or heavy confiscations. I believe this to be a far better system than ours, but it would a chief and warrior, but now all caste work without distinction at times. He was very sententious, having many wakatauki or proverbs, as, for instance, 'Tama tu, tama, ora, Tama noho, tama mate kai (The man that rises to work will be satisfied; the man who sits still will be hungry).' Also: 'Ehara te toa taua, he toa pahekeheke, ko te toa ngaki kai ekore e paheke (Vain is bravery in war, for it is an uncertain thing, but he who is brave in tillage is certain of reward).' The Maoris have as many proverbs and wise saws as we have.

The cultivations of the kainga were enclosed with a tieps, that is a fence, made by driving in a double row of stakes, between which branches, etc., are laid transversely, the stakes being tied together at intervals with twine. The whites call it a tieup fence, the Maoris taiep, words very similar and having just the same meaning. The cultivations were carried on by the old men and women. They grew tobacco, the Virginian pink blossomed plant. They prepared the leaf by putting it in heaps when green to sweat, that is heat and ferment. It is then rolled into plugs which are tightly bound round with flax lashing till they become hard and set. It is mild to smoke, and not as well flavoured as the tobacco of commerce, that is if good, but it is far better than a good deal of the rubbish that is sold. Indian corn grows and ripens well in the northern parts of the North Island. It is grown, too, in the Middle Island, but does not thrive much; the summers there are not hot enough for it. The Maoris either roast the cobs at the fire and gnaw them, or else put them in baskets, which they keep in a water-hole till the corn is rotten; it is then beaten up into a paste and boiled. It smells very nasty, but it is very pleasant to the taste. The natives of the South Sea Islands prepare bread fruit in a similar manner; they call it poi. Then besides rewi or tiwa, the names of the common potato, they grow kumeras or sweet potatoes, which is an arum; the gourd or calabash, called hue, also pumpkins, water and rock melons. Kumeras are rather smaller than the ordinary potato, and they are pink-skinned; when boiled they are about the consistence of a turnip, and as sweet as a carrot. The gourd is hollowed out and used as a vessel for food, water, etc., but these are now giving place to European utensils.

The Maoris had many resources for food in the indigenous productions of the country, but these are now seldom made use of. Edible fern, for instance, which is seldom found except on the richest land, the roots; a foot or two beneath the surface, containing a good deal of farinaceous matter. It is cooked by laying it on hot embers till sufficiently roasted. It is then scraped with a shell to take off the blackened outside, then beaten with a wooden mallet to separate the farina from the fibres; it was thus considered a good antidote for sea-sickness. The shoots of the nikau, an indigenous palm that bears no edible fruit; the shoots and tap root of the ti-tree (commonly called the cabbage tree), which is something like the toddy tree in India, from which a spirit is distilled; the root of the toi, a giant grass with lofty plumed reeds growing sometimes twelve feet high; the roots of the raupo, a species of bulrush growing in swamps, all when baked in a kopa Maori form food more or less nutritious and palatable. The mamaku, a tree fern generally known to settlers as mumuk, which sometimes attains a height of twenty feet, is nearly all edible; the outside bark or shell being removed, the rest is a vegetable substance with scarcely any fibre in it. When cooked it is pleasant to the taste. Several kinds of fungus growing on dead timber are edible. The piroi is held to be the best of New Zealand indigenous fruits; it grows on a trailing plant called gigi. It is something like pine apple in consistence—sweet bitter in taste. But none of the native vegetable productions are very palatable to Europeans, though the native European children seem to relish them.

The Maoris are not without amusements. Of an evening they often assemble in the larger whares. Some of the Kotiro, or young women, will sing haka songs, whilst some of them dance the haka dance. In this the dancers grace-