

## NEARLY A HUNDRED.

RAHERA TE KAHUHIAPO: HER LIFE AND TIMES.—SOME SONGS OF THE MAORI.

(Special to the "Graphic.")

ANY a tangi-song of old, and many an ancient love-chant, too, were sung over the remains of the venerable Ra-hera (Rachel) te Kahuhiapo, who was laid to rest the other day at Ngapeke, on the shores of Tauranga Harbour. For Ra-hera was a famous woman in her day, and a great beauty of the Bay of Plenty and Lakeland kaingas. She was a "wahine whai-manua," a "woman of power." Indeed, she seems to have been an unusual woman altogether. Her word was law with many a hapu, and when she died lately, aged somewhere between ninety-five and a hundred years, hundreds of tribes-people from all over the Bay of Plenty country, and from Maketu, and the sea coast, and inland to the Rotorua villages, gathered by the waters of Tauranga to cry over her, and to chant their poetic farewells to the last of the great Maori chieftainesses of the East Coast.

Such a woman as Ra-hera was a leader of her hapus in more ways than one. To her the people came for advice when in trouble; her word "went" when there were disputes over land; but, above all, her "whakapapa" or pedigree gave her a position of high degree. For the tribes she was connected with were many, and she could trace her descent from several of the chiefs who commanded the Hawaikian viking-canoes which landed their Polynesian crews on the East Coast of New Zealand between four and five hundred years ago. And further back than the days of the Arawa and the Mataatua canoes, too, she could go; she could recite her genealogy from the ancient people of the land, the aborigines who were already settled here a thousand years ago, and with whom later immigrants fought and inter-married.

As an example of the aristocratic Maori family-tree, here is Ra-hera's line of direct descent from Toroa ("Alba-

ross"), the captain of the Mataatua canoe, which landed her Eastern Pacific crew at Whakatane, Bay of Plenty, between four and five centuries ago—Wairaka (daughter of Toroa), whose son was Tama-ki-te-huatahi, who begat Tane-moe-ahi, whose son was Pukenga (founder of the celebrated warrior clan Ngati-Pukenga), whose descendants were—father to son—Whetu, Tuhokia, Te Aomatapiko, Tamahape, Te O, Te Maire, Rarunga, Hine-marama, and Te Nia, whose daughter was Ra-hera te Kahuhiapo. And one of Ra-hera's daughters is Ka (Katarina) te Atirau, of Tauranga, whose eldest daughter is Te Rongokahira (wife of Mr. Charles R. Parata, of Wellington), and one of the many great-grandchildren is little Kahureremoa, a tiny girl, who bears an illustrious name from her ancestress, the original Kahureremoa, who lived many generations ago, and was a celebrated beauty and a "pahi"—that is, she knew no man until she was regularly married by tribal consent to the chieftain chosen for her.

Ra-hera witnessed more than one cannibal feast in her time. For her young days were spent in scenes of frightful savage war. For years there was fighting between the Ngaiterangi and the Arawa tribes, and as Ra-hera was connected with both tribes she was in the thick of it. She saw the inter-tribal battles at Maketu, and she also saw the capture of the celebrated stockaded "pa," Te Tumu, on the sea coast, near Maketu, in 1836, when an army of Rotorua warriors stormed the fort and slaughtered many scores of its defenders, whose bodies went into the oven. She witnessed, too, the last patriotic stand of her warrior tribes against the Queen's troops in 1864.

And Ra-hera had her love adventures, too. In her youth she lived with her father, Te Nia, on the beautiful hill-top Motutawa, which is a high island-like peninsula jutting out into the blue

waters of Lake Rotoiti, in the Geysers-land Country. Motutawa was a palisaded stronghold of the Ngati-Pikiao tribe, to which Te Nia belonged. A great carved-meeting-house, which stood on Motutawa hill, was called "Tuau," after Te Nia's warrior father. Well, Ra-hera fell in love with Te Ngaru ("The Wave"), a young chief of the Ngati-Te-takanga hapu, and he with her. And they loved each other right well. But the twin were violently parted. Te Nia and his people took the sorrowing Ra-hera away, and completely broke up the little affair of hearts. She was taken across the lake to Pukurahi, another Ngati-Pikiao fortified village, whose beautiful commanding site you may see to-day, at the entrance to an almost landlocked placid bay on the north side of Rotoiti. So the width of the lake separated the lovers. And Te Ngaru used to sit on the cliff-top at Motutawa when evening came, gazing across the waters at the northern shore, and as he gazed and sorrowed, he used to play a plaintive little air on his "putorimo" (wooden flute)—another Tutanekai playing to his Hinemoa. And he composed and sang this love-lament for Ra-hera:—

(Translation.)

Lonely I sit  
On Motutawa's cliff,  
Ever gazing towards Pukurahi,  
Where dwells my love.

The fires burn low  
On Pukurahi hill;  
By their dim light  
We'd take our fill of love.

The moonlight beams  
On Pukurahi hill.  
By that pale light  
Would we could love again!

My sad flute-song  
Floats out across the lake,  
But thy lament  
Ne'er falls upon mine ear!

So chanted Te Ngaru his love-song to the sleeping lake. It reached Ra-hera's ears at last by tribal message, though the lovers were never reunited; and whenever she visited Lake Rotoiti in after years the people delighted to chant the little "waiata" in her honour. It was chanted again and again at her tangi, and now her little great-grand-child, Te Kahureremoa, of Karori-road, Wellington, is learning to sing it, too.

Some of the laments lately composed for Ra-hera are finely poetic in their imagery. The Maoris likened her to the bright star of the morning, to Tawera (Venus), "te whetu marama o te ata," now gone from their sight. I translate brief passages from one or two of the laments:

Lo! On the distant waters  
Sweeps along Te Whatarau's canoe,  
Oh! that he'd hasten to the shore!  
And by his kindly magic move this load  
That weighs my spirit down.

The Southern breezes blow,  
And every gust that comes  
Seems but to increase my sorrow,  
And to renew my tears.

I look for some warm robe  
To shield me from the blast;  
And trembling, sore, forlorn,  
I seek in vain,  
And comfortless I lie.

See, over yonder mount  
The morning breaks;  
Purchase my chieftainess returns to me  
Clothed in that shining cloud.  
Ah, me! I wait in vain.

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3. A Teasing Irritation in your Throat?
4. A Difficulty in Breathing?
5. A Cold in Your Head?
6. A Fit of Sneezing?
7. A Pain in Your Chest?
8. A Shortness of Breath?
9. "Only a Bit of a Cold?"

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YOU?

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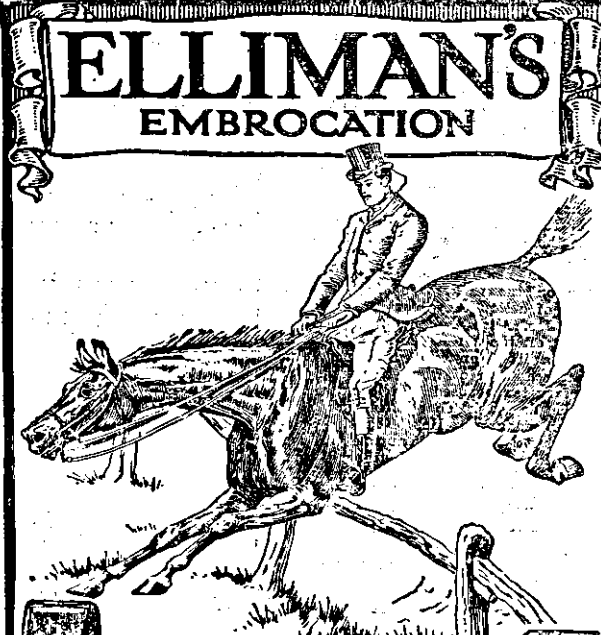
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