

NEW ZEALAND STORIES.

For the Love of a Maori Maid.

(By GAELIC.)

[The Editor desires to announce that New Zealand Stories by New Zealand writers, will be published on this page regularly. The page will be open to any contributor, and all accepted stories will be paid for at current rates. terse, bright sketches of Dominion life and people, woven in short story form, are required, and should be headed "New Zealand Stories."]

YOU who read must set your thoughts to follow where my thoughts lead. I would have you leave the street and the town, and come with me far back; come far into the lands that know not the pakeha voice—that know not the sounds of the white man's world. The lands that bear the forest's pride, where the fern is untrampled, where the tui sings his loudest and is not afraid—there must he wander. Nay, more! a greater and stronger fancy must lead you, for I would have your mind to close its understanding to the things of to-day—to the present that lives—and open its ways to the doings of the past. The present is real, and, save in mighty moments, fails to arouse the man from beneath the skin that a newer world hath wrapped around him, and hath tied so fast that when aroused he blushes to find the spirit outpouring from the smothered and girded founts of his inmost mind.

We in the present are too languid to love as we loved before, too polite to hate as of old. Our love must first be found by writings of law; our hate is unwieldy, and barren of the sport it should yield if only they who quarrel would stand out, naked of knife and spear, and let the better brain and muscle laugh when the weaker fall. Can hate of the present be hate of the heart when it spits out death through a tube of iron to the foe it has never met, nor even seen, as the wide valleys part the ways?

My mind is of the past, and my whitened bones soon will show that my beating heart has ceased to yield life to my body of the present. I have seen that the present can never meet the past, for it does not understand, and will not reconcile. The old are old in mind, as in body, for their thoughts are not with the world of youth. Can the spirit of the ancient kauris deign to follow the doings of the chirping sparrows? We die, but the words of our mouths live on. Give me, then, your thoughts, that my tale shall be told when this, my tongue, lies mouldering into the dust whence it came.

Tell me, which of all people can boast of having known greater changes in life and in the manners of life, from grand-sire to child, than the civilised Maori. Others may have tasted as many of the pleasures and pains of the passing of nakedness, but none, I say, has suffered the disappointments or enjoyed the advantages to points of keenness greater than my dark-skinned race. When the Great White Queen gave us our charter, we pictured a very heaven of bliss for the Maori. All things would work to one ending to form a happy blend; all wrongs would be righted, and all darkness would be turned to light! Thus we thought, and so would you also have thought had your ignorance of life and of the ways of righteous men been as ours. But, thanks to that great Charter, we now can talk in the pakeha tongue as well as our white brethren, and, perhaps, better than many of them! The pakeha guns protect us from the invader across the sea, and the pakeha law courts protect us from the land-shark ashore. We sit beside the silk-wrapped lady in the worship-house, and we brush against the scented dandy in the swift-moving, horseless cars; and none dare banish us or openly insult our name. Yes, we are grateful, very, but many thoughts of sadness come to the mind of the Maori, whose dreams take him back to the past. He thinks of the fallen greatness of his people, of the majesty and power of the mighty

Ariki, and of the mystery of the solemn tohunga's power. He can now recall the dead ages only in lettered books, wherein cold, unfeeling authors describe all wondrous deeds as "acts of barbarism," and wherein good and bad are too readily grouped into the signs and ways of savagery. Bad, the Maori may have been, but his soul was open to other spirits besides those of evil. Hate was strong, but love was stronger. You laugh, and beneath your laugh your eyes

loves to hover in the gutters, smoking paper-wrapped tobacco and doing cowardly and unclean things. The home of the Maori has left the hills and high places. His bones are grown lazy, for he loves to dwell where his fuel and water are earned with but little labour. He builds his kaings on the low places, heedless that there the consumptive sickness lurks. The Maori is dying; he is to blame, for he sleeps on, and his sleep will end in death!



IN THE NICK OF TIME.

may veil a sneer. My story may help to show you the power of love's sway among the hearts of my people. It will show you that faith in love led even our great chiefs to open their hearts to its spirit-power. Their love-filled minds would lead them to do the bidding of their visions; and you will learn how the dreams of Ruatui moulded his path of life and of death, for his visions were not to be denied. Nor do I know of any of love's mind-beckonings which led any man out to the maid who had left her image on his soul, engraved by the magic power of her love-lit eyes in living flesh and blood. I lament the loss of poetry, and of the thoughts that soften hate. Our dreams now turn to the getting of money, and the Maori is fond of eating out his brains with the strong drink, the fiery liquid of the Evil One, which the pakeha is ever ready to sell to him. His talk is too much like that of the thing called harrikin, that

But the pakeha is impatient to hear my story.

It was told to me by my father, and is therefore true. My father was a great priest, and knew men's minds. He it was who heard the last words of Ruatui, and saw him leap out to the gods. My heart stores the words of Ruatui, as told to me; and thus he spoke to my father the priest:—

"My heart is heavy and my soul is sick, oh Tanemai! The goodness in my heart commands me, and says 'Speak and die, oh Ruatui, the brave!' The badness laughs, and says 'Be silent; bury thy sorrow, thy doings, and live thy life, oh Ruatui!' My spirit is torn. Will your holy mind help me and command, oh Tanemai?"

"Speak, my son!"
"And die?" Then let it be so, Tanemai, I love a maid, Moecana must be my bride in death. She is of the Ngapu; I of the Wairomo, as all our race knows full

well. When the Wairomo fought the Ngapu, I, their chief, led them; but we were beaten back, though many of our warriors stayed to feed the Ngapu fires of death. The pobutukawas have bloomed many times since then, but well I remember the way I fought for and won a prisoner—even Moecana—surely the chosen of the goddess of beauty, for she was no other maid, and I protected her and chose her to mate. After many moons had shed their light and passed, the love that Moecana bore to me was strong as the love I bore her, and she was soon to be the Wairomo's chief honoured wife and queen. But my people were wrathful and, while yet too fearful to kill her, they drove her back through the blackness of night, back to the Ngapu, her tribe, where she could see me no more. My anger was great, and straightway I took revenge, and gave many of my people to the gulls on the shore. But revenge satisfies the evil in our minds and does not reach the heart. My sun had gone down, for Moecana was gone, and I knew that she, too, would mourn her fate high up in death. Now, the maiden, my Moecana, who in her great beauty was called the Sunshine of the Ngapu, appeared many times to me in wondrous dreams, so that I clutched forth as I slept, but the beautiful vision ever melted away and slowly beckoned me to follow.

"I did not tell of my dreams to the Wairomo, for it was right that they should not wish a Ngapu to be the mother of my children. No, the Maori of old hated too well! Many murmurs of anger, too, had been heard by my spies concerning the taking of my revenge; and so I kept my thought and told not of the waiting yet fleeting visions.

"But love is strong, and I loved the smiling face, the shining hair of Moecana; and oh, Tanemai! when I could no longer keep my sorrow, nor bear the tearing at my heart, I crept away at set of sun and followed where the love-shadow led. Whilst my people slept the happy vision led me over the hills, through many waters, and across the plains, far into our enemy's land, and there, while the moon was yet high and shining through the dew-glittering branches of the tall kauris, I lost my wondrous guide, but saw, running fast to meet me, my heart's longing—even Moecana herself—in full glory of life and beauty. I stood, and the heat of my quick journeying turned to cold. I had seen no green tuatara; nothing had crossed my path to give this fear-god power over me; but for a moment the brave Ruatui left his own body so that it became but a cold home for fear to dwell in. The change I had seen from lovely airy spirit to still lovelier mortal being was too great for my understanding, and my brain could not help me. But Moecana spoke, and her voice was sweeter than music of the morning tui!

"Come, oh Ruatui! Your spirit whispered through the night, and I knew that your love led you thither. Come to my people; they must surely welcome you. You are strong, you are good, and we shall wed. Ruatui, our tribes shall be at peace. Come!"

"The sound of the human voice gave me back my strength, and the thoughts of Moecana's words lent me courage to that I could answer, 'Your will is my will, Moecana. Life and death shall see us as one, and neither shall part us!'"

"There spoke the true spirit of Ruatui! Come, my mortal god, and we will go to the Ngapu to learn of our life to be."

"Moecana, your love is still mine? You speak of OUR life!"

"Even so, my warrior! and Moecana's soft laugh started a sleeping Whauroro to his morning song. 'My art is weaker, but my wits are nimbler than thine.'

"A maid may sing of the love she bears, and sigh!

A man may fight with all his care,

Or die!

Her heart is dead, but life is left

To weep!

His soul is peace, his body left,

To sleep!

But Moecana's heart is burst

With blood,

To quench her brave Ruatui's thirst,

In flood

Of love, that shall not die with life

Or death!

So live and laugh, or go in strife,

Our breath."

"Moecana's voice of song filled my soul and seemed to live in the trees, so that I could not speak until we were far out on the white cliffs that border the sea. We walked slowly on, hand in hand, and