

The magnificent Maori story of the creation, the gods of heaven, earth, ocean and forest, the wild Rider of Tempests—Tawhiri—the war-god Tu, all are fitting subjects for poets and word-picture painters. Domett has taken the tales of the unlettered Maori and turned them into memorable lines. He has caught the spirit of the tohunga-narrator in his tradition of the separation of Heaven and Earth—Rangi and Papa, by their son Tane-Mahuta who with a Titanic effort

Heaved the Heavens aloft with a million broad  
limbs shot on high all together rebounding,  
resilient :

Then at once came the Light, interfused, inter-  
flowing—serenely soft—eddying—crystalline  
—brilliant !

Will New Zealand produce another  
Domett ?

But the author of "Ranolf and Amohia" has by no means exhausted the Maori fount of Hippocrene and "Helicon's bright stream." The awe-inspiring convulsions of Nature in which the simple wild man saw the actual hand of his gods; the immortal Maui who drew up the solid land, and who allows the winds to blow in hurricanes and loves to ride on the furious winds of the north and south in quest of the strayed west wind; the fairy "Patupaiarehe," Dryads of the woods, who dwelt on the lofty mountain-tops and whose shadowy forms were seen through the early morning mists; the Tree-god Tanē and his children; the sea-gods and goddesses wandering on the face of the waters, now succouring and now engulfing the ancient mariner; the ceremonies of war and peace; the sayings of the oracles, the strange visions of the seers or "mata-kite"—these and a thousand other fanciful matters of the native race are open to the poet's pen and the artists' brush.

I recall with delight fleeting hours spent, on more occasions than one, on the romantic Island of Mokoia, in Lake Rotorna, when a venerable Maori, a survivor of a past generation, unfolded to his visitor in a spot remote from the abodes of his people, some of the interesting history attached to that Island; and a war hymn he recited especially struck

me. Standing on an ancient sacred place, on the sandy shore of the lake, where formerly stood a flat stone "tuahu" or altar, the old man chanted once again, in rhythmic measure, waving a leafy twig over the rippling lake-waters, the centuries—old song of the priests in welcoming a returning canoe-party of warriors :

Haere mai i uta !  
Haere mai i tai !  
Haere mai i te tu parekura !  
Te-ere, te-ere, tere nui na Tu !  
Hikitia mai taua kai !  
Hapaingu mai taua kai !  
Ki rungi rungi taua kai.  
Kia kai mai, rongo mai,  
Heke iho i te rangi taua kai,

Come from the land,  
Come from the sea,  
Come from the battlefield of Tu !  
Come, pilgrims, great pilgrims of Tu !  
Lift up hitherwards that food ;  
Raise up towards heaven that food ;  
Come and eat, come and listen,  
Descend from the heavens that food .

The first portion of this chant welcomed the cannibal war-party from the field of Tu, the scarlet-belted god of war, and the rest was an incantation or invocation connected with the offering of a sacrifice, often the heart of an enemy, to the parties before the *tapu* was removed from the fighting-men. 'Twas but a fragment, yet as the grey-bearded sire chanted the wild refrain on the spot where his fore-fathers had so often landed from their war-canoes and danced the savage "ngeri," it carried the *pakeha* back in imagination to other days, when battle-axe and spear and club ruled this land of Aotearoa.

A song of more peaceful associations is their "powhiri" of welcome to visitors, which is to be heard at any Waikato village to-day on the occasion of the arrival of guests from a distance. It is peculiarly applicable to the Waikato, where the settlements lie near the river-banks, and where native visitors often arrive by canoe :

Kumea mai te waka ;  
Toia mai te waka,  
Ki te urunga,  
Ki te moenga ;