

“Rebels to the Queen.”

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Illustrated by H. E. Taylor.

“Truly ye come of the Blood.”—*Kipling.*

CHAPTER I.

ONE calm and pleasant evening in the early spring of 1863, two Maori boys were fishing for eels in the large swamp at the back of Meremere, a little village fronting the clear, swift Waikato. Darkness had settled over the land, and scarce a sound

burning close by them, served to attract the fish to the spot in large numbers, and—for so profound was the stillness—one could plainly hear the peculiar sucking noise made as they rose to the surface of the water.

“Ha, Nini!” suddenly exclaimed the taller of the lads, “I have him at last, and he is a big one!”

Rapidly hauling in his line, he landed a fine silvery eel, a couple of feet long, firmly secured by the sharp steel hook.

“Look, Nini,” continued the young fisherman, as he cautiously, and with some difficulty, unhooked his wriggling prize, “see how firm the *pakeha’s* hook has caught him! I should never have got him with the old bone hook hanging in my father’s whare. Ah, it is keen and strong, like the *pakehas* themselves! Truly they are wise and cunning, the *pakehas*, and I would see more of them.”

“True, Tautini,” replied his comrade, “they are wiser than we, but they are also greedy, and would take away the lands of the Maori.”

“But,” returned the first speaker, “they are not all cruel and greedy. They are mostly like the Pihopa Herewini* that old Rangiamohia has told us about. Yes, I would fain learn more of them and their ways.”

“Ah well, Tautini, for me, I am quite happy here. When I am older I will marry Tohe, and live comfortably here in Meremere, and surely that will be better than going far away among strange people like the *pakehas*? But come, let us return to the *pa*. We have enough fish now, and I am sleepy.”

* Bishop Selwyn.



“HA, NINI! I HAVE HIM AT LAST, AND HE IS A BIG ONE.!”

broke the deep stillness. The boys, intent upon their sport, talked but little, and then in low voices, unconsciously tuned to the perfect repose around them. A small fire,