

beautifully carved and tattooed to represent Toroa, the celebrated captain of the Mataatua canoe, which arrived on these shores six hundred years ago. From the ears of the wooden figure are suspended handsome tufts of albatross down—fitting adornment for the illustrious sailor-chief named after the swift-winged king of the ocean.

Another bird whose feathers are highly valued, but which, strictly speaking, does not belong to the category of New Zealand birds, is the *amokura*, the tropic-bird or bo's'n-bird, as it is popularly called. It is



SADDLE-BACK (TIKE).

found all over the Pacific, and the South Sea Islanders, as well as the Maoris, set much store upon its peculiar long narrow tail feathers as ornaments. In Niué (Savage Island) the feathers of the bo's'n-bird (there called *tuaki*) are used as ornaments for the hair on gala occasions, and the *amokura* feathers are used in exactly the same fashion by the Maoris, who are fond of decorating their hats with one or two of these straight, very narrow, red feathers. They say it is a *tohu rangatira*, a sign of chieftainship, like the wearing of *huia* or *kotuku* feathers. At a recent Maori gathering of the clans at Rotorua, many of the natives wore the

highly-prized *amokura* feathers (which came from the distant Niué), while many of those who could not obtain them displayed in their hats a peculiar imitation of the feather in the form of dried and plaited leaves of *maurea*, a slender grass which is found near Lake Taupo, and which dries red.

The *huia* (*Gould's Heterelocha Acutirostris*) is one of the most beautiful of our native birds, and its white tipped tail feathers are greatly valued by the Maoris, amongst whom the wearing of a *huia* feather in the hair or hat is, as has just been stated, looked upon as a token of chieftainship or good birth. The *huia's* plumage is of a glossy black, with several large curving tail feathers tipped with white. This handsome bird is yearly becoming scarcer, and it is now only to be found on the Ruahine Mountains and Tararua Ranges, in the North of the Wellington Provincial District.

One of the most familiar of our birds, as far as illustrations go, is the rapidly decreasing *kiwi* (*Apteryx*), whose singular appearance is well known to colonists and to many outside New Zealand. The habitat of the *kiwi* is the more remote of the wooded ranges in the interior of the North Island, and also in the vicinity of the West Coast Sounds. I have heard a suggestion made by one who takes a deep interest in our native birds that a number of *kiwi* should be transported to the Little Barrier Island, at the entrance to the Hauraki Gulf, and liberated in that avifauna reserve, where there is every chance of them thriving and increasing. Our one scientific body, the New Zealand Institute, should attend to this before it is too late, and before the few remaining wingless birds vanish from the North Island. This suggestion also applies to the *huia*, which is not as yet represented in the natural history "farm" of the Little Barrier.

The rarest bird in New Zealand—if there be one still alive—is the singular creature known as the *takahe* (*Notornis Mantelli*). The last known specimen of this bird, a young female, was captured in September, 1898, by Mr. Ross, at Lake Te Anau, and as there were eggs in it, it is considered that it