

As it was in the Land of Tara.

THE INVASION OF WELLINGTON BY THE NGAPUHI LEAGUE IN 1817.

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I.

WHEN, in the early part of the century, the Ngapuhi and other Northern tribes obtained fire-arms from the early traders they piously proceeded to raid the less fortunate Southern tribes, and, armed with the much dreaded guns, marched in victorious triumph down both coasts, leaving scenes of death and desolation in their trail.

About the year 1817 an expedition was formed by Ngapuhi, Ngati-Whatua and other tribes of the North to attack the people of Taranaki and Raukawa (Cook Straits). We will listen to the account of that bloody foray, as given by a survivor:—

“Friend! Let me tell you of our raid on Taranaki and the Southern people in the days that are past. To the far South we marched, even to Raukawa, the Sacred Sea (Cook Strait), and to the great harbour of Tara,* and the Valley of the Shining Water.†

It was the third raid I had joined, for I was then a young man. The war party of Tuwhare arose. We assembled at Kaipara. The fighting men of Ngapuhi joined us, and we, who marched against the South, were five hundred, twice told. But we who returned, after twelve moons of fighting, were but three hundred, twice told; and the others? Son, they are lying beneath the waves of Raukawa, in the sand hills of the coast, by the flowing waters of the Land of Tara.

We were marshalled under the chiefs

Hongi Hika, Te Kawau, Tuwhare, Te Waka Nene, Te Karu, Te Parou, Pori, Moctara, Taoho and others. As we advanced down the coast Te Rau-paraha joined us with a band of his warriors.

We had four guns, and Hongi Hika had one of these, as he was a good shot.

Whenever we approached a *pa* those who had the guns went before, while we of the *rakau Maori* (native weapons) followed. When the enemy recognised us as a war party their braves ascended the *puwhara* (platforms—see note 1), or stages, that they might be able to assault us by throwing down stones upon us. But they knew not of the new weapon—the gun. They knew not how it destroys man from afar. For thus it was that we overran the White World and marched to and fro across the land, from far Te Roinga to the Land of Tara. Even that the name of Ngapuhi struck against the heavens.

So our warriors with the guns would advance opposite the fort and dance defiantly and defy the men on the stages with insulting words and gestures, and the enemy would challenge us to the attack. Then they would begin to cast stones at us, and our gun men would fire upon them. Friend, it was like shooting pigeons on the forest trees, as they fell from those stages. And those in the *pa* would hear the sound of the guns, and see the smoke and the flashing lightning and their bravest warriors falling, slain from afar by some strange power they knew not of. They thought that it was Maru, their war god, who had ranged himself on our side, and that the death of their braves was caused by the power of that god

*Te Whanga nui a Tara, Wellington Harbour.

†Wairarapa.