

end" of all Maoris, the possession of the land.

The new people soon set out to explore the strange mysterious land they had taken possession of, so different from the palm-clothed isles of the tropical seas. They wandered up the valleys, crossed the ranges, and looked with wondering eyes on the wide plains of the Waikato and the Waipa, covered with forest and fern, through which wound the silver thread of many a river. They gave names to the features of the country; they built their rude dwellings, planted their few seed-kumara with great care and ceremony, and foraged for the foods of Aotearoa. It was a virgin land they prospected. Deep, dark forests then, as now, covered much of the country; wild birds swarmed in countless numbers; the voice of man could scarce be heard on the forest outskirts at dawn of day for the chiming of the bell-bird and *tui*, the screaming of the *kaka*, and the "ku-ku" of the pigeon. So, as the pioneers became acquainted with the resources of this "Fish of Maui," they set their cunningly-devised snares for the forest-birds; they speared them with long barbed spears; they made rat-pits for the *kiore Maori*; built eel-weirs and manufactured long flax seines for the sea-fish. They set up their *tuahu* or sacred places, and at due seasons the hereditary priests repeated the already - ancient incantations to Io, Tū, Uenuku, Rongo, Pani and other gods of the Maori. They discarded their too airy *tapa* garments for the more substantial clothing of flax and *toi*. In such fashion they lived; they multiplied, and in due time thickly peopled the more fertile portions of the coast and hinterland, and chased out the few earlier inhabitants, the *tangata-whenua*.

Even in the thick forest one still comes across traces of the old-time people. Great trees grow out of the *pa*-trenches, and the surveyor and bushman still occasionally find a hollowed-out *waka*, or bird-trough, which was set up in dry portions of the bush and filled with water, while above it were placed flax snares and nooses, in which

the thirsty wild pigeons might be caught when they flew down to drink.

Strange and interesting is the race-history of these Tainui immigrants and their descendants. The record of their occupation of this territory, afterwards known as the "King Country," as disclosed in the Land Courts, is a narrative of place-naming, land-claiming, house-building, and of fierce feuds and vendettas, warlike expeditions, ruthless murders and cannibal feasts.

The descendants of Hoturoa and Rukataura often quarrelled amongst themselves, and when they were not engaged in alternately murdering and conciliating each other, they were busy repelling the attacks of outside tribes.

The Ngatimaniapoto tribe, in later times, became the dominant tribe of the land. This clan takes its name from the great Maniapoto, founder of the tribe, who lived fourteen generations ago. His father was Rereahu, whose name is revered as that of a sacred *Ariki* or tribal head. Rereahu's grandfather was Turongo, whose remains were interred at Rangiatea, near the Raugitoto Ranges. It is said that the mouldered bones of that ancient can still be seen there, at the foot of a *karaka* tree.

Then in course of time arose other tribes, besides the parent tribe Tainui, of Kawhia, the Ngatiraukawa, Ngatitona, Ngatimahuta, Ngatimatakore, Ngatihikairo, and the many tribes known under the common heading of Waikato. The Waikato proper lost their ancestral lands as the result of the war of 1863-64, so that Ngatimaniapoto are now the people chiefly interested in the Rohepotae*.

The Rohepotae district may be defined as all that stretch of land extending from

NOTE.—This term means an external boundary-line. "Rohe" is a boundary, and "potae" a head-covering. The name was applied to the King Country in modern times, as a comprehensive term for the vast, roughly-circular tract of country under the *mana* of the Kingite party. Wahanui was one of those to originate the name early in the "eighties," and at his instigation a survey was made of the Rohepotae boundaries.