

chance of filling our pickle pork tub. I was then bachelorizing with Bob. It was his duty to ride round the sheep that week in the mornings, while I cooked the breakfast. The day before, he had reported seeing pig tracks, and traces of the slaughter of lambs. This morning he took the cattle-dogs. They were no good for holding pigs, but would hunt them, and do their best to bail them up. Our favourite old pig-dog had fallen a victim to his intrepidity in an encounter with a boar some time previously. I stood at the door watching Bob riding up the brow of the grassy hill in front of the house. As he topped it, the dogs, which had hitherto trotted quietly and unconcernedly at his horse's heels, suddenly threw up their heads, evidently sniffing a strong scent that they knew. By the way, I'm not surprised at dogs being able to hunt pigs by the scent, I have a good nose for them myself. Away they went towards a small round hillock, covered with bush, standing at the base of a volcanic mountain similarly clothed.

I rushed into the house, seized an old muzzle-loader which happened to be ready loaded, and, taking a short cut, reached the spot before Bob had time to open several gates and get his horse through. On the top of the hillock was an old Maori fortification, evidently a sort of advance fort, giving the holders the advantage of an admirable retreat, if necessary, along the short spur to the more impregnable mountain which frowned above it. The palisading had long since rotted away, and the ditch which surrounded the miniature plateau, where the pa once stood, was almost obliterated by a precocious young forest of fern-trees and other shrubs.

From the sound of the dogs barking, I rightly judged that the pigs had made for this spot. Standing in the ditch, and gently pushing aside the drooping fern leaves, I could just see through the tangled mass of scrub the top of the mound, on which stood at bay a grand old

boar with bristles on end, gleaming, bloodshot eyes, and foaming jaws, armed with glittering tusks which rattled ominously. Behind him, as he turned round and round to present a constant front to the circling dogs—who, though valiantly barking, appeared equally anxious to see if he looked less formidable behind—I spied a pair of exceedingly plump and comely young sows. This gay old December had two youthful Mays, then, and was most anxious not to lose either of them. They, for their part, displayed little fear, appearing to have every confidence in his power to protect them. They merely waltzed nimbly round after his every turn, keeping their position in his rear.

I shall never forget that scene. The spot was historic. Many a fierce battle between contending tribes of Maori had been fought there for the possession of the fertile plains on which our sheep now fed. The once grim, old fortification was now a wondrous bower of beauty. It seemed almost sacrilege to shoot pigs there, and mean to make an unequal contest of it by the use of firearms, against those confiding young Mays. But the thought of many innocent young lambs gobbled up by them before the helpless mothers' eyes—my young tender lambs which had contributed to the sleekness I admired, and that empty pickle-pork tub, flashed across my mind. All compunction was gone in an instant.

A chance presented itself in the eddying whirl, of a shot at one of the young sows without the danger of hitting a dog. I caught her just behind the shoulder, and she fell. The boar and the other sow, frightened at the report, darted off down the hill, the dogs after them. Whether the old warrior was really concerned about his lost darling, or whether the dogs were successful in heading him, I know not, but I had scarcely lowered my gun before they again appeared, in a revolving ring, on the top of their fort, another shot, and the old fellow was twice