

shells . . . he had on a sou'wester hat, three woollen mufflers, a dark brown cloth coat with an almost invisible stripe in it, and trousers to match, a blue serge vest . . . Round his neck hung some Roman Catholic relic in the shape of a heart . . .²⁰

Kingston's castaways make a similar discovery on one of their expeditions:

On a rude bed raised a couple of feet from the ground, lay the body of a man . . . Close by was a small heap of limpet and mussel shells, and within his reach were two bottles—one was empty, but the other was full of water . . .²¹

The details of the clothes are the same—except that Kingston, a good Protestant, omits the holy medal.

In 1872, Kingston published the sea tale, *The Three Midshipmen*. It was enormously popular. He followed it up with (naturally) *The Three Lieutenants* and *The Three Commanders* and finally, in 1878, *The Three Admirals*. This last has a chapter set in New Zealand during the Land Wars. Some years previous to *The Three Admirals*, Kingston had published *Blue Jackets*,²² an account of the exploits of the fighting Royal Navy during Queen Victoria's reign. This had briefly covered the war in New Zealand from 1845 to 1847. *The Three Admirals*, however, owes little to this, and draws instead upon accounts of the Waikato campaign.

Kingston's heroes join in a bloody attack on a well-fortified pa on the banks of the Waikato. Its name is not given, but its description clearly reveals it as Rangiriri:

It was situated on a hill some way up the river . . . Besides the pah, strong entrenchments had been thrown up by the Maoris, reaching from the right bank of the river to a lake on the opposite side of the pah, thus completely blocking up the road. In addition to these fortifications, were two lines of rifle-pits . . .²³

The description of the battle—the shelling, the sacrificial assaults, the eventual surrender—could have been pieced together from any newspaper account, but direct parallels suggest that the most probable source is Major-General Sir James Alexander's *Bush Fighting*.²⁴ This is confirmed by the similarity of Kingston's description of 'A night march to attack a village—Desperate defence of the inhabitants' and Alexander's description of the attack on Rangiaowhia. Alexander's brisk account of the assault on one hut reads:

The Maoris pushed their guns through the walls and fired. The door was attempted to be forced open. They pulled a Ranger inside, and the hut took fire. The door opened, and a big Maori came out in his blanket, and walked up deliberately to the soldiers and gave himself up a prisoner. No others came out, and in the ruins were found the charred remains of six men and the Ranger.²⁵

Kingston adds some picturesque details:

One of the seamen had got close up to the door, when it was opened and he was hauled inside before his comrades could rescue him. There could be little doubt but