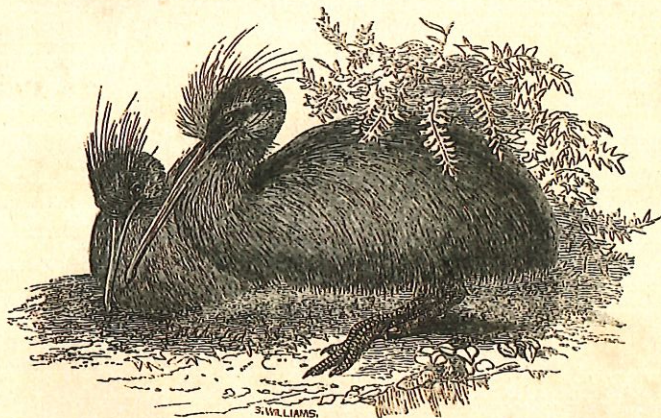


TRAVELS
IN
NEW ZEALAND,

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
GEOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY, BOTANY, AND NATURAL
HISTORY OF THAT COUNTRY.

By ERNEST DIEFFENBACH, M.D.,
Late Naturalist to the New Zealand Company.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.



Kiwi Kiwi, or Apteryx Australis.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1843.

(Dieffenbach, E.,
1843: 127–131)

party, stripped of their clothes, bedaubed with red ochre, and distorting their faces even more frightfully than the men. All the warriors have their hair dressed, tied round on the top of the head, and ornamented with feathers, but their bodies and limbs are entirely naked. The combat is carried on by alternate advance and retreat. If a party retreats in flight, they carry, if possible, their dead with them, or the enemy seizes them for the purpose of devouring them.

In an engagement on the sea-shore, in which muskets were used, I saw both parties advance, guarding themselves by trenches rapidly dug as they pushed forward. They fire continually, but irregularly, and a great deal of powder is wasted, as they rarely take aim. But, notwithstanding this, large numbers are often killed.

Their mode of besieging is rude, but not without cunning. The besieging party digs trenches and erects high structures of blocks of wood, from which their fire can reach into the pa. Both parties have fosses with loopholes, and outposts; but they are little careful to conceal their arrangements, each knowing the other's forces too well; and strangers or neutrals are allowed to pass from one party to the other, the combatants politely ceasing to fire during the time.

If a pa is taken, in most cases nothing but a general slaughter of the men satisfies the thirst of the victors for revenge, and women and children are carried off as slaves. When the two parties are

inclined to peace, they deliberate about the conditions, and a feast concludes the whole.

On returning home they sometimes kill more of the captives. E'Ongi's principal wife, who was blind, often indulged the natural cruelty of her disposition in this manner. But her barbarity at length met its just punishment: in one of the last excursions of E'Ongi to Wangaroa she was left behind on account of sickness, and, being unable to defend herself, the dogs actually devoured her alive.

A remarkable custom exists among the natives, called the taua tapu (sacred fight), or taua toto (fight for blood), which is in the true spirit of the ancient law of the Asiatics—"blood for blood." If blood has been shed, a party sally forth and kill the first person they fall in with, whether an enemy or belonging to their own tribe; even a brother is sacrificed. If they do not fall in with anybody, the tohunga pulls up some grass, throws it into a river, and repeats some incantation. After this ceremony, the killing of a bird, or any living thing that comes in their way, is regarded as sufficient, provided that blood is actually shed. All who participate in such an excursion are "tapu," and are not allowed either to smoke or to eat anything but indigenous food.

In former times large fleets of canoes often went to distant parts of the island, and, as the country is everywhere intersected by rivers, and contains many lakes, the canoes were dragged from one to the

other. E'Onghi traversed nearly the whole northern island in this manner.

The canoes which they use in war are the largest and are ornamented at the head and stern. They are made of one tree, the kauri, in the northern, and the totara in the southern parts of the island. I have seen them eighty feet long, and they are able to carry a proportionate number of warriors. They have gunwales on their sides, firmly attached by flax ropes. Formerly a stone adze was the only implement used in their construction; the natives, however, have now an iron adze. There are other sorts of canoes; one of them, very low and without gunwales, is used in many parts of the island, especially in the inland lakes of Taupo and Rotu-rua, and is called tiwai. The sails are triangular, and made of the light raupo-rushes. They can sail very close to the wind, and are steered by a paddle.

A few observations regarding the cannibalism of these islanders may not be out of place. This frightful custom has not yet entirely ceased, although it undoubtedly will do so in a very short time. The implacable desire of revenge which is characteristic of these people, and the belief that the strength and courage of a devoured enemy are transferred to him who eats him, are, without question, the causes of this unnatural taste—not the pleasure of eating human flesh, which is certainly secondary, and, besides, is not at all general. A chief

is often satisfied with the left eye of his enemy, which they consider the seat of the soul. They likewise drink the blood from a similar belief. The dead bodies are "tapu" until the tohunga has taken a part of the flesh, and, with prayers and invocations, has hanged it up on a tree or on a stick, as an offering to the Atuas, or to the wairua of him to revenge whom the war was undertaken. The heads are stuck up on poles round the village. Women, especially those who plant the kumara, and those who are with child, are not allowed to eat of the flesh, but children are permitted to do so at a certain age, when the priest initiates them into the custom by singing an incantation, which I insert here, although it is too obscure for translation:—

He waka ngungu tamariki tenei	Mau nga tua ahu
karakia	Horo nuku
Ka ngungu te tama nei	Horo rangi
Ka koro te tama nei	Horo paratu
Ka kai te tama nei	Horo awa hei kai
Ka kai tangata te tama nei	Mau nga pukenga hei kai
Ka horo parata te tama nei	Mau nga wananga hei kai
Ka kai hau te tama nei	Mau tenei taura
Ka kai e tiki ei	E kai te tama nei
Ka kai rangi	E horo te tama nei i te tangata
Ka kai papa hei kai	Ka kai akuanei
Mau nga tua hei kai	Kakai apopo
Mau nga wahi tapu hei kai	Heoi katahi kakai te tamaiti.

Many men too are restricted from eating it. They all agreed, when conversing with me freely upon the subject, that human flesh is well flavoured, especially the palm of the hands and the breast. The flesh of Europeans they consider salt and dis-

agreeable—a curious physiological fact, if true; and they stated the same regarding the flesh of our dogs and the introduced European rat. It appears very doubtful whether they ever killed a slave merely for the purpose of eating him. Where such murder was committed there was generally some superstitious belief connected with the act, or it was done as a punishment.

The island of Tuhua, or Mayor's Island, in the Bay of Plenty, with a population of about 200 souls, has been subject to many attacks from the tribes of the mainland; first from the Nga Pui, and afterwards from the Nga-te-Wakaua, in Wakkatane. Their pa being situated on an almost inaccessible rock of craggy lava, the enemy has always been obliged to retreat. The last attack was made in the night, but the inhabitants were on their guard, and allowed the enemy to come to the base of the rock on which the pa stands, and then rolled down large boulders, by which many of the attacking party were crushed; the rest retreated. They related this the following morning to a missionary, and, on being asked to show the marks of the blood on the rocks, they answered, "Our women have licked it off!" The savage, passionate and furious with the feeling of revenge, slaughtering and devouring his enemy and drinking his blood, is no longer the same being as when cultivating his fields in peace; and it would be as unjust to estimate his general character by his actions in these moments of unrestrained passion

as to judge of Europeans by the excesses of an excited soldiery or an infuriated mob. If we were to be judged by the conduct of our countrymen in the South Seas, who, unprovoked, have not only frequently murdered the innocent by tens and twenties, but, what is still worse, have fostered the passions of the natives against each other in every possible manner, what a picture would be given of our civilization! The history of the discovery of the islands of the South Seas is one continued series of bloodshed and aggression; and in our intercourse with the New Zealanders it might easily be proved that, in nine out of ten cases in which there has been a conflict between them and Europeans, the fault was on the side of the latter, not even excepting the case of the otherwise humane and benevolent Captain Cook, who shot natives in order to make himself acquainted with their race. If one were to reckon up the crimes and gratuitous cruelties (not including, of course, the unhappy but involuntary consequences of our intercourse) which civilized men have committed against the savage, the balance of humanity, and of other virtues too, would probably be found on the side of the latter. I am acquainted with authentic facts relative to occurrences in many of the South Sea Islands, several of them related to me by the perpetrators themselves, which make the blood boil, and which are only equalled by the treatment of the American Indians as related by Las Casas.