

(Grey, G., 1855: 58)

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POLYNESIAN

MYTHOLOGY

BY

SIR GEORGE GREY



POLYNESIAN MYTHOLOGY,
AND
ANCIENT TRADITIONAL HISTORY
OF THE
NEW ZEALAND RACE,
AS FURNISHED BY THEIR PRIESTS AND CHIEFS.

BY SIR GEORGE GREY,
LATE GOVERNOR-IN-CHIEF OF NEW ZEALAND.



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Q before he died he had children, and sons were born to him; some of his descendants yet live in Hawaiki, some in Aotearoa (or in these islands): the greater part of his descendants remained in Hawaiki, but a few of them came here to Aotearoa. According to the traditions of the Maori,* this was the cause of the introduction of death into the world (Hine-nui-te-po being the goddess of death: if Maui had passed safely through her, then no more human beings would have died, but death itself would have been destroyed), and we express it by saying, "The water-wagtail laughing at Maui-tiki-tiki-o-Taranga made Hine-nui-te-po squeeze him to death." And we have this proverb, "Men make heirs, but death carries them off."

Thus end the deeds of the son of Makeatutara and of Taranga, and the deeds of the sons of Ranginui, and of Papa-tu-a-Nuku; this is the narrative about the generations of the ancestors of the inhabitants of New Zealand, and therefore, we, the people of that country, preserve closely these traditions of old times, as a thing to be taught to the generations that come after us, so we repeat them in our prayers, and whenever we relate the deeds of the ancestors from whom each family is descended, and upon other similar occasions.

* Inhabitants of New Zealand.