

*korero*. It was no sooner finished than the thirteen Kingites came forward and expressed their desire to take the oath of allegiance to the Queen. In Pehi's presence I administered to them on the Testament the following oath:—In the presence of the chiefs and their people here assembled, I, A.B., do hereby renounce Kingism, and further swear henceforth to bear true allegiance to our Sovereign Queen Victoria—so help me God.

In this pa there was only one prisoner, rather severely wounded. Dr. Fletcher, on examining him, expressed his doubts whether he could bear removing. On hearing this the natives burst into a roar of laughter. "What! not well enough to be removed? he was jolly and hearty enough when we arrived; we know better, he's only shamming, we'll have him," and off they bundled him to the canoe. Just as we reached our canoes a volley was fired apparently in the rear of where Pehi received us. In an instant the natives, who suspected treachery—that Pehi had probably concealed a body of men ready to fall upon them if it were prudent—threw themselves into skirmishing order, and availing themselves as if by instinct of every tree and of the slightest unevenness of ground, rapidly advanced to the pa and demanded the meaning of the volley. It turned out that it was merely a salute fired by Topia (Pehi's son) and other rebels just returned from Waikato, on paying a visit to Pehi.

The first place we stopped at on returning was the Kauaeroa Pa, where we took the prisoners without difficulty, and received from the Rev. Mr. Lampila an abundant supply of grapes, which proved most refreshing to the wounded. On arriving at Tawhitinui, being under the impression that the only prisoner to be taken was the chief Te Raimona, I did not at first leave the canoe. After nearly an hour had elapsed and no appearance of the prisoner, I went up to the pa and found a rather angry discussion going on. Te Raimona, who was wounded in the groin, was sitting under a verandah, and his wife was, in not very complimentary language to the loyal chief, protesting against his being surrendered, Te Raimona himself declaring that he would not be taken. Hori Kingi, leaning on his spear, seemed to be arguing the point at issue very calmly. Seeing no probable termination to the discussion, I asked Mete Kingi why they did not take the prisoner. He at once replied, "He is a great chief; he is nearly related to all of us; if we lay hands on him he will be degraded, and looked upon as a slave for ever. We are, therefore, trying to persuade him to walk down to the canoe without our touching him. Give us time." "Take your own time; I will wait as long as you choose." Another half-hour elapsed without the negotiation having apparently advanced a single step, when Mete Kingi came to me and said, "What is to be done? he won't come." "Send a file of men on each side, and I will then order the constable to take him." Without a moment's hesitation Mete Kingi said "It shall be done," and was giving the orders to his men, when Te Raimona, probably seeing the movement, got up and said, "I will go." He was no sooner in the canoe than Hori Kingi said, "There are a few other prisoners, all old men; have we not done enough for to-day?" an opinion in which I so entirely concurred that I ordered him to push off at once. When we arrived at Ranana, Te Raimona was treated with the greatest possible respect, a *tangi* was held over him, he was shown into the runanga house, supplied with the best of everything they had, the other prisoners being placed in a whare by themselves, but nevertheless treated most kindly; and yet, strange to say, at Tawhitinui, the pa from which Te Raimona was taken, Matene and his followers (including of course their prisoners) had dug two large ovens in which they intended to have cooked (had they proved victors) their opponents, whether killed or taken prisoners.

Tuesday, 24th.—We left Ranana about 9 a.m., and touching at the several pas where natives were desirous of taking the oath of allegiance, reached Wanganui about half past six p.m., when the wounded were sent to the hospital, and the unwounded prisoners handed over to the military authorities.

Late in the evening Mr. White informed me that the next day at 12 o'clock there was to be a large meeting of the Taranaki, Ngatiruanui, and Ngarauru rebel chiefs at Pakaraka, a pa within the recently purchased Waitotara block, and about seventeen miles from Wanganui. The chief Rio, who brought the news, was anxious, knowing that I was expected, to have waited to see me, but he was advised to return to Pakaraka to be in readiness to receive the expected visitors.

It appeared to me so degrading to the Government, and so calculated to lessen its influence with the loyal natives, besides being dangerous to the settlement, to allow such a meeting, not merely of rebels, many of whom had been engaged at Moutoa, but of known murderers, to take place on crown land and in such immediate vicinity of the town of Wanganui, where there were 350 troops in the garrison, and 400 or 500 well-trained militia out on actual service, that I determined to proceed myself to Pakaraka, and warn the rebels off the Queen's territory; and in order to convince them that the Government was in earnest, I requested Major Rookes to accompany me with Captain Cameron's troop of volunteers. Major Rookes with the greatest readiness complied with my request; and though he had only that afternoon dismissed the troop, telling them that their services would not be required for some days, yet the next morning he had the whole troop ready at ten o'clock (Wednesday, the 25th). We rode at a tolerably good pace, and came within sight of the pa at about one o'clock. When within three or four hundred yards of it, I requested Major Rookes to halt the troop and remain there until I returned. I then rode off to the pa, accompanied by my interpreter, Mr. Hamlin, Captain Noake (of the Colonial Defence Force), and Mr. C. Broughton. Instead, however, of encountering the great gathering of rebels we had been led to expect, we only found the friendly chiefs Rio and Piripi, and a few of their people, with a slight sprinkling of Kingites. The meeting, it appeared, had been postponed. I had therefore to content myself with requesting Rio to proceed to Waitotara, where the rebels were, and tell them that they would not be allowed either to hold meetings or to remain on the Waitotara block; and that if they did not obey my order, they should be driven off by force. Rio promised that he would start at once, and deliver every word of my message. We then returned to town.

On Saturday, the 28th, just before leaving Wanganui, Rio sent in word that he had seen the rebels; had told them every word I had said; that they had held a runanga, and had decided upon finally abandoning the Waitotara block, and retiring to the north side of the Waitotara River.

On my way down the coast I held meetings with the natives at several of their settlements; but as you visited them a few days afterwards, it is unnecessary that I should report what took place at these interviews. Suffice it to say that the impression left on my mind was that Kingism was doomed, and that there never was so little prospect of the peace of the West Coast being disturbed.

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