

## No. 3.

## WAIKATO.

REPORT from W. N. SEARANCEKE, Esq., Resident Magistrate, Hamilton.

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Esq.*

IN the year 1854, at Taupo, and in the year 1855, in the Waikato, the first symptoms of divided and separate interests between Europeans and Maoris showed themselves, the causes in the gradual growth of years were many, and calculated to excite all the jealous feelings of a naturally sensitive race. Whether the steps taken at the time were calculated to allay this feeling or not is a matter of opinion, but these feelings did increase until but the one idea prevailed the mind of the whole Maori race, one element only was wanting "united action," and this was impossible at the time from the too vivid recollection of tribal and private jealousies.

The movement was sufficiently strong and united in its action in 1857 to allow of Potatau the principal chief of the Waikato being proclaimed King, at Paetai, on the Waikato River, and subsequently in the same year at Ihumatao on the Manukau.

In 1860 a land question led to the war in Taranaki, this war was one of the results of the movement, and was carried on by Natives from almost all parts of New Zealand. In 1861 peace was made or rather the war ceased in Taranaki, not from exhaustion or a feeling of defeat on the part of the Natives, only to break out afresh in the Waikato as they thought in a more favorable locality, and with better chances of success to themselves.

In July, 1863, Her Majesty's forces commanded by General Cameron crossed the Mangatawhiri Creek, and were met at once in the open country by the Natives commanded by Pene te Wharepu and Te Huirama, the engagement that then took place is known as Te Koheroa fight, in which the Natives were defeated, they then retreating, crossed Te Maramara Creek, and fell back on Meremere a large and well fortified pa on the Waikato River, and defended by about two thousand Maoris, from this pa they retired without fighting on account of being threatened in their rear on the unprotected side of the pa by a body of the troops.

A portion of the Natives, amounting to about six hundred, fell back on Rangiriri, which they fortified with great labour, skill, and judgment on the side on which they expected the troops to advance and attack them. In the attack on Rangiriri which followed, the Natives fought with the utmost bravery, but on the morning following the attack, from their own great losses and the desertions during the night, including the Maori King Matutaera, and William Thompson and a large body of their followers, the remnant amounting to about one hundred and sixty men surrendered to General Cameron.

Her Majesty's forces then advanced up the country to Te Awamutu and Rangiaowhia, in the neighbourhood of which places several engagements took place, terminating in the investing of the Native pa at Orakau in 1864. The defeat and slaughter of the Natives under Rewi on their attempting to escape from Orakau may be said to have terminated the actual fighting in the Waikato, the Natives then retreating towards Taupo.

In May, 1865, I had the honor to be appointed Resident Magistrate of the Middle Waikato District only. At this time Her Majesty's forces still occupied the principal posts in the whole Waikato District. William Te Wheoro the chief of the Ngatinaho tribe and his people resided at Putakauere on the West bank of the Waikato River about three miles from Rangiriri, also a large number of other Natives who having come in during the war and taken the oath of allegiance were located here under the charge of Te Wheoro, who together with the whole of his tribe with few exceptions had both before the commencement of and during the war given the most active assistance to General Cameron and Her Majesty's forces, completely isolating themselves from the other Waikato tribes by their steady adherence to the Europeans. I also found other small bodies of Natives settled at Wahi and Taupiri on the West bank of the Waikato, and a large party under the Rev. Wi Barton settled at Karakariki and Whatawhata on the Waipa River. To a great extent at this time the Natives were much demoralized, poverty-stricken, and dependent on Government rations. Their number at this time I am not prepared to state. At the present time the whole Maori population within the confiscated boundary is (about) 345 men, 265 women, 220 children, total 830. These numbers are grounded on a census taken by myself in the Autumn of 1867; from previous observations I believe the Native population to be now, on the whole, slightly on the increase, and encouraged by the total absence of all excitement and fear and their now settling down on their own lands, as awarded to them, and steadily going to work as formerly. Adventitious aid except under peculiar circumstances has been a source of demoralization to Natives, and this they now feel as a thing of the past. Their physical and moral condition is very much improved, early marriages are encouraged amongst them, and a more healthy moral tone now prevails than I have hitherto known; on the other hand I cannot but note that religious observances have almost ceased without however any proportionate falling off in their principles, crime is unknown, and the consumption of ardent spirits except amongst the Maungatautari Natives almost absolute. I feel happy in being able to bear testimony to the improved industrial feeling and to the general good conduct of the Natives in this district. When disputes arise, as they will, the Natives invariably refer them to either Te Wheoro or myself, and abide cheerfully by our decision.

A general good and friendly feeling exists between the Europeans and Natives, and a mutual neighbourly wish to assist each other prevails.

There is but one idea prevalent amongst the Natives in respect of the late war, that it was undertaken with the view of obtaining possession of their land. I have heard this view expressed by friendly Natives as well as by the Maori King's adherents, this view is explained in their own causes of war in former times, which were two in number, "women and land."

The removal of the troops caused at the time considerable excitement and fear in the minds of the friendly Natives, arising from some threatening language reported to have been made use of by the King's party as to what would be done whenever the troops were removed, both fears and threats alike died out and a very general confidence now exists. At Tokangamutu, the Maori King's settlement, the