

New Zealand six hundred years ago through the trackless sea, they must have known more about navigation than Englishmen at that time, who were then afraid to go out of sight of land; while the Maoris may have been weeks at sea, steering their course by some subtle art and science that some of us at least cannot now understand. Then, why need we trouble our heads about the fencing and food required for a moa-farm? The Lyttelton steamer the other day lost her way in going to Chatham Islands, and had some trouble to find her destination.

I have read recently that the words for counting from one to ten in the Madagascan language and in Maori are nearly identical, and if that is a fact the dialect is likely to have come almost direct to New Zealand, or at least without any long delays among other island tongues. And, if it was not for the habit of thinking above alluded to, we might easily believe that the Madagascan moa was brought here by old-time navigators, who could also have brought roots and fruit and corn for its food, for we are not sure that the climate has been the same since the moa's first arrival. The earth may have taken a slight list to the south since then, and an age of heat, unlike the cold, leaves no deep grooves behind, unless its marks may be in the recent cool and changing forest trees.

If we only knew of oxen by their bones and horns we should not judge them easily farmed; so there possibly need have been no difficulty in taming the moas. The question is, Did the men bring them here, or find them here when they came? In the latter case the herds would have been too tame for hunting, and it would have been only a matter of butchering them when required; and surely a people intelligent enough to build and provision a vessel to bring their families over the sea—no matter from where—would have had sense to see the value of the moas in time to save and foster them, especially in such places as the Canterbury Plains, where the various kinds could have been tended for ages as we tend our sheep.

That there were moa-hunters there need be no doubt, for the arrow-heads alone would almost prove that; but they were probably recent Maoris developed into hunters of peaceful men, and then following up their calling by hunting the moas off the earth. As for not finding human bones with moas, we know how few of ours will be found with those of our sheep, for instance, because the latter are everywhere, with millions of better chances of finding favourable conditions for preservation and ultimate discovery.

At Manapouri Homestead, twelve miles from the lake of that name, and perhaps 100 ft. above it, Mr. Mitchell used to find stone tools and fragments enough to show that the place had once been the site of an old village, and that was almost proof that the lake was up there then. The "Long Valley" would have been the harbour, and the peninsula on which the house is built would have sheltered the village from the north wind. I think the outlet from a deep lake would hardly wear at all when there are no stones to rattle down in floods; but in this case the Mararoa River brought down material from the drift hills to form Manapouri Plain, and then supplied the stones to cut down the outlet from the lake; while Te Anau, having no such officious river, has long remained about the same. The level of this old village would probably make them into one great lake, bounded on the south by the Takitimos, which I heard translated as "great margin," which would have been very appropriate then, but is meaningless now. If the translation is correct, it is evidence that those old villagers lived on the bank of the great lake, and handed down the name from some far-off time when totaras grew on the hills instead of tussock and birch.

On the Bullock Hills, a few miles away, I found what is known as a Maori oven, and near it, on the surface, a patch of moa gizzard-stones; and during my ten years at Te Anau I found—away from the lake—several such scraps of history, which could not have been all coincidences.

On the south of Te Anau, a few feet above high water, patches of gizzard-stones are quite easy to find—after a fern fire—lying on the surface of alluvial soil quite apart from other stones, for, of course, such is the only place in which they could be identified in a stony country like that. They are of any size from that of peas up to small hen-eggs, probably representing different sizes or ages of birds, and they tell the story of how the birds died there, or the hunter emptied out the gizzards he wanted to carry away for food; and it is evident that they were never washed by waves or driven by streams or glaciers, or they would have been scattered. So Te Anau remains about the same level since the moa's time, while Manapouri has gone down 100 ft. at least, for I do not remember finding any moa traces on that lower plain.

There was an old village at Te Anau occupied perhaps as late as 1840, but also for a very long time previously, as shown by the distance of some of the sites away from the slowly receding lake and its driftwood. Yet within a stone's throw of the lake, between the little dunes, a party of us found a basketful of big charred knuckles and broken moa-bones, with the charcoal in the fireplace still on the surface, as if it had been used only a few years before. When I first went up there arrow-heads and pieces of moa-bone were common finds. Spear-heads most people call them; but no native would lash a rudely chipped stone on the end of a spear for penetration—the lashing alone would destroy it for that. He would sooner point the stick, like the Australians; and every boy knows the necessity of a weight on the point of his arrow. The native evidently did lash those heads on something, and I cannot think of anything else but a big arrow for the sake of the weight to strike a powerful blow, which in my experience is most effective in stunning or stopping an animal.

Some one has written that those charred bones were used for "firewood," but that is so easily settled by experiment that it would not be worth mentioning but to show that some one is always willing to tangle the ends of every question. At Te Anau traces of trees are as old as the hills, and probably driftwood has always been abundant since then, so that there was no sense in any one charring old bones up there; and a grass fire cannot, at all events, char the underside of a bone, for it will not always darken the bleaching on its top.

Some one may ask why those fanciful navigators did not take something more useful than the moa. Well, an animal's value in that light greatly depends, first, on its disposition, and