

the Wairau River, about another 700 acres. The "Big Lagoon" and the Main Channel have been reserved as a sanctuary for water-fowl for the last two or three years. (See *New Zealand Gazette* No. 20, 19th March, 1903, p. 796.) To show the extent to which the water-fowl of various kinds resort to this sanctuary, I may say that when I visited a few days ago the "Maori Look-out" (a small eminence near the south-west corner of the "Big Lagoon," 138 ft. above sea-level) I estimated that there were about seventy thousand water-fowl in sight. This vast number was composed chiefly of ducks and black swans. As a contrast to this, I may remark that there were hardly any birds to be seen on the Upper and Chandler's Lagoons, but these lagoons are not protected, and the frequent use of firearms has scared nearly all the wild-fowl away.

The canals are still, for the most part, in a state of good repair, and navigable for small canoes. They have been constructed with great care, and many of them are 10 ft. or 12 ft. wide by 2 ft. or 3 ft. deep. One very large one, joining the Wairau River to the outlet of the Upper Lagoon, is known by the name of "Morgan's Creek," while another has a remarkable course, having been taken along a narrow ridge of land separating the Upper and Chandler's Lagoons, then it skirts another small lagoon and terminates at the point of a long narrow strip of land projecting into the "Big Lagoon."

Besides the canals there are many other evidences of the occupation of the adjacent country by large numbers of Maoris. Taking these evidences in order, beginning with those nearest Blenheim, there are, first, the remains of an old burial-ground, at a point along the railway-line 21 miles 32 chains from Picton. Here are to be found sandhills to the right of the railway-line going south, with numerous remains of human skeletons. Next, at Seventeen Valley (about 23½ miles from Picton along the railway-line), about half a mile below the railway-line, or about half-way between the coach-road and the railway, on the right-hand bank of the stream, there are numerous excavations which are supposed to have been "pit-dwellings" of the ancient Maoris. Perhaps they are only kumara-pits. They are quite numerous, I should say some twenty or more, and they extend along the banks of the stream for a distance of a quarter of a mile. Then, above the railway-line, about a quarter of a mile from it, and on the left-hand bank of the stream, there are the remains of about twenty Maori ovens, scattered over a level stretch of alluvial deposit. Many of the stones show evidence of the action of fire, and heaps of cockle-shells, mussel-shells, and a few oyster-shells are to be seen. In the next large valley that the railway runs up, about the 26th-mile post, there are more evidences of ancient Maori occupation. Also, between Mr. John Greenfield's homestead "Vernon" and the White Bluff, there are the remains of Maori cultivations wherever the land was suitable, and even where not suitable great pains have been taken to render the ground fit for cultivation by collecting the stones, and forming enclosures or small walls to mark off or protect the cultivated land. The remains of these cultivated plots are very numerous, and still plainly to be seen.

I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. S. M. Neville, of Thurston, Blenheim, who first drew my attention to these interesting mementoes of ancient Maori occupation. Most of the pits and ovens are on Mr. Neville's land, and any student of ancient Maori history desirous of further investigating these matters will find Mr. Neville ever ready and anxious to afford all the information in his power, and to point out the localities where the Maori evidences are to be found.