

were lighted the signal-fires to warn their tribesmen to the south of the presence of the enemy. As the shades of night fell over the scene the signal-fire cast its lurid glow over sea and wooded range around. In a few short moments the warning was repeated from the semi-island fort of Omahu, and from thence across the bay in quick succession was answered by the great pas of Patangata, Katikatiaka, Pukearuhe, and Otumatua, from the last of which the war-fire could be seen along the whole line of coast, and away inland to the Waitara River district, and thus, as in Macaulay's "Armada,"—

For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly war-flame spread.

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(On) Cape beyond cape in endless range were seen those twinkling points of fire.

This was the Kawau, the Thermopylae of North Taranaki, or we may go further and term it the key of the whole south-western portion of the North Island, for here Ngatitama bade defiance for some two hundred years to the powerful Ngatimaniapoto and allied tribes to the north. On the hard sandy beach below, called Rangikaiwaka, which stretched from the island northwards, was fought many a pitched battle, and here had been heard times beyond number the thundering chorus of the *ngeri* (war song and dance), the forerunner of the coming fight.

The great warrior chief of the Ngatihaua (Waharoa—William Thompson—known as the "king-maker" during the Maori troubles in the Waikato of 1860–68) took his name from an incident that occurred here. This man's father, the head chief or one of the highest rank in the Ngatihaua, was taken prisoner in one of the innumerable fights that took place on the Poutama Beach close at hand. He was taken to the pa and crucified (head downwards) in the main gateway, or *waharoa*, of the pa, hence the name "Waharoa."

The member of another family of high rank—that of Wahanui—also took his name from a somewhat similar incident. A leading chief of Ngatimaniapoto, called Pahitahanga, fell into the hands of the Ngatitama on the occasion of an unsuccessful attempt to take the pa by surprise. His body was cut up and eaten with great ceremony at the festival of *te ohu*, or the planting of the kumara. His son took his name from this event, and was called Te Ohu.

In the latter days of its history the Kawau rose to a high pitch of notoriety, reflected from the marvellous deeds and adventures of the two brothers Raparapa and Tupoki, the former the idol and leader of his tribe, and the terror of his enemies. No one could equal them in the use of the ancient Maori weapons. Their names have become a proverb in this respect, but the men and the tribe had to bow to the advance of civilisation.

The advent of the musket changed entirely the old order of things. The coming of firearms and the death of their great leader sounded the knell of this impregnable stronghold. The Ngatitama, following the lead of their Ngatitua allies under Te Rauparaha, and under pressure of their better armed and more numerous foes from the north, gradually left the homes of their ancestors—a land very dear and precious in their sight—migrating southward to the vicinity of Wellington City. A miserable remnant of this warlike people only was left when in the very late twenties of the last century this historic pa was taken by a war party of Ngatimaniapoto, and the small garrison led down to the beach below and there slaughtered.

Since that date the position has never been reoccupied, and with its fall began the disastrous raids of Waikato and allied tribes into Taranaki proper, ending rapidly in the sweeping-away of its people, its habitations, and cultivations. The fall of the Kawau was the prelude to the devastation of the country from Mokau to Patea. In the words of a well-known Ngatiawa chief, referring to Taranaki soon after this event, "All was quite deserted; the land, the sea, the streams and lakes, the forest, the rocks were all deserted; the dead, the sick were deserted; and the landmarks were deserted."

Another historic pa—that of Okoke, situated about two miles north of Urenui Township—has been taken and permanently set aside as an historic reserve. This extensive fort, now covered with a luxuriant growth of native bush, was the principal fighting pa of the Ngatimutunga Tribe. It was built originally by the Kerewai Hapu of Ngatimutunga, whose home in latter days was the Mimi Valley, and the Ngatihinetuhi Hapu of the same tribe, as a stronghold to which all could flee in time of danger. Its position was one of great natural strength, and by infinite labour and skill was made complete for defensive purposes under the then existing conditions of warfare, with its great palisaded banks and deep counter-ditches, its covered ways to water and intricate leads and passages for entrance and exit.

Ngatimutunga was the last tribe to occupy the pa, and they were living there in force at the height of their power as a tribe when Te Rauparaha and the Ngatitua migration arrived in 1822 on their way south to Kapiti. In the immediate neighbourhood of the pa, and under its shelter, the Ngatitua and their famous leader rested for a season, with the purpose of growing food and making final preparations for passing through the hostile tribes to the south that lay between them and their goal. It was during this period, 1822, that occurred the great fight of Motunui on the plain immediately seaward of the pa, when the Ngatimutunga and its allies of Ngatiawa, with Ngatitua, met in desperate combat the northern invaders of Waikato and Ngatimaniapoto. This story is told at length in Part 3, vol. 18, of the *Polynesian Journal*. Owing to the migration to the south of the Ngatimutunga, the whole people practically throwing in their lot with Rauparaha, Okoke was finally deserted in 1831, the small remnant of its inhabitants fleeing to Pukerangiora, before the great invading host of Waikato and allied tribes under Te Whero Whero and other leaders, that swept over North and Middle Taranaki in 1871–72.

It was the people from Okoke who seized the brig "Rodney" at Port Nicholson in 1835, and compelled its master to take them to the Chatham Islands, where they occupied the country, and in a short space of time practically exterminated its original inhabitants—the Moriori.

Yet another pa in the neighbourhood of Urenui has been reserved under the Scenery Preservation Act—a pa of singular beauty and charming environment—Pukemiro, on the Onaero River, near its confluence with the Tasman Sea. A beauty spot in truth! This was the head centre and fighting pa of the now practically extinct Ngatikaitangata (the man-eaters) Hapu of the Ngatimutunga. Unfortunately little is known of its history.