

# eColenso

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## Vale Peter Wells

I record Peter's death on 18 February with great sadness.

He was the giant who put the Rev. William Colenso back on the map. His astonishing *The Hungry Heart: Journeys with William Colenso*, best described as a series of creative essays on Colenso, was like nothing we had ever read. He was a leader in the organisation of the first Colenso conference in Napier and of the second in Wellington. He encouraged and supported the work of the Colenso Society and was proud of its achievements—not least the naming of William Colenso Square in Wellington.

He had known about his prostate cancer for some time and had talked and written freely about it.

A fuller biography can be found at [https://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/wells-peter/%7Bsys\\_site%7DReaders/About%20NZ%20Awards](https://www.bookcouncil.org.nz/writer/wells-peter/%7Bsys_site%7DReaders/About%20NZ%20Awards).



# The Tauweru taniwha?

## The Kourarau crocodile?

*All lizards were more or less dreaded by every New Zealander: this is a curious feature, and worthy of deep investigation. It was their only living representation for the Atua (or malignant demon), which, according to their belief, was gnawing their vitals in sickness, and especially in consumption; while, however, stout men and warriors would often fly from a lizard, they would also return and kill it. [1]*

*Superstitious dread was universally shown ... most particularly at all kinds of lizards, living or dead, although harmless—as such ever reminded them of a malignant demon, or Atua. [1]*

*A love-song. Rise up quickly, O thou Moon! make haste to get above me, that I may give vent to my sighing, and utter my laments! Now, indeed, for the first time, do I feel the pangs of love; it is as if a demon, or a lizard, were within me gnawing. [2]*

*Moreover, it should also be briefly noticed, that while they laughed and mocked at earthquakes, at pealing thunder, at vivid lightnings, and at terrific storms, they exhibited great dread at merely unexpectedly seeing a small, common, and harmless lizard; [3]*

Stories of dragons, giant man-eating monsters—in a word, taniwha—fascinate most of us and the specific Maori tales have been widely debated. For a thorough discussion see Simon Best [4: [http://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/document/Volume\\_97\\_1988/Volume\\_97%2C\\_No.\\_3/Here\\_be\\_dragons%2C\\_by\\_S.\\_Best%2C\\_p\\_239-260/p1](http://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/document/Volume_97_1988/Volume_97%2C_No._3/Here_be_dragons%2C_by_S._Best%2C_p_239-260/p1)]

The Wairarapa legend of the taniwha Ngarara-huarau is well documented—most extensively in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* in 1905 by Hoane Paraone Tunui-a-rangi (translated by Percy Smith); by Elsdon Best in his 1922 *Maori Religion and Mythology* where he also relied in part on Tunui-a-rangi's narrative; and most recently in Maxine Hemi's graphic novelette *Ngārara Huarau (Māori)*.

Elsdon Best first heard of this creature in 1893; he was a moko nui, a huge lizard. He came from Marokotia and swam down by sea to the mouth of the Pahaoa river, up that river and up the Wainuioru. For a time he was stopped by the waterfall later called Mauri-oho-o-Ngarara-Huarau,\* but later settled in the Kourarau stream, near a path used by the tangata whenua. When a party was walking from Pahaoa to inland Marumaru, Ngarara-huarau killed them all: nobody escaped. Some time later the inland people started for the coast to collect kai moana and they too were all devoured by the dread taniwha.

When he took to man-eating at Kourarau he did so in a wholesale manner, he swallowed persons whole, garments included; if a man was carrying a pack he swallowed man and pack; were a mother carrying her child both went down together, any tools or weapons carried were also swallowed.

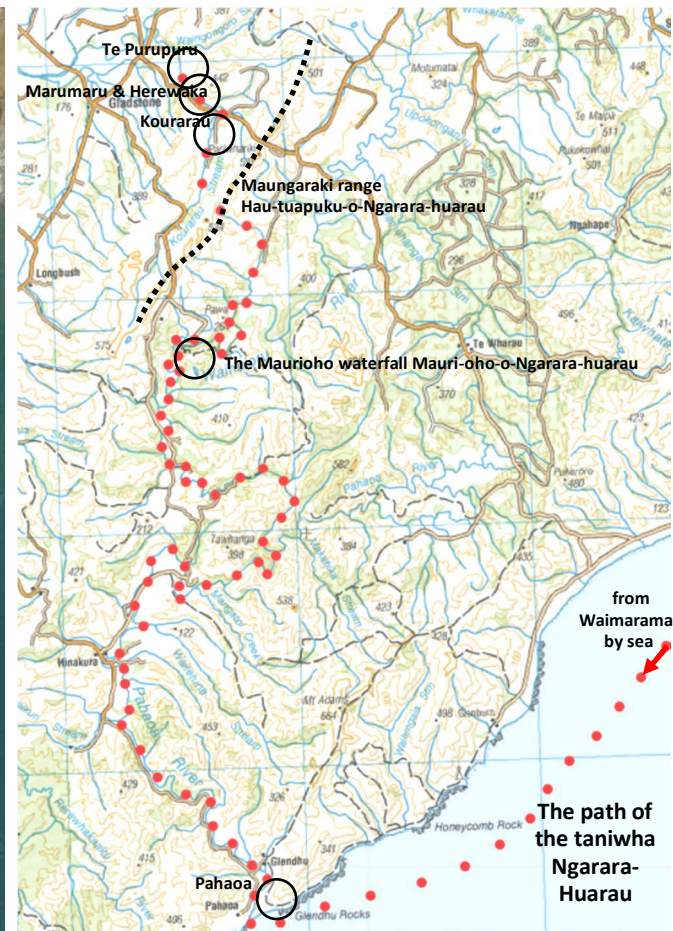
Many travellers perished: none returned so nobody knew why, until, of one party so attacked, “a lone member had lagged behind and heard the tumult of the slaughter and saw the monster destroying his friends”. He fled home and reported the death of his companions—

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\* oho mauri: (verb) to jump into action, start suddenly, startle, astonish, astound, shock.



South of Waimarama on the east coast, showing the Marakotia hills, Huarau rocks and the "fissure" where Ngarara-huarau, the great taniwha lived. (Google maps).







The falls of Mauri-pho-o-Ngarara-Huarau which took the taniwha by surprise and delayed him. After ascending the falls he rested in the pools above

“Nought remains, save the flowing waters, I alone survive.”

The people planned to overcome Ngarara-huarau. Because he was so powerful their leader Tupurupuru decided to crush him by felling trees on him. They scarfed the trees near the path, until one more blow of the stone adze would have made them fall. When everything was ready a dog was bewitched and made to bark outside the monster’s lair to entice him out.

Up rose the taniwha of evil repute and pursued the dog, and the dog fled down the path. In furious pursuit came the monster, who caused the very ground to tremble, and who, by colliding with the heavily scarfed trees caused them to fall, and in their fall they crushed and destroyed the taniwha. So perished Ngarara-huarau.

When the body of the dread scourge was cut up, layers of men, women and children were found in the stomach, these bodies were buried while that of Ngarara-huarau was handed over as food for Mahuika (personified form of fire). The head of the monster became petrified and is still seen in the form of a rock.

The place where “Ngarara-huarau was slain was Tupurupuru; Marumaru and Herewaka are toward the south, Marumaru is between Tupurupuru and Kourarau, that stream flows into Tauweru, Tauweru flows into Ruamahanga, while the latter flows into Wairarapa lake.

### Colenso’s account

William Colenso, who was careful to record respectfully the legends he heard everywhere he went, wrote of the fable of the shark and the lizard: “In days of yore the large lizard and the shark lived together in the sea, for they were brothers, both being of the children of Punga. The lizard was the elder and the shark the younger. After some time they fell out, and as the quarrel was great and protracted, the lizard, vexed at the conduct of his younger brother, determined to leave off dwelling in the sea, and to reside on the dry land, so he left the water”.

On 19 March 1846 Colenso had made good time on his walk up the Wairarapa from Huaangarua (Martinborough) and he arrived at Hurunuiorangi rather early. He was told of the bones of the monster and determined to see them for himself.

Hearing the Natives talk of the bones of the immense head of a Serpent, which was killed by one of their ancestors, and which lay bleaching under a hill, apparently about 2 miles off—and finding, on enquiry, that some of my own Lads had seen it, I determined to visit the spot (although my feet were now well-blistered), so, setting out, with Barnabas, the Chief of the village as guide, we, with all haste, made for the place. —Road there was none, and I found to my cost the distance to be 4 long miles, which we endeavoured to accomplish through the bush, in an hour and a half, through extra exertion. On reaching the spot, ‘Where,’ said I, ‘is the head?’ ‘Here,’ replied my guide, (pointing to a mass of stone of several tons weight, which, from the appearance of a precipitous cliff close by had, doubtless, fallen from it).

He wrote about this a second time in 1880, 37 years later,

I found the said ‘bones’ to be a heap or knob of yellowish, friable, glittering, quartz-like stone (calcite), which cropped out from the hill-side and lay in large lumps. I remember well how angry one old Māori became, who was of the party with me, on my asserting that the pile before us was not bone at all but stone. Very likely those natives had never seen any other stone like it (up to that time I had not). It bore, at first sight, a resemblance to the yellow decaying bones of a whale. I think the spot was called Tupurupuru, and that it is not very far from the head waters of the river Tauweru.

Four miles from Hurunuiorangi the Tauweru flows through the

Wairarapa flatlands (not a “precipitous cliff” and barely a hill to be found), but its tributary, the Kourarau, descends through the steep banks of the Maungaraki foothills through an area now marked Te Purupuru on the topo map. From the accounts given to Elsdon Best the mythical taniwha was killed in the hills—which Colenso had accessed via the Tauweru.

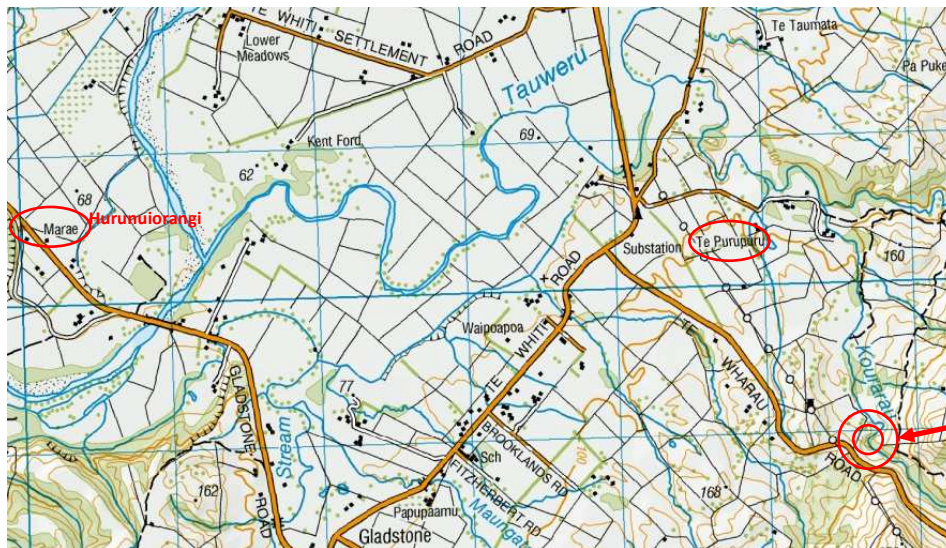
### Myth or crocodile?

But was it just a myth? was it just *St George and the Dragon* in another culture? In 1978 Simon Best advanced the very plausible notion that large male salt water crocodiles, perhaps from the Solomon islands, may have reached New Zealand in the past and may have survived here for some time as lone vagrants in the waterways.

The climate may have favoured such long ocean travel. In the northern hemisphere the world’s climate was warm for much of the period from AD800 to 1300 (the “medieval warm period”), and much colder from about AD1300 to 1900 (the “little ice age”).

In New Zealand the warm period lasted longer with the onset of the cooler climate later, in about 1450—so New Zealand was warm for some time after the first Māori arrived here in 1250 or so, perhaps warm enough to have sustained an occasional large salt water crocodile whose life and times would then become the stuff of legend.

Let’s consider Ngarara-huarau was a big old man crocodile. Ousted by younger Solomon islands males, he swam south to Te Ika a Maui, lived in a crevice above the Huarau reef, rich in seals, crayfish and other marine life, but later (pestered by sharks) he made his way down the coast and up the inland river systems, feeding on ducks, eels and koura as he went. He was surprised by—and for a time stopped below—the Maurioho waterfall, but then continued up streams and over the Maungaraki range till he found the koura-rich



Native once miserably perished through the wind blowing the water & gravel about him.”

### And now...

The Maurioho waterfall is accessible through private land belonging to Sam and Gwenda Saunders. It was an imposing spot even in late summer when the stream was a mere trickle.

The “bones” lie in the Kourarau on land belonging to Jamie Clinton-Baker. The Kourarau flows through limestone country, its bed littered with fossil coral and shells and many limestone boulders. There were a number of white rocks that met the criteria (steep banks, big calcite rock with “tail” of smaller rocks, about 4m from Hurunuioiangi), but one, with a smooth bony surface and wavy outline, with a “spine” of smaller rocks tailing upstream, had to be the one—though I couldn't see where Colenso had taken samples.

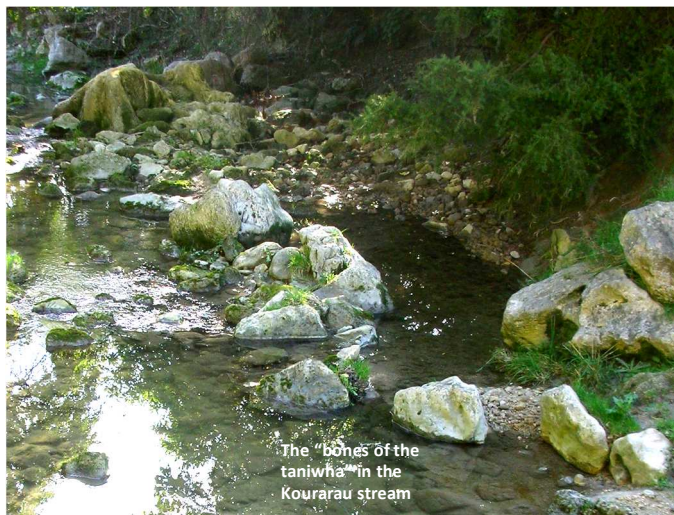
Aotearoa is now facing a new warm period—manmade this time.

I wonder if we should expect more taniwha some time soon.

Kourarau. Luckily for him Māori paths also followed the rivers and streams and he supplemented his diet with the occasional unfortunate traveller. Men always exaggerate the bad behaviour of their enemy (the first casualty of war is truth) to the point that it becomes intolerable—so they killed him, remembering the site by the unusual white stone nearby and by mythologising the heroic feats of his life and death.

Or, on the other hand, he was only ever a figment of poetic Māori imagination, the equivalent of “Here be dragons”, an attempt to explain frequent loss of life in a wild and dangerous place. The inland route between Kourarau and Pahaoa was a long, hazardous one: Colenso wrote of the Pahaoa river, “Our journey hither this day was all the way in the bed of the river, which we had to wade across & recross continually, no less than 65 times in a few hours! (he used to count river crossings by knotting a bit of string at his waist).... One place is a complete gorge through the chain of hills, and, the Natives say, when the West wind blows, is impassable; here a poor





The "bones of the  
taniwha" in the  
Kourarau stream



## A lounge of lizards, a legion of demons

Colenso first wrote of giant lizards in Maori mythology in 1843 [5], but in his retirement returned to the subject in some detail. In 1878 he wrote [6],

To return from our earliest intercourse with the Maori, two or three peculiar and strange traits and circumstances highly characteristic of him have been known. I allude to those respecting his belief in, and fear of, animals of the Saurian or Lizard kind. Settlers and colonists of to-day can form no correct idea of how a bold and daring New Zealand warrior, who feared not to meet his fellow foe in a stern hand-to-hand deadly fight, would blanch and run away in horror from a little harmless lizard! [p83] yet this I have often seen. Why was this? was it that he really feared that little harmless animal? or was it that that tiny creature was to him the form and representation of a great, fearful, mischievous, and mysterious power, the deadly foe of man, ever hated and dreaded by all New Zealanders, and called an *Atua*, or demon? of which it was said—aye, and firmly believed—that it often gnawed the internal part of diseased folks, and so surely caused their death; or was it through their belief in those cherished legends of the olden time, that had been strictly handed down through many generations from father to son, containing the history of some dreadful monsters of the Saurian order, and which the prowess of their ancestors, aided by the charms and spells of their priests (*mark this*), had enabled them to vanquish and to overcome? Animals of such a huge and monstrous size as would comparatively leave the Megatherium and Mammoth far behind in the place of kittens!

And here I cannot help calling your particular attention to a very curious feature, which will prominently appear in the relations I shall have to give you—viz., that while the utmost exact-





itude is preserved in those strange stories—of time, and place, and persons, and of a certain amount of strong natural reality, yet not a single vestige of any osteological remains of any animal of the Saurian kind has ever yet been discovered! While, on the other hand, the fossil remains of many large and extinct *Struthious* birds of several genera and species, and commonly known in the lump by the name of *Moa*, are to be met with in great abundance; and yet, of these realities, there are neither credible history, nor curious legendary tale, nor myth nor fable, that I have ever been able to lay hold of.

Captain Cook heard something of those large *Saurians* on his third voyage while at anchor in the Straits which bear his name; which, being but brief, I will give in his own words:—“We had another piece of intelligence from this chief, that there are lizards there of an enormous size. He described them as being eight feet in length, and as big round as a man’s body. He said they sometimes seize and devour men; that they burrow in the ground; and that they are killed by making fires at the mouth of the holes. We could not be mistaken as to the animal, for, with his own hand, he drew a very good representation of a lizard on a piece of paper, in order to show what he meant.” And this statement was further confirmed by Mr. Anderson, the surgeon to the ship, as appears from a *note* appended to that voyage, viz.:—“In a separate memorandum book, Mr. Anderson mentions the monstrous animal of the lizard kind, described by the two young New Zealanders they had on board, after they had left the island.” [84]<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Nicholas, who accompanied Mr. Marsden on his first visit to New Zealand in 1814, says:—“While in the forests at the Bay of Islands, observing a hole at the foot of one of the trees, which evidently appeared to have been burrowed by some

quadruped, we inquired of Kena what animal he supposed it was; and from his description of it, we had reason to believe that it must be the Guana. Wishing to know how far our surmise was correct, we desired our friend to thrust a stick into the hole, and endeavour to worry the animal out of it; but this he tried with no effect, for either it was not in the hole at the time, or, if there, not to be dislodged by such means. Kena, however, was rather well pleased than otherwise at not meeting with this animal; for his dread of it was so great, that he shrunk back with terror at the time he thought it would come out, nor did he examine the hole but with very great reluctance. This we thought very strange, for the Guana (the animal we took it for) is perfectly harmless. ... The chief, Ruatara, however, informed us that a most destructive animal was found in the interior of the country, which made great havoc among the children, carrying them off and devouring them, whenever they came its way. The description he gave of it corresponded exactly with that of the alligator. ... The chief had never seen the animal himself, but received his accounts from others; and hence it appears to me very probable that his credulity might have been imposed upon.”<sup>2</sup>

Captain Cruise, of the 84th Regiment, who came to New Zealand in H.M.S. ‘Dromedary’ five years after Mr. Nicholas, and who resided in this country ten months, gives in a few words an interesting notice of the abject fear exhibited by the Maori at the mere sight of a small lizard! which, as it is (or was) so truthful—as I have too often myself witnessed—I also quote :—“A man who has arrived at a certain stage of an incurable illness, is under the influence of the *Atua*, who has taken possession of him, and who, in the shape of a lizard, is devouring his intes-

1. WC: 3rd Voyage, Vol. I., pp. 142, 153.

2. WC: Narrative, Vol. II., pp. 124, 126.

tines; after which no human assistance or comfort can be given to the sufferer, and he is carried out of the village and left to die. ... This curious hypothesis was accidentally discovered by one of the gentlemen, who, having found a lizard, carried it to a native woman to ask the name of it. She shrunk from him in a state of terror that exceeded description, and conjured him not to approach her, as it was in the shape of the animal he held in his hand that the *Atua* was wont to take possession of the dying, and to devour their bowels.”<sup>3</sup>

In various parts of this island, but all to the north of Napier, I have had shown me when travelling (1834–1844), many spots where it was said monsters of the Saurian Order had formerly dwelt. [85]

Thirty-five years ago, when journeying along the East Coast, between Cape Kidnappers and Castle Point, on reaching the top of the high hill or range situated between Waimarama and Te Apiti, named Marokotia, my attention was called to a remarkable rift or chasm at the head of the glen just below me, on the east or sea side of the old Maori track or pathway. This, I was told by the old chiefs of the coast who were with me, was in ancient times the dwelling of a monster Saurian, named Hinehuarau; that it burst away from this place, tearing and rending all before it, and so went on south until it reached Wairarapa, where it was subsequently killed by a chief of note of ancient days, named Tara, whose name he gave to the lake near Te Aute, “Te Roto-a-tara.”

Some time after I was again in the Wairarapa Valley, and hearing so much of the “bones,” or, as some said, “the head,” of this monster being yet to be seen in the place where it was slain, away among the hills, I purposely walked thither from a village called Hurunuiorangi to see them. It was rather a long and

rough walk to the place among the hills on the other side of the Ruamahanga river. Arriving there, I found the said “bones” to be a heap or knob of yellowish, friable, glittering, quartz-like stone (calcite), which cropped out from the hill-side and lay in large lumps. I remember well how angry one old Maori became, who was of the party with me, on my asserting that the pile before us was not bone at all but stone. Very likely those natives had never seen any other stone like it (up to that time I had not). It bore, at first sight, a resemblance to the yellow decaying bones of a whale. I think the spot was called Tupurupuru, and that it is not very far from the head waters of the river Taueru.

Such places, however—caves, rifts, chasms, and strange-looking stones—are by no means unfrequently met with in travelling in New Zealand, especially when journeying (as I was obliged to do) along the old foot-paths, which mostly led over ridges of hills; and there are plenty of such stories concerning them, each spot having its own peculiar myth or legend, which was once most certainly believed.

I have also more than once seen another curious spot in this neighbourhood (Hawke Bay), which deserves recording, the more so, perhaps, from the fact of its being no longer to be seen as I saw it. It was on the low undulating grassy banks of the river Waitio. There, at that time, was a huge earthwork representation of a *ngarara*, or *ika*, i.e., a lizard, or crocodile, which, several generations back, had been cut and dug and formed in the ground by a chief of that time named Rangitauira, who, in doing so, had also dexterously availed himself of the natural formation of the low alluvial undulations in the earth. It had the rude appearance of a huge Saurian extended, with its four legs

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3. WC: Journal, pp. 283, 320.



and claws and tail, but crooked, [86] not straight, as if to represent it wriggling or living, and not dead. It was many yards in length, and of corresponding width and thickness, and by no means badly executed. On two occasions, in particular, in travelling that way, as we generally rested there on the banks of the stream, the old Maori chiefs with me would diligently use their tomahawks and wooden spades in clearing away the coarse grass and low bushes growing on it in its more salient parts, so as to keep its outline tolerably clear, reminding me of what has been said of the periodical scouring in the Vale of the White Horse. The natural vegetation of the place was well suited for the purpose of preserving it, being mostly composed of our (Hawke Bay) common carpet or mat grass (*Microlana stipoides*) and a low-growing *Muhlenbeckia* (*M. axillaris*),<sup>4</sup> but in those days no foot of man trod on it, and of beasts there were none!

This curious earth-work was called Te Ika-a-Rangitaurira, that is, that that Saurian outline was made or formed by a chief whose name was Rangitaurira. He was an ancestor of the chief Karaitiana (M.H.R.), and of several other chiefs and sub-tribes now living here in Hawke Bay; he lived nineteen generations back; one of his residences was a large *pa* called Te Mingi, on the Tutaekuri river. He formed this design, or earth-work (which originally consisted of *three* Saurian outlines) in remembrance of his having returned from that spot with his fighting party. They had left their own *pa* to attack another on the east side of the Tukituki river, but being here overtaken by daylight abandoned their design. First, however, forming and leaving there those three monsters, to indicate to the people of the *pa* they had set out to attack, how they had intended to serve (*i.e.* devour) them. This chief subsequently met with his death in returning from the Patea country in the interior, through being

overtaken by a violent snow-storm, and taking refuge in a cave called Te Reporoa (on the *lower* passes of the Ruahine mountain range) where he and those with him miserably perished in the snow! His younger brother, who persevered and kept on his journey, escaped. Consequently for many years this chief's huge earthwork was attended to and kept clear of coarse weeds by his descendants in commemoration of him.

I now proceed to give you some of those old legendary tales, for which I have been preparing the way, premising that these are all fair translations from the original Maori as I received them, and without any addition. Like most translations, however, they lose much of their striking original character and beauty in attempting to clothe them in a foreign dress. [87]

## § 2.—Tales.

### THE STORY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF MONSTERS.

#### 1. *The Slaying of Hotupuku.*

Here is the tale of the valiant deeds of certain men of old, the ancestors of the chiefs of Rotorua. Their names were Purahokura, Reretai, Rongohaua, Rongohape, and Pitaka; they were all the children of one father, whose name was Tamaihutoroa. As they grew up to manhood they heard of several persons who had been killed in journeying over the roads leading by Tauhunui and Tuporo, and Tikitapu,—all places of that district.

People of Rotorua who had travelled to Taupo, or who went into the hill country to meet their relations, were never again heard of; while the folks of the villages who were expecting

4. WC: It was here that I discovered that pretty little and very scarce plant, *Stackhousia minima*.

them were thinking all manner of things about their long absence, concluding that they were still at their respective places of abode; but, as it afterwards turned out, they were all dead in the wilderness!

At last a party left Taupo on a visit to Rotorua, to travel thither by those same roads where those former travelling parties had been consumed. Their friends at Taupo thought that they had, arrived at Rotorua, and were prolonging their stay there; but no, they, too, were all dead, lying in heaps in that very place in the wilderness!

Afterwards another travelling party started from Rotorua to Taupo; this party went by the lakes Tarawera and Rotomahana, and they all arrived safe at Taupo. On their arrival there many questions were asked on both sides respecting the people of Taupo who had gone to Rotorua, but nothing whatever could be learned of them. On hearing this the people of Taupo earnestly enquired of the newly-arrived party from Rotorua, by what road they came? They replied, "We came by the open plain of Kaingaroa, by the road to Tauhunu." Then it was that the people of Taupo and the party from Rotorua put their heads together, and talked, and deeply considered, and said, "Surely those missing travellers must have fallen in with a marauding party of the enemy, for we all well know they have no kinsfolk in those parts." Upon this the Taupo people determined on revenge, and so they proceeded to get together an army for that purpose, visiting the several villages of Taupo to arouse the people. All being ready, they commenced their march. They travelled all day, and slept at night by the road-side; and the next morning, at daylight, they crossed the river Waikato. Then they travelled on over the open plain of Kaingaroa until they came to a place called Kapenga, where dwelt a noxious monster, whose name

was Hotupuku. When that monster smelt the odour of men, which had been wafted towards him from the army by the wind, it came out of its cave. At this time the band of men were travelling onwards in the [88] direction of that cave, but were unseen by that monster; while that monster was also coming on towards them unseen by the party. Suddenly, however, the men looked up, and, lo! the monster was close upon them; on which, they immediately retreated in confusion. In appearance, it was like a moving hill of earth! Then the fear-awakening cry was heard, "Who is straggling behind? Look out, there! A monster, a monster, is coming upon you!" Then the whole army fled in all directions in dire dismay and confusion at seeing the dreadful spines and spear-like crest of the creature, all moving and brandishing in anger, resembling the gathering together of the spines, and spears, and spiny crests, and ridges of the dreadful marine monsters of the ocean. In the utter rout of the army, they fell foul of each other through fear, but, owing to their number, some escaped alive, though some were wounded and died. Then, alas! it was surely known that it was this evil monster which had completely destroyed all the people who had formerly travelled by this way.

The news of this was soon carried to all parts of the Rotorua district, and the brave warriors of the several tribes heard of it. They soon assembled together, 170 all told, took up their arms, and marched even until they came to Kapenga in the plain, and there they pitched their camp. Immediately they set to work, some to pull the leaves of the cabbage-tree (*Cordyline australis*), others to twist them into ropes; then it was that all the various arts of rope-making were seen and developed!—the round rope, the flat rope, the double-twisted rope, the three-strand rope, and the four-sided rope;<sup>5</sup> at last the rope-making was ended.

Then the several chiefs arose to make orations and speeches, encouraging each other to be brave, to go carefully to work, to be on the alert, and to be circumspect, and so to perform all the duties of the warrior. All this they did according to the old and established custom when going to fight the enemy.

One in particular of those chiefs said—Listen to me, let us go gently to work; let us not go too near to the monster, but stay at a distance from it, and when we perceive the wind blowing towards us over it, then we will get up closer, for if the wind should blow from us to the monster, and it smells us, it will suddenly rush out of its cave, and our work and schemes will be all upset.” To this advice the chiefs all assented, and then the men were all properly arranged for each and every side of the big rope snare they had contrived and made, so that they might all be ready to pull and haul away on the ropes when the proper time should come. [89]

Then they told off a certain number to go to the entrance of the cave where the monster dwelt, while others were well armed with hard-wood digging spades<sup>6</sup> and clubs, with long spears, and rib-bones of whales, and with short wooden cleavers or halberts. Last of all, they carefully placed and laid their ropes and nooses, so that the monster should be completely taken and snared in them; and then, when all was ready, the men who had been appointed to go up to the mouth of the cave to entice and provoke the creature to come forth, went forwards; but, lo! before they had got near to the cave, the monster had already smelt the odour of men.

Then it arose within its cave. And the men who had gone forth to provoke it heard the rumbling of its awful tread within the cave, resembling the grating noise of thunder. Notwithstanding, they courageously enticed it forwards by exposing themselves

to danger and running towards it, that it might come well away from its cave; and when the monster saw the food for its maw by which it lived, it came forth from its den ramping with joy.

Now this monster had come fearlessly on with open mouth, and with its tongue darting forth after those men; but in the meanwhile they had themselves entered into the snares of ropes, and had passed on and through them, and were now got beyond the set snares—the ropes, and nooses, and snares, all lying in their proper positions on the level ground.

At this time those men were all standing around below when the huge head of the beast appeared on the top of the little hill, and the other men were also ascending that hill and closing in gradually all around; the monster lowered his head awhile and then came on, and then the men, the little party of provokers, moved further away on to the top of another hillock, and the monster following them entered the snares! At this the men on that little hill stood still, then the monster moved on further and further towards them, climbing up that ascent also, so that when its head appeared on the top of that second hillock its fore legs were also within the set loops of the big snare.

Then it was that the simultaneous cry arose from the party who were standing on the top of the little hill watching intently, “Good! capital! it has entered! it is enclosed! pull! haul away!” And that other party, who were all holding on to the several

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5. WC: This was still the custom in late years; their strongest common ropes were made from the leaves of the cabbage-tree, after steeping them in water, and a strong and very peculiar kind of 4-sided rope was made by them of it. I have had such made for me, but I almost fear the art is lost. Flax (or *Phormium*) leaves would not be suitable.

6. WC: This implement (called a ko) might be just as well termed a lance, or pick; it was narrow, pointed, and 6–7 feet long, and used for digging fern-root, &c., and sometimes, as here, as an offensive weapon.



ropes, anxiously waiting for the word of command, hearing this, pulled away heartily. And, lo! it came to pass exactly as they all had planned and wished for—the monster was caught fast in the very middle of its belly. [90]

Now it began to lash about furiously with its tail, feeling more and more the pain arising from the severe constriction of its stomach by the ropes.

Then the bearers of arms leaped forth. A wonderful sight! The monster's tail was vigorously assaulted by them; they stabbed it over and over with their hardwood digging picks and their long spears, and pounded it with their clubs, so that even its head felt the great amount of pain inflicted on its tail, together with that arising from the severe constriction of the ropes on its softer parts. Now the monster began to rear and to knock about dreadfully with its head; on seeing this, the enticing band of provokers, who had still kept their position in front, again began to entice it to make straight forward after them, by going up close to it and then running away from it, when, on its attempting to stretch out after them, they suddenly faced about in a twinkling, and began to play away upon the monster's head with very good effect. Oh! it was truly wonderful to behold!

By this time, too, the party of rope-pullers had succeeded in making fast all their ropes to the several posts they had fixed in the earth all round about for that purpose; this done, they also seized their weapons and rushed forward to assist their comrades in beating the monster's head—this being now the part of it which reared and knocked about the most violently. Now, the assault on its head was carried on alternately by those men, combined with the others who began it, and who for that purpose divided themselves into two parties, when one party rushed forward and delivered their blows, and the hideous head

was turned towards them, and they fell back a bit, the other band came on on the other side and delivered their battery, either party always beating in the same place. After a while the monster became less vigorous, although it still raged, for its whole body was fast becoming one vast mass of bruises through the incessant and hearty beating it was receiving.

Still the fight was prolonged; prodigies of strength and valour, ability, and nimbleness were shown that day by that valiant band of 170, whose repeated blows were rained upon the monster. At last the monster yielded quietly, and there it lay extended at full length on the ground, stretched out like an immense white larva<sup>7</sup> of the rotten white pine wood, quite dead.

By this time it was quite dark; indeed, night. So they left it until the morning. When the sun appeared they all arose to cut up this big fish.<sup>8</sup> There it lay, dead! Looking at it as it lay extended, it resembled a very [91] large whale,<sup>9</sup> but its general form or appearance was that of the great lizard,<sup>10</sup> with rigid spiny crest, while the head, the legs, feet, and claws, the tail, the scales, the skin, and the general spiny ridges, all these resembled those of the more common lizards (*tuatara*). Its size was that of the sperm whale (*paraoa*).

Then this man-devouring monster was closely looked at and examined for the first time—the wretch, the monster, that had destroyed so many persons, so many bands of armed men and

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7. WC: The word is huhu. I suppose this large grub has been selected for a comparison owing to its dying helplessly extended, and its plump, fat appearance.

8. WC: I have translated this word (ika), wherever it occurs in the story, by "fish," this being one of its principal meanings; but it would carry a very different one to a New Zealander. Here it would be just synonymous with whale, or large marine animal.

9. WC: Nui tohora.

10. WC: Tuatete, the angry, frightful lizard, now extinct.

travelling parties! Long, indeed, was the gazing; great was the astonishment expressed. At last, one of the many chiefs said, “Let us throw off our clothing, and all hands turn to cut up this fish, that we may also see its stomach, which has swallowed so many of the children of men.”<sup>11</sup>

Then they began to cut it open, using obsidian and pitch-stone knives, and saws for cutting up flesh made of sharks’ teeth, and the shells of sea and of fresh-water mussels (*Unio*). On the outside, beneath its skin, were enormous layers of belly fat (suet), thick and in many folds. Cutting still deeper into its great stomach or maw, there was an amazing sight. Lying in heaps were the whole bodies of men, of women, and of children! Some other bodies were severed in the middle, while some had their heads off, and some their arms, and some their legs; no doubt occasioned through the working of the monster’s jaws and the forcible muscular action of its enormous throat in swallowing, when the strong blasts of its breath were emitted from its capacious and cavernous belly.

And with them were also swallowed all that appertained to them—their greenstone war-clubs, their short-knobbed clubs of hardwood, their weapons of whales’ ribs both long and short, their travelling staves of rank, their halbert-shaped weapons, their staffs and spears—there they all were within the bowels of the monster, as if the place was a regular stored armoury of war. Here, also, were found their various ornaments of greenstone for both neck and ears, and sharks’ teeth, too, in abundance (*mako*). Besides all those there were a great variety of garments found in its maw: fine bordered flax-mats; thick impervious war-mats, some with ornamented borders; chiefs’ woven garments made of dogs’ tails, of albatross feathers, of *kiwi* feathers, of red (parrot) feathers, and of seals’ skin, and of

white dogs’ skin; also, white, black, and chequered mats made of woven flax, and garments of undressed flax (*Phormium*), and the long-leaved *kahakaha* (*Astelia*, species), and of many other kinds. [92]

All the dead bodies, and parts of bodies, the conquerors scooped out and threw into a heap, and buried in a pit which they dug there. And that work over they proceeded to cut up the fish into pieces; and when they had examined its fat and suet, they expressed its oil by clarifying it with heat, which was eaten by the tribe; and so they devoured and consumed in their own stomachs their implacable foe. This done, they all returned to Rotorua and dwelt there.

## 2. *The Killing of Pekehaua.*

After the destruction of the monster Hotupuku, the fame of that exploit was heard by all the many tribes of the district of Rotorua. Then a messenger was sent to those heroes by Hororita, or by some other chief, to inform them that another man-eating monster dwelt at a place called Te Awahou, and that the existence of this monster was known, just as in the former case of the one that dwelt in the plain at Kaingaroa. The travelling companies of the districts of Waikato and of Patetere were never heard of; and so the travelling companies of the Rotorua district, which left for Waikato, were also somehow lost, being never again heard of. When the people of Rotorua heard this news, those same 170 heroes arose, from out of many warriors, and set forth for Te Awahou. Arriving there, they sought for information, and gained all they could. Then they asked, “Where does this monster dwell?” The people of the place replied, “It dwells in the water, or it dwells on the dry land, who

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11. WC: Uri-o-Tiki: literally, descendants of Tiki; Tiki being, in their mythology, the creator or progenitor of man.

should certainly know; according to our supposition, no doubt it is much like that one which was killed.”

Hearing this, they went to the woods, and brought thence a large quantity of supplejacks (*Rhipogonum scandens*), with which to make watertraps of basket-work. Those they interlaced, and bound firmly together with a strong trailing plant (*Muhlenbeckia complexa*), so that when they were finished the traps consisted of two or even three layers of canes or supplejacks. Then they twisted ropes wherewith to set and fix the water-traps, in order to snare the monster, and these were all done. Then they made similar plans and arrangements for themselves, as on the former occasion when the first one was killed. All being ready, the band of heroes set out, reciting their forms of spell, or charms, as they went along; those were of various kinds and potencies, but all having one tendency, to enable them to overcome the monster. Onwards they went, and after travelling some distance, they neared the place, or water-hole, where it was said the monster lived; the name of that deep pool is Te Warouri (*i.e.*, the Black Chasm). They travelled on until they gained the high edge of the river’s side, where they again recited their charms and spells, which done, the 170 proceeded to encamp on that very spot. [93]

Then they diligently sought out among themselves a fearless and courageous man, when a chief named Pikata presented himself and was selected. He seized the water-trap, which was decorated on the top and sides and below with bunches of pigeons’ feathers; the ropes, also, were all fastened around the trap, to which stones were also made fast all round it, to make it heavy and to act as an anchor and to keep it steady; and, having seized it, he plunged into the water with his companions, when they boldly dived down into the spring which gushed up with a

roaring noise from beneath the earth. While these were diving below the others above were diligently employed in performing their several works, viz., of reciting powerful charms and spells,<sup>12</sup> of which they uttered all they knew of various kinds and powers, for the purpose of overcoming the monster.

Now it came to pass that, when the spines and spear-like crest of the monster had become soft and flaccid, through the power of those spells and charms, for they had been all erect and alive in full expectation of a rare cannibal feast, Pitaka and his chosen companions descended to the very bottom of the chasm; there they found the monster dwelling in its own nice home; then the brave Pitaka went forwards, quite up to it, coaxing and enticing, and bound the rope firmly around the monster; which having done, lo! in a twinkling, he (Pitaka) had clean escaped behind it! Then his companions pulled the rope, and those at the top knew the sign, and hauled away, and drew up to the top their companions, together with the monster, so that they all came up at one time. Nevertheless, those above had also recited all manner of charms for the purposes of raising, lifting, and upbearing of heavy weights, otherwise they could not have hauled them all up, owing to their very great weight.

For a while, however, they were all below; then they came

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12. WC: Upwards of ten kinds of spells are here, and in other parts of these stories, particularly mentioned by name; but as we have nothing synonymous in English, their names cannot be well translated, and it would take as many pages of MS. to explain them. Among them were spells causing weariness to the foe, spells for the spearing of taniwhas (monsters), spells for the warding off attack, and for the protection of the men from the enemy, spells for causing bravery, for returning like-for-like in attack, for uplifting feet from ground, for making powerless, etc., etc., all more or less curious, but mostly very simple in terms. Of spells and charms, exorcisms and incantations—for good or for ill-luck, for blessing and cursing—the ancient New Zealander possessed hundreds, ingeniously contrived for almost every purpose; few, however, if any, of them could be termed prayers. Such form a bulky history of themselves.



upwards by degrees, and at last they floated all together on the surface. Ere long they had dragged the monster on shore on to the dry land, where it lay extended; then they hastened to hit and beat with their clubs the jaws of this immense fish. Now this monster had the nearer resemblance to a fish, because it had its habitation in the water. [94]

So then went forth the loud pealing call to all the towns and villages of the Rotorua district. And the tribes assembled on the spot to look at and examine their implacable foe. There it lay dragged on to the dry land on the river's side, in appearance very much like a big, common whale. Yet it was not exactly like a full-grown old whale; it was more, in bulk, as the calf of a big whale as it there lay.

They then commenced cutting-up that fish as food for themselves; on laying its huge belly wide open there, everything was seen at one glance, all in confusion, as if it were the centre of a dense forest.<sup>13</sup> For, going downwards into its vast stomach, there lay the dead, just as if it were an old bone-cave with piles of skeletons and bones—bones of those it had swallowed in former days. Yes, swallowed down with all their garments about them, women and children and men! There was to be seen the enormous heap of clothing of all kinds;<sup>14</sup> chiefs' mats of dogs' tails and of dogs' skins—white, black, and chequered—with the beautiful woven flax-mats adorned with ornamental borders, and garments of all kinds. There were also arms and implements of all kinds clubs, spears, staves, thin hardwood chopping knives, white whalebone clubs, carved staffs of rank, and many others, including even darts and barbed spears, which the monster had carried off with its food. There these arms and implements all were, as if the place were a store-house of weapons or an armoury!

Then they proceeded to roast and to broil, and to set aside of its flesh and fat in large preserving calabashes, for food and for oil; and so they devoured their deadly enemy all within their own stomachs; but all the dead they buried in a pit.

Then every one of those valiant warriors returned to their own homes. The name of that village, where they were for a while encamped, was Mangungu (*i.e.*, broken bones).

So much for thy victorious work! O thou all-devouring throat of man, that thou shouldest even seek to eat and to hunt after the flesh of monsters as food for thee!

### 3. *The Killing of Kataore.*

When the fame of those victors who had killed the monster Pekehaua reached the various towns and villages of Tarawera, of Rotokakahi, and of Okataina, the people there were filled with wonder at the bravery of those men who had essayed to destroy that terrible and malicious man-devourer.

Then they began to think, very likely there is also a monster in the road to Tikitapu, because the travelling companies going by that place to Rotorua [95] are never once heard of; their relations are continually enquiring, "Have they arrived at the place to which they went?" but there is no response; therefore they are dead. Hence it follows that the sad thought arises within, were they killed by some monster? or, by some travelling man like themselves? or, by some armed marauding party of the enemy?

But the chief of Tikitapu and of Okareka, whose name was

13. WC: The words are: "Koteriu o Tane-Mahuta," lit., the hollow stomach, or centre of Tane-Mahuta—*i.e.*, the god of forests; Tane-Mahuta being the god of forests.

14. WC: Ten kinds are here enumerated, all of hardwood and hard white whale's-bone.

Tangaroamihi, knew very well all along that there was a monstrous beast at Tikitapu, although he did not know that the beast there residing ate up men; the chief always believed that it dwelt quietly, for it assumed the very air of peace and quietness whenever the chief and his men went to the spot where it dwelt to give it food; and that beast also knew very well all its feeders, and all those who used it tenderly and kindly. Nevertheless, when they had returned from feeding it to their village, and any other persons appeared there going by that way, then that monster came down and pursued those persons and devoured them as food.

Now the manner of acting of this ugly beast was very much like that of a (bad) dog which has to be tied to a stick (or clog). For its knowledge of its own masters was great; whenever its master, Tangaroamihi, went there to see it, its demeanour was wholly quiet and tractable, but when people belonging to another and strange tribe went along by that road, then it arose to bark and growl at them; so that, what with the loud and fearful noise of its mouth, and the sharp rattlings of its rings and leg-circlets, great fear came upon them, and then he fell on them and ate them up.

Now when the multitude everywhere heard of the great valour of those men, the tribes all greatly extolled them, and wondered exceedingly at the prodigious powers of those four chiefs.

Then it was that the chiefs of Rotokakahi, of Tarawera, of Okaitaina, and of Rotorua began to understand the matter, and to say, "Oh! there is perhaps a monster also dwelling in the road to Tikitapu, because the travelling parties going from those parts to Rotorua, as well as those coming from Rotorua to these five lakes, are never heard of." For when the travellers went to Rotorua by the road of Okareka they safely arrived thither; and

so when they returned by that same way of Okareka they reached their homes in safety;—but if the travellers went from Tarawera to Rotorua by the road of Tikitapu, they never reached Rotorua at all; somehow they always got lost by that road.

And so again it was with the people from Rotokakahi, travelling thence to Rotorua; if they went by the road leading by Pareuru, they safely arrived at Rotorua, and also in returning from Rotorua; if they came back by that same road, they reached their villages at Rotokakahi in safety; somehow, there was something or other in that road by Tikitapu [96] which caused men's hearts to dislike greatly that way, because those who travelled by it were lost and never heard of.

Therefore, the hearts of those who remained alive began to stir within them, so that some even went as far as to say—"Perhaps that chief Tangaroamihi has killed and destroyed both the travelling parties and the armed parties who travelled by the way of Tikitapu." But that chief Tangaroamihi had shown his hospitality and expressed his kindly feeling to the enquirers who went to his town to seek after those who were missing.

Now, however, when the suffering people heard of the exceeding great valour of those four chiefs in their slaying of monsters, then they considered how best to fetch them to come and to have a look at Tikitapu.

So their messenger was sent to those brave heroes, and when they heard from him the message, they all bestirred themselves, that same 170, for they were greatly delighted to hear of more work for them in the line of slaying monsters. So they immediately commenced preparations for their journey to Tikitapu, some in pounding fernroot, some in digging-up convolvulus

roots, some in taking whitebait (*Galaxias attenuatus*), and some in dredging freshwater mussels, all to be used as food on their journey to Taiapu, to the mount at Moerangi, for Moerangi was the place where that noxious beast called Kataore dwelt.

In the morning, at break of day, they arose and started, taking their first meal far away on the great plain, at a nice kind of stopping-place. When they had scarcely finished their meal they commenced conversation with the usual talk of warriors on an expedition; for at this time they did not exactly know whether it was really by a monster, or by the people who dwelt thereabouts, that all those who had travelled by that road, whether armed parties or whether singly, had been destroyed.

When this armed party took their journey, they also brought away with them the necessary ropes and such things, which had been previously made and got ready. They knew that such (as they had heard) was the evil state of all the roads and ways of that place, therefore they sat awhile and considered, knowing very well the work they had in hand.

However, when the eating and talking were ended, they again arose and recommenced their march. They entered the forest and traversed it, quitting it on the other side. Then the priests went before the party to scatter abroad their spells and charms, that is to say, their Maori recitations. But they acted just the same on this as on former occasions already related.

They recited all the charms and spells they had used against both Hotopuku<sup>15</sup> and Pekehaua, going on and reciting as they went; at last [97] they made up their minds to halt, so they sat down. Then it was that the people in the villages, under the chief Tangaroamihi, gazed watchfully upon that armed party there encamped, thinking it was a party of their enemies com-

ing to fight and to kill; but in this they were deceived, it being altogether a different party.

A long time the party remained there, watching and waiting, but nothing came. At last one of the chiefs got up and said—"Whereabouts does this noxious beast that destroys men dwell?" Then another of those chiefs replied—"Who knows where, in the water, or in the stony cliff that overhangs yonder?" On this they set to work, and closely examined that lake; but alas! the monster was not to be found there; nevertheless, the appearance of that water was of a forbidding fearful character, that is to say, the fear was caused by the peculiar glitter of the water, as if strangely and darkly shaded, having the appearance of the water whence the greenstone is obtained. But notwithstanding all that, they could not detect any kind of chasm or deep dark hole in all that lake, like the hole in which Pekehaua was found.

Then certain of the chiefs said to the priests, "Begin, go to work; select some of your potent charms and spells." So those were chosen and used; the priests recited their charms, causing stinging like nettles, and their charms of stitching together, so that the bubbles might speedily arise to the surface of the lake, if so be that the monster they sought was there in the water. At this time one of the priests arose, upon the word spoken forth by one of the chiefs of the party, and said, "It is all to no purpose; not a single burst, or rising, or bubble has arisen in the water of Tikitapu."

Then they turned their attention upwards to the stony cliff which stood before them; when, before they had quite finished their spell, causing nettlestinging, and were reciting their lifting

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15. WC: Though not once mentioned or alluded to in that story.

and raising charms, a voice was heard roaring downwards from the overhanging precipice at Moerangi, as if it were the creaking of trees in the forest when violently agitated by the gale; then they knew and said, “Alas! the monster’s home is in the cave in the stony cliff.”

Upon this the whole body of 170 arose and stood ready for action; for glad they also were that they had found food for their inner man. In their uprising, however, they were not forgetful, for they immediately commenced reciting their powerful charms and spells; all were used, of each and every kind—none were left unsaid; the several priests made use of all,<sup>16</sup> that being their peculiar work.

They now set to work, and soon they got near to the entrance of the [98] cave in the rock where this noxious cannibal beast dwelt. At last they got up to the cave, where the whole band quietly arranged themselves, and took a long time to consider how to act. At length the valiant, fearless men arose—men who had already bound monsters fast—and, seizing the ropes, went forward into the cave. There they saw that noxious beast sitting, and staring full at them; but, oh! such fearful eyes! Who can describe them? In appearance like the full moon rising up over the distant dark mountain range; and when gazed at by the band, those hideous eyes glared forth upon them like strong daylight suddenly flashing into the dark recesses of the forest. And, anon, lo! they were in colour as if clear shining greenstone were gleaming and scintillating in the midst of the black eyeballs! But that was really all that gave rise to the appearance of fear, because the creature’s spines and crest of living spears had become quite flaccid and powerless, through the potent operations of the many weakening spells which had been used by those numerous warriors, that is to say, priests.

Then they managed to put forth their hands stealthily over its huge head, gently stroking it at the same time. At length the rope was got round the monster’s neck and made secure; another rope was also slid further on below its fore-legs, and that was firmly fixed; twice did those brave men carry ropes into the cave. Having done all this they came out to their friends, those of the 170 warriors who had been anxiously waiting their return, and who, when they saw them emerge, enquired, “Are your ropes made fast?” They replied, “Yes; the ropes are fastened to the monster; one round the neck and one round the middle.” Then the enquiry arose, “How shall the dragging of it forth from its cave, and its destruction, be accomplished?” When some of the chiefs replied, “Let us carry the ropes outside of the trees which grow around, so that, when the monster begins to lash and bound about, we shall be the better able to make them fast to their trunks.” Then others said, “All that is very good, but how shall we manage to kill it?” Some replied, “Why should we trouble ourselves about killing it? Is it not so fastened with ropes that it cannot get away? Just leave it to itself; its own great strength will cause it to jump violently about, and jerk, and knock, and beat itself; after that, we having made the ropes fast to the trees, the destroyers can easily run in on it and kill it; or, if not, let us just leave it alone to strangle itself in the ropes.” So all this was carried out by those 170 brave warriors.

Then the several men having been all properly placed, so as to hold and handle and drag the ropes effectually; the word of command was given, “Haul away!” and then they all hauled with a will! But, wonderful to behold, entirely owing to the cave being in the face of the perpendicular [99] cliff, almost simultaneously with the first pull, lo! the monster was already

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16. WC: Seven or eight kinds of charms and spells are here also particularized, and then the remainder given in a lump.

outside of the entrance to the cave. But then, in so saying, the potent work of the priests in reciting their raising and uplifting charms must be also included in the cause of the easy accomplishment. The moment that the monster's great tail was outside clear of the cave, then its head began to rear and toss and plunge, frightful to behold! On seeing this, they loosened a little the rope that held it by its middle; when, lo! its head was close to the trees, against which it began to lean, while it knocked about its tail prodigiously. The men, however, were on the watch, and soon the two ropes were hauled tightly up around the trees, notwithstanding the jerkings and writhings of its huge tail. There, at last, it was, lashed fast close to the trees, so that it could only wriggle a little that is to say its tail.

Then the armed men came on; they banged and beat and clubbed away at the monster, which now lay like a rat caught in the snare of a trap; and it was not long before it was quite dead, partly through the blows and bruises, and partly through the ropes; and so it came to pass that it was killed.

The fame of this great exploit was soon carried to all those tribes who had fetched and sent Purahokura on his errand to Tikitapu. Then they assembled at the place, and saw with astonishment their deadly foe lying on the ground, just like a stranded whale on the sea-shore, even so this noxious monster now lay extended before them. Then arose the mighty shout of derision from all both great and small, the noise was truly deafening, loud sounding, like that arising from the meeting together of the strong currents of many waters!

Early the next morning the people arose to their work to cut up their fish; then was to be seen with admiration the dexterous use of the various sharp-cutting instruments—of the saw made of sharks' teeth, of the sea mussel-shells, of the sharp pitch-stone

knives, of the freshwater mussel-shells, and of the flints. Truly wonderful it was to behold, such loads of fat! such thick collops! This was owing to the cannibal monster continually devouring men for its common food at all times and seasons; it never knew a time of want or a season of scarcity; it never had any winter, it was always a jolly harvest time with it! How, indeed, should it have been otherwise? when the companies of travellers from this place and from that place were continually passing and repassing to and fro; therefore it came to pass that its huge maw was satiated with food—not including the food given to it by its master Tangaroamihi—and therefore it came to be so very fat.

So the big fish was cut up. As they went on with their work, and got [100] at length into its stomach, there the cannibal food which it had devoured was seen! there it lay—women, children, men—with their garments and their weapons. Some were found chopped in two, both men and weapons; no doubt through the action of its terrible lips in seizing them! others were swallowed whole, very likely through its capacious mouth being kept open, when the strong internal blasts from its great gullet drew down the men into its stomach! For you must also know, that this cave is situated near to the water, so that whenever a party came by water paddling in their canoe to Tikitapu, and the canoe came on to the landing place, this monster, Kataore, seeing this, came out of its cave, and, jumping into the water, took the canoe with the men in it into its stomach, so that both men and canoe were devoured instantaneously!

The victors worked away until they had taken everything out of its big maw, both the goods (of clothing and instruments as before) and the dead; the dead they buried in a pit. Then they finished cutting up that big fish; some of it they roasted and



broiled; and some they rendered down in its own fat, and preserved in calabashes; and so it came to pass that it was all eaten up, as good food for the stomach of man.

But when the news of this killing was carried to the chief Tangaroamihi, to whom this pet Saurian belonged, and he heard it said to him,—“What is this they have done; thy pet has been killed?” The chief enquired, “By whom?” and they answered, “By the tribe of Tama” (Ngatitama). On hearing this the heart of Tangaroamihi became overcast with gloom, on account of his dear pet which had been killed; and this deed of theirs was a cause of enmity and war between Tangaroamihi and those who had destroyed his pet; and it remained and grew to be a root of evil for all the tribes. Thus the story ends.

It should be briefly noticed, in conclusion, that the name of this chief (Tangaroamihi), is one highly suited to the *event*; or it may have been given to him at an earlier date, through his having a pet reptile. *Tangaroa* is the name of the god, or creator or father and ruler, of all fishes and reptiles; (though Punga is sometimes spoken of as a god possessing similar powers, but perhaps over only a certain natural section of those animals,<sup>17</sup> and *mihi* means, to show affection for, or to lament and sigh over, any one,—present or absent, living or dead;—so that Tangaroamihi might mean, (1) that this chief lamented over the death of one of Tangaroa’s family, or tribe; or (2) that he ever liked and showed great affection towards one of them. [101]

§ 3.—Fables.

1.—*The Fable of the Shark and the Large Lizard*—(Guana).

In days of yore the large lizard and the shark lived together in the sea, for they were brothers, both being of the children of Punga. The lizard was the elder and the shark the younger. After some time they fell out, and as the quarrel was great and protracted, the lizard, vexed at the conduct of his younger brother, determined to leave off dwelling in the sea, and to reside on the dry land, so he left the water. But just as he had got on the shore, his brother the shark swam up to where he was on a rock, and wished him to return, saying—“Let you and I go out to sea, to the deep water.” The lizard replied, with a bitter curse, saying—“Go thou to the sea, that thou mayst become a relish of fish for the basket of cooked roots. On this, the shark retorted with another curse, saying—“Go thou on shore that thou mayst be smothered with the smoke of the fire of green fern.” Then the lizard replied, with a laugh, “Indeed, I will go on shore, away up to the dry land, where I shall be looked upon as the personification of the demon-god Tu, with my spines and ridgy crest causing fear and affright, so that all will gladly get out of my way, hurrah!” [7].

Colenso used different prose styles for different kinds of writing: here, for Maori myths and legends, employing the phrases and cadences of that other mythology, the King James Version of the Bible.

Julius von Haast asked him, “Do you know any reliable Maori traditions about the Moa? Do not all, or at least some, of these traditions appear to have been brought by the Hawaiki immigrants from their former home, as, for instance, the accounts of the great lizard (crocodile?)?” [8]. Colenso replied, “No: I *don’t* believe in that myth, as containing anything real, (objective, material)—i.e. appertaining to the Sandwich or any other Islands. Were there “Crocodiles” *there*, or any huge saurian—see legend of the Saurian pet: “Trans. N.Z. Inst.” vol.xi. p.100.”

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17. WC: Vide the beginning of the following fable,—“The Shark and the large Lizard,” and the note there.

On 10 September 1898 the *Hawke's Bay Herald* carried this story,

**THE KUMI.  
A REMARKABLE DISCOVERY.  
(BY TELEGRAPH.)**

GISBORNE, Friday.

A bushfeller on Lysnar's station, Nowhara, 50 miles from Gisborne, was startled last week by a strange animal which he surprised in the bush, and which ran into a hole in an immense rata tree. Other bushfellers who were near were called, and distinctly traced the track of the animal to the tree and up the trunk to its hole.

On the ground were footprints larger than a man's hand, and circling round the tree was the track worn by the claws of the creature. The man who saw it said it was like a huge lizard with four legs, and from his description well informed natives say it tallied exactly with the description handed down to them by their forefathers of a reptile called the *kumi*, which is not known to have been seen for at least three generations, but the old Maoris in this district have stories that they existed and grew up to twelve feet long, living in large trees or amongst boulders.

They possessed huge jaws with curved teeth (as the one described), and used to lie in wait for their prey.

The *kumi* used to be found in company with the moa, and they were believed by the natives to be protectors of the moa. They were able to ascend trees, travelling up them in spiral fashion, just

as the animal seen last week is stated to have done.

According to tradition they were known to exist in three hills in this district, Nowhana being one of these. They were known by a strange noise, somewhat like the noise inside a drum, and it was a peculiar noise that attracted attention to the animal seen the other day.

The head of the *kumi* was bigger than a man's, and like a bulldog's. A party is going out to endeavor to secure the reported find.

On 15 September the *Herald* added,

Whether the animal seen at Gisborne by a bushman last week was a kumi or not is problematical. The Rev. W. Colenso, F.R.S., in the absence of fuller particulars, believes it is one of the large lizards mentioned in "Cook's Voyages." Captain Hutton inclines to the opinion that the animal was a large tuatara, the size of which was very much exaggerated by the bushfeller who saw it, as these reports always are exaggerated. Captain Hutton points out that the tuatara existed on the North Island, and a specimen now in the Auckland Museum was secured there. Professor Dendy is much of the same opinion, and thinks that some proof of the existence of such an animal as the supposed kumi would have been found in the shape of skeletons, or fossilised remains, if it ever did exist.

Colenso wrote to the editor,

SIR,—In your paper of this morning you

have a short local on the strange animal lately seen near Gisborne, in which you bring me forward as saying (to your informant) that "In the absence of fuller particulars I believed it to be one of the large lizards mentioned in Cook's voyages." That, however, is but a small portion of what I said to him, and not (perhaps) the most likely hypothesis of the several mentioned by me. However, I should not care to write about it now, only for another error in the same notice, namely, that by Captain Hutton. I told your informant (seeing that the moa—of celebrity—was also prominently brought forward in your account of the said animal from Gisborne) that it was likely the mythical *saurian*, or monstrous lizard, formerly stated by the old Maoris to be the moa's guard, at its cave, on the top of the mountain Whakapunake. I now quote briefly from my first early paper on the moa, containing mention of the said fabulous lizard; and also of other real living Maori ones, as obtained by me from the old tohunga Maoris more than 60 years ago.

"During the summer of 1838, while at Waipatu, East Cape, I heard from the Maoris of a certain monstrous animal, called a *moa*:—that it dwelt in a cavern on the precipitous side of a mountain,—that it lived on air,—and that it was guarded by two immense *tuataras*, who, argus-like, kept incessant watch, while the moa slept; also, that if anyone ventured to approach the dwelling of this wonderful creature, he would be invariably trampled on and killed by it. A mountain named Whakapunake, at least

80 miles distant in a southerly direction, was spoken of as the residence of this creature; there, however, only one existed, which, it was generally contended, was the lair of its race." (I here omit a great deal more said of the moa; and give a portion of a note from the same paper on the *tuatara*—then, also, unknown to science.)

"The *tuatara*, a saurian,—is common in some parts of New Zealand, particularly on rocky headlands, and islets lying off the coast. I have one at present in spirits, which I had alive for nearly three of the winter months; during which time, although I repeatedly tried to get it to take some kind of food, I could not succeed. From its habits I supposed it to be a hibernating animal. It measured 19 inches in length, &c., &c., and appeared a perfectly harmless creature. It was taken, with two others, (also possessed by me,) on Karewa Island, off Tauranga harbour, Bay of Plenty,"

"The natives speak of another species, possessing a forked tail; and assert that a larger species, which inhabits swampy places, has been seen 6 feet in length, and as thick as a man's thigh. The largest, however, that I have ever known did not measure above 2 feet in length." (*Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science*, vol. II, p.81. Published under the kind auspices of the lamented Sir John Franklin, then Governor of Tasmania.)

Then, as to Captain Hutton's remark, as given by you—that the large animal lately seen near Gisborne was a *tuatara*, a specimen having been obtained near

Auckland, &c., this could not be; from the fact of this strange animal having been called by them a "*kumi*"—the name of the mythical big lizard—the companion or guard of the moa. No Maori would, or could, have confounded that scarce monstrous creature with the small and well-known *tuatara*. Possibly, with your permission, I may have a little more to say on this subject. I await, however, further news re the *kumi* from Gisborne, hoping it may not prove to be a hoax!

It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that the name *kumi*, given to this big lizard, is the proper name for their measure of *ten fathoms*. *This* serves to join it on to those cleverly constructed legends of those immense saurians as related by the ancient Maoris; translations of the same are given by me in vol. XII., "Transactions N.Z. Institute.—I am, &c.,  
W. COLENSO.

N a p i e r ,

September 15th, 1898.

Alas, on further searching the creature appeared to have fled, leaving pigeon feathers as evidence of its diet. Other *Herald* correspondents were dubious: Henry Hill "very much doubted it" [10]; Donald Munro thought it was probably a ferret [11] and the story died.

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Elsdon Best related the Ngarara Huarau legend in some detail,

## The Story of Te Ngarara-huarau

This name is known over both the North and South Islands, and there are many stories concerning mythical monsters so named, evidently the term was a favoured one. I have heard about a dozen stories describing the doings of *taniwha* so named, and they pertained to far sundered places. These stories often take the form of an abnormal union, a *taniwha* of saurian form, a huge lizard, captures a Maori woman and makes her his wife, in some cases the woman bears a child, or children, of semi-human form, and the story concludes with an account of how she escaped from the monster. An almost ever present incident is the tying of a rope to the captive woman, so as to give her a certain measure of liberty as she performed her domestic duties, while the *taniwha* husband kept the other end of the cord in his hand if he had any. In a number of cases the woman escaped by releasing the cord from her body and tying it to a pliant limb or sapling, so that, when the *taniwha* pulled the cord, he felt the "give" of the branch and thought that his captive was still attached to the cord. It would appear that, in those far off times, there were some very simple minded *taniwha* in New Zealand.

....

Another taniwha known as Ngarara-huarau dwelt in the Wairarapa district in long past times, but eventually perished at Tupurupuru. In 1893 Te Aro gave me an account of this creature, which, he said, was a moko nui or huge lizard. He came originally from Marokotia in search of his sister, named Parikawhiti, and when he left his cave dwelling at Waimarama some of his scales left therein developed into tuatara lizards. At last he came down by sea to the mouth of the Pahaua stream, then passed up that stream, and up the Wainuioru and Marumaru. On reaching Maurioho he knew that he was near his sister, and so leaped ashore and a mound formed there was called Hau tuapuku rau o Ngarara-huarau. After that he took up his abode in the stream, at a place near a path used by people of those times, but little thought those folk that a malignant monster had settled there. Then a party came from Pahaua proceeding to Marumaru, and that party was annihilated by Ngarara-huarau, no single creature escaped; naturally their friends believed that they had safely reached Marumaru. Some time later the inland people started for the coast to collect food products, and all these people were destroyed by the dread taniwha. So it went on, great numbers of travellers so perished, until, upon a time, it chanced that of one party so attacked, a lone member had lagged behind and heard the tumult of the slaughter and saw the monster destroying his friends. He at once turned and fled, so came he safely to his home village, where he reported the death of his companions—"Nought remains, save the flowing waters, I alone survive."

All the people were assembled and a plan was devised whereby to destroy Ngarara-huarau. Now this plan was one that is, or was, absolutely unique, one that could only have emanated from the most brilliant minds of the Ngai-Tara folk of that period. Inasmuch as the fearsome taniwha was a creature of

great powers and prowess, it was resolved that caution should form a prominent feature of the slaying process, and so those warriors determined to crush the monster by felling trees on him. Enough said; a band of stalwarts, armed with stone tools, went forth to prepare the trap, which they did by "scarfing" the trees near the path, until, as Te Aro explained to me, one more blow of the stone adze would cause them to fall. When everything was ready for action then a warlock bewitched a dog and so compelled it to advance to the den of the monster and entice him forth by barking. Up rose the taniwha of evil repute and pursued the dog, and the dog fled down the path. In furious pursuit came the monster, who caused the very ground to tremble, and who, by colliding with the heavily scarfed trees caused them to fall, and in their fall they crushed and destroyed the taniwha. So perished Ngarara-huarau at the hands of Ngai-Tara, whose eponymic ancestor Tara dwelt on the isle of Motukairangi in the great harbour of Tara.

The place whereat Ngarara-huarau was slain was Tupurupuru; Marumaru and Herewaka are toward the south, Marumaru is between Tupurupuru and Kourarau, that stream flows into Tauweru, Tauweru flows into Ruamahanga, while the latter flows into Wairarapa lake. These waters reach the ocean at Okorewa, which is a famous place for eels.

In later years Tunui-a-rangi gave another version of the above tale in which he states that Ngarara-huarau traced his absent sister by scent, and so came by sea to Pahawa (called Pahaua by Te Aro). He came across a waterfall at Maurioho that startled him, hence the place was named Mauri-oho-o-Ngarara-huarau; he had difficulty in ascending that fall. On reaching Maungaraki he felt aweary and arched his back, as people knew by the marks of his claws in the earth, hence was that place named Hau-tuapuku-o-Ngarara-huarau. When he

took to man-eating at Kourarau he did so in a wholesale manner, he swallowed persons whole, garments included; if a man was carrying a pack he swallowed man and pack; were a mother carrying her child both went down together, any tools or weapons carried were also swallowed. Then it was ascertained that this taniwha had formerly led an equally evil life at Waimarama.

In this version two men were selected to go forward with the dog in order to lure the monster along the prepared path, and charms were recited over all members of this forlorn hope, including the dog and a cord used, in order to render all serviceable and efficacious. On reaching a point above the cave the men lowered the dog down by means of the cord, as they did so a glaring light gleamed from the eyes of the monster, and soon his head appeared; then fled the men down the path pursued by the monster; as Tiurangi the hawk darts through space so fled the lurers. When the body of the dread scourge was cut up, layers of men, women and children were found in the stomach, these bodies were buried while that of Ngarara-huarau was handed over as food for Mahuika (personified form of fire). The head of the monster became petrified and is still seen in the form of a rock. The spells employed when the men were engaged with Ngarara-huarau were those known as Pawhakaoho, Tumania and Tupakeke.

Colenso refers to the above tale in one of his papers of 1878, and gives the name of the creature as Hinehuarau, which name betokens the female sex, and he describes her as "a monster Saurian"....

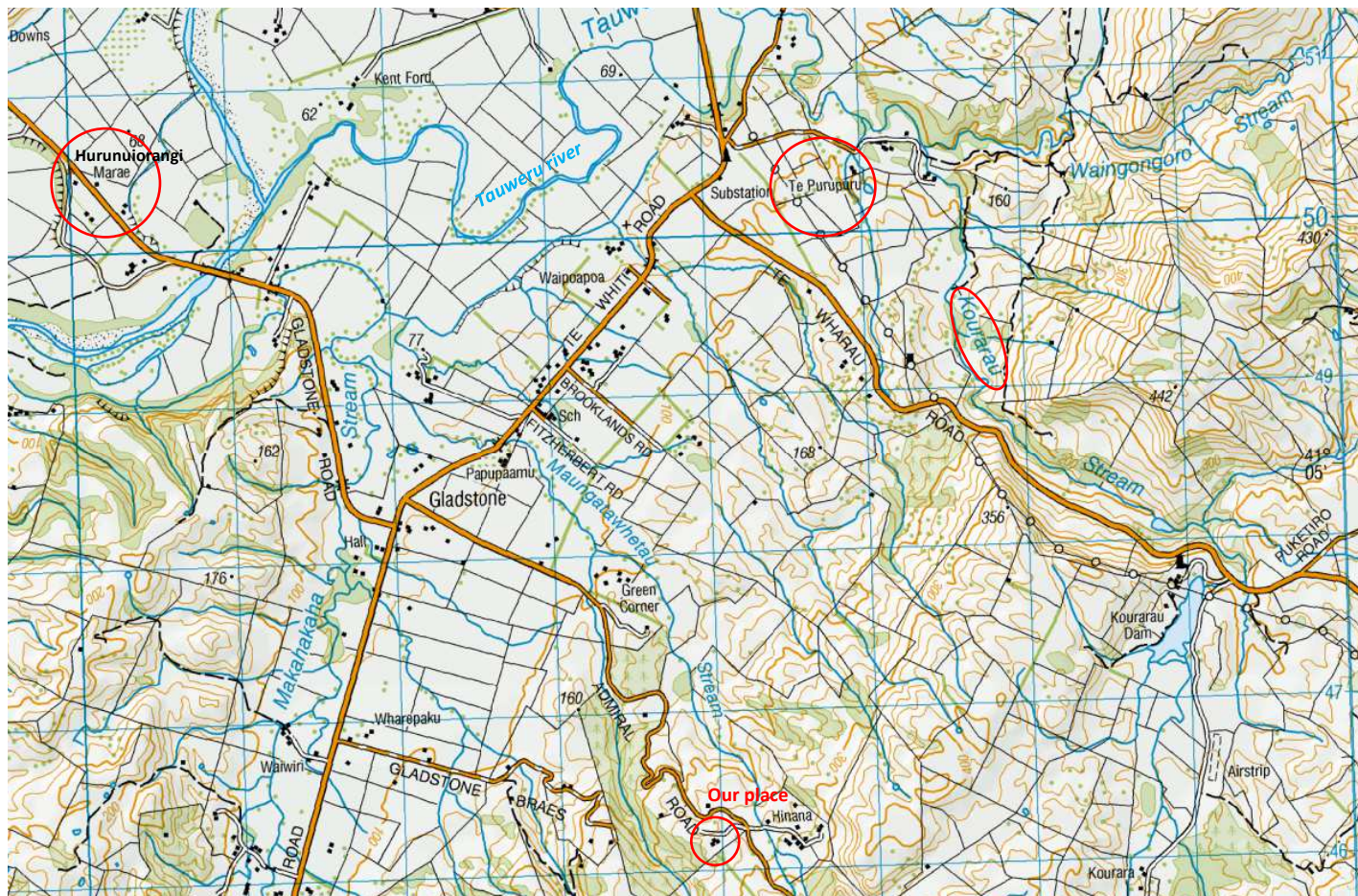
Best went on to relate legends of South Island taniwha of the same name, Ngarara-huarau [12].

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AUE! HE KUMI!

—from Thomas Lambert 1925. *The story of old Wairoa and the East Coast district, North Island, New Zealand, or, Past, present, and future: a record of over fifty years' progress.* Coulls, Somerville Wilkie, Dunedin.

