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John White

Excerpt

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ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE MAORI.

CHAPTER I.

If Tu and Papa had fought thus
 For their two farms at U-hea
 And at Po-lutu-kawa,
 They would have stayed the streams
 Of Moana-kura (red sea)
 And of Moana-toto (sea of blood),
 And made their war to cease,
 And would have gone far out,
 To Marere-o-tonga
 And Tumu-whaka-iri-a,
 Where gods with power reside,
 And gained their aid, and peace have made,
 To rest on all mankind,
 And, with the power of gods,
 Have ended war and strife.

Lament of Nga-ti-kaahu-ngunu for the dead.

UE-NUKU AND WHENA.

(NGA-TI-KAHU-NGUNU.)

TE-POPO-TAUNGA-I-TUA (the crowd assembled on the other side) begat Te-popo-taunga-i-waho (the crowd assembled on the outside), who begat Kapa-whiti (array of people crossing from side to side), who begat Kapa-rere (fleeing host), who begat Rara-taunga-rere (exclamation of dread whilst fleeing), who begat Te-mata-tini-o-te-rangi (the many faces of heaven), who begat Mounu-ma-wawae (flee and disperse), who begat Tira-a-rangi (travellers of heaven), who begat Te-pahure-o-te-rangi (the departed of heaven), who begat Tura (bald), who begat Kopu-nui (large stomach), who

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begat Kopu-roa (long stomach), who begat Te-kitea (not seen), who begat Whe-iro (little maggot), who begat Karaka-tuha (the *karaka*-tree spat on), who begat To-tino-i-te-ata-kai (eating sumptuously in the morning), who begat Mihikai (craving for food), who begat Auau-kai (searching for food), who begat Te-whe-iro (the dwarf maggot), who begat Te-kitea (not seen), who begat Taumaha-piro (repeat incantations over the stomach), who begat Tahu-makaka-nui (the crooked great companion), who begat Ira (wart), who begat Eo-roa (He-o-roa) (food in store for a long period), who begat Iwi (tribe), who begat O-ono-ono (food that is planted), who begat Ue-roa (long fourth night of the moon), who took to wife Te-we (the unattached) and begat Tahito-tarere, who begat Ta-whaki, who took to wife Maikukumakaka and begat Wahie-roa, who begat Rata.

Ta-whaki had been killed by Matuku-tangotango and Pou-a-hao-kai; and Rata determined to avenge the death of his grandfather. He went to the forest, and in one day he felled a tree. On the following day, when he went to form it into a canoe, he found the tree had been placed in its original position again. He again felled it, and watched to see what had restored it to its place on the previous night. Soon he saw the host of Haku-turi, of Roro-tini, and of Pona-ua advancing towards the tree, chanting the following incantation :—

It is Rata, Rata, Rata,
Who felled the sacred forest of Tane.
Small chips of Tane,
Chips of Tane flying,
Flying scraps of Tane,
Adhere and come together.
Fly hither, the chips of Tane,
And come together, adhere.
Fly hither, the ribs of Tane,
And come together, adhere.
Be straight, and be erect, O chips !
Lift thee up. O chips ! be erect.

And up went the tree again, and stood erect. Rata called and said, "Why have you put the tree in its place again? The tree is mine." The host of Haku-turi

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answered, "Because you did not consult us, that we might know and consent that you should cut in two the neck of your ancestor Tane-mahuta." Rata said, "What you say is right; but I have a desire to make a canoe for myself, in which to go and avenge the death of my grandfather, who was killed by Pou-a-hao-kai (or Pou-a-ho-kai) and Matukutangatango." They answered, "It is well. Cut the tree down, and when it is felled go and get some *pare-tao* (*Asplenium*), and cover the stump with it. Then you may adze the trunk for a canoe." He did as instructed and made his canoe, and called it by the name of A-niu-waru (the eight conjuring-sticks of the god), after him who became the navigator of this canoe. When they had got far out on the ocean, Rata said to his army, "If Pou-a-hao-kai should come out to make war on us, and should call, 'Little heads, little heads,' I will answer, 'Display the big face on the horizon;'" and thus they conversed until they landed. So numerous were they that they covered the beach from end to end, and Pou-a-hao-kai opened his mouth in vain—he was unable to call out; so Rata and his army escaped destruction by that god. Whilst they were dragging their canoes clear of the action of the sea Pou-a-hao-kai went to prepare houses and food for the strangers. Rata then said to his army, "If Pou-a-hao-kai call and say, 'O little heads!' I will answer, 'Display a big face. Open the side of the house.'" The army of Rata then went up to the settlement, and Pou-a-hao-kai called and said, "Little heads." Rata answered, "Display a big face. Open the wall of the house." The wall was opened, and the host thus entered the house. Again Pou-a-hao-kai called and said, "Little heads, occupy the side of the house which has been covered with carpets." Rata answered, "Temporary visitors, sit on the part not carpeted."

When food was placed before the army of Rata, they merely put it to their mouths, but did not eat it. Rata said to the god, "Get some water for me to drink." Pou-a-hao-kai went for the water, and Rata chanted an incantation that he might not be able to reach it, and that rain

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might descend upon him. Pou-a-hao-kai afterwards returned fatigued and wet with rain, and said to Rata, "There is no water for you. As I went toward it the water receded." Rata said, "I am satisfied by the water of heaven. But sit down, and I will prepare food for you." Pou-a-hao-kai did as he was directed, and Rata placed stones on the fire, and when they were exceedingly hot he said to Pou-a-hao-kai, "Open your mouth wide," and when he did so he threw the hot stones down the throat of the god, who smacked his lips and opened his mouth until Rata had thrown the last one down his throat, which made Pou-a-hao-kai's stomach burst with a loud noise, and he died, and then were seen the canoes and men which had been swallowed by him.

After this Rata took Tama-uri-uri, the friend of Matuku-tango-tango, as his god. Rata asked Tama-uri-uri, "Where is your friend Matuku-tango-tango?" He said, "He is below eating men, but when the moon rises he will come up to perform the ceremonies and chant the incantations over himself."

Tama-uri-uri then practised deceit on Matuku-tango-tango by calling, "O Matuku! O Matuku! climb up. The moon has risen—this is the third night of the moon." Matuku answered, "The nights are wrong, O Tama! These are the dark nights." Tama said, "Oh, no! the nights are now right. Climb up." Then Tama said, "Let ropes be placed over the mouth of the cave, and place four fences on each side of the mouth of the cave. Let the four fences on one side be called Pahau-waiapu (dark-green wing), and let the other four be called Pahau-tuhua (black wing)." This was done before Matuku came up. He saw Rata lying on the ground, and was glad, and laughed at the prospect of having something to eat; but Tama-uri-uri made a signal to Rata for the people to pull the ropes tight. Then they smote one wing of Matuku and broke it, and then the other; and thus Matuku was rendered helpless, and was killed by Rata.

From this time forth men could travel in safety and without fear of these monsters; and Rata brought Tama-

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WHENA KILLS THE CHILDREN OF UE-NUKU.

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uri-uri home with him as a god for himself and the descendants of Wahie-roa.

Rata then took Kani-o-wai to wife, and begat Pou-matangatanga, who took Rangi-ahua and begat Pai-hutanga. She became the wife of Ue-nuku, who took Ranga-toro to wife also, and begat seven children—Kahu-tia-te-rangi, Maputu-te-rangi, Mahina-te-ata, Ropa-nui, Whatiua, Inanga-mata-mea, and Rongo-ue-roa.

Now, Kahu-tia-te-rangi and his sisters found that their food (*kumara*) was being stolen by the children of Whena. Ue-nuku ordered stages to be built on which to keep the food of his children; but one morning it was seen that even from those stages the food had been stolen. Watchers were therefore set to guard the food. These watchers were two birds—pet owls—called Ruru-wareware (forgetful owl) and Ruru-atamai (kind owl), belonging to Ue-nuku. And when next the thieves came to steal from the food-stores, the two birds flew from the front gable of the house and intercepted them. The names of the thieves were Wha-tino and Wharo.

When the news of the capture of his children reached Whena he was grieved with Ue-nuku. Not long after this Maputu-ki-te-rangi, Mahina-i-te-ata, Ropa-nui, Inanga-mata-mea, and Rongo-ue-roa, the children of Ue-nuku, went to the settlement of Whena. Pou urged Whena to kill these children of Ue-nuku. Whena rose and ordered their execution, and after they were executed they were laid in a heap. Rongo-ue-roa was not quite dead when he was put into the heap, and he heard Whena giving orders to his people to go at once and attack Ue-nuku and kill him ere the news of the death of his children could reach him. When night came Rongo-ue-roa crawled away to the canoes and hid himself beneath the floor of one of them. At dawn of day Whena and his party embarked; and, having arrived at Ao-tea-roa, the landing-place of Ue-nuku's settlement, Rongo-ue-roa came out of his hiding-place and went up to the settlement, and sat down near the root of a bush of *toetoe* (*Lyperaceæ*) just as the wife

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of Ue-nuku came to obtain some of the leaves to make small baskets to serve the food to Whena and his people. The woman saw Rongo-ue-roa sitting there covered with wounds. He asked her, "Where is Whena?" She answered, "He is in the house yonder." He said, "Go to Ue-nuku, and secretly tell him to come here." She went and delivered the message. Ue-nuku went to his son and saw his head all bruised and wounded. He asked him, "Where are your sisters?" Rongo-ue-roa answered, "They are all dead: I alone have escaped. My sisters were killed by Whena, and he thought I also was dead, and I was thrown into the heap with the corpses of my sisters, and heard Whena advising to come and kill you. I crawled away at night and hid myself beneath the foot-stage in their canoe, and thus am here to warn you."

Ue-nuku took his son Rongo-ue-roa and wrapped him in his mat, and went and stood in front of the house which Whena and his party occupied; and while he kept Rongo-ue-roa hidden, he called to Whena and said, "O aged! where are my children?" Whena replied, "They are on the other shore, cooking food for the people who are at work, and in the intervals they are playing at games of jumping, throwing the *niti* (*teka*), spinning tops, dumb motions, and hide-and-peek [a game like hunt-the-slipper], and they are amusing themselves with puzzles and the other games of their progenitors Taka-taka-putea (rolling about in a bag) and More-o-tonga (the tap-root of the south)." Ue-nuku replied, "O aged! you speak falsely. You have killed them." Whena said, "O aged! they are where I say." Ue-nuku replied, while he uncovered his son, "Aged, you speak falsely: there is the only one who has escaped death." And he brought his son close up to the front of the house, that Whena and his people might see more distinctly. Then they began to move as though they would leave the settlement; but Ue-nuku said, "Stay and partake of food, and then depart." They sat still, and food was provided for them. After they had partaken of it they dragged the canoes into the water. Ue-nuku

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again called to them and said, "O Whena! Come, you are fully aware that I know all that has taken place. Now depart: I will follow you to look for my children." Whena answered, "What will be able to conduct you to my settlement—to the place of rubbish, and rushes, and nettles, and *tu-mata-kuru* (*Discaria toumatou*—a prickly shrub)?" Ue-nuku answered, "These are nights of summer: they will be light enough to suit my purpose. I will be with you." Whena and his party left him, and Ue-nuku remained in grief at his home, and made for himself mourning-garments, which he called Rangi-tuituia (the heavens sewed together) and Rangi-kaupapa (the flat heavens).

When the days of mourning were ended, Ue-nuku sent Mahi-rua (double work) to Pawa to consult the oracles. He found Pawa roasting a fish: the fish was a barracouta. The messenger bowed himself before Pawa, and as he advanced he went in a crouching attitude. Pawa held the fish up towards Mahi-rua, and he fell prostrate. The people called and said, "O Pawa! the man is dead." Pawa answered, "Let him lie there till the power of the god has abated." When Pawa had finished eating his fish, he took the tail of it and laid it on the body of Mahi-rua, and restored him to life. Then Pawa asked him, "What has brought you here?" Mahi-rua answered, "Ue-nuku sent me to inquire of you." Pawa said, "I have nothing to give you but the company of people and the *toetoe* (*Arundo conspicua*) of the house at Maketu, and the incantations to the gods that rend. Do you go to Pou-ma-tangatanga: he has the information you require." Mahi-rua returned to Ue-nuku, who asked, "What does he say?" He answered, "He says he has no information, but Pou-ma-tangatanga will give you what you want."

Ue-nuku sent three messengers, called Tara-i-tuia (the power of incantations knit together), Tara-apua (the power swallowed), and Tara-kakao (the power of the night-bird of evil omen), to Pou-ma-tangatanga, who said, "The information you seek is to be found in the path leading to the

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filth." But they could not find it there. Then they were told it was to be found near the post in the front part of the house; but they did not find it there. Then they were told it was at the pit in the centre of the house where the fire is kept burning; and there they found it, and they took the kernel and the point of the cone of Ma-putu-te-rangi (the heap of the sky) and his younger brothers, and returned with them to Ue-nuku, who performed the ceremonies and chanted incantations over them, and gave the point of the cone to one of his children, and then called his army together. Whatuia (bind together), one of Ue-nuku's sons, called and said, "Let me have command." Ue-nuku agreed. Whatuia commanded the host to stay at home till the *kumara*-crop was ripe.

When the time came, Whatuia and Paikea assembled their army of one hundred and forty warriors, and when they were ready to embark Ue-nuku addressed them and said, "O aged! how will you act?" Whatuia replied, "We will lead our army by the horizon." Ue-nuku replied, "Depart; but if you capture the daughter of Pou-ma-tangatanga, save her to be a wife for me."

Then the war-party departed; and when they arrived at the land they went over the mountains of Aro-whena (compassion of the dwarf), and found the house of Rangi-kapiti (precipice of the sky) standing, and the god uttering his oracles to the people of the place and saying, "There is no army coming to attack us." But in the dawn of the following day the house of Rangi-kapiti was attacked and taken, and Rangi-hapopo (day of crowding together) (or Hapopo—rotten, breath) was killed. And this originated the old proverb,—

God of madness
Escaped, and left
Death for Ha-popo.

Pai-mahu-tanga (delight of recovery from a wound), the daughter of Pou-ma-tangatanga, was taken prisoner, and taken back with the war-host on their return to Ao-tea-roa.

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BATTLE OF RA-TO-RUA.

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Now, when that part of the army under command of Ue-nuku got out of sight of land, Ue-nuku put on his mourning-garments. When they came in sight of Whena's land, and had got near to the breakers, they saw an army drawn up prepared to receive them. They then dropped anchor and allowed the canoes to pass through the surf, and leaped on the beach, and at once gave battle, and took Putua-ki-te-rangi (heap up before heaven) prisoner. Then Ue-nuku called the fog to settle down on Raro-tonga (lower south), to perplex Whena and his people, and paddled out to sea with their prisoner, and killed him, and cooked his heart, and put it into the calabash Ao-tea-nui-o-maunga (great mountain of daylight). This battle was called Te-*ra-kungia* (the sun shut up).

Then Ue-nuku caused the fog to clear away; but, seeing many of Whena's people still alive, he caused it to settle down again, and sent his dogs on shore to attack them. After some time he caused the fog to lift again, and waited in the canoes to witness the battle of the dogs and the people of Whena. This was called the battle of Te-*mau-a-te-karaehe* (the food of the dogs), at the Ra-to-*rua* (double sunset).

Ue-nuku again caused the fog to settle down on the land, and to remain until every sound of battle had ceased; and when not a voice was to be heard he caused the fog to clear away again from Raro-tonga, and he saw the hosts of Whena were overcome and destroyed. This battle was called the Ocean of Te-*wai-pu* (the battle of the deep). Thus the war was closed, and Ue-nuku went back to Ao-tea, where he found Pai-mahu-tanga, the last-born child and daughter of Pou-ma-tangatanga, and took her to wife, and begat a son called Rua-tapu (sacred pit), and he and his children lived quietly in his house Rangi-kapiti.

It was in this house Nuku (Ue-nuku) declared Rua-tapu should not use the comb of his elder brother Kahu-tia-te-rangi (the garment of heaven), who was begotten on the royal mat, and who wore the head-dress called Titi-reia (the plume envied by all); which provoked the anger of his son Rua-tapu,

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so that he planned and consummated a terrible revenge, by causing the death of one hundred and forty of the first-born sons of the senior families and lords, and in this way: He went to Hae-ora (cut open whilst alive), and obtained the canoe Tu-te-pae-rangi (the margin of heaven), also named Huri-pure-i-ata (the seed over which ceremonies were performed at dawn), and after great preparations announced his intention of going on an expedition of adventure and pleasure, and invited all the first-born and representative sons of the senior families to join in it, and all equally fell into the snare. From which this proverb has arisen: "The great axe of Hae-ora" (revenge kept in mind).

He did not ask any of the members of the junior families to accompany him: all in his party were the lords of the tribes, and they numbered one hundred and forty. Rua-tapu prepared one hundred and forty spears, and hid them beneath the stage on which the crew were to sit. There was a spear for each man. But secretly one night he went and bored a hole in the bottom of the canoe in a place convenient to the position he himself would occupy, and put a plug into it. They started on their voyage, and put out to sea. Though they had lost sight of land, they still paddled on till near the dusk of evening. Then Rua-tapu took his foot off the hole he had bored in the bottom of the canoe, and secretly pulled the plug out, and at the same time hid the baler in his clothing. The canoe began to fill with water. The crew began to search for the baler, but nowhere could it be found; and soon the canoe filled and upset, and all were cast into the sea. Rua-tapu got clear of the others, and kept himself afloat without much exertion by means of the baler, and when the others were exhausted by struggling in the sea he began to kill them. Those against whom he had an ill-feeling he killed by holding their heads under the water and drowning them; the others he killed with his weapon. In this way forty were destroyed; but still he continued to kill until all save Paikea and Hae-ora had sunk under his weapon. Hae-ora called to Rua-tapu and said, "O