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50. Cremation Amongst the Maori Tribes of New Zealand

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placed. A companion sucks at the point of the horn and quickly closes the little hole in the point of the horn with a pitchy substance. Through the outer pressure of the air the horn remains firmly to the temples of the patient and works as an ordinary cupping glass.

During the whole period of my stay with these peculiar people, whose manner of life I have briefly depicted in this chapter, I was not once molested in the slightest way. When the Batwa had once grasped that I wanted to get information regarding their life in the swamps, they seemed to be delighted to help me so far as lay in their power. I am also indebted to them to a great extent that the ethnographical collections which I have acquired have been so complete, collections which enormously facilitate the work of the monograph on the Batwa tribes with which I am at present occupied.

The sketch map is taken from "N.E. Rhodesia Provisional Map, by O. L. Beringer, from information collected in the Survey Office, etc." The districts occupied by the different tribes are inserted by Eric von Rosen.

ERIC VON ROSEN.

New Zealand.

Best.

Cremation amongst the Maori Tribes of New Zealand.
Elsdon Best.

By **50**

In the first place it is well to state that cremation was never a common racial custom among the Maori. It was never practised as a general custom to the exclusion of other methods of disposing of the dead. So far as we are aware, the circumstances under which cremation was practised by the natives of these isles were as follows:—

1. When a tribe occupied open country wherein were found no suitable places for the final disposal of bones of the dead after exhumation.
2. When a raiding party (or even peaceful travellers in some cases) lost members by death outside their tribal boundaries.
3. Occasionally practised in order to stay the spread of disease.

In regard to the first condition, we may cite such examples as the Ngati-apa tribe of the Rangitikei District; as also those occupying the Waimate Plains; who, according to Colonel Gudgeon, often cremated their dead at Te Taheke, an old earthwork fort near the present township of Manaia. In this instance some open pits were pointed out by the natives as the places where their dead were sometimes burned in former times.

The Maori was always very particular in concealing the bones of his dead, lest they be discovered by tribal enemies, who would be in great glee at such a discovery, and would at once proceed to manufacture fish-hooks, piercers, flutes, points for bird-spears, &c., out of the said bones.

As to the second condition; cremation of the dead in an enemy's country was common, we believe, to all tribes. When members of a war party were slain under such conditions, their companions would, if not too hard pressed, cremate the bodies. In some cases they would retreat to some secluded spot in the forest, bearing their dead with them, and there burn them. In the case of men of rank, the heads were often cut off, steamed and cured, and taken home, to be kept over by their friends; in which case only the bodies were burned. We have heard of cases in which, when pressed by the enemy, the wounded also were thrown into huge fires and burned. Being too badly wounded to travel, the only thing to do was to burn them, lest their bodies be eaten, and their bones converted into fish hooks, etc., a terrible degradation in Maori eyes. Thus an old native known as Tahu-ora explained that he was so named from the fact that his father, when

FIG. 1.—BATWA MAN, WHO HAS DIVED FOR A WATER LILY.

FIG. 2.—BOWMAN. BATWA TRIBE.

FIG. 3.—BATWA WOMEN.

FIG. 4.—BATWA MAN AT HIS HUT.

THE SWAMPS OF BANGWEOLO AND ITS INHABITANTS.

seriously wounded in a raid on the west coast tribes, had been burned alive, as the name signifies. Again, when the west coast tribes attacked Ngai-tara at Miramar, two of their chiefs, Te Toko and Whakatau, were slain, and, under cover of night, were cremated at Haewai, in Houghton Bay. So much for cremation in war.

An old native of the east coast informs us that the burning of a human body would be carried out at some rocky or sterile spot, or other place whereat there was no likelihood of food being cultivated in the future, for such would spell misfortune; the place of the dead being intensely *tapu*.

In the case of a person dying when on a visit to a friendly clan, the latter would be almost sure to ask that he be buried at their place, but, in most cases, his friends would carry him home for burial. At such a juncture, one would probably hear quoted the highly curious aphorism, "*He mata kai rangi; kp he mata kai aruhe*," meaning that the deceased is a person of some standing, not a nobody, and hence they will carry the body home for burial. The Maori ever likes to bury his dead on his own tribal lands. We have seen bodies carried over the roughest bush-clad ranges for several days so that they might be laid with the tribal dead.

In some cases, however, when the task of carrying a body home was reckoned to be too arduous, or possibly for some other reason, a suitable place would be sought away from the path, on the homeward journey, and the body there buried, though the head might possibly be taken.

Again, in the Bay of Plenty district, a singular custom obtained in former times in regard to the bodies of persons who died of *kai uaua*, which, we take it, was consumption. In such cases the body was burned in order to prevent the spread of the malady, and all ashes were carefully buried.

The following account of the burning of the bones of the dead after exhumation was gathered from the northern tribes; we have not heard of it as having been practised as a custom elsewhere. The custom seems to be a singular one, and one marvels why the natives should go to the trouble of carrying out inhumation and exhumation when the bones were to be burned. However, we do not profess to know native modes of thought, as we have only been a little over half a century among them.

"When a dying person is near his end (or just after the breath of life has left the body) his legs are doubled up and a cloak wrapped round him. The body is placed in position for the mourning ceremony, which continues for some days. At the conclusion of this ceremonial, the body is buried, or placed in a tree. Having disposed of the body, the priests return, and proceed to a stream or pond whereat religious ceremonies are performed, and there set up a wooden rod in the water, which rod or wand represents the spirit world and the defunct. The *tohunga ariki*, or head priest, then recites the following formula:—

"'Thou wand of the Po (spirit world): the great Po, the long Po, the dark Po, the unseen Po, the unsought Po. Stand there, ye wand, wand of *tane*, wand of the Po: Depart for ever to the Po.'"

The wand and ritualistic utterance are both for the dead, and the object is to cause the *wairua* or spirit of the dead to proceed at once on its way to the Po or spirit world, to join the myriads who have already gone there, lest it remain in this world and plague the living.

The officiating priest then sets up in the stream another rod or wand, which represents this world and the living denizens thereof, and recites:—

"'Thou wand of this world: the great world, the long world, the dark world. Stand there, ye wand, the wand of Hikurangi, the wand of this world, of the world of light. Remain in this world.'"

The priests then return to the village, the items presented as "wrappers" for

the dead are handed over to relatives, the *Taumaha* ritual is recited over the foods for the funeral feast.

Three summers pass away, the bones are reclaimed from earth or tree, and burned with fire. Prior to such burning certain foods for a ritual feast are cooked in *tapu* ovens, while the priest extracts the teeth from the skull, ties them to a wand, and then, holding up the wand in his hand, he repeats a certain formula. Then, when the shades of night fall, the bones of the dead are burned.

The second charm is to preserve the life and welfare of the living. Hikurangi is a mountain in the original homeland of the Maori race, a famed and sacred mount, the abode of the Bird of the Sun.

These brief notes comprise all that we have to offer on the subject of cremation among the Maori folk of New Zealand; the custom was never a common one, and was only resorted to under certain circumstances, as we have shown.

For the benefit of non-residents in these isles, it may be as well to state that the practice of cremation has long been discontinued among the Maori, though cases are known in which the bodies of our dead were burned by the hostiles during the late unpleasantness in the 'sixties.

ELSDON BEST.

England: Archaeology.

Peake: Manley.

Description of a Bronze Flat Celt in the Newbury Museum. By

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Harold Peake. *With a Report on an Analysis of the Alloy by John J. Manley, Daubeny Laboratory, Magdalen College, Oxford.*

The flat celt which is here illustrated belongs to the Borough of Newbury Museum, and was formerly in the museum belonging to the Newbury Literary and Scientific Institution. It is said to have been found near Newbury, but the exact site of its discovery is unknown.

In a MS. catalogue of the old museum compiled in 1854, by James White Roake, the curator at that time, it is thus described: "I. 63. Three bronze spearheads or celts. Supposed "to have been manufactured and used by the ancient Britons. "Exhumed in the neighbourhood of Newbury. Deposited by "J. W. Roake."

Then follow extracts from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The two other celts are of a later type.

This celt is 170 mm. long, 76 mm. wide at the cutting edge, 34 mm. wide at the other end, and 11.5 mm. thick. Its sides seem to have been hammered so as to exhibit faint traces of flanges; there are no signs of a stop ridge. Its weight was 520 grams, but 3 grams were removed for analysis by Professor H. J. Bowman, and were handed over to Mr. John J. Manley, who has kindly contributed the following account.

H. PEAKE.

THE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION OF THE BRONZE.

In December 1911, I received from Professor Bowman 3 grams of drillings which had been removed from the above-named flat bronze celt. These drillings have recently been analysed under my supervision by one of my pupils, Mr. E. A. Berrisford, of Queen's College Oxford. Two perfectly independent analyses were carried out, and, with the object of securing the greatest possible degree of accuracy, all the weighings were effected with a previously fully-tested and highly sensitive long beam Oertling balance, by the methods of reversal and vibration. Beyond stating that every care was taken to exclude the introduction of foreign matter and