

Journal of the Interpreter and Native Guides with the Patea Expeditions

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The *Wanganui Times* of the 24th October, publishes the following journal, by William Jenkins, Esq., Acting Interpreter to the Imperial Forces serving at the Patea:-

Having received orders to accompany the Brigadier and force on an expedition against the murderers of Mr Broughton and Keriti, and having engaged the services of eight Maori guides of the Nguraura Hapu, several of whom were near relatives, and one a brother of Keriti; four of them proceeded on Sunday, the 15th instant, to the Reserve Redoubt, and were at the service of Colonel Trevor, the other four being attached to our party. We embarked in the Gundagai, on the day following, at 9 a.m., and reached Patea the same evening. On Tuesday we accompanied the Brigadier and 300 men of the 18th and 58th regiments to Kakaramea redoubt, taking with us one six-pounder Armstrong gun. Having pitched our tents, at the Brigadier's request, Hata Rio drew a map of the locality he proposed visiting, and pointed out the various native tracks leading to the villages, and particularly to the one occupied by the murderers of poor Broughton.

Wednesday, 5.30 a.m. – We were on the move, Major Inman in command of the force. The weather was anything but propitious, much heavy rain having fallen in the night, the ground and the high fern through which we passed, was saturated. Heavy showers descended at intervals, so that we were pretty well drenched. The guide led the force by a circuitous route to the back of the pah, visible from Kakaramea, a fearful ravine intervening and surrounding three sides of it. We crossed at the most convenient spot, and that was bad enough; so steep and slippery that the ascent was exceedingly difficult – especially to the soldiers who had to carry their long Enfield rifles.

The horses were left in charge of a guard, and the Brigadier and staff proceeded to climb the hill over the first gully, and here we found as bad a piece of road as any man could desire to travel on. On our right we observed that the hill was skirted with apparently rich cultivations, and we peered into the forest surrounding them, anxious to discover if a Hau-hau's head was watching our movements. Here our guides exclaimed, "you English soldiers know nothing about bush fighting, we ought to have been here before daylight, and have reached the back of the pah by dawn; but now, should the pah be still occupied, we are observed, and the rebels will either escape or lie in ambush to wait our approach; besides, the soldiers are talking all the time, and the enemy will hear them. This is not our way of fighting."

We now, in single file, dipped into the deep ravine and scrambled up the other side, as we best could, getting at length on the ridge, we followed a narrow but well defined-track which led us out immediately at the back of the pah. On reaching the open, Ensign Jones of the 18th dashed up the hill with his men, and they were into the pah in quick time, followed closely by the guides and the whole force, but not a Maori was there! The place had evidently been deserted immediately after the death of poor Broughton. The Hau Hau flag-staff was in an instant cut down, each man appeared anxious to have a hand in its destruction. This pah is named Otoia.

The Brigadier then desired me to take the natives down the path which apparently led to some plantation in the hollow to our right, and taking a few men with us we very soon opened into a very large Maori garden, entirely surrounded by dense bush. Far away down in the ravine, we heard the crowing of a cock, and having closely examined the skirts of the bush and discovering the main track by which it is supposed the murderers returned to the

pah, we went back to our friends on the hill, who, by this time had prepared a second breakfast for which we had acquired an appetite. During our repast another heavy shower fell and we retreated to the whares to finish our meal. The weather having cleared up, the Brigadier discovered a Maori stockade on a hill a little to the right, the back of the position we occupied, and I was at once requested to take the Maori guides to look for a track leading thereto a deep ravine intervening.

The Brigadier with 100 men remained on the hill, and Major Inman with 200 men, followed us on the track which led us down to the stream, and here we found the worst piece of road we had yet met with, consequently we moved very slowly, and by the time we were up the hill, we were all pretty well "done up." One man not able to keep up with us lost his way, and was some little time afterwards picked up, and when questioned by the Brigadier as to his conduct, he replied – "Sure, yer honour, it was the hill that bate me."

We now lost our track, and scrambled through the heavy scrub with great exertion, Hata Rio and myself leading the way, and beating a path for the men. The Maoris again found fault with the soldiers for talking so much, but it was useless, talk they would. Who could stop an Hibernian from talking, if it was only to tell his comrade to hold his tongue? On observing one fellow jabbering away, I told him to cease, when he replied, "In troth, Sir, I didn't spake at all, I only told Mick not to make such a divil of a noise." But on they jabbered and no one could stop them.

At length an open appeared, and Hata Rio exclaimed "we are close to the pah, cease talking, as if it is occupied, Maoris are near to us and will gain an advantage over us." Suddenly rounding the bush, the stockade was before us, distant about 60 yards apparently newly erected, with poles transversely and fronted with green flax. A stand was made, and silence prevailed for a few seconds, the men gradually arrived. Major Inman ordered them to keep under cover of the bush. When a sufficient number of men had come up the order was given for the assault. Captain Johnston of the 18th, appeared on the open, and calling on his men rushed up close to the stockade, and, in a few seconds he was over the fence, and several others soon cut their way through into the enclosure, which was surrounded inside by a deep rifle pit. Not a Maori was seen and the flagstaff soon fell – the stockade was levelled to the ground, and at the back or ledges of the precipitous descent leading to Patea river, were the whares or miserable huts, and lots of potatoes and kumeras. The place was soon fired, some kumeras, native mats, calabashes, &c., taken away as relics, and the force retired. This place is called Whakapaiho and must have been erected about the time of the murder of Mr Broughton, as a place of retreat in case of attack, and had by all appearances, been deserted only a few days.

We found a better track for our return, and in a short time rejoined the Brigadier on the hill, and having burnt the whares there the force retired by the track we had discovered in the front of the pah. The ravine, which surrounds this pah is in the form of a horseshoe, is several feet deep, and exceedingly precipitous, one part of the ascent on the Kakaramea side, being by a strong ladder, called by the troops "Jacob's ladder." The hill on which the pah stood, has been rather strangely named "Gentle Annie." The ascent was so difficult that the men had to pass up their rifles in order to have both hands at liberty to pull themselves up. "Such a 'winder' I have not had for some years, and the soldiers declared it was the most difficult journey they ever had. I heard one of the men behind me exclaim, as he came puffing and sweating up the steep – "Be my soul, this is a divil of a place to fight in; what could we do if the niggers were after us jist here?"

On reaching the top our olfactory nerves were assailed by a fearful stench. My first thought was that we had discovered the body of poor Broughton; but we soon found out our mistake: there lay the horse he rode from Kakaramea, which had been pierced to the heart with some sharp weapon. The saddle was gone, the bridle was on the horse's head. I managed with some difficulty to take it off the putrid carcass and have brought it with me. The fate of poor Broughton is no longer a matter of doubt. Probably the Maori report was correct in substance, but not in detail. The horse was killed a long way from the pah, and not within sight of it, the deep ravine intervening. I concluded, therefore, that he was killed somewhere between the spot where the flag of truce was erected on the flat, and the edge of the ravine where we found the horse.