

- 1 **BIRD-SNARING, ETC., IN THE WHANGANUI RIVER DISTRICT.****BY T. W. DOWNES.**

THE Maori of pre-European days was a singularly efficient craftsman, fowler, and warrior. As a food-seeker he secured the eel on its way to the ocean, caught the less known but more highly esteemed *piharau* (lamprey) on its way up stream, trapped the *kiore* or rat in the forest, and most ingeniously snared the feathered creatures of Tane-i-te-rere. In bush-lore he had little or nothing to learn from the white man. Some early writers complain of the Maori's lack of ingenuity, but the fact remains that the Maori, with great skill, made river, sea, and bush minister to his necessities. He lived well where the average European would have starved.

In this paper I shall endeavour to give some of the details of the technical skill exhibited by the Maori in snaring and preserving birds. Readers who seek information regarding the ceremonies and rites observed in connection with the catching of birds will find details in Elsdon Best's *The Maori*, Hamilton's *Maori Art*, and the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*.

The following notes were for the most part obtained from Puanaki of Ohura, a short time before his death in 1926. Living in this remote district, Puanaki never came much into contact with Europeans; he lived the life of the old-time Maori, and could not speak English. Reremai of Pipiriki, aged about 80 years, formerly of Owairua, a deserted hamlet over a hundred miles up-river, Tamatea of Hiruharama, Wharawhara, a son of Topine te Mamaku, and Kauae-orangi, the son of Raungaiti, both of Taumarunui, also contributed.

Pigeon Snaring.—The pigeon (*Hemiphaga novae-zealandiae*), known to the Maori as *kereru* and *kuku*, was taken in the old days only in its proper season. This season

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commenced about the middle of the twelfth month, that is, Taihi-haratua (May), continued throughout the first month of the year, that is, Pipiri (June), and finished about the middle of Whangongoi (July).¹

The birds were fat and at their best during the period stated, and snaring with the *waka-kereru* (pigeon trough) was almost the only method used before the Europeans, with their guns, came on the scene.

The *waka-kereru* was, said Puanaki, about three *teketeke* in length. The *teketeke* was, I think, known as *tuke* in other places, and in length was the distance from the elbow to the point of the extended middle finger. That makes the length of the trough between 4ft. 6in. and 5ft. The width, as indicated by the same informant, would be about nine inches, and the depth five inches.

Each trough was given the same name as that of the *miro* tree (*Podocarpus ferrugineus*) in which it was placed; all the larger bird-frequented trees had a specific name. The troughs were never changed from tree to tree, and were set in the same tree year after year, though removed at the end of the season. In some few cases, when a tame pigeon (*mokai*) was used as a decoy, the trough was removed nightly and replaced each morning at daylight. They were usually cut out of *totara* (*Podocarpus totara*), and were sometimes ornamented with carving.

In the operations of a regular organized trapping party, of which several would be sent out by the clans who owned the feeding-grounds, many of these *waka-kereru* were used, for each man of the party might be given as many as ten to attend to. These men went round their respective beats to the selected *miro* trees, and had to climb

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the trees, keep the troughs supplied with water (which usually had to be carried quite a long way from the bottom of a gully to the top of a high ridge), remove the dead birds, and re-set and properly arrange the nooses. As a rule a man could visit each of his trees twice in the day. Water was usually carried in gourds, but occasionally *kohukohu*, an absorbent moss (*Hypnum clandestinum*) was used; it was compressed into a rough ball, and made a useful,

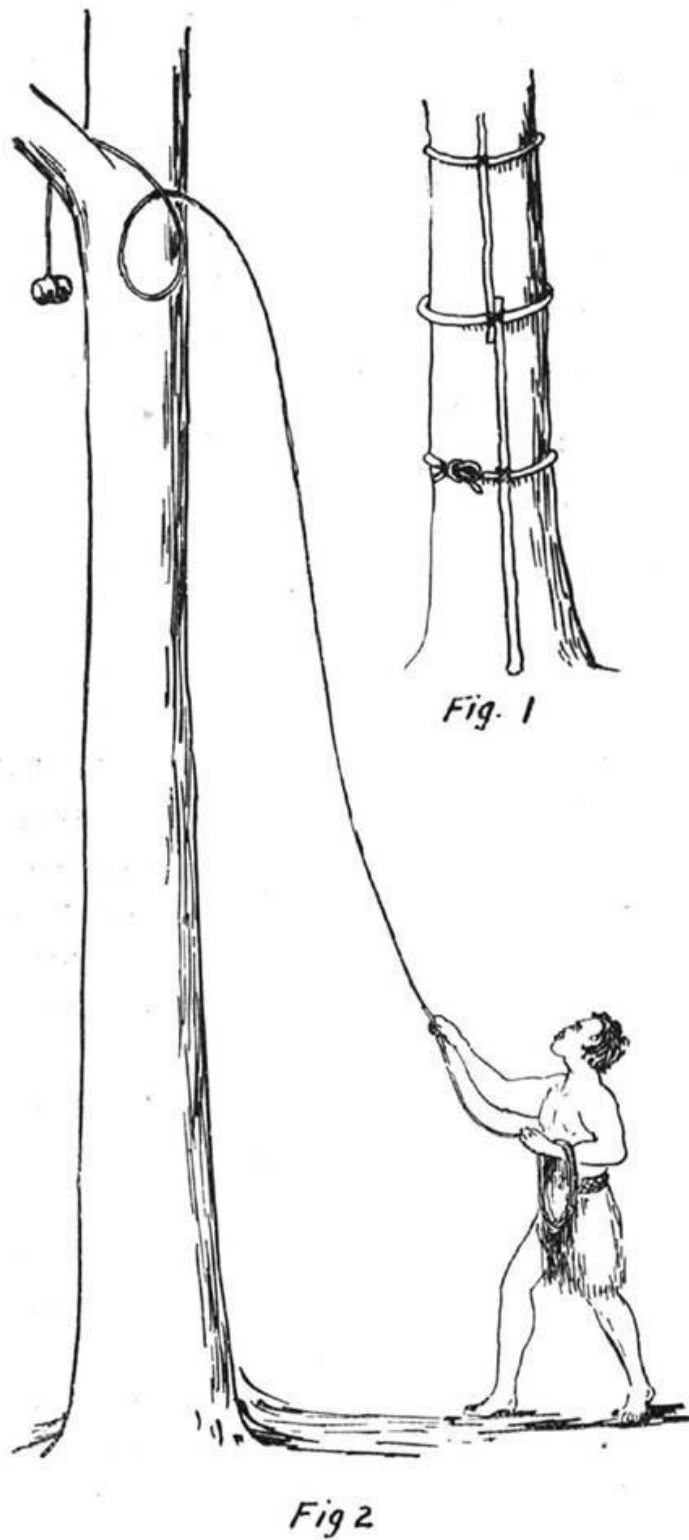


Fig. 1

Fig 2

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sponge-like carrier. This was also formerly used by women, and was largely employed as a covering for new-born infants.

Puanaki stated that in his youth the pigeons were so tame that they would sometimes sit on the edge of the trough, and commence drinking, while the trappers were setting the nooses.

Sometimes temporary ladders were made on difficult trees by securing lengths of *karewao* (common supplejack) round the trunk, these being about 3ft. apart. They were held in position by one or more perpendicular vines secured to them, or by saplings lashed to the supplejacks. This rude form of ladder was known as a *teka* (Fig. 1), but the usual

custom was for each man to carry a rope made of plaited leaves of *ti* (*Cordyline australis*), three twisted strands plaited together, a plait being known as *whirikorino*. With a stone on one end, this would be thrown over the lowest limb, and worked down on the other side by throwing loops till the thrower was able to reach the end. (See Fig. 2.)

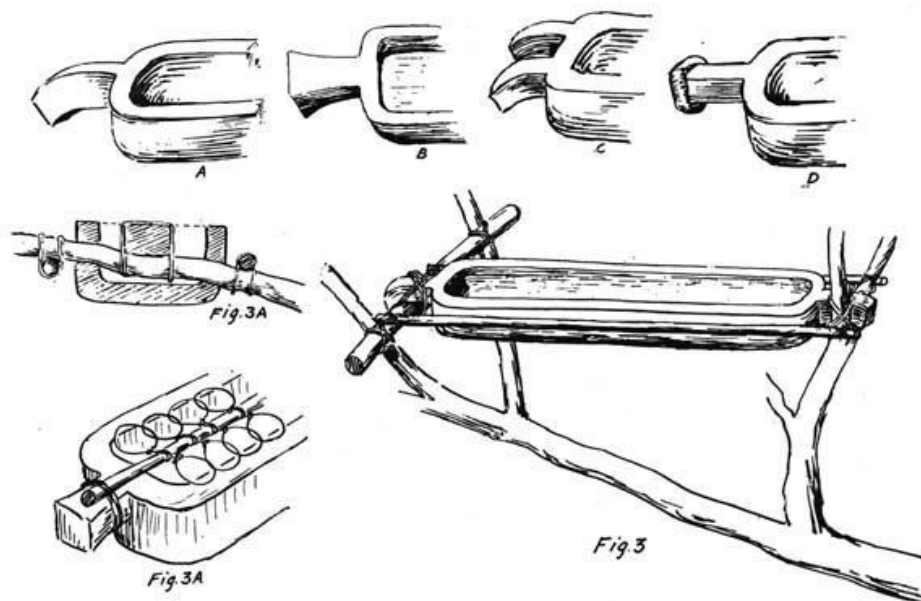
There were many recognized camps on the Upper Whanganui used only during the bird-catching season, such as Taupiri, Teoteo, and Owata. They were known as *nga kainga mahi kai manu* (the bird-food procuring camps).

At these main hunting-camps it was the duty of the *tohunga* (expert), one of whom would be at each camp, to recite the correct *karakia*, or charms, very early in the morning, before the trappers set out on their rounds. It was also his duty to take charge of all the birds that were taken at each trough at the beginning of the season, and to perform certain ritual over them.

The trappers, while at their work, were *tapu*, and so went out each morning without partaking of food; they did not eat until their return at night.

The *waka-kereru* were sometimes fixed in a bough junction, but were more often tied at both ends, where projections at each end, called *maungaroa*, were fashioned for this purpose when the trough was being made. These projections were usually somewhat dove-tailed in shape, and had a slight downward turn, so as to give a closer and more secure grip on the bough on which they were tied.

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Often cross-pieces of timber, known as *turuturu*, had to be tied to the bough with split *karewao*, to suit the length of the trough. Again, sometimes a double projection was left on the trough to fit each side of an upright bough. (Fig. 3.) Occasionally the troughs were suspended. Parallel to the trough, the same length or a little longer, saplings from one to two inches in diameter were tied on to it, one on each side of the trough, to which the nooses were fixed. These, when fixed to the trough itself, were kept in position by small pieces of wood placed between the trough and the stick. These were called *karawa*, and sometimes *paepae*. They were frequently tied to the boughs instead of to the trough itself.

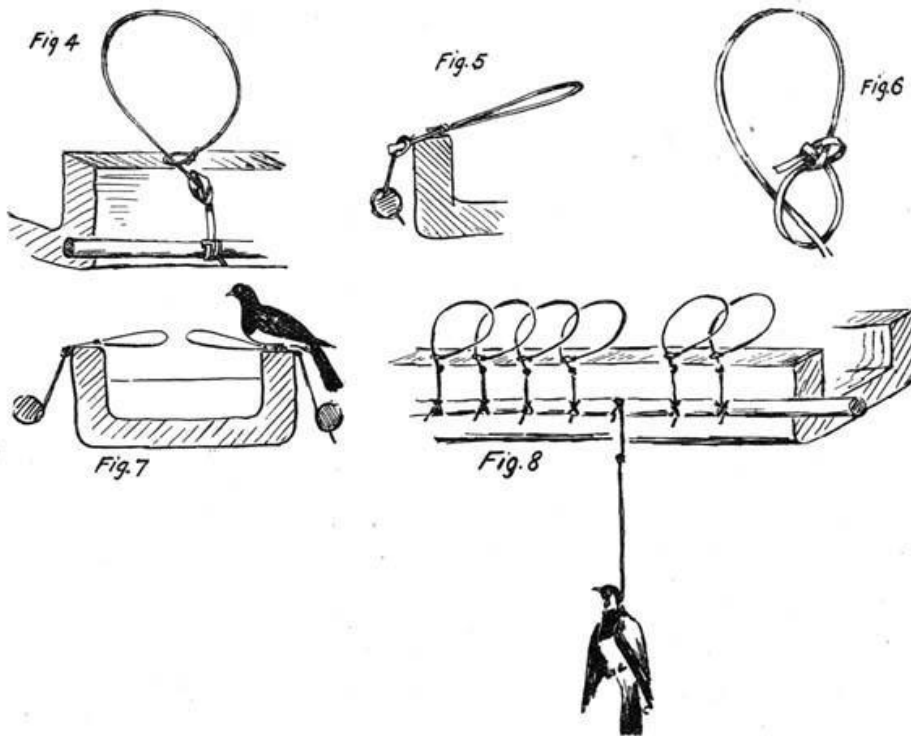
Sometimes only one *karawa* was used, in which case it was tied at both ends to the *maungaroa*, and placed down the middle of the trough, with the nooses arranged on both sides and resting on the sides of the trough. The birds were thus caught when perching either upon the top-sides, *niao*, of the trough, or on the *karawa*. This method was not in common use, owing to the dead birds often blocking the water. (See Fig. 3A.)

It is interesting to know that one of these old-time *waka-kereru* is still in position in a *miro* tree at Paparoa, about 18 miles below Taumarunui, but the *karawa* have long since rotted away. A natural trough formed by a peculiar *rata* tree root-growth was formerly a well-known snaring place at Tokamaru, on the hill south of the Kaurapawa stream.

Natural water-courses were also sometimes used, the stream being covered for a considerable distance with branches, leaving an open water-space in a suitable position, around which snares were placed. Such a place formerly existed at Rakatopoma [?], and was owned by Te Kooro.

The nooses (*tari*) were made from the leaf of the *ti* (*Cordyline australis*), which is much stronger than that of *harakeke* (flax—*Phormium tenax*), and the noose-loop holds its shape much better. Two strips were taken from each leaf, one from each side of the mid-rib; the rest of the leaf was discarded. Flax was never used, as it was not stiff enough to stand at the required angle. These strips were somewhat less than an eighth of an inch wide, and were called *kotaha*; after they were looped and set in

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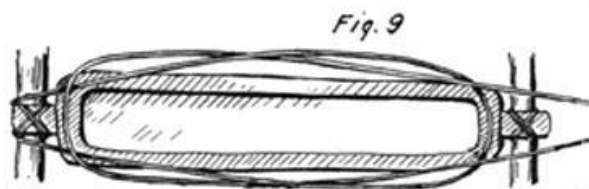
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position the nooses were known as *mahanga*. The *kotaha* was not plaited, but was worked a little between the thumb and fingers, with a cross movement, to separate the fibres. It was sometimes smoked for a time over a fire of *kahikatea* (*Podocarpus dacrydioides*) wood to give it a weathered appearance. It was very strong and stiff, and would remain in any set position until disturbed. Below the noose there was tied a loose knot, known as *whitiki*, which was most important, as it turned the *tari* to a different angle, and also turned the leaf strip edge on to the loop space, and so provided a better catchment for the feathers of the bird's neck. (See Figs. 4-8.)

The loop was fastened with a knot similar to that which is known to Europeans as a bowline (*kopeti*), and the loose end of the *kotaha* was tied to the *karawa* by a knot called *whitiki-pu*. (Fig. 4.)

The nooses, or *mahanga*, were placed overlapping each other, and so close together that the birds were forced to put their heads through one of them to get at the water. They were set leaning somewhat towards the water, so that the pigeon sitting on the edge of the trough would not interfere with the arrangement of the snares. After the arrangements were completed, a charm was recited, the effect of which was to attract the birds, and it was recognized that some men, owing to a more powerful charm, or, as the uninitiated would think, to more careful noose-setting, were more successful trappers than others.

Kauae-o-rangi, of Taumarunui, tells me that when he was a boy he saw the double-noose method operated for pigeons at Koiro. In this case the fowler sits in the tree, concealed as well as possible, and watches the snares. The nooses are set so that, when the pigeon sits on the edge of the trough, the cords are clear, and when one side is pulled, the other being made fast, the bird is caught by the legs. As a rule only one bird was taken at a time. (Fig. 9.)



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It was customary to place the troughs containing water in the trees some time previous to the snares being fixed, so that the pigeons would become accustomed to using them. It is said that the *miro* berry creates a thirst, and that the pigeons are caught in the act of drawing back after drinking. The ruffling of the feathers gives the noose a grip, and it is, of course, quickly tightened by the struggling bird.

The first birds taken for the season at each trough were taken away by the *tohunga*, or expert, for use in certain ritual.

As the men gathered the strangled pigeons they tied them together with *akatea* vine in small bundles, heads together. The birds were hung to cool at a height of about six feet from the ground. This height was necessary in order to prevent depredations by rats. Each evening these bundles were taken to the camps, where the other men, and sometimes women, plucked the feathers and removed the bones and entrails. In the ordinary way the entrails were

eaten with the birds, but when making *huahua* (preserving them) the entrails were removed, as the birds would not keep well with these delicacies left in. The bones and entrails were removed through a small hole made below the wing (I omitted to find out from Puanaki on which side). The birds, heads together, were then tied together again with *akatea*, and the bundles were covered with leaves of the *rangiora*, or *wharangi*, as it is sometimes called (*Brachyglottis*). Outside the leaves fronds of *ponga* (*Cyathea dealbata*) were fastened, leaving the under part open to the air. Each bundle was then suspended from a tree branch by a single vine and, so affirms the Maori, they would thus keep good for a month or more without attracting flies or developing any strong smell. They were then left until preparations were forward for cooking and preserving. All the feathers were burned, except some of the finest tail-feathers, which were hidden away until such time as they would be required for decorating the vessels in which the birds were preserved. The feathers were burned because the Maori believed that the sight of them would cause birds to desert the forest. The bones and entrails were eaten, but no other part of the bird was

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permitted to be eaten in camp until the trapping season was entirely over.

Pigeons were sometimes taken with spears. These were called *here*, and were sometimes of *tawa* (*Beilschmiedia tawa*) and sometimes of *maire* (*Olea Cunninghamii*). The former tree was split, and several could be taken from a single trunk, but when fashioned from *maire* a tall and straight young tree was selected, and this was thinned down to the desired thickness. They were from 20 to 30 feet long. Usually a bone point, sometimes barbed, was lashed on. Spearing was the method used before the *wakakereru* idea was developed, but it was generally discarded here in favour of the latter method, as in spearing the body of the bird was considerably damaged. The birds were usually speared from the ground, but in the tall trees a man climbed to a convenient place, and recited charms to make the birds come to the clump of berries at which the spear was directed.

In later times it was a custom of travelling parties to cook pigeons on the march, without calling a halt. Small stones were heated, and three of these, each about the size of a pigeon's egg, were forced with a stick into the bird's body, through a hole made in the neck. This method was known as *kono*. The hole was plugged with the bird's own head, bent round. The body, with the feathers on, was wrapped in *pikopika* (a fern), and placed on the backs of carriers, and after three or four hours was found to be perfectly cooked!

How the Patua Bark Vessels were made.—While some of the men were engaged in the trapping, others were engaged in making *patua*, a sort of bark basket in which birds were preserved.

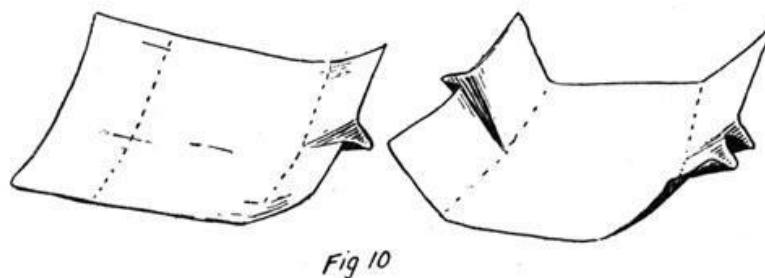
These *patua* were usually made of the inner bark of the *totara* tree; when this material was unprocurable *hinau* bark was used, but this was avoided if possible on account of the bark being too thick to bend well. The bark of young trees only was used, and the section of bark was removed from the sunny side of the tree (the northern side), as this came off more easily, and was more flexible than that on the shady side. It was taken off in the winter, but my informant had forgotten the months in which this was done. Two cuts were made through the bark, half encircling the

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tree, one about ten or twelve feet above the other, long enough for two *patua*, according to the size required. Two perpendicular cuts were then made, opposite each other, and meeting the horizontal cuts. The two bottom corners were then slightly wrenched free to give a start to the stripping, after which a piece of *karewao* (supplejack) was tied round the portion operated upon, to prevent it falling down, and perhaps splitting. In a short time the bark would come away without further treatment; sometimes, when in a hurry, the whole piece was wrenched off in one operation, after first beating it all round, but it had to be done very carefully, to avoid splitting. The piece of bark removed and corrected to length was called *kiripāro*.

(In many places where *totara* forests still exist, the old scars can be seen where bark was removed by a former generation. This has, in our district, given rise to a mistaken belief among the European settlers that half a *totara* tree was killed by being barked thus in the process of canoe-making. Examples of these barked trees can be seen in the Borough reserve, south of Taumarunui.)

When the *kiripāro* was carried back to camp, slight bruises were made at equal distances from each end, in straight lines across the fibre, showing where the bends were to start. This was done by bending inwards once or twice. The ends were then made pliable by being placed alternately in a fire, and before getting cold the ends, from the marked line, were folded, first one end, then the other, the middle first with an outward bend, then alternately each side of the middle and end for end, five folds in all at each end. Unless done in this way it is said the bark would split, when the whole thing would be rendered useless; consequently the utmost care was used in working out these folds. (Fig. 10.)

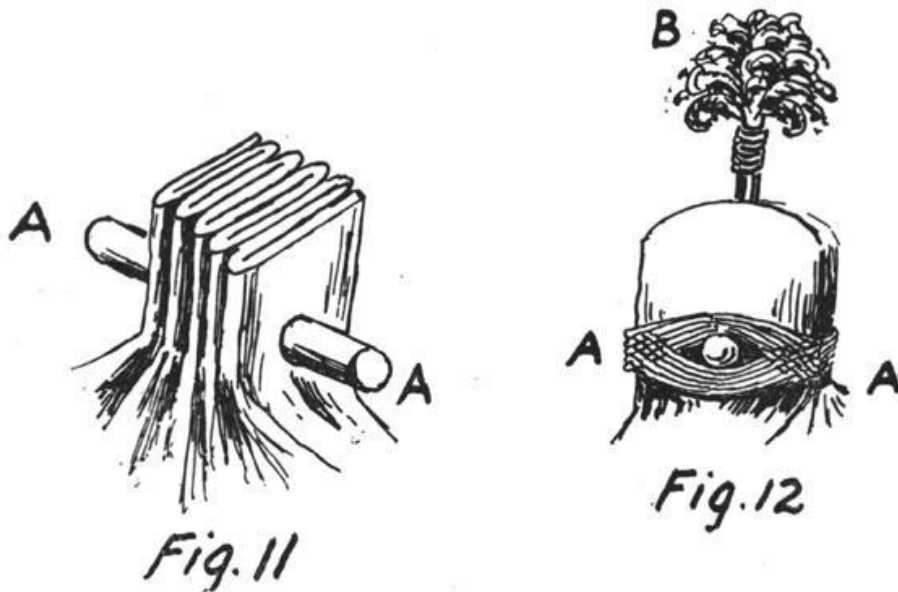


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In a large *patua* the width allowed for a complete fold at the end was one *whanganga* and a *huka*, otherwise one and a half spans, a *whananga* being a full span of the fingers, the *huka* being the distance from the end of the middle finger to the knuckle. That would be, roughly, about a foot; consequently the width of the bark required for a large *patua* would be about five feet. Many were, however, considerably smaller. (See Pl. 1.)

The fold was termed *potipoti*. The folds were next brought together at the top, and a hole bored through the bunch, in which was inserted a *manuka* (*Leptospermum scoparium*) or *kopuka* (*L. ericoides*) pin, called a *titi*, perhaps three-quarters of an inch in diameter (A, Fig. 11). A length of *aka whiriwhiri* or twisted vine was next prepared, in length three *wahanga*, a *wahanga* in this district signifying a measurement from the centre of the breast to the finger tips, arm outstretched.²

The prepared vine, called *herekaka* (A, Fig. 12) was passed seven times round the lug, known as *poitu*, and on both sides of the *titi* in a *ripeka* or crossed design, drawing the folds together as tight as it was possible to get them. The top of the *poitu* was then neatly rounded off. (Figs. 11, 12, and Plate 1.)



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The length of the *patua* varied considerably; those for small birds, such as *mata karaihe* (probably "glass eye," the blight-bird, *Zosterops caeruleus*), being only about 12 to 18 inches long, and of about the same width, while large ones for pigeons or *kaka* would often be 3ft. or more. All the large *patua* made for presentation were given special names. It is said that the two largest ever made in this district were known as *Taratuia* and *Pohoare*. They were made near *Reretaruke*, and presented, full of preserved pigeons, to the lower river natives during the marriage celebrations of one *Tamahina*, about seven generations ago. It is said that both of these, when empty, were large enough to hold four men. The lower river people were unable to fill these again for a return present, but it is said that they were afterwards used for *huahua tangata* (preserved human flesh). After once being used for holding human flesh, *patua* were never again used for birds or for holding water, but were usually broken up.

*Rememai*³ gives an account of these two *patua* as follows:—

"Ko *Tarahuia raua ko Pohoare he patua no nga kai maori, ara no nga manu i mahia [e] raua ki Re-taruke. Ko te take i mahia ai mo te moenga a Tamahina i a Hinengakau, hei patunga kai ma Tamahina. Ko te rahi o enei patua e wha nga tangata ki roto, e hoehoea ana i mua hei waka. Kati ka mahia nei nga manu mo roto, ko nga manu enei:—Kereru, kokako, tieke, wirairangi, huia, kaka, piopio, korimako, kawau, matuku, tui, pihipihī, pitoitōi, kiwi, kakariki, weka, whio, whioi, pukeko, koera, kotare.*

"Me era atu manu, kaore he manu i ngaro o roto i te ngaherehere.

"Ko te tane tuatahi a *Hine-ngakau ko Tukaiora, no muri ka moea e Tamahina, koia tenei patua i mahia ai. Ka mahia nei nga kai, ara nga manu, hei kai hapainga mo Tamahina, ko nga iwi nana i mahi ko Ngati-Rangi, ko Ngati-Hauaroa, ko Ngati-Ruru, ko Ngati-Hekeawai, ko*

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Ngati-Tuwharetoa, ko Ngati-Kura, ko Ngati-Rangituhia, ko Ngati-Uenuku, ko Ngati-Manunui, me era atu ingoa hapu. Ka mutu te mahi i nga manu, ka kīia aua manu he huahua. Ka whakahokia mai a Tamahina raua ko tana wahine ki a Ngati-Ruaka, ka riro mai a Taratuia raua ko Pohoare, ngaro tonu atu ia Ngati-Ruaka. Ka pau nga kai o roto i aua patua, ka tahi ka kuhuna nga tangata rangatira ki roto, ara i a Pohoare raua ko Tarahuia, hei utu [?] mo] aua manu i pau nei i a Ngati-Ruaka."

Patua holding birds for home consumption were used year after year, and, if they were well made, would last a generation or more.

When enough birds had been gathered they were prepared for cooking. In addition to the bones and entrails being removed, which process was termed *makiri*, the legs were cut off, also the wings at the lowest joint, but the heads were left on and tucked into the bodies. From 80 to 100 was the usual number for an ordinary-sized *patua*, and a special method of counting, employed only when counting pigeons, was used when packing them away:—Tahi pu=10; Rua pu=20; Toru pu=30; etc.; Ngahuru pu=100, etc.

They were packed in rows, heads upwards, honeycomb fashion, and were squeezed into a practically solid mass.

Cooking always took place at night time; one of the methods is said to have been as follows:—Holes were dug, in which fires were lighted and kept going until the ground was very hot. A quantity of *raureka* (unidentified) was then placed in the hole and the full *patua* placed in position. More *raureka* was then put round the sides, and on the top, the whole being covered with a *tapora* (covering mat), and covered with earth; no water was used. This was a slow method, taking fully twenty-four hours for the birds to be properly cooked.

A second method was to make and heat up an ordinary *hangi* (steaming pit), or, as it is sometimes called, *umu*, and, after the fire was raked out, the stones were covered with *korokio* (a species of veronica?) and a *patua* that was used only as a cooking vessel, packed with birds, was placed therein. Strips of *totara* bark were then placed over the *patua* to catch and circulate the steam, a mat was placed over the whole, which was then covered with earth. By this

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method water was used to produce steam, and it is said to have been a much quicker mode of cooking than that first described. When the pigeons were very fat, the mat was sometimes lifted by the four corners, and some of the surplus hot fat removed. After cooking, while still hot, the birds were re-packed in their respective vessels.

If there were too many birds for the *patua* to accommodate, the surplus ones were placed in calabashes and then put away in the *whata*, or store-houses. In some districts, where the material for *patua* was not available, the whole season's catch was put into these *tahā*, or calabashes, which will be described later.

The full vessel was known as a *patua huahua*. After packing a bundle of tail-feathers was fixed to each end, not only for ornament, but also to show the species of birds the vessel contained, whether *tui*, *kaka*, pigeon, or bell-bird. These tail-feathers were split, then curled, and tied to a little *manuka* stick, the bottom end of which was forced into the centre tuck of the *poitu*. The feathers were usually tied on with split *kiekie* (*Freycinetia Banksii*) root. This adornment was called *puhipuhi*. (Fig. 12.)

A piece of bark was next squared to fit the top of the *patua*, and was pressed down between the two *poitu*. This was to keep dust from the food during storage.

Finally a *manuka* handle was cut, trimmed, and inserted under the folds of the *poitu*, below the *titi*. This was called *amo-poutu*. It was grooved on the under-side to carry the lashings, which, it is said, consisted of twelve strands of *aka*. The tie was called *here-tapeka*. (Fig. 13.) The *amo-poutu* sometimes protruded through holes bored through the sides of the *patua*, under the *poitu*, and it was occasionally bound round with the split root of the *kiekie*.



That pigeons so preserved were highly esteemed may be gathered from the fact that a man named Puiti, living in the Waimarino district, was killed by some visitors when

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they discovered that, when giving them preserved rats, he had retained some potted birds for himself.

Many of the old "goashore" iron pots (*kohua*) that were introduced by the early Europeans were, in the early days, used to cook the birds for *huahua*; such pots were given special names, such as Pupu-tui at Tawa-ta.

Before a *patua* of potted birds was opened, a formula was chanted in order to cause the spirits of the dead birds to again live and fly away to the mountains.

Alas! how are the mighty fallen! The *huahua* of to-day consist of lumps of dried up wild pork, braized in a camp oven and packed in a benzine tin.

The photograph here shown (Plate 1) shows a specimen of these bark vessels in the Whanganui Museum, but it is not a good specimen, the *puhipuhi* and *amo-poutu* being exceptionally poor.

The Tahā or Calabash Vessels.—This is usually written *taha*, but is pronounced by the Maori *tahā*. The vessels consist of the matured fruit of the gourd plant.

That some of these *tahā* were highly valued can be gathered from the fact that many old ones are remembered in song and story, such as Rongo-kako, a specimen with a carved neck that belonged to Ngati-Rangi-whakaewa and Nohoanga-tahi, and which was once in the possession of the Ngati-Ngarengare tribe.

A broken *tahā*, in Rakai-hiku-roa's time, was the primal cause of the fall of the Titi-rangi *pa*.

That they were formerly largely used is suggested by the historical note that when, on the occasion of the marriage of Pikitia to Tumango, one hundred calabashes of *huahua* (said to be all pigeons) were sent to Whanganui from Te Kapua, many of which held upwards of one hundred birds.

The *hue* (*putahue*) was one of the few cultivated vegetable foods possessed by the Maori in pre-European times, but it was only eaten when young. A great deal of ceremony was observed in planting the seeds and tending the young seedlings, but the writer considers the plant quite hardy, and has grown it perfectly well by using ordinary care, and

without the assistance or knowledge of the old time charms. The seeds planted were obtained from a broken gourd in the Whanganui Museum. There

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PLATE 1.



Patua in Whanganui Museum.

PLATE 1.

- ii 



FIG. 1.

Calabash known by the name Ngaturi.



FIG. 2.

Calabash known by the name Wairingaroa.

PLATE 2.

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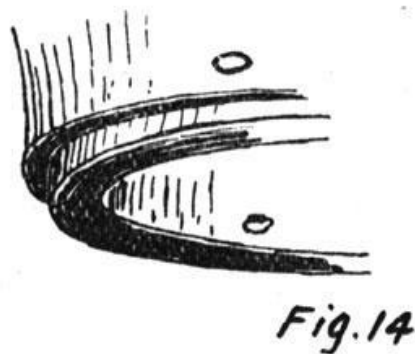
were probably several varieties in the old days, but concerning these no information is obtainable. The variety now grown was seen by the writer at Rarotonga on a recent visit to that island. It is a running or trailing plant, with pretty white flowers, and bears a great number of gourds of various sizes. To get the best results the growing plant should be liberally watered, and the natives here used formerly to choose a rather damp, but sunny, situation for growing them.

For some reason unknown the cultivation of the gourd is a thing of the past in this district, although *taro* and *tī-tawhiti* (*Cordyline* sp.) are still frequently found. The writer has endeavoured to re-introduce it up-river, and should any reader of these notes be interested enough to apply to him for seeds he will probably receive an answer.

The principal use of the gourd-fruit was, however, to serve as calabashes, which, in the absence of pottery, were most valuable, and extreme care and labour were expended in preparing and embellishing these vessels.

When fully ripe the fleshy portions of the fruit dry up, and are easily removed through a small hole made at the stem-end. When so treated the small gourds were used for holding oil and pigments, etc., the medium ones chiefly as

water-vessels, while the large ones were always reserved for potting birds. These were thoroughly sun-dried and oiled, a portion of the stalk-end was cut off, leaving a round hole from about four to five inches in diameter. A wooden neck or mouth-piece (*waha*, *tuki*, *tokai*, or *tokahi*) was made, usually out of *matai* timber, with the grain vertical, as though a section of a branch were cut off and hollowed out. This mouthpiece was usually about five inches deep, wider at the top than at the bottom where it was fixed to the vessel, the hole being wide enough for an average-sized hand to be inserted. It was almost invariably carved with elaborate designs. A rabbet was cut at the bottom to give



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a close fit to the gourd, and either four or six holes were bored, so that it could be securely tied on. (Fig. 14.) A fine string, to serve as packing, was forced into the join. After the *tokai* was fixed the vessel was enclosed in, either a net or a closely-woven flax basket fabric, with handles and suspension gear attached. Two vines were usually passed round the outside of the network and bound together, as shown in Plate 2; they served to protect the frail vessel. In some cases four legs were attached to these vines, and the vessel was decorated with feathers indicating the species of bird preserved, but of these the writer has been unable to get a description. The enveloping fabric was woven round the vessel in one piece, and also round the intersecting cords.

Formerly a stopper was used to keep the contents of the vessel free from dust. This was called *punga* [? *pangu*] and was made from a piece of *pangu* [? *punga*]. The *pangu* is an excrescence that grows on the *tawai*, one of the *fagus* family, the black birch of the settler. It is a light, corklike material, and was procured in the high-altitude forests, such as that at Karioi. It was largely used as punk in this district. When full, the calabash was always hung up in the storehouse, never placed on the floor.

Parts of the *tahā* or calabash vessel.—The mouth, carved or plain, *waha*, *tuki*, or *tokahi* [*tokai* also given]; top of mouth, *kopani*; the net, about two-inch mesh, *poha*; two-twist dressed flax cord, from which the net is made, *miro*. As to the heavy cords passing underneath the gourd, for support and handles, these were of four strands of 3-ply twist, making a round 12-strand plait. It is a very neat cord, about $\frac{3}{8}$ in. diameter, and is called a *whiri-kopu*. The cord used as a binder from *aka* to *aka* (encircling bands) is termed *titoko*; handles or cord loops, *purutanga*; woven flax basket-work, *kete raranga*; stopper made of *pangu*, *punga* [?].

Plate 2, Fig. 1.—Calabash known by the name Ngaturi, in the possession of the Taihana family at Pungarehu. This calabash came from the Mangawhero district, and is over eighty years old. The owners have four others enclosed similarly to the one depicted in the photograph. The net has been tucked in to suit the shape of the gourd, and not woven in position.

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FIG. 1.

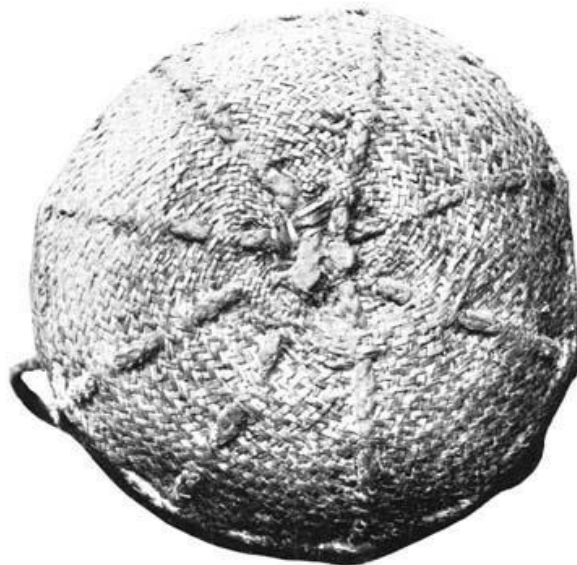


FIG. 2.

Calabash in Whanganui Museum.
Fig. 1, side view; Fig. 2, bottom view.

PLATE 3.

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Plate 2, Fig. 2.—Calabash named Wairingaroa, owned by Ruamanu, of Aramoho. Came from Mangawhero, age unknown. Encircling bands (*titoko*) [Cf. p. 18, par. 3] are roughly made. Detail of join shown in drawing.

Plate 3, Figs. 1 and 2, side and bottom views.—These pictures show a fine specimen in the Whanganui Museum, but name, former ownership, and place of origin are unknown. In this example the three-plait handles have been bound with dressed flax to prevent wear. (Fig. 15.)



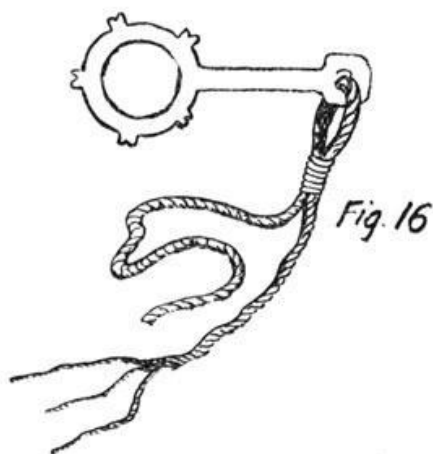
Taking the Kaka (Nestor meridionalis).—The *kaka* and *tui* (*Prothemadera novae-zealandiae*) were both taken by means of *mokai* or tame birds. The *kaka* lived to a great age, but the *tui* could only be kept in captivity for five years at the longest. Both could be taught to talk fluently, and both were noisy birds, especially the *kaka*.

It was a tame *kaka* speaking some objectionable phrase, thought to have been uttered by a man, that gave rise to some of the tribal fighting in Whakaneke's time. A very talkative man would often be likened to a *kaka*, as in the Tuke-a-maui raid two rather boastful men were known as "*Nga kaka waha nui*"—the loud-voiced *kaka*.

For the best decoys it was necessary to get the birds from the nests when young; but when taking birds in the forest the first birds could be brought down by imitating their call on a leaf of the *angiangi* tree; thereafter the birds would come in flocks upon hearing the cry of the captured bird.

The tame *kaka* was held prisoner by a small ring round one leg. This was called a *poria*, and it was often made of human bone, one shown to the writer being about an inch long, with a hole half an inch in diameter. It was ornamented with five little nicked projections, and had a hole at the handle end for a cord. (Fig. 16.) Greenstone

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types are shown in Fig. 17. Of these No. 4 is in the possession of Mr. A. Robertson, of Papaiti. No. 3 was found by Mr. H. Russell at the Awarua *pa*. No. 1 belongs to an up-river Maori, and No. 2 is in the possession of Mr. E. J. McLachlan, of Whanganui; it was obtained by him from a local Maori.

The cord attached to the ring was three-ply dressed flax-fibre, and was about an eighth of an inch in diameter. It was passed through the ring and then bound together with a much finer twisted thread. This cord was made strong, so that it could not be easily damaged by the bird's powerful beak, although as a rule the unfortunate captive had to go through a fire ordeal so as to prevent this. The

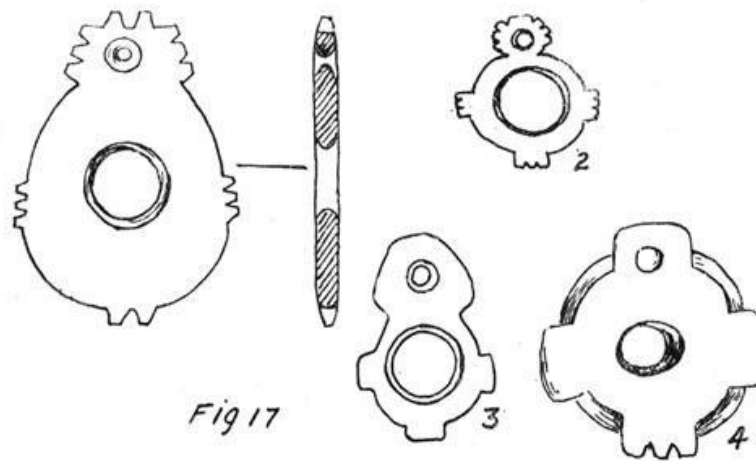


Fig 17

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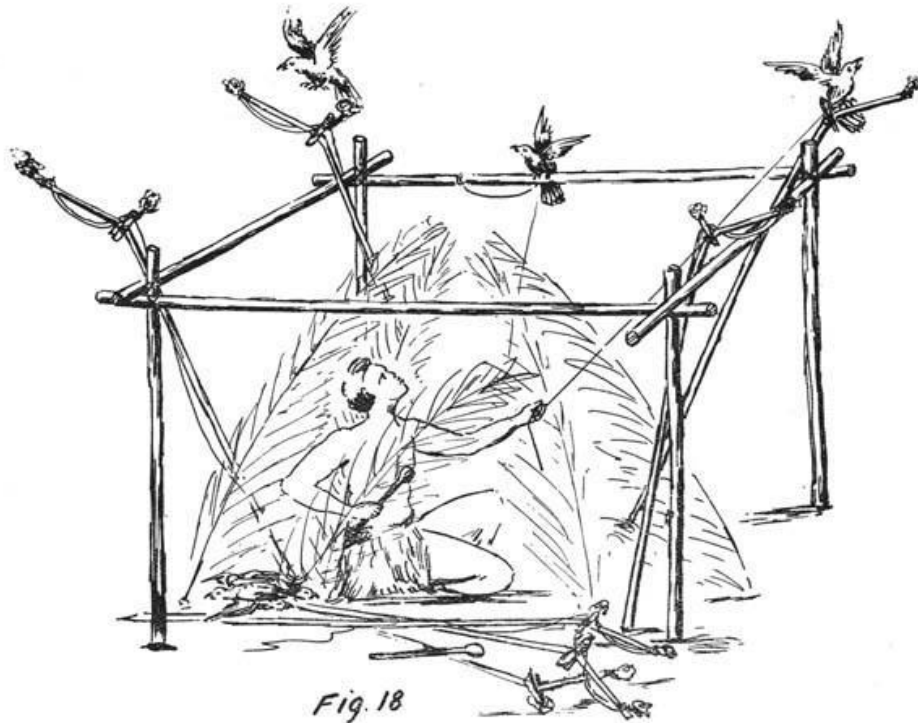


Fig. 18

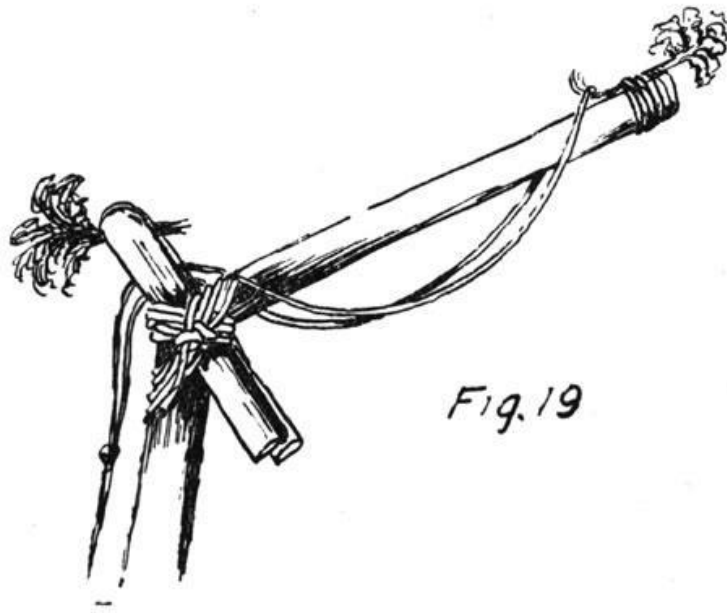
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writer has frequently seen heavy green *tawai* (beech) boughs torn to shreds on one side by these birds in order to get at the *weta* (the insect *Deinacrida*) therein.

In this district the procedure in catching *kaka* seems to have varied but little from that in other places, the difference being only in detail, with probably a variation in names.

The most common method employed was by the building of a little four-sided shelter (called *tutu*) beneath a *rata* tree when that tree was in blossom during the summer. This was a rough frame supporting four horizontal poles, inside of which scrub and ferns were placed so as to hide the fowler. A tame *kaka* parrot was tied to one of these poles, and a long string was attached to the bird's free leg, which cord was occasionally jerked to make the bird call out. The spot where the hidden fowler crouched was known as *kohupapa*; he had with him a knobbed stick, a sort of club, called *kuru*, with which he crushed the heads of the captured birds that were not required to assist in calling others. (Fig. 18.)

A number of young saplings were selected with a branch growing at an angle of about 45 degrees. These were trimmed so as to be long enough to reach some 18 inches above the shelter, with the butt ends on the ground. A piece of vine was bent over and tied at the bend with a *ripeka* or cross tie. This was called *wahi tapu*, and the whole thing a *tuke*. Bunches of *kaka* feathers (*puhipuhi*) were tied, one at the bend and the other at the end of the *tuke*. The snares were set on these in the usual way, and

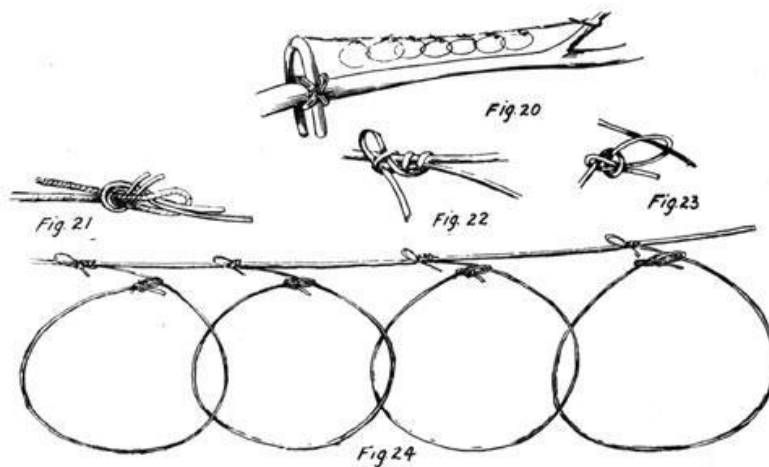


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by means of a sudden jerk of the cord the bird, on alighting, would be jammed up against the *wahi tapu*. (Fig. 19.) One of these snare perches was placed at each corner of the *tutu*, and more were at hand, so that, if the birds were plentiful, others could be erected in a few moments. (Fig. 18.) The cords were of twisted *muka* or dressed flax fibre.

A second method of taking these parrots was called *ahere*. It was simply a row of snares (*ahere*) tied along a branch of a tree frequented by the birds. Strong vines, called *turuturu*, when so used, were bent and tied to the branch with the *ripeka* or crossed lashing, and a strong line of twisted *ti* leaf, termed a *kaha*, was suspended from the *turuturu* to a branch that would give a parallel line to the main branch below. To this cord nooses were attached overlapping each other, so that the bottoms of the loops were about an inch above the resting branch. A *mokai* or decoy bird was used with this method, but no *puhipuhi*. The fowler was in readiness to remove the birds when caught. Fig. 20 shows an *ahere* as made for the writer by Reremai of Pipiriki.

The *mahanga* or snares were strips of *ti* leaf (*Cordyline*), about three thirty-seconds of an inch wide; diameter of the loops when set, about four inches. The tie to the *kaha* (as shown) was called *whitikipu*, and the slip-knot



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kopeti; arranging the snares was called *tataki*. (Figs. 20-24.) These loops for the *mahanga* were made up in bundles of about 50 and taken out to the bird-catching grounds by the fowler.

The ordinary *tuke*, or *Tuke-a-Maui*, as they are sometimes called, were usually made of *manuka* or *akerautangi* (*Dodonaea viscosa*), but occasionally from a human bone, such as one known as *Tahuna*, which was made from a man's rib in the Upper Rangitikei district. The projecting arm of the snare-perch was about ten inches in length, and the perpendicular piece about eight or nine inches. Four holes were bored in most of them, two at the end of the arm to hold the *turuturu*, or, as it is sometimes called, *ngingita*, one on the top, parallel to the perch, to pull the cord through, and one on the inside of the elbow, to hold another *ngingita*.

The *ngingita* was a small piece of vine passed through one of these holes at each end of the perch, its object being to hold the cord in position.

The *tuke* were always lashed to a pole or branch of a tree under a *rata* or *miro* tree, and had a projection left on the bottom to give the lashings a good grip. If tied to a

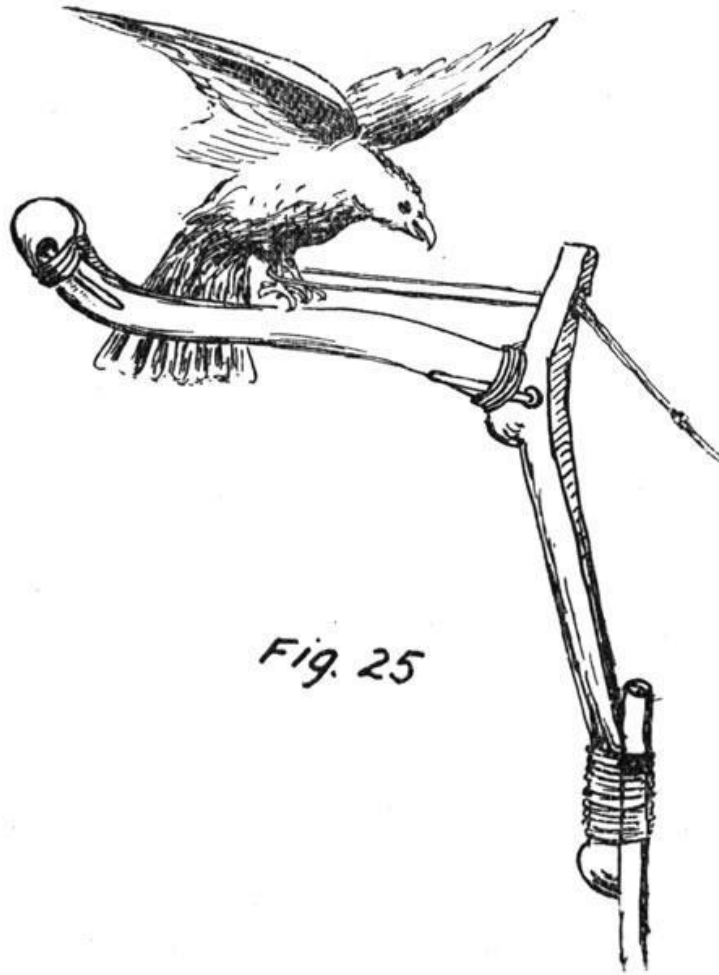
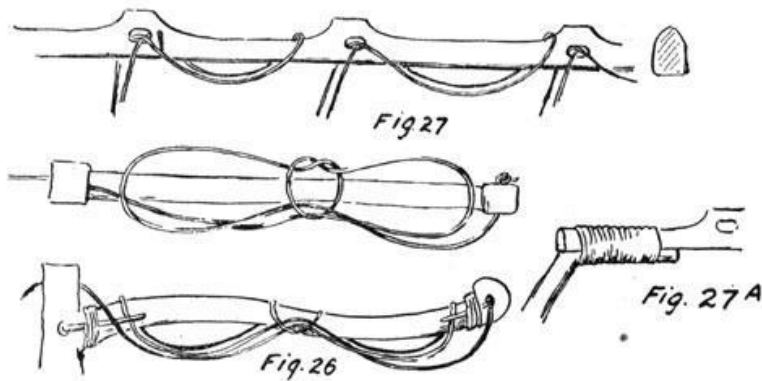


Fig. 25

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pole, the pole was stuck in the ground, and another rod, to which the *mokai* or decoy was secured near the top, was leaned up against it. The fowler, concealed under what was called a *marumaru*, that is, a shelter of *ponga*, *mamaku*, or *nikau* fronds, held the cord, and, on the bird alighting on the perch, jerked the snare and so held the *kaka* prisoner, as shown in the sketch (Fig. 25). Sometimes the *tuke* were ornamented with carving, in which case they usually had a specific name. The knob at the outside end of the perch is known as *puapua*, and that at the bottom I have been told is *turuturu*, but there is apparently some confusion about this word, as it has been given me several times for different parts of the *tuke*. Sometimes the snare used with the *tuke* was a double bow, in which case one end of the cord was tied to one of the holes at the *puapua*. Two birds could be caught at once by this method of arranging the cord, as, when the string was jerked, the birds were not jammed against the head of the *tuke*, but were enmeshed in the cord. (Fig. 26.)



There was another kind of snaring perch employed in taking these birds by the *takiri* method. It was about four feet long, the one seen by the writer having four perches hollowed out, though I am informed the correct number was seven. A glance at the illustration (Fig. 27) will give the reader an idea of this implement, which was tied to a pole (Fig. 27A), and operated from a shelter. It was, in common with the other described methods, used with a decoy, and was only employed when *kaka* were plentiful. When the cords were pulled the birds were simply held

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down by their feet to the perch. (There is one of these *takiri* in the Whanganui Museum, but hitherto it was not known what it was for.)

Preparation of the birds for *huahua* (potting) consisted of plucking, then removing the legs and wing tips, and thereafter, from a hole under the wing, the bones and intestines were taken out (a process called *makiri*). The skull was also removed, but the [? lower] beak was left attached to the skin. In the proper season, when the birds were in condition, there was enough fat procured from them to cover them when packed in the vessel. It is said that the flesh of the *kaka* was not inferior to that of the *kereru*, but the most esteemed of all the birds was the *tui*.

The evenings and mornings were usually chosen for snaring the *kaka*, as the birds move round more freely at these times, although with calls they can be induced to come down at any time. Though they feed on the *hinau* berries, they invariably roost on a *rata*, hence the snares are always set under a *rata*. It is said that during the moulting season the birds come to the ground and are unable to rise, but the flesh is not valued very greatly at that time, as only the females are in fair condition, the males, by reason of much fighting, being very thin.

Miscellaneous Snaring.—Other species of birds seem to have been taken as in other places; the *kiwi* with the torch (*rama*), the *weka* with noose snares set on its tracks, the *tui* by much the same methods as those employed to take the *kaka*, but usually taken on the *poroporo* (a *Solanum*) when the berries of that shrub were ripe. Details of procedure in these operations are unprocurable, but concerning the little *mata-karaihe* or *pihipihi* (the blight bird) one or two notes may be interesting. Regarding this bird, Puanaki gravely informed the writer of a matter that is rather hard to grasp, viz., that the bird was always fat in the early mornings, but by 10 o'clock it became poor and useless for food. It was taken in March in great numbers by the following means:—A thin sapling was tied in a horizontal position to upright supporting stakes, about 3ft. from the ground. A lad concealed behind a shelter, with a stick long enough to reach the end of the pole, would run his rod along the sapling every time a bird settled upon it, and so

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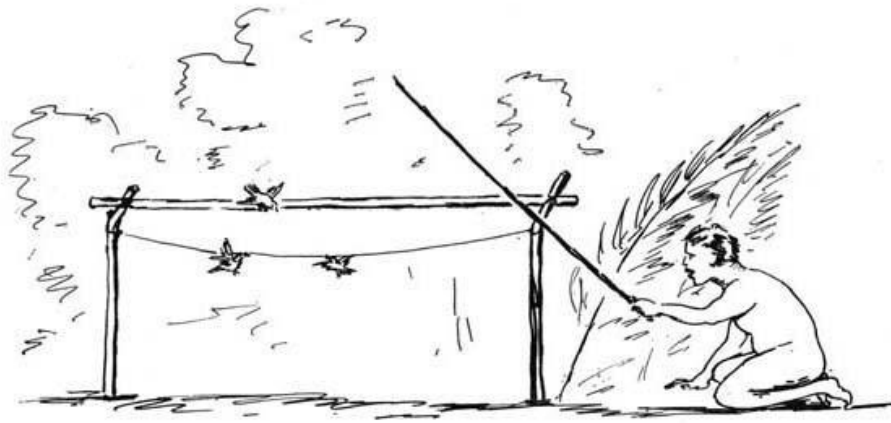
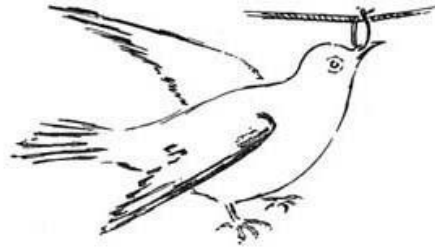


Fig. 28



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despatch it. A cord was suspended below the horizontal perch, but out of the way of the striking rod, to which a number of unfortunate little prisoners were hung by a small ring of *ti* leaf passed through the beak. (Fig 28.) The struggles of these tiny victims, combined with the fowler's call on an *angiangi* leaf, induced great numbers of the *pihipihi* to fall into the clutches of the clever fowler. Although but a mouthful, they were oft-times potted as *huahua*, and were esteemed a great delicacy. This method was called *pae*. The *pae* for taking the paroquet, *tui*, etc., consisted of a slanting stick, upon which the bird was induced to rest by means of a decoy, the fowler running his striking stick along the perch as in the method already described.

REMARKS ON THE ABOVE.

Mr. Downes's paper contains interesting descriptions of several methods of snaring birds, as practised in the Whanganui district, and also records the process of manufacture of the singular bark vessels termed *patua*, *papa*, and *papapatua*. This paper should be read in conjunction with one on the same subject contributed by Tamati Ranapiri (Thomas Ransfield), of Ngati-Raukawa, to Volume 4 of this *Journal*.

Of the names of the lunar months given in this paper the spelling among tribes of the East Coast differs somewhat; this is so with regard to Nos. 2, 7, 9, and 12. Nos. 5 and 6 sometimes appear as Whiringa, and No. 8 usually as Kaitatea or Kohitatea. No. 2 appears as Hongonui, and in one list as Pakawera, Whakihea as Hakihea, 9 as Huetanguru, and 12 as Haratua and Hakiharatua. The *teketeki* unit of measurement mentioned is the cubit, termed *tuke* among some tribes; both terms denote the elbow. The reference to running a loop up a cord when making a form of rope ladder will be clear to any one who has seen an expert hand manipulating a lariat.

The illustrations of the various devices described are illuminating, and include some that have not previously been recorded. That of the bark vessel termed a *patua* would serve equally as well as representing a bark basket made by natives of Southern India. It is not clear as to where the snare-set water trough method of taking birds was developed, but the Tuhoe folk first acquired knowledge of it in the Waikato district.

The fireless method of cooking described sounds alluring, but we have grave doubts as to the "perfectly cooked" result thereof. The peculiar method employed in counting pigeons, wherein the *pu* unit denotes ten birds, is a peculiar usage, and may be compared to somewhat similar modes of counting *tui* and eels practised in some

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districts. The *raureka* herbage mentioned may possibly be *raurekau* or *rauriki*.

Some of the expressions appearing in this paper are new to us, such as *poitu*, for the lug of a *patua*, and the *poutu* of *amo poutu* seems to clash with it. *Putahue*, as a name for the gourd plant, may be a variant form of Pū-tē-hue, the personified form of the gourd, or perhaps a tutelary being. *Waha*, *tokai*, and *tokahi* are given as names for the mouthpiece affixed to a gourd vessel. The first of these terms denotes the actual orifice, and the last one is probably an example of the misplaced "h," a common practice at one time among the Aotea folk. *Tokari* is a Whanganui name for the mouth-piece. The stopper of the orifice is said to have been called *punga*, which consisted of a piece of *pangu*. Possibly these two words have become transposed, inasmuch as *punga* is the name of a species of fungus, while

pangu is the Maori form of the English "bung." The word *kopani* carries the meanings of "to cover" and "to enclose"; it would hardly be applied to the rim of the mouthpiece.

The rude booth used as a shelter by bird snarers is termed a *tutu* at Whanganui, but in some districts the name denotes a tree on which birds are snared. The place of concealment of the fowler is said to be known as *kohupapa*, a singular name to apply to it, but *kahupapa* denotes an elevated platform in a tree, on which a fowler posts himself for snaring or spearing birds. One wonders why the term *wahi tapu* should be applied to part of a bird snaring apparatus.

The form of snaring perch shown in Fig. 27 is an interesting novelty; the term *takiri* mentioned merely describes the method of taking birds by means of a sudden jerk of the long cord; it may be, and is, employed in connection with the ordinary *tuke*.

The name *koera*, as a name for quail, is not on record, and Mr. Downes's suspicions may be correct. *Whioi* may be applied to the sparrow, but it is the old name for the native lark. *Wirairangi* as a bird name is unknown to us, but a native of the Napier district gave *wirarai* as a name of the *miromiro*, a forest bird. Tane-i-te-rere is the title of Tane the Fertiliser when referred to as the origin of birds. The *pihipihi* or blight-bird is said to have appeared in the North Island in 1856; it came hither from Australia.

EDITORS.

¹ The months, in the Whanganui district, from the first month onward, were named as follows:—

- ▶ (1) Pipiri—June.
- ▶ (2) Whangongoi—July.
- ▶ (3) Koka, sometimes Here-turi-koka—August.
- ▶ (4) Mahuru—September.
- ▶ (5) Hiringa-nuku—October.
- ▶ (6) Hiringa-rangi—November.
- ▶ (7) Whakihea—December.
- ▶ (8) Warukaitatea—January.
- ▶ (9) Uetanguri—February.
- ▶ (10) Poutu-te-rangi—March.
- ▶ (11) Paenga-whawha—April.
- ▶ (12) Taihi-haratua—May.

² In the Whanganui River district some of the old measurements were:—

- ▶ Middle of breast to tips of outstretched fingers—*Wahanga*.
- ▶ Elbow to tips of outstretched fingers—*Teketeke*.
- ▶ Foot to finger of upraised hand—*Takoto*.
- ▶ Span of outspread fingers—*Whanganga*.
- ▶ Middle finger tip to knuckle—*Huka*.

³ Reremai, of Pipiriki, is aged about 80. All the old men on the river know of these two *patua*. I suggested to my informant that *whioi* (sparrow) was a European bird, but he did not take kindly to the suggestion, also that *koera* (quail) was a European word, and that probably the word should be *koreke*, but he persisted. The *pihipihi*, or blight bird, is also said to have made its appearance here in modern times.