

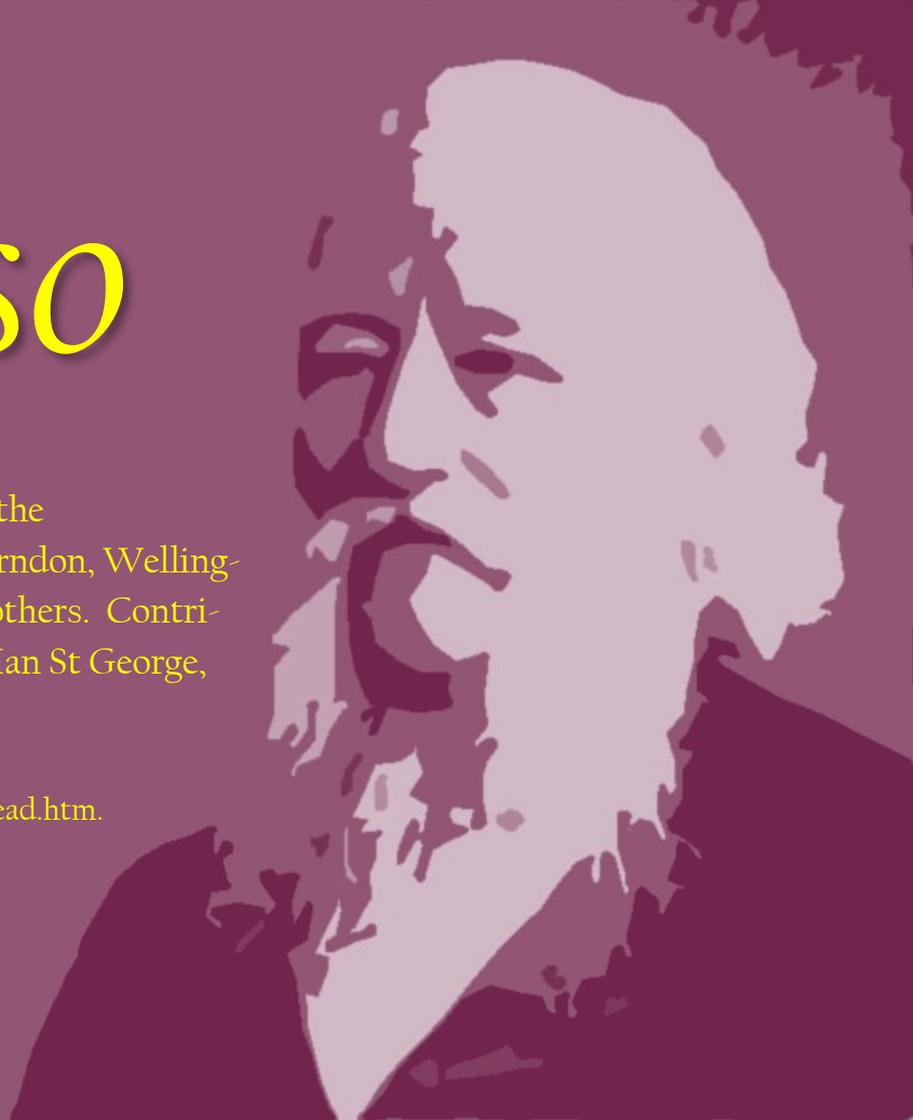
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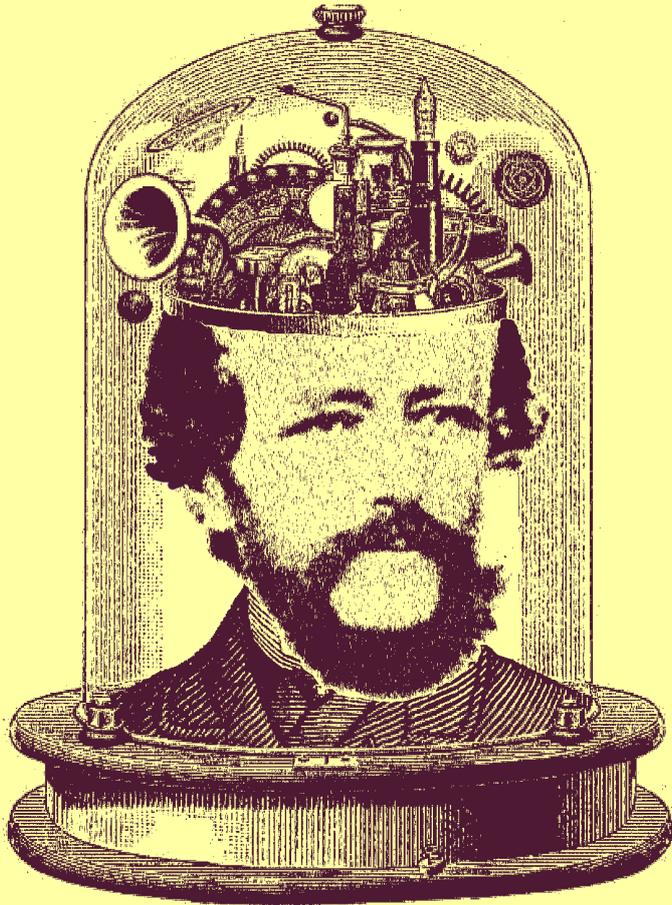
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# The NZ polymath: Colenso and his contemporaries

Wellington 17–19 November

Email [Deborah.Levy@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Deborah.Levy@vuw.ac.nz)

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New Zealand Maori warriors with Maori dog →  
Augustus Earle 1838.

The kuri was by then already interbred with European dogs .



## Te Kuri Māori

My second primary school was Te Rore, under the shadow of Mt Pirongia, fifteen of us from primers 1 to 6, all in the same room all day with Miss Glass. We had school picnics at Te Pahu by the Waipa river. My father was a share milker on a dairy farm and one of his acquaintances used to take him “pig-’untin’ with the goories” up Mt Pirongia. At age eight I had been duck shooting and rabbit shooting with my father and we didn’t take dogs—but I wasn’t allowed to go pig hunting with the men. In an area of classical te reo pronunciation I considered “goory” an abominable way to say “kuri”.

It was years later, at medical school in Dunedin, that I became aware of Ngai Tahu pronunciations and realised “goory” was okay. Furthermore Southland students told me “pukeko” was pronounced “pugagi” down there and even later I learned, from the Begg brothers’ (Dunedin doctors’) *The world of John Boulton*, that the correct local pronunciation of “Otakou” is “O-tar-go”). And Ngai Tahu is “Gai” Tahu. But I ramble.

The kuri, or Māori dog, was one of Colenso’s preoccupations. He wrote about it in 1877....

### Colenso on the Māori dog

**Notes, chiefly historical, on the ancient Dog of the New Zealanders. *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 1877; 10: 135-155.**

FOR several years I have been aware of much error being commonly entertained concerning the original New Zealand dog, and I have been desirous of combatting it, as far as I could, by putting together

what little I have learned respecting it, and the valuable testimonies yet extant of those of our earliest voyagers in these seas who frequently saw the animal. And this, I cannot help thinking, is the more needed just now; for, in the last volume of the “Transactions,” there is a paper by Dr. Hector “On the remains of a dog found near White Cliffs, Taranaki,” in which there are some statements and remarks concerning the New Zealand dog, which, I think, will be found incorrect—*e.g.*, where Dr. Hector says:—“A few dogs of this primitive breed were known within the last twenty years,” that “it is improbable that the same dogs were both highly-prized domestic pets and also used for food;” and “a bitch and full-grown pup were known for several years in the densely-wooded country between Waikawa and the Mataura plains, and did great damage among the flocks of sheep, etc., they were (at last) shot and presented to the Colonial Museum. Of the smaller specimen both skin and skeleton were taken to the British Museum by Sir G. Grey, and the skin of the mother was preserved here, and has been recognised by many old Maoris as a genuine *kuri* or ancient Maori dog. ... It is a large-bodied dog with slender limbs, large ears, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

From an early period (in our modern times) I travelled pretty much in this North Island of New Zealand (particularly from 1834 to 1854), and that always on foot, zig-zagging about and visiting the Maori pas and villages in the interior and on the coast from Cook Straits to Cape Maria Van Diemen, and often crossing the island from sea to sea. I mention this, because I failed to see a single specimen of the true Maori dog, although I made every exertion to obtain one, offering, too, a high price. But they had become wholly extinct, or very nearly so, at least fifty years ago.

Notwithstanding, I have seen and possessed its hair; for, about the year 1835, I obtained an ancient, large, and handsome chief’s staff and weapon of defence,<sup>2</sup> which was richly ornamented with carving,

red feathers from under the wings of the parrot (*Nestor meridionalis*), and the flowing hair of the old Maori dog. This hair was long, fine, and white, beautifully and securely done up in little queues having their ends firmly bound round with the finest spun flax where secured to the weapon, neatly covered with the [136] red feathers which were also singly and firmly fixed by being closely woven into a bit of strong flaxen cloth made especially for that purpose.

To a paper which I wrote on the *moa* in the year 1842, I added the following note:—“The New Zealand dog (*kuri*) is a small animal (somewhat resembling the variety known as the pricked-ear shepherd’s cur) with erect ears and a flowing tail; its cry is a peculiar kind of whining howl, which, when in a state of domestication, it utters in concert at a signal given by its master, and it is most unpleasant. This variety of dog has, however, become very scarce in consequence of the continued introduction of other and larger varieties.”<sup>3</sup> At that time I supposed that some of the many dogs I had seen in my early travels were of the old New Zealand or South Sea breed; but, since then, I have had good and ample reasons for believing I was mistaken. It was, however, quite possible, or even probable, that those dogs alluded to by me in my old note quoted above, were mongrel half-breeds, or mixed descendants of the New Zealand and the introduced foreign dogs. And it is such dogs or others like them, but with still less of the true Maori breed in them, that have deceived later enquirers and the early settlers.

I may also mention that I have both seen and heard wild dogs in the forests and on their outskirts when travelling. Those, however, were dogs of a different kind—mongrels of various sorts—which had run away from their Maori masters, or had stayed behind in the woods when out pig-hunting with them, and so by degrees had become wild and increased in number. And as pigs were now becoming plentiful in the country, and their flesh (almost the natural food of the dog)

easily obtained—while in the pas or villages those curs were often very badly off—it was no marvel that some of those dogs ran away and became wild. I remember particularly being beset on two or three occasions by tolerably large packs of those wild dogs, between the Ruahine mountain range and the Ruataniwha plains, in the years 1846–7. One of those packs were eleven in number, and being unarmed, save with my stick, I had some difficulty in keeping them off. I was alone too at the time, as my Maori baggage-bearers had lagged behind, and my own dog, which was much bigger, would not look at them, but kept behind me, which no doubt was one of the causes of their so persistently following me up and closing round me. I thought so much of it that I sent to England for double-barrelled pistols (revolvers then not being known—to me, at least) for a future occasion, as my regular travelling lay in that direction and over the mountain range. It was these wild dogs of that mongrel kind that did mischief to the flocks of the early settlers [137] in some places, and I believe that the two dogs shot near Matura (mentioned by Dr. Hector) were of this description.

So long back as 1814–15, Mr. Nicholas, who visited New Zealand in company with the Rev. S. Marsden, made a similar error. He says:—“On our return from the place where we cut down the spars, we met one of the native dogs running about in a wild state. It was considerably larger than any of the dogs that we had seen domesticated among them, and bore a strong resemblance to the shepherd’s dog so well known in England. The moment it came in sight of us it set up a terrific howling, and never ceased the same baleful discord till we had left the place. There are numbers of dogs running wild in this manner through the different parts of the island, but I could not discover that they ever offered any injury to the inhabitants, who prize them very highly, as well for the sake of their flesh, which serves them for a delicious article of food, as for their hide and bones, which they convert to a variety of purposes, in the way of ornamental devices.”<sup>4</sup>

Both Mr. Marsden and Mr. Nicholas, who spent some months together in New Zealand, and travelled too, pretty much—from Hokianga to the Thames—seemed never to have seen a single New Zealand dog of “the primitive breed.”

Captain Cook does not give many particulars concerning the South Sea dog in his voyages, although he had frequent opportunities of both seeing and eating it! Fortunately, however, he was during his first two voyages round the world accompanied by scientific men, who have left on record many interesting remarks respecting this animal. On his first voyage, Cook was accompanied by Sir Joseph Banks, Dr. Solander (a Swedish naturalist), and a talented young artist named Sydney Parkinson; this last-named gentleman has given us several particulars in his separately-published journal of that first voyage. On his second voyage, Cook was accompanied by two eminent German naturalists, father and son (J.R. and G. Forster), and by Dr. Sparrman, another celebrated scientific Swede. And the two German gentlemen have also recorded much about our New Zealand dog, which they published in their large and separate works about their voyage.<sup>5</sup> On his third voyage Cook had with him Mr. Anderson, who was the surgeon on board of his ship, and who also acted as naturalist. From these independent accounts, written by persons who had ample opportunities of seeing and knowing all about our New Zealand dog, and who also understood what they were writing, I purpose making copious extracts, to [138] which I am the more inclined seeing the books themselves are very scarce and scarcely even known by name in the colony.

The South Sea dog was first seen by Captain Cook and his companions at Tahiti; and it is worthy of something more than a mere passing notice to bear in mind, that, while it was also found by them here in New Zealand, there were several intervening islands and groups at which Cook called where the dog was not found. Generally speaking,

the natives of the various Polynesian isles he visited possessed three domestic animals—the pig, the dog, and the common poultry fowl; but few possessed all three: some had but two, and some (as New Zealand) only one. And yet it seems to me pretty evident that the natives of those isles in which one or two of those animals were wholly wanting, both knew and gave the right common name for them to Cook’s party when they saw the animal for the first time in his ship!

Captain Cook, on his first voyage anchored at Tahiti on the 10th April, 1769, and though he and his party were daily on shore and had strolled miles in the country to visit plantations and villages, and had also held daily markets for purchasing food, etc. of all kinds which the islanders brought for sale, yet his first entry concerning the South Sea dog was on the 20th of June! which, being in every respect peculiar, I may in part copy. Writing of Opeera, a great lady of the island, he says:—“As the most effectual means to bring about a reconciliation between us, she presented us with a hog and several other things, among which was a dog. We had lately learnt that these animals were esteemed by the Indians as more delicate food than their pork, and upon this occasion we determined to try the experiment. The dog, which was very fat, we consigned over to Tupaea, who undertook to perform the double office of butcher and cook. He killed him by holding his hands close over his mouth and nose, an operation which continued over a quarter of an hour. While this was doing an oven was made in the ground. ... The dog, being well cleaned and prepared, with the entrails and blood in cocoa-nut shells, was then placed in the oven: in about four hours it was opened and the dog taken out excellently baked, and we all agreed that he made a very good dish. The dogs which are here bred to be eaten taste no animal food, but are kept wholly upon bread-fruit, cocoa-nuts, yams, and other vegetables of the like kind. ... We all agreed that a South Sea dog was little inferior to an English lamb; their excellence is probably

owing to their being kept up and fed wholly upon vegetables. . . . Here are no tame animals except hogs, dogs, and poultry, and these are by no means plentiful.”<sup>6</sup>

Sydney Parkinson, however, has an earlier entry than this, made in [139] April, which (in part) is also worth copying. He says:—“These people also are fond of dog’s-flesh, and reckon it delicious food, which we discovered by their bringing the leg of a dog roasted to sell. Mr. Banks ate a piece of it and admired it much. He went out immediately and bought one and gave it to some Indians to kill and dress it in their manner, which they did accordingly. . . . At night it was served up for supper, I ate a little of it, it had the taste of coarse beef, and a strong disagreeable smell; but Captain Cook, Mr. Banks, and Dr. Solander commended it highly, saying it was the sweetest meat they had ever tasted, but the rest of our people could not be prevailed on to eat any of it. We have invented a new dish, which is as much disliked by the natives as any of theirs is by us. Here is a species of rats, of which there are great numbers in this island. We caught some of them and had them fried. Most of the gentlemen in the bell-tent ate of them, and commended them much, and some of the inferior officers ate them in a morning for breakfast.” And, subsequently, on their passage thence to New Zealand, we have also this entry in his Journal:—“On the 27th August we killed a dog, and dressed him, which we brought from Ulietea (Raiatea): he was excessively fat, although he had eaten nothing while he had been on board”<sup>7</sup> (nearly twenty days).

On shore at Tolago Bay, Cook and his party first saw the New Zealand dog. Cook says:—“No tame animals were seen among the natives except dogs, which were very small and ugly.” And, again, on leaving Tolago, he says:—“We saw no four-footed animals, nor the appearance of any, either tame or wild, except dogs and rats, and

these were very scarce; the people eat the dogs like our friends at Tahiti.”

Parkinson’s entry in his Journal at Tolago respecting the dog is:—“Of quadrupeds we saw no other than dogs, which were like those on the island of Tahiti, and of them but a few.” Another entry of his in his Journal respecting a dog, made in March, on leaving the south coasts of New Zealand (on the day they discovered those dangerous shoals called the “Traps”), is also worthy of notice. Parkinson says:—“This day the weather was more moderate than it had been for many days, and being one of the inferior officers’ birthday, it was celebrated by a peculiar kind of festival; a dog was killed that had been bred on board; the hind-quarters were roasted, and a pye was made of the fore-quarters, into the crust of which they put the fat; and of the viscera they made a haggis!” (We must remember that Parkinson was a Scotchman).

From George Forster (who, with his father, J.R. Forster, accompanied Cook on his second voyage), we gain good information respecting the New Zealand dog.<sup>8</sup> He first saw them in Queen Charlotte Sound, before their [140] ship had visited Tahiti, and (speaking of some natives who visited their ship) he says:—“A good many dogs were observed in their canoes, which they seemed very fond of, and kept tied with a string round their middle; they were of a rough long-haired sort with pricked ears, and much resembled the common shepherd’s cur or Count Buffon’s *chien de berger* (see his *Hist. Nat.*) They were of different colours—some spotted, some quite black, and others perfectly white. The food which these dogs receive is fish, or the same which their masters live on, who afterwards eat their flesh and employ the fur in various ornaments and dresses. They sold us several of these animals, among which the old ones coming into our possession became extremely sulky and refused to take any sustenance, but some young ones soon accustomed themselves to our provisions.”



And, again, shortly after, he says:—“While here we saw a large animal in the water about Grass Cove which seemed to be a sea-lion by its magnitude, but which we could not get a shot at. We had already discovered a small species of bats in the woods, so that the list of the indigenous quadrupeds in New Zealand was increased to five, including the domestic dog of the natives.” On leaving Cook Straits for Tahiti, Forster says:—“The officers, who could not yet relish their salt provisions after the refreshments of New Zealand, had ordered their black dog (mentioned p. 135)<sup>9</sup> to be killed, and sent the captain one-half of it; this day, therefore, we dined for the first time on a leg of it roasted, which tasted so exactly like mutton that it was absolutely undistinguishable. In our cold countries where animal food is so much used, and where to be carnivorous perhaps lies in the nature of men, or is indispensably necessary to the preservation of their health and strength, it is strange that there should exist a Jewish aversion to dogs’ flesh, when hogs, the most uncleanly of all animals, are eaten without scruple. ... It may be objected that the exalted degree of instinct, which we observe in our dogs, inspires us with great unwillingness to kill and eat them. But it is owing to the time we spend on the education of dogs that they acquire those eminent qualities which attach them so much to us. ... In New Zealand, and (according to former accounts of voyages) in the tropical isles of the South Sea, the dogs are the most stupid, dull animals imaginable, and do not seem to have the least advantage, in point of sagacity, over sheep, which are commonly made the [141] emblems of silliness. In New Zealand they are fed upon fish, in the tropical isles on vegetables, and both these diets may have served to alter their disposition. Education may perhaps likewise graft new instincts; the New Zealand dogs are fed on the remains of their masters’ meals; they eat the bones of other dogs, and the puppies become true cannibals from their birth. We had a young New Zealand puppy on board, which had certainly had no opportunity of tasting anything but

◀From Comte de Buffon 1707–1788. *Histoire Naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la description du Cabinet du Roy*. George Forster thought the kuri looked like this.

the mother's milk before we purchased it; however, it eagerly devoured a portion of the flesh and bones of the dog on which we dined to-day; while several others of the European breed, taken on board at the Cape, turned from it without touching it." A little further on, he says:—"On the 4th August a young bitch of the terrier breed, taken on board at the Cape of Good Hope, brought ten young ones—one of which was dead. The New Zealand dog, mentioned above, which devoured the bones of the roasted dog, now fell upon the dead puppy, and ate of it with a ravenous appetite. This is a proof how far education may go in producing and propagating new instincts in animals. European dogs are never fed on the meat of their own species, but rather seem to abhor it. The New Zealand dogs, in all likelihood, are trained up from their earliest age to eat the remains of their masters' meals; they are therefore used to feed upon fish, their own species, and perhaps human flesh; and what was only owing to habit at first may have become instinct by length of time. This was remarkable in our cannibal-dog, for he came on board so young that he could not have been weaned long enough to acquire a habit of devouring his own species, and much less of eating human flesh; however, one of our seamen having cut his finger, held it out to the dog, who fell too greedily, licked it, and then began to bite into it."

About a month after this, at Huahine, he says:—"We collected upwards of twenty hogs this day for large spike nails, and about a dozen of dogs, which seemed to be the most stupid animals of their kind, but were reckoned most excellent provision by the natives." At this island dogs were in great plenty. Forster says:—"Dr. Sparrman and myself in our walk saw great numbers of hogs, dogs, and fowls. The last roamed about at pleasure through the woods, and roosted on fruit trees; the hogs were likewise allowed to run about, but received regular portions of food, which were commonly distributed by old women. We observed one of them feeding a little pig with the sour fermented bread-fruit paste, called *mahei*. She held the pig with one

hand, and offered it a tough pork-skin, but as soon as it opened the mouth to snap at it, she contrived to throw a handful of the sour paste in, which the little animal would not take without this stratagem. The dogs, in spite of their stupidity, were in high favour with all the women, who could not have nursed them with a more ridiculous affection if [142] they had really been ladies of fashion in Europe. We were witnesses of a remarkable instance of kindness, when we saw a middle-aged woman, whose breasts were full of milk, offering them to a little puppy which had been trained up to suck them. We were so much surprised at this sight that we could not help expressing our dislike of it; but she smiled at our observation, and added that she suffered little pigs to do the same service. Upon enquiry, however, we found that she had lost her child, and did her the justice among ourselves to acknowledge that this expedient was very innocent, and formerly practised in Europe. The dogs of all these islands were short, and their sizes vary from that of a lap-dog to the largest spaniel. Their head is broad, the snout pointed, the eyes very small, the ears upright, and their hair rather long, lank, hard, and of different colours, but most commonly white and brown. They seldom, if ever, barked, but howled sometimes, and were shy of strangers to a degree of aversion."

Again he says:—"The quantity of live stock which we had purchased during our stay there was amazing. ... The 'Resolution' alone had 209 live hogs, 30 dogs, and about 50 fowls on board when she sailed; and the 'Adventure' had not much less." And a little further on he says:—"The want of room occasioned the death of several hogs; and the obstinacy of the old dogs in refusing to take any sustenance deprived us of the greatest number of those animals." About a month after, when their ship was near to the coast of New Zealand, he says:—"Some of our people who examined the pump-well found there a dog, which they brought up on deck. This creature, which had been purchased at the island of Huahine, like many others of the same species,

had obstinately refused to take any nourishment, and in all probability had lived ever since in that hole without the least support of food for a space of thirty-nine or forty days. The whole body was reduced to a mere skeleton, the legs were contracted, and he voided blood at the anus. The torments in which this poor animal must have lived were a lesson to our people to purchase only young puppies of this race for the future, as the grown dogs constantly refused to eat on board.”

The elder Forster in his work also says:— “The dogs of the South Sea isles are of a singular race; they mostly resemble the common cur, but have a prodigious large head, remarkably little eyes, prick-ears, long hair, and a short bushy tail. They are chiefly fed with fruit at the Society Isles; but in the low isles and New Zealand, where they are the only domestic animals, they live upon fish. They are exceedingly stupid, and seldom or never bark, only howl now and then; have the sense of smelling in a very low degree, and are lazy beyond measure; they are kept by the natives chiefly for the sake of their flesh, of which they are very fond, preferring it to pork. ... The New Zealanders continually living on fish are [143] glad when they can get a dog or bird to eat, which with them always is reckoned a dainty.”<sup>10</sup>

Captain Cook in his Second Voyage, and while in New Zealand at anchor in Queen Charlotte Sound, incidentally remarks (when writing of the then proved cannibalism of the New Zealanders and its not being owing to their want of animal food):— “In every part of New Zealand where I have been, fish was in such plenty that the natives generally caught as much as served both themselves and us. They have also plenty of dogs; nor is there any want of wild-fowl, which they know very well how to kill.” And again he says:— “While here we were visited by several strangers in four or five canoes, who brought with them fish and other articles, which they exchanged for cloth, etc. These new-comers took up their quarters in a cove near us; but very early the next morning moved off with six of our small water

-casks, and with them all the people we found here on our arrival. ... They left behind them some of their dogs and the boar I had given them the day before, which I now took back again as I had not another.”

Mr. Anderson, who was with Captain Cook on his third voyage, also states that their dogs were plentiful. He says:— “It is remarkable that in this extensive land there should not even be the traces of any quadruped, only excepting a few rats and a sort of fox-dog, which is a domestic animal with the New Zealanders. ... The natives sometimes, though rarely, find means to kill rails, penguins, and shags, which help to vary their diet. They also breed considerable numbers of their dogs (mentioned before) for food, but these cannot be considered as a principal article of diet; from whence we may conclude that, as there is not the least sign of cultivation of land,<sup>11</sup> they depend principally for their subsistence on the sea, which indeed is very bountiful in its supply.”

Here, however, I would remark, that this is the only place in all his voyages and many visits to New Zealand in which Cook says, or hints, that the New Zealand dog was plentiful. In other parts of his voyages, as we have seen, he has said the contrary—that they were but few; and all the other gentlemen who had been with him in New Zealand also said the same. I think, therefore, that Captain Cook in this place speaks more rhetorically than in strict accordance with fact, being led thereto (in this sentence) in declaiming against the cannibalism of the natives. And so of the surgeon, Mr. Anderson; he had never been in New Zealand before, neither had he the opportunity of visiting the North Island (hence his erroneous remark of the New Zealanders having no cultivations!). [144] And now, when Captain Cook again revisited his old anchorage at Queen Charlotte Sound, where he was well known, and the natives, coming from all parts in their canoes to see him, took with them all their domestic dogs, simp-

ly because they could not possibly leave them at home; and hence, on Mr. Anderson seeing so many dogs with them in their canoes, he reasonably concluded there must be plenty more at home. This trait in their character, of always taking with them in their canoes their live domestic stock, has come down to comparatively modern times. I have seen plenty of it!

Dr. Sparrman, the Swedish naturalist (who, I think, was a better zoologist than the two Forsters, judging from what he has published in English of his travels and discoveries in Africa), who also accompanied Cook in his second voyage, has unfortunately not given us any particulars of this voyage to the South Seas, although I believe such were published by him at Stockholm in his own language—at least he intimates as much in his “Voyages.”<sup>12</sup> If so, perhaps some scientific gentleman of that country may ere long inform the colony of New Zealand of it.

Further: It may be also well to see to what uses the New Zealanders put their dogs besides that of using them for food. Captain Cook gives us very little information under this head, contenting himself with saying, (in his First Voyage) “that the people of Tolago Bay adorn their garments with the skins of their dogs, as we do ours with furs and ermine”—and, that “some others whom he fell in with in their canoes near Cape Brett, had weapons of stone and whalebone, and also the ribs of a whale carved, and adorned with tufts of dog’s hair.” Mr. Anderson also briefly says, “their work (of clothing flax-mats) is often ornamented with pieces of dog-skin; sometimes they cover their flax-mat with dog-skin, and that alone we have seen worn as a covering.” But, while Cook and Banks and Solander and Anderson are so provokingly concise, Parkinson and the two Forsters are much more profuse and clear.

Sydney Parkinson informs us early, like a true artist noticing the beautiful, that the first natives they saw in six canoes on leaving Pov-

erty Bay “had garments wrapped about them made of a silky flax, each corner being ornamented with a piece of dog-skin.” And a little further on in his journal (in narrating that memorable adventure here in our waters of Hawke Bay, in which the New Zealanders kidnapped Tupaea’s lad, Taiota, which circumstance also gave the name to our southern cape), Parkinson says:— “An old man who sat in the stern” (of that kidnapping canoe) “had on a garment of some beast’s skin, with long hair, dark brown and white border, which we would have purchased but they were not willing to part with anything.” And again, shortly after, while at Mercury Bay, [145] says:— “In one of the canoes (which came from some distance to the ship) there was a very handsome young man, of whom I bought some things; he seemed by the variety of his garments, which he sold one after another till he had but one left, to be a person of distinction among them; his last garment was an upper one, made of white and black dog-skin, which one of the lieutenants would have purchased, and offered him a large piece of cloth for it, which he swung down the stern by a rope into the canoe; but as soon as the young man had taken it, his companions paddled away as fast as possible, shouting and brandishing their weapons as if they had made a great prize; and, being ignorant of the power of our weapons, thought to have carried it off securely; but a musket was fired at them from the stern of the ship; the young man fell down immediately, and, it is probable, was mortally wounded, as we did not see him rise again. What a severe punishment of a crime committed, perhaps, ignorantly! The name of this unfortunate young man, we afterwards learned, was Te Riunui.” So again, while at the Bay of Islands (their next anchorage), he says:— “A canoe came into the bay that had eighty people in her, most of whom paddled; the chiefs wore garments of dog-skins, and were very much tattooed. ... We saw many plantations of the kumera, and some of the aute, or cloth trees” (*Morus papyrifera*). And in the fifteenth plate of his journal he gives “a New Zealand warrior in his proper dress;” in which his clothing-mat is a fine one, made of cloth woven from New

Zealand flax (*Phormium*) within, and with the skins of black and white dogs alternately placed, chequer-fashion, without. Also, in Plate XVIII., the chiefs in the war-canoe are represented as so dressed; and in that ever admirable plate of a war canoe fully manned, with rowers paddling<sup>13</sup> (also taken by our artist), the chiefs are dressed in similar garments.

G. Forster, writing of the New Zealanders whom he saw at Queen Charlotte Sound (in Cook Straits), says:— “The form and colour of these people was almost entirely the same as that of the Dusky Bay people; their dress was likewise made in the same manner of the flax-plant, but never interwoven with feathers, in lieu of which they had bits of dog-skin at the four corners of their cloaks, which the others were not fortunate enough to possess.” Again he says:— “They sold us an apron, made of their close-wrought cloth, covered with red feathers, faced with white dog-skin, and ornamented with pieces of the ear-shell, which is said to be worn by the women in their dances.” And, shortly afterwards, speaking of a large canoe of strangers which came up to the ship, he says:— “Two people of a fine stature, one at the stern and another about the middle of the canoe, stood upright; the former had a perfect black cloak of the close-wrought [146] kind, patched in compartments with dog-skin. ... Among their dresses were several cloaks entirely lined with dog-skin, upon which they set a high value, and which indeed gave them a very comfortable appearance in the cold weather that now began to be felt.” And six months after, on their return to New Zealand from the Society and other islands, having made Cape Kidnappers and passed it, and when near to Black Head, their ship was visited and boarded by a chief<sup>14</sup> from the shore in his canoe; to him Captain Cook gave some pigs, fowls, and garden seeds; and the chief, in return, gave to Captain Cook “his *mai-pi*, or battle-axe,<sup>15</sup> which was perfectly new, its head well carved, and ornamented with red parrot’s feathers and white dog’s hair.”

J.R. Forster, in his “Observations,” also observes:— “The New Zealanders employ the skins of dogs for their clothes, but merely for convenience, namely, to keep them warm. They also make use of their hair in various ornaments, especially to fringe their breast-plates in the Society Isles, and to face or even line the whole garment at New Zealand.”<sup>16</sup>

It appears, therefore, from the united testimony of the first visitors to this country that the ancient New Zealand dog was much like those of Tahiti and other South Sea isles—that it was merely a domestic animal, small in size, with pointed nose, prick ears, and very little eyes; that it was dull, stupid, and ugly; that it was of various colours, white, black, brown, and parti-coloured, with lank long hair, and a short bushy tail; that it was fed on fish and refuse offal, and that it was quiet, lazy, and sullen, had little or no scent, and had no proper bark. Further, that its flesh was used by the New Zealanders for food, its skin for clothing, and its hair (particularly the long white hair of the tail) for ornamental purposes. And Captain Cook incidentally remarks on the great attachment of the New Zealanders to their dogs; for, in speaking of a native chief whom he had known, a father giving him his son to go away with him in his ship, he says:— “When about to sail, a boy of about ten years of age, named Kokoa, was presented to me by his own father, who I believe would have parted with his dog with far less indifference.”<sup>17</sup>

It seems certain that the variety of dog found by them in New Zealand [147] was considered to be greatly inferior to those of the same breed they had seen in the other isles of the South Sea. It is not at all unlikely that this variety had degenerated through successive breeding-in-and-in,<sup>18</sup> and want of proper food. And it does not seem to have been eaten by our early voyagers, as the dogs of the other islands were, although, for want of fresh provisions, they scrupled not to eat rats and other “small gear.” It is true that we have in their journals espe-

cial mention of four dogs having been killed for food at different times on board of their ship after leaving New Zealand; but all these it seems were obtained from other places. The dog on which the officers made such a feast when near the Traps off the South Cape of New Zealand, during their first voyage, and shortly after leaving this country, had been “bred on board.” The dog which was killed on board for food in June, 1773, during their second voyage and soon after their leaving Cook Straits for Tahiti, was of the “Dutch” breed;<sup>19</sup> and very likely brought with them from the Cape of Good Hope. Again, after leaving New Zealand the third time on discovery, the dog which was killed on board when near Easter Island, to save Captain Cook’s life, was an old ship dog, of which circumstance Captain Cook himself says,—“I was now taken violently ill so as to be confined to my bed, and it was several days before the most dangerous symptoms of my disorder were removed. ... When I began to recover, a favourite dog of Mr. Forster fell a sacrifice to my tender stomach. We had no other fresh meat whatever on board; and I could eat of this flesh, as well as broth made of it, when I could taste nothing else. Thus I received nourishment and strength from food which would have made most people in Europe sick, so true it is that necessity is governed by no law.” And about a month after, when on their run from Easter Island to the Marquesas, another dog, which was also killed on board under similar circumstances, was from the Friendly Islands the year before. Of this dog G. Forster writes:—“Captain Cook himself was obliged [148] to keep his bed again, being afflicted with some alarming symptoms. ... My father ordered his Tahitian dog, the only one which still remained alive after our departure from the Friendly Islands, to be killed; it was cut into quarters which were served up to Captain Cook during several days, and gave him some nourishment, as he could not venture to taste the ship’s provisions. By such small helps we succeeded in preserving a life upon which the success of the voyage in a great measure depended.”

They succeeded, however, in taking alive to England one of the South Sea dogs on their return from their second voyage. And this dog had been a peculiar sufferer, for he (with others) had eaten of some very poisonous fish while in the tropics, and, after severe and long suffering, had nearly died; and he had also been repeatedly operated on, by inserting in his flesh poison scraped from the points of the poisoned arrows of the islanders, and yet he got over all! “and was brought alive to England”—the first and only one of his race!

I have already said, that at some of the Polynesian Islands, our early voyagers found no dogs. J.R. Forster says:—“In all the low islands they have dogs (a race with long white hair), but no hogs; at the Friendly Islands, and at Tanna (New Hebrides), they had hogs but no dogs; at the Marquesas, also, they had hogs but no dogs; while at New Caledonia they had neither hogs nor dogs. We gave at Amsterdam (Tongatapu) and at Tanna the first dogs; at New Zealand the first hogs and fowls; and at New Caledonia we left a couple of dogs, and another of pigs. They must formerly have had dogs at Amsterdam, because they knew the animal and were acquainted with its name, *kuri*, but have lost the species, as it should seem, by some accident.” G. Forster’s graphic description of this introduction of the dog at Tongatapu is worthy of notice. He says:—“Early the next morning Capt. Cook’s friend, Ataka (the principal chief of the islands) came on board in one of the first canoes and breakfasted with us. ... After breakfast the captains and my father prepared to return to the shore with him; but just as he was going out of the cabin he happened to see a Tahitian dog running about the deck; at this sight he could not conceal his joy, but clapped his hands on his breast, and, turning to the captain, repeated the word *kuri* near twenty times. We were much surprised to hear that he knew the name of an animal which did not exist in his country, and made him a present of one of each sex, with which he went on shore in an ecstasy of joy. That the name of dogs should be familiar with a people who are not possessed of them

seems to prove either that this knowledge has been propagated by tradition from their ancestors, who migrated hither from other islands and the continent, or that they have had dogs upon their island of which the race, by some accident, is [149] become extinct; or, lastly, that they still have an intercourse with other islands where these animals exist.”

G. Forster also says of the natives of Mallicollo (one of the New Hebrides group):—“Hogs and common poultry are their domestic animals, to which we have added dogs by selling them a pair of puppies brought from the Society Islands. They received them with strong signs of extreme satisfaction; but as they called them hogs (*puaha*), we were convinced that they were entirely new to them.”

And Capt. Cook, in his third voyage, states that at the island of Mangaia which he discovered they had no such animals as hogs and dogs—both which, however, they had heard of. This information he obtained from Mourua, a chief of that island, who visited his ship and conversed on board with the Tahitian native Omai, who was now returning to his own country from England in Cook’s ship. Another interesting item Cook relates concerning this chief. He says:—“As soon as Mourua got out of the cabin, he happened to stumble over one of the goats. His curiosity now overcoming his fear, he stopped, looked at it, and asked Omai what bird this was, and not receiving an immediate answer from him, he repeated the question to some of the people upon deck.” And a few days after, at the next island, Atiu, which Cook also discovered and visited, he found that they had hogs but no dogs, though they knew the name of it, and “were very desirous of obtaining a dog, of which animal this island could not boast, though its inhabitants knew that the race existed in other islands of their ocean.” Of the people of this island Cook further says:—“Our visitors were conducted all over the ship. ... They were afraid to come near the cows and horses; nor did they form the least conception of

their nature. But the sheep and goats did not surpass the limits of their ideas, for they gave us to understand that they knew them to be birds, ... The next day, soon after daybreak, we observed some canoes coming off to the ships, and one of them directed its course to the ‘Resolution’ (Cook’s own ship). In it was a hog, with some plantains and cocoa-nuts, for which the people who brought them demanded a dog from us, and refused every other thing that we offered in exchange. One of our gentlemen on board happened to have a dog and a bitch, which were great nuisances in the ship, and might have been disposed of on this occasion for a purpose of real utility, by propagating a race of so useful an animal in this island. But their owner had no such views in making them the companions of his voyage. However, to gratify these people, Omai parted with a favourite dog he had brought from England, and with this acquisition they departed highly satisfied.” [150]

It remains for me to show what I have been able to glean from the old New Zealanders, during the course of many years’ residence and enquiry, concerning their ancient dog, now a creature of the past, equally so with the *moa* and the *kiore*, or New Zealand rat.

From the reliable old natives I gathered that their dog was of small size, and but few in number in a *pa* or village; that it did not bark,<sup>20</sup> only howled plaintively at times; that it would not bite man; and that rats (the old edible rat) and birds were (in part) its food; that the owners of the dogs were greatly attached to them, gave them names, and prized and petted them (just as I have known the New Zealanders to do to their pigs and mongrel dogs forty years ago); that some of them were trained to seize ground-birds, such as *wekas* and *kiwis*, for their masters, and this was effected in great part through stratagem on the part of the native, who, when he went a bird-catching, would take his dog with him, always leading him securely tied by a cord, and, squatting down concealed in a fit place, held his dog, and imitating the cry

of the bird he was in quest of, the bird came near, when the little dog was let go, and he ran and seized the bird, and held it or brought it to his master. Sometimes they lost their dogs, owing to its stupidity or laziness; but the true New Zealand dog never became wild in the woods. Sometimes they were stolen or killed, which of course always led to reprisals, and not unfrequently to murder and to war. Their loss or untimely death was lamented in songs and monodies, of which several are still extant. The white-haired dogs were greatly prized, especially if they had long-haired tails. Such were indeed objects of envy, and were fitting presents for a king! These dogs were taken the greatest possible care of; they slept in a house on clean mats, so that their precious tails should be kept as white as possible. Their tails were curiously and regularly shaved, and the hair preserved for ornamental use. This operation of shaving its tail was quite unique (and would take some time to describe), and was never performed by a common person.

The flesh of the dog was not only deemed a dainty but it was also a *tapu* (or sacred) dish. A dog was always killed for the priest to eat on performing certain *tapu* or religious ceremonies over the children of chiefs, and on other great and formal occasions; also as food for the *tohunga-taa-moko*, or tattooer, when operating on chiefs. Hence, as a large number were continually needed to meet these requirements, the increase was kept under. The skins, when flayed, were cleaned and stretched in a hollow frame, and then hung up in the wind to dry gradually, protected from the sun, rain, [151] and dew. Men attended to this duty, and also made the dog-skin garments, though the women wove the inner flax-cloth lining. Forster and others, as we have seen, always speak of the dog-skin as the lining of the men's clothing mats, or dresses; such, however, was not the case; they, at sea in their canoes, merely changed sides to them to keep off the saltwater; in fact these dog-skin dresses were manufactured reversible. Many a dog-skin mat has been made within the last fifty years of the skins of dogs

of the small mongrel breed, before European clothing became common among the natives. Of these I have often seen the manufacture. I remember receiving an interesting account from an intelligent old native of the killing of one of those ancient dogs, and this was the last one I ever heard of. According to my informant it must have occurred about the year 1831–32 (as he lived with me in 1835,) and took place at Mangakahia on the river Wairoa, (which runs into Kaipara harbour) in the interior of the North Island. A great lady of that place had her chin, etc., tattooed after the old custom, and a dog was accordingly sought as *tapu* (sacred) food for the *tohunga*, or operator. There was but this one left in that neighbourhood, and it was almost taken by force from its owner (a petty chief) who cried and mourned greatly over his dog. My informant also partook of its flesh, being an assistant in the ceremonies. He, moreover, had also travelled extensively in this North Island, but had never seen another true New Zealand dog!

I am aware that Dr. Hector (speaking of those two dog-skins<sup>21</sup>) says that “they were recognised by some old natives as the skins of the genuine *kuri*, or ancient Maori dog.” This native testimony, however, has little weight with me, *i.e.*, in the way indicated by Dr. Hector, and that for several reasons: 1st. I doubt very much if those old natives had ever seen the genuine ancient Maori dog. 2nd. Their meaning (when speaking of those skins as that of a *kuri Maori*) may be very different from what Dr. Hector supposes. As I take it, the meaning there of the adjective *Maori* is very likely to be common and not indigenous, just what any common (plentiful) or cur-like mongrel dog would now be called by the natives, and which, indeed, we hear every day; *e.g.*, as when a native says (speaking of pigs), “*he poaka Maori tonu koa!*” or of peaches, “*he pititi Maori;*” or of potatoes, “*he tae-wa Maori ano;*” or of guns (muskets), “*he pu Maori;*” or of vessels, “*he kaupuke Maori;*” he means only such as are of the common run or sort—ordinary, general, well-known; of course (in these cases) he

never means indigenous or purely native. 3rd. Natives, for several years, have made great mistakes in speaking of animals or plants, especially of those which have become extinct or nearly so, or which have not been seen by them for many years. About four years ago, a gentleman [152] shot a bird in Hawke Bay; he showed it to the old natives around him, who all said it was a native bird; some said positively it was a *koreke* (a New Zealand quail); others, a *mohokura*, or a *mohopatahi* (two species of small rails). However, it was sent to me, and it proved to be the introduced Californian quail. I have long ago known that in all such matters the natives are not now to be depended on;<sup>22</sup> the oldest ones from their not having seen the animal or plant (in question) for many years, or perhaps not all; the younger ones from their never having known it!

The dog is mentioned in their oldest traditions and myths. Dogs were sometimes sacrificed, in the earliest times, to obtain the favour of the gods who were invoked; notably so, as is circumstantially related in the legend of the migration hither of the chief Turi and his party, who came from Hawaiki in the canoe Aotea, and landed on the west coast of this island. Turi is the (claimed) ancestor of the Whanganui tribes, and when on their voyage they had landed on a small island to refit and repair, a dog, whose name was Tangakakariki, was sacrificed with great formalities to appease the gods and to obtain them favourable winds. And this ancient Polynesian rite of sacrificing the dog may serve to explain two things respecting it which I have not yet referred to; the one took place at Tahiti, when Capt. Wallis, who discovered the island (two years before Cook visited it), was there; and it is thus related by him—but I should first mention that Captain Wallis was obliged to have two desperate engagements with the natives on his arrival, who courageously attacked his ship in great numbers; and it was only after killing several of them, and “landing and destroying more than fifty canoes, many of which were sixty feet long,” that they gave over, and peace was made. Captain Wallis says:—“At 2 p.m.

(on the day of the last fight) about ten of the natives came out of the wood with green boughs in their hands, which they stuck up near the sea-side and retired. After this they brought several hogs with their legs tied, ... and some dogs with their fore-legs tied over their heads, ... also several bundles of cloth, and placing them on the beach called to us on board to take them away. At first we could not perfectly discover of what this peace-offering consisted. We guessed at the hogs and the cloth, but seeing the dogs, with their fore-legs appearing over the hinder part of the neck, rise up several times and run a little way in an erect posture, we took them for some strange unknown animal, and were very impatient to have a nearer view of them. The boat was therefore sent on shore; our people [153] brought off the hogs, but the dogs were turned loose, and with the cloth left behind. In return for the hogs, our people left some hatchets, nails, and other things, making signs to some of the Indians who were in sight to take them away with their cloth. After the boat had returned on board, the Indians brought down two more hogs, and called us to fetch them; the boat, therefore, returned and fetched off the two hogs, but still left the cloth, though the Indians made signs that we should take it. Our people reported that they had not touched any of the things they had left upon the beach for them, and somebody suggesting that they would not take our offering because we had not accepted their cloth, I gave orders that it should be fetched away. The event proved that the conjecture was true, for the moment the boat had taken the cloth on board, the Indians came down, and, with every possible demonstration of joy, carried away all I had sent them into the woods.”<sup>23</sup> Captain Wallis remained there at anchor more than a month after this, on the best possible terms with the natives, buying largely of provisions but no dogs, of which animal he scarcely again writes. And Captain Cook (whom I have quoted<sup>24</sup>) states that after their great falling-out with that people, the chief lady (Operea), in sending him the present by way of reconciliation, included in it a dog—which is also the first time Cook mentions the animal.

The other circumstance I have alluded to is mentioned by Mr. Banks in Cook's first voyage to Tahiti, who saw within the sacred *marae* (or paved court of their great temple) "several small stages which seemed to be a kind of altar, as upon these are placed provisions of all kinds as offerings to their gods ... and we found here the skulls of above fifty hogs, besides the skulls of a great number of dogs."

And while such sacrifices were rare, if not unknown, in New Zealand (where hogs were not and dogs but few), still we may see a remnant of them in a dog having always to be killed on great ceremonial observances as a sacred food for the officiating priest or *tohunga*.

A few named dogs take a prominent place in the very dawnings of history among the New Zealanders—before they even left Hawaiki—whether that place be a reality or a myth. It is related in their earliest legends that a dog belonging to a great chief named Houmaitawhiti, who lived at Hawaiki, having committed some trifling error, was killed and eaten by another chief of that place named Toitehuatahi. On the dog, whose name was Potakatawhiti, being missed by its owner, his sons went seeking the animal in the several villages in the neighbourhood, calling it, in their way, "*Moi, moi*." On their seeking it in the *pa* of Toitehuatahi, the dog, hearing their call, responded from within the stomach of Toi, "*Au, [154] au*," although the enraged chief kept his own hand tightly on his mouth, so that the dog's cry should not be heard by that outlet. The young men, however, hearing it, returned to their father and told him of it, and soon reprisals began, and a desolating war followed, which ended in a migration to New Zealand!

Another famed dog was in the canoe of another lot of emigrants from Hawaiki, led by the chief Manaia. On its way to New Zealand, the dog, scenting the land before it could be seen, and a dead whale that had been cast on shore, sprang overboard, and swam howling towards the land; the canoe followed all that evening and night, guided only

by the cries of the dog, and so not only reached the land in safety, but also came in for a feast on the stranded whale,—and more good things afterwards.

Another strange dog legend is told of Irawaru, who was brother-in-law to the famed demigod Maui—the hero who, among several other equally strange adventures, fished up the North Island of New Zealand, and caused the sun to travel more reasonably through space for the benefit of man. The story is too long to relate here, but I may just say that Irawaru had displeased Maui, who, getting him unsuspectingly into his power, pulled his ears upwards and his back-bone out, so as to form a tail, and then transformed him into a dog! Cruelly sending his sister, on her enquiring after her husband in the evening, in ignorance of what had happened, to call him by the usual dog-call of "*Moi, moi*," which the poor newly-metamorphosed dog plaintively answered; on which the wife committed suicide by throwing herself into the sea. Hence, it is that Irawaru is said to be the father or precursor of all dogs.

In conclusion, I will merely add that it is my conviction that, hereafter, several of these things I have here brought forward will prove to be of service, trifling as some of them may at first sight appear to be, for, apart from the few concluding myths and legends, they are all facts. Facts, realities, respecting the ancient New Zealand dog (we have no more!). And these may tend towards elucidating the origin of the New Zealanders. And let it never be forgotten, particularly by such an institution as ours, that facts, faithfully recorded facts, however small in themselves, are not only stubborn things, but are sure to become useful. Science is still seeking to know of the origin of the New Zealanders, and of their so-called migrations hither; and here, in much of what I have compiled and written and laid before you is food for the reflective mind; indications which may yet prove of service. Further: it has often been thoughtlessly said, that because (in some

parts of the north of this island) the dog was also called *pero* and *peropero*<sup>25</sup> by the natives, therefore it was introduced into this country by the Spaniards! [155] (*perro* being the Spanish word for dog). Here, I think, will be found quite enough to upset that far-fetched theory, seeing that the New Zealanders possessed their little South Sea dog ages before a Spanish keel ever floated on the waters of the South Pacific! But there are several other such theories abroad, equally without reasonable foundation.

1. "Trans. N.Z. Inst.," IX., 243, 244.
2. Hani, Taiaha or Maipi, of the natives.
3. Published in "Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science," vol. II., p. 97; and in "Annals of Natural History" (London), vol. XIV., p. 93.
4. Nicholas' "Narrative of a Voyage to New Zealand," vol. II., p. 126.
5. "Voyage round the World," by G. Forster, 2 vols., 4to; "Observations made during a Voyage round the World," by J.R. Forster, 4to.
6. Cook's Voyages, 4to. ed., 1773, vol. II., pp. 152, 196.
7. S. Parkinson's Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas, pp. 20, 81.
8. Forster's Voyage round the World, 4to. (London), 1677, vol. I., p. 219.
9. At p. 135, Forster says:—"Here at Dusky Bay we had a young dog with us, which the officers had got at the Cape of Good Hope, and intended to try whether we could not train him up to the gun, but we had no sooner discharged the first fowling-piece than he ran into the woods and would not return, though we used all possible means to recover him." I suppose they managed to do so before they left Dusky Bay.
10. Observations made during a Voyage Round the World, 4to., London, 1778, pp. 189 and 208.
11. Mr. Anderson was only in the Middle Island of New Zealand.
12. 2 vols. 4to., London, 1786.
13. Cook's Voyages: first voyage, vol. III., Plate XVI.
14. This chief, of whom a portrait is given in Cook's Voyages, I have ascertained to be Tuanui, the ancestor of the present Henare Matua, of Porangahau, so well known among us. Tuanui put off from Pouereerere, and Cook's gifts to him were well remembered and circumstantially related. From some of those "garden seeds" sprang the "Maori cabbage" of the coast, which, thirty years ago, grew very thickly there and on to Palliser Bay, and often served me, when travelling, for breakfast.
15. Much like that one of mine, mentioned above, p. 135.
16. Observations, pp. 189, 208.
17. G. Forster also remarks on it, ante.
18. Note.—To a superficial observer such must have been much the same in the tropical islands, but there is this great difference, viz., the New Zealanders were, from the

- earliest times, split up into small tribes, who were ever at deadly enmity; hence the circle of breeding a strictly domestic animal must have been very contracted and limited: it was not so in the islands, which were under kingly rule.
19. For this I am indebted to Dr. Sparrman, whose entry in his Journal is so highly characteristic, that I copy it. He says,— "On the 7th June we sailed from New Zealand. ... After we had been at sea a few days we resolved upon killing a fat, though ugly Dutch dog, before the scurvy, together with the short commons of the ship, should render his flesh unfit for eating. Already used in our run between the Cape and New Zealand to put up with sheep that had died of the scurvy or other disorders, diseased hens and geese, we certainly were not now in a condition to turn up our noses at a roasted dog, which was really very palatable and well tasted." Sparrman's Voyage, 4to., London, 1786, p. 88.
  20. The New Zealander has different words to describe the cry of the old and of the new or more recent dog. The former is called and written ao ao, and au au; the latter, tau tau, and sometimes haru, and pahu pahu.
  21. Vide ante.
  22. Hence the many errors in Maori names of plants, etc., given in the "New Zealand Institute Transactions" (passim) and in other modern publications, which seem to have been collected by any and everybody and set down at random, and so doing positive and lasting injury!
  23. Cook's Voyages: first voyage, vol. I., p. 451.
  24. Vide ante.
  25. The New Zealanders have several common names for the dog, as kararehe, kirehe, kuri, pero, peropero, pape, and moi—though this last word is more properly the call for a dog.

## Taylor White on the Māori dog —and Colenso on Taylor White

Taylor White 1837–1914 was the owner of Glengarrig station and wrote several papers for the *Transactions*, including "On the Wild Dogs of New Zealand", read before the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute on 12 August 1889.

In 1890 Colenso was smarting from the rejection of his work by the editor James Hector and the editorial board of the *Transactions* and upset that the derivative writing of Taylor White and Judge TH Smith

seemed to be preferred. He wrote to Coupland Harding (21 October 1890),

*I do not write... for publication—merely for the audience of that evening. I am sick at seeing such stuff—as Taylor White’s, & Smith’s stolen mess, &c., &c.—pubd. in Trans. The question has again & again been put to me... why I don’t go on w. my papers on ancient Maori matters? & perhaps Sir J.H. may not like my answer, should he hear of it.*

15 November 1890 to Harding,

*Taylor White’s interminable Ms. (—paper folio flp.!!!) on Rats & mice!*

On Christmas Day Colenso wrote to Taylor White, in reply to the latter’s enquiry (ATL Ms-Papers-11282),

*Napier, Decr. 25, 1890.*

*Taylor White, Esq.,  
Wimbledon.*

*Dear Sir*

*Your note of the 18<sup>th</sup>. inst. reached me here just as I had returned from Dannevirke, where I had been some time sojourning: writing (as you remark) at this time, I would reciprocate your kind wishes, and sincerely wish you all the compliments of the Season.—*

*Re your enquiry as to the meaning of the word, “Mokokuri,”—I have but little to say (in a note)—it means,—an inferior or commoner or courser or less-elaborate kind of face tattoo. Kuri is added, adjectively, to several words in Maori, generally meaning as above—(having nothing to do with the Kuri = dog,) much indeed like our English use of the*

*term horse—as in horse-chestnut, horse-mint, horse mussel, horse-mackerel, horse-laugh, &c.*

*From your note I gather, you are going to write again on the Maori Dog. I fear I shall run the risk of displeasing you in saying,— “think twice before you do so,”—or you will greatly err. At all events first read my exhaustive paper on that subject, in vol. x. Trans.N.Z. Inst.—*

*Sir G. Grey, and Dr. (now Sir James) Hector made, years ago, similar mistakes, as, I believe, you have done.*

*I hope you are keeping well. I am not very well just now, and so am solitary at home, and thus writing this night to you, to be in time for your mail leaving here on 29<sup>th</sup>. I expect to leave again for the Bush about the 10<sup>th</sup>. of Jany.*

*I am, yours truly  
W. Colenso*

Taylor White submitted his paper and it was published (On the Native Dog of New Zealand. *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 1892; 24). Colenso wrote on 14 July 1891 to Harding,  
*... after Taylor White’s, Rat, Dog, &c—anything may go down!!—.*

14 September 1891 to Harding,

*... that irrepressible man—Taylor White!—*

On 28 November 1892 at the Hawke’s Bay Philosophical Institute Colenso commented on Taylor White’s paper and the *Transactions* later published his comments,

**Observations on Mr. T. White's Paper "On the Native Dog of New Zealand" — Transactions of the New Zealand Institute 1892; Vol. xxiv., Art. 51. Transactions of the New Zealand Institute 25: 495-503.**

Every kind of evidence is made to tell by writers who have a theory to defend.  
MAX MÜLLER: "The Gifford Lectures," 1891, p. 428.

As headstrong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile.  
(Mrs. Malaprop.) SHERIDAN: "The Rivals."

I REGRET to see a long paper by Mr. Taylor White in the last volume (xxiv.) of Transactions of the New Zealand Institute, ostensibly on the native dog of New Zealand; but, as far as concerns the genuine native dog of New Zealand, it is full of error. And as he has mentioned my name in his paper, and so some of his correspondents (though scarcely fairly), I feel constrained to write a little more additional on that subject. Moreover, I am the more inclined to do this through having very recently obtained some further valuable authentic information on the ancient and long-extinct New Zealand dog. Not, however, that any such was wanted by the seeker after real facts to complete what we already knew concerning it.

Mr. White's paper is pretty nearly wholly a compilation, and that from newspapers and correspondents—men of to-day. Much, however, of what they have written is correct (and I could furnish similar statements long known to me, from before this country became a colony, respecting both wild and tame imported dogs in New Zealand), but it has nothing whatever to do with the subject in question. Had Mr. White really cared to know the truth—the indisputable and genuine historical facts—concerning the ancient New Zealand dog he would have followed the intimation I had volunteered to give him concerning it in a letter I wrote to him in December, 1890, in reply to his inquiry. For had he done so I venture to think he would not have written another paper on that subject. Of course, in my so saying, I

suppose he had not seen my paper on the New Zealand dog, therein so exhaustively brought forward by me; if he had, however, done so, then he seems to have wilfully ignored all the certain knowledge concerning it, in his redundant zeal to establish a "fad" of his own.

Professor Max Müller very justly and eloquently observes in his late lectures at Glasgow (which is highly applicable here), "What is of immense importance in all scientific discussions is the spirit of truth. To make light of a fact that has been established, to ignore intentionally an argument which we cannot refute, to throw out guesses which we know we cannot prove—nay, which we do not even attempt to prove—is simply wrong, and poisons the air in which true science can breathe and live." ("The Gifford Lectures," 1891, p. 81.)

And, as I happen to have taken a copy of my note to Mr. White (referred to above), I give it here verbatim, from which it will be seen how I had put him on his guard, as well as kindly indicated the right direction:—

(here Colenso appended his 25 December 1890 letter to Taylor White).

### Further...

Colenso to Harding 21 September 1893,

*I did not go to mtg. of our Socy. last Monday—for... Taylor White's p. was to be read—and I did not wish to know anything of it, & so I staid away.*

4 January 1894 to Harding,

*... a clipping from Herald of 2nd. contg. a letter from the inexpressible Taylor White again on Maori words—& the Moa!!*

30 May 1894 to Harding,

*Among the many local letters recd. of late are 3, that were you here you should see—one, at least, I will send, w. my brief reply:—this is from Taylor White! the “cheek”, or the “egotism” of that man....*

3 May 1895 to Harding,

*... Taylor White’s additional rubbish—on Maori Rat and the aliases of the Moa (many birds!)—not read, even, here, have been published!!*

6 August 1895 to Harding,

*... after this treatment I don’t think I shall essay any more especially when I see Taylor White’s 3 (!! ) wretched papers—on old old matters, published in vol. XXVII. However, “Comparisons are \_\_\_\_\_”.*

22 October 1896 to Harding,

*Hony. Secy. Dinwiddie, told me at Meeting, he had recd. 4 Papers! from Taylor White all stuffed w. Maori names! he, D., could not read them. I dare say that these will pass muster at Wgn.!!*

27 January 1897 to Harding,

*... the Bishop made some dry telling remarks on “Taylor White and his Maori”: I thought I would have given 5/- for you to hear them, & 10/- for Hector, Tregear & Co.!*



The “island dogs” or *kori* of Vanuatu are small, prick-eared animals, ranging from short haired to long, black and tan to white. They match Colenso’s descriptions quite closely, though they are, no doubt, now of very mixed breed.

Cook found no dogs in the New Hebrides. It is tempting to think that today’s island dogs may be descended from two Tahitian puppies he left on Tanna.