

descriptive of Maori life and customs, given at the Y. M. C. A. Hall, on Sept. 25th and 28th, by Mr. Wherahiko Rawei, attracted audiences which packed the building in every part, and which throughout testified its appreciation by hearty laughter and warm applause.

Standing before that large gathering, the representative of a fine but fast disappearing people, the gifted New Zealander seemed to form a connecting link between the Maoris and our own Hawaiian natives, for the two races undoubtedly possess many similar characteristics, and the welcome he received was at once spontaneous and enthusiastic.



TATOODED MAORI CHIEF.

Attired in picturesque native costume, Rawei presented an attractive appearance, and aided by a constantly changing background of beautiful and artistic pictures, he succeeded in transporting his hearers into the heart of Maoriland, and it was easy to imagine oneself in the very midst of scenes described so ably, so eloquently, and with a power of pathos that was equalled by irresistible touches of humor.

Commencing at Wanganui, situated about a hundred miles beyond Wellington (the capital of New Zealand), the delighted audience was



MAORI BELLES.

carried up winding river, over mountain fastness past charming fern bank and sparkling cascade, and by impregnable forest to the terrible grandeur of the towering cliffs of the King country, whose massive clefts are lit up by the flash of falling waters rushing from an unknown source to an equally mysterious destination.

And while these rapidly changing scenes were thrown by limelight upon the stage—the views painting the description, the word-painting aiding the view—Rawei simply entranced all present with Maori song and quaint legend, enlivened now with ready wit or humorous satire, shots that struck home, but left no wounds; by little touches of pathos, and sweet melody.

From a seemingly inexhaustible stock of valuable information, quaint witticisms and legendary lore he produced a series of life like pictures of one of the noblest, most war like and intellectually greatest of the races of Oceania. Illustrations of curious Maori customs, religious and social, were given and artistic pictures of native men and maidens displayed. Several reproductions appear in this article, one of the most interesting being that of a Maori Tuhunga (native priest) elaborately tattooed in accordance with ancient custom. For to be plain-faced, that is without tattoo marking, was in olden days a severe reproach to a Maori. Yet it is a painful and prolonged operation, and the wounds or cuts made by the shell chisel, which was driven into the flesh with the blow of a greenstone mallet, take long to heal.

The tattooing instrument "uhi," before being applied to the skin is dipped in a black dye, and redipped for each stroke, blood flowing freely. The dye in question is a solution of burnt resin and wood, or the awets, the latter a caterpillar which, burrowing in the vegetable soil, gets a spore of a fungus between the folds of its neck, and, unable to free itself, the insect's body nourishes the fungus, which vegetates and occasions the death of the caterpillar by filling the interior of the body with its roots, always preserving its perfect form. When properly charred this material yields a very fine dark dye, much prized by the Maori for the purposes of tattooing.

During the process of ornamentation a native is tapu, that is sacred, and the priests exercise jurisdiction over him.

Especially he must by no means touch with his hands food of any description; it is usually conveyed to him in liquid form through a finely-carved trough or funnel.

The tattoo pattern (moko), varied as it is, represents well nigh all the art the people possess, for the Maori knows no other form of decoration, and apparently has no capacity for expressing himself otherwise.

His wooden effigies, the tribal war canoes, wharepunis, and various articles of domestic use are all decorated with somewhat similar work.

When a famous Maori chief, Te Pehi Kupe, visited Europe years ago, he stated that the New Zealander had his name written on his forehead, and pointed to portions of his own curiously carved visage. The patterns employed by the Maori artist are such that no two men are ever tattooed alike, and the operator is an artist whose sense of what is fitting appears to be the only guide to his handiwork.

Referring to our illustration, attention may be drawn to the fact that the tattooed or chiseled curves seem to follow the lines which age would give to

the face, consequently the Maori warrior thus tattooed has nothing to fear from the effects of time on the features. The old face looks young and the young face looks old. Age makes no changes.

The representation of Moko on the face of a chief or owner has frequently been used to sign a document conveying land to Europeans where



MAORI MAIDEN.

he could not write. But it is not on the same footing as European heraldry, though it may possess one or two features in common with that system of decoration.

One of the duties of a Maori Tuhunga "priest" is to teach the native children to read and write their own language, and to instruct them in all matters concerning the traditions and history of their people, who are said to have emigrated to New Zealand from Hawaiki (probably Hawaii) in seven large canoes, many hundreds of years ago. These canoes were named as follows: The



MAORI BELLES.