

1384

**TRADITIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS**

OF THE

**NEW ZEALANDERS:**

WITH

**ILLUSTRATIONS OF THEIR MANNERS AND  
CUSTOMS.**

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## CHAPTER VIII.

EDUCATION OF YOUTH—THEIR AMUSEMENTS AND GAMES—SKILL AT DRAFTS.—‘MAMINGA.’—SONGS USED IN PULLING HEAVY SPARS, ETC. BY LAND—SONGS FOR WAR CANOES.—LOVE DITTY, CALLED ‘HAKA.’—WAR SONG AND DANCE.

LIKE the Spartan, the New Zealand youth were considered more the property of the tribe than of the parent. And as the welfare of the tribe—nay, its very existence as a free body of men—depended on the valour of its members, every other consideration gave place to the necessity of rearing a valorous progeny. Curbing the will of the child by harsh means was thought to tame his spirit, and to check the free development of his natural bravery. The chief aim, therefore, in the education of children being to make them bold, brave, and independent in thought and act, a parent is seldom seen to chastise his child, especially in families of rank. Were he to do so, one of the uncles would probably interfere to protect his nephew, and seek satisfaction for the injury inflicted on the child by seizing some of the pigs or other property of the father.

Notwithstanding such a principle of education,

the children are not so unruly as might be expected, and when domesticated in European families are remarkably docile and well-behaved. They are, however, troublesomely intrusive and inquisitive. Little ever escapes their notice; so that, on their return home, they are able to give a tolerably correct inventory of the goods and chattels contained in the house of their late master—a knowledge which their relations endeavour to turn to account by using importunity or artifice to obtain what they most covet, either as a present, or on condition of paying for it on some future indefinite occasion.

Young persons have a great variety of games, some of them not unlike those of European children. I may mention one in which a string, tied together at both ends, is passed over the hands and fingers in a way to form a variety of intricate figures, *Anglicè* “cats’-cradles.” *Poroteteke* is the name of a game in which boys are the actors. Several having arranged themselves in a row, suddenly, at a given signal, stand on their heads, and then move their legs about in the air, kicking their heels against the buttock to the time of a song in which all join. It is a sort of war-dance on the head, and has so ludicrous an appearance, that no one who saw it performed could refrain from laughing. Their other favourite pastimes are flying kites, throwing reed spears, running races, walking on stilts, wrestling and mimic contests. In these con-