

flames illumined the surrounding country. Immense rocks and large quantities of dust and ashes were thrown out. Craters opened in Lake Rotomanana, and enormous volumes of heavy mud spread destruction on every hand. The loss of life amongst the Maoris was very great, and a number of Europeans also perished, as the town of Wairoa, and several villages were buried in lava, ashes and mud.

The story of the terrible catastrophe is now evidenced by the gaunt, burnt trunks of trees, and blasted forests on the mountain sides, eight miles distant, and the tremendous deposits of mud and ashes in the valleys below. Deep gulleys have now been washed out by the heavy rains, and occasionally the ruins of a Maori house may be seen, partly buried in the ravine. Rolling hills of blue mud, broken by deep gulleys, are now spread over the site of the once beautiful lake of Rotomanana.

From an eminence called the Ashfield, the Elders obtained a good view of Parawere and its surroundings. The mountain was cleft in two by the terrific explosion, and the craters are plainly visible. A new growth of ferns, grasses and shrubs now relieve this desolate scene, for nature is doing her utmost to hide all traces of the catastrophe.

As the Elders neared the scene of the eruption, the rugged condition of the country compelled them to dismount, and, leaving their horses, the journey was continued on foot. Steep inclines were climbed by grasping bunches of grass growing out of the fissures and after leaping across several chasms of unknown depth, a deep gully was entered, and its course followed for some distance. A stream of cold water enabled the travelers to quench their thirst, but imagine their surprise, after following the stream a few feet, to observe the water steaming and boiling. It was necessary to examine the ground carefully before stepping upon it, as boiling springs were steaming in every direction, and scalding vapor issued from fissures and holes in the ground. What appeared to have been an immense crater is now a boiling lake of clear water.

Mount Tarawera still looms up with threatening significance. The rift dividing the mountain is still hot and steaming, and the rocks in the vicinity are too hot to handle. Such a scene of fearful desolation will be long remembered by all who are privileged to view it, and the visitor turns from its contemplation conscious of his own insignificance and realizing still more the mighty forces of nature controlled by the Creator.

Waiwhakahihi was the next point of interest, with its numerous geysers and beautiful springs, but as heavy black clouds commenced to gather overhead, the horses were urged forward, in the hope of gaining a place of shelter before the gathering storm broke. A heavy thunderstorm, however, burst upon the travelers just as they caught sight of a cabin in the distance. The horses were spurred onward, but the heavy rain caused their riders to arrive in a wet condition. The horses were turned out and possession was taken of the house, the

owner of which was absent. The Book of Mormon and other church works convinced the Elders that the owner was a member of the church, so they rested contentedly till morning. The storm having passed over, the journey was continued.

On reaching the Waikato river, the natives on the opposite bank were signalled. A Maori crossed over in a small waka, and the little party shuddered at the thought of returning with him in such a small boat, as the Waikato is a swift, treacherous and turbulent stream. The waka (a small canoe hewn out of the trunk of a tree) was about two feet wide and fifteen feet long. One passenger was taken at a time, and the native with great dexterity paddled safely across. The little craft was propelled with a single oar, or paddle, and, after watching the skilful manipulation of it, all misgivings vanished.

Orakeikorako is an exclusively Maori settlement, pleasantly situated on the banks of the river. Most of the inhabitants are Latter-day Saints, so every attention was paid to the visitors. Ngawhas and pulas are very numerous in the vicinity, and the boiling pools are used for laundry and cooking purposes. Some of these hot springs are huge cauldrons, while others are just large enough for an egg boiler. The stream, issuing from the fissures, is utilized in various ways.

After a short stroll, the Elders met their Maori hostess with a kit of potatoes. Learning that she was taking them to cook, they accompanied her. The potatoes were rinsed in a stream of cold water, and then placed in a steaming cavity in the side of the hill. Covering them with a sack, they were left to cook in a natural steam oven.

The famous Alum cave, situated near the village, is a very interesting and unique sight. After crossing the river again, it was reached by climbing the hillside. On reaching the entrance the tall ferns were brushed aside, and the first glimpse of the enchanting scene was almost captivating. Descending rude steps, a perfect fairyland grotto was entered, which certainly baffles description. The cave is 128 feet long, 64 feet high and 42 feet wide. The incrustations on every side are of varied tints, and, as the sun shines from above, a beautiful picture is formed. The alum crystals glisten in the sunlight, and the tropical vegetation and tall tree ferns are reflected in a pool of water in the bottom, forming an appropriate background. The visitors could readily imagine it the scene of Rip Van Winkle's exploits with the goblins in the famous Catekills.

When ready to continue the journey, the Maoris caused the horses to swim the river. After passing Wairakei, a valley with innumerable attractions, the Huka falls were visited, which are said to be the finest in the Southern Hemisphere. At this point the Waikato river is forced through a narrow chasm, and the foaming, boiling torrent rushes between two precipitous rocky walls, finally breaking over a steep precipice, causing the fine spray to rise like columns of steam. This is a favorite resort of tourists, and is about six miles from Lake Taupo, a fine sheet

of water about 600 square miles in extent. Several Maori villages are located upon its shores, and many Maori legends connect it with the ancient history of the natives. The famous mountain scenery near the south end includes the active volcano, Tongariro, and the snow-covered Ruapehu. A family of Saints, residing at the base of Tongariro, hospitably entertained the Elders during their stay. The volcanic mountain is continually sending forth volumes of steam and sulphurous smoke, and is 7000 feet above sea level. Ruapehu, with its snow-crowned summit, is 9200 feet high and is very similar to many of the Wasatch peaks.

Climbing Mount Tongariro is no easy task. For many years it was considered an impossible feat, but of late years has often been visited. Utah boys are not easily discouraged, so the task was undertaken. Horses were used until it was no longer safe to ride them, and the venturesome travelers then secured staffs, and, picketing the animals, continued their journey. An immense extinct volcano about a mile and a half wide was crossed with some difficulty. The bottom was very rugged and had the appearance of boiling lava which had suddenly cooled, leaving huge waves of rock. The precipitous sides of the mountain are difficult to climb, as the loose ashes prevent a firm footing. Every few minutes a rest was necessary, and as the summit was neared, a rest was required every few steps. The sulphurous smoke enveloped the awe-struck travelers, and hid the crater from them. However, a good view was obtained of the active crater later. The whole summit of the mountain, at one time, had evidently been an immense crater, six hundred feet across. Several smaller craters may now be seen within this but only one is active, and that is about seventy-five feet across. Dense volumes of sulphurous smoke are belched forth, and at times roll back only to burst forth with greater force.

From the summit an extensive view is obtained of the surrounding country. Mount Egmont, nearly 100 miles distant, is clearly discernible in the west, and the faint outline of the ocean northward may also be seen, while the romantic and rugged scenery of New Zealand's "Wonderland" is in the foreground.

At the foot of Tongariro the Elders separate to seek their respective fields of labor and to continue their efforts to spread the Gospel of Christ.

PEGNIX.

ST. JOHNS STAKE CONFERENCE.

The quarterly conference of the St. Johns Stake of Zion was held at St. Johns, Apache county, Arizona, on the 5th and 6th of March, 1893.

The Stake Sunday school conference occupied the forenoon on Sunday, at which the schools of the stake were well represented. The exercises were quite interesting, interspersed with songs and instrumental music. Elder B. H. Roberts of the presidency of the Seventies was present and made a few remarks. Elders J. M. Dalton and T. H. Cluff, missionaries to the Y. M. M. I. Association, were present.

At the afternoon meeting on Sunday