

sidered an unfit place for man or beast to travel. There was once a good carriage road from Rotorua to Wairoa—a village near the shore of Lake Tarawera, some ten miles from the scene of eruption—the drive winding in and out through the hills, along the steep sides, and through the bush; but it has been so completely destroyed in the manner referred to above as to leave no trace of its former existence in the best part of the last eight miles. So our bridle-path, if such it can be called, led through some exceedingly bad places—up and down deep gulleys—over wash-outs and stones—and when we reached the bush, over roots and broken trees—through narrow places and under fallen limbs, to pass through which safely, it at times became necessary to almost lie flat on one's horse. I speak of this, to convey to you something of an idea of the destruction wrought by the eruption. The bush referred to, known as the Tikitapu Bush, is said to have been one of the finest in New Zealand, and enough magnificent forest giants and luxuriant undergrowth of ferns and shrubbery is left in a semi-destroyed state on the end farthest from the volcano, to lead one to imagine what it once was; but as one nears the scene of disaster, it gets worse and worse—immense trees having been smashed like match wood and the undergrowth completely buried by the furious stream of mud and ashes. But terrible as must have been the crashing of these timbers, some persons living on the edge of this bush who narrowly escaped at the time of the mud storm, say they never heard the snapping and falling of the forest trees, so all-absorbing was the roar of the volcano.

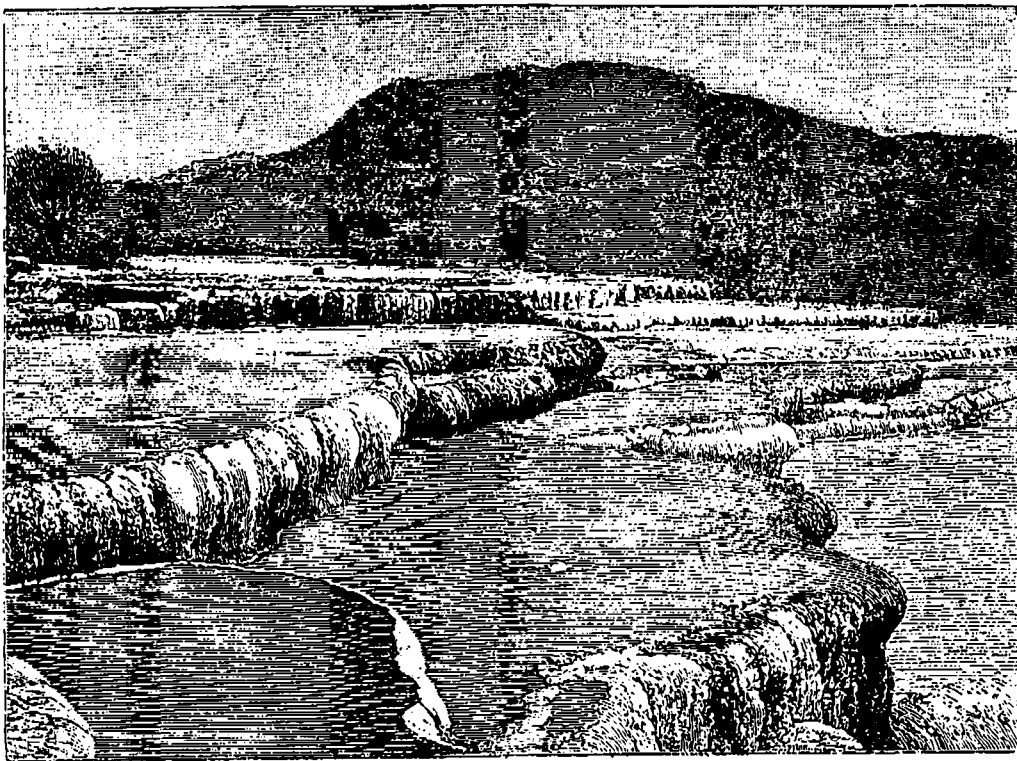
Emerging from the bush we came to Lake Tikitapu—once of a beautiful blue color, but now only a muddy pond about a mile or so across. Our path followed its shore for a little distance—it being necessary to wade part of it close to the shore, the hillside, where previously the road was, being quite impassable—and there left our horses and proceeded on foot, it being impossible for beasts to travel farther.

This walk, as may be imagined, was a decidedly rough one, up and down through deep cuts and

covered with the deposit—the small frame hotels with their roofs caved in and the side walls bulged and cracked in a frightful manner—and other buildings or huts wrecked and all but totally covered—are sad and too plain evidence of the powerful forces at work that awful night. The majority of the people in this little village miraculously escaped by assembling in the *runaga*, or native meeting house, and native *whare*, keeping up the roofs with numerous props. Five Europeans and six natives,

or “volcanic bombs,” which kept up for several hours, and with all a “gale of wind” and “fearful lightnings” (I picked up two specimens of these “volcanic bombs” in front of the hotel at Wairoa, ten miles from the volcano). Flames and fire shot up from Tarawera miles into the air, which people in Auckland, 168 miles away, claimed to have seen, while ships, many, many miles away at sea, had their decks covered with volcanic dust.

Oh, what a fearful night it must have been for



THE WHITE TERRACES, SEEN FROM ABOVE, AS THEY APPEARED PRIOR TO THE AWFUL ERUPTION AT ROTOMAHANA.

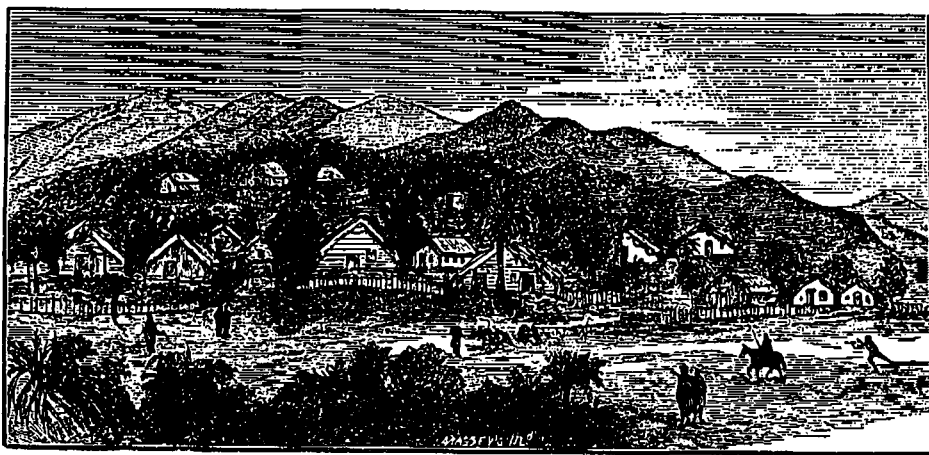
however, were lost. Though in times past a luxuriant vegetation clothed the hillsides about Wairoa, at present but the slightest vestiges remain, even these disappearing entirely as one approaches Tarawera.

It would go beyond the powers of our imagination to picture to ourselves the scene of that night

the people of that district! What mental suffering! What awful anxiety! A young tourist who was killed at Wairoa, had commenced what evidently he knew would be a farewell letter:—“This is the most awful moment of my life. I cannot tell when I may be called upon to meet my God. I am thankful that I find His strength sufficient for me. We are under heavy falls of volcano —” but these words were all he had time to write, for, when making necessary escape from the tottering hotel, a portion of the building fell upon him, killing him instantly, this unfinished note being found in his hand. But I must hasten on with my narrative.

From Wairoa our path descended a somewhat dangerous and very steep and rough decline to the shore of Lake Tarawera—a very irregularly shaped lake of some fourteen miles in extent, which is said to have risen twelve feet during the morning of June 10th. Here we embarked in a row boat, our guide and two stalwart natives, who had come with us for the purpose, pulling us the nine miles to our point of landing. These two natives were of a tribe not belonging in the district, for nothing would induce a resident native to come near the place, it being considered by them *tabu* or sacred. There was not a cloud in the sky and the blazing sun was shining down upon us with its noonday heat, the barren mud-covered hills about us without the slightest vegetation to relieve the eye, but adding to its intenseness.

As Tarawera first comes into view across the lake it appears as a mountain of immense proportions with triple craters. Upon rounding the first point on our right the guide pointed out to us the location of a native village on the shore, of



THE VILLAGE OF WAIROA BEFORE THE ERUPTION—TEN MILES FROM THE VOLCANO.

crevices and over heaps of baked mud and ashes, past Lake Rotokakahi, and following the course of its outlet to Wairoa. Lake Rotokakahi, formerly a green lake, but now also changed to a muddy color, is ninety-five feet lower than Lake Tikitapu, though only separated from it by a very narrow ridge. The water in both of the lakes rose nearly three feet as a result of the eruption. The semi-buried village of Wairoa presents a most desolate scene; it would be hard to conceive a more terrible picture of wreck and disaster. Here and there are native huts buried almost to their eaves in mud and ashes—“the old mill,” its great water wheel half

of horror, for even eye-witnesses, several of whom I carefully questioned, cannot give a clear account of the phenomena. The gist of it is as follows:—On the evening of June 9th, 1886, a beautiful “electric cloud” hung over Mount Tarawera, illuminated by flashes of lightning resembling “barbed wire.” Thinking it a “pretty thing” and not heeding it as a warning, the neighboring villagers watched it until satisfied and retired, but only to be awakened next morning at half past two by a “most awful noise” and “quaking of the earth,” following which came a “storm of mud” and a shower of “hot ashes and fire,” and “fire balls”