THERE'S GOLD IN THEM HILLS

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BY

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CHAPTER I

IN THE sixties of last century the squatters had arrived in Australia from England and other places and taken up large areas of land extending in all directions, and sometimes beyond the railway terminal, and the arriving immigrants who were not prepared to work for the squatter were obliged to push further on, which a lot of them did, including my mother and father who steered away into East Gippsland, Victoria, which would be about 80 miles distant from the nearest railway station. They made their choice of a selection a few miles outside a small settlement called Buchan. I was born there in November, 1881, and we all shifted down to the Snowy River the following year.

Australia was not a hard country to pioneer in, as my father did all the shifting by wagon and bullocks, and mother once told me that when shifting from Buchan to the Snowy River there was not room on the wagon for everything, so father fastened a big bough to the tail of the wagon and then tied a lot of gear to the limbs.

The whole company consisted of our mother and father and seven children—five boys and two girls; cattle, horses, pigs, fowls, fruit trees, and an assortment of many things too numerous to mention. The distance travelled was nearly 30 miles mostly through maiden bush. Our father was a good bushman and knew how to find his way, and on the third day we arrived at the top of the hill overlooking Snowy River. Father placed a new cracker on the bullock whip, and with his 14 stone 4 pounds of brawn and muscle, he sounded the alarm that a new settler had arrived to take possession of what he named Rocky Hills. I visited the place about 30 years ago and when it came into view a thrill went through my body as the panorama before me appeared to be the loveliest sight that I ever saw. Two more children were born after arrival

on the Snowy River, one girl and a boy, and that concluded our family of nine living, six boys and three girls; one girl died at Buchan when three months old.

My father was one to explore new fields and went to Western Australia, and tried to induce the boys, my eldest brothers, to be interested, without any success, and he died there when I was twelve years of age. We did reasonably well but I was not the favourite boy in the family, and often used to try and think how I could get as far as I could from the rest of them, but I could never think of anything that would lead me anywhere, until my brother Jack said to me, "Angus McCole and I are going to New Zealand. Would you like to come with us?" My chance had come, and I said, "Yes, I would." I was nearly eighteen. I had some cash in the bank, and I sold four horses and whatever else I could turn into cash. We were given a farewell party, and we left the following morning on horseback, and rode four miles out to the main road to meet the coach, and for those who have not had the experience of saying goodbye for the first, and perhaps, the last, time, I must say the experience is very sad indeed. The saddest word in our language (goodbye) is hard to say, and strange to say all hands were shedding tears, but myself. I seemed to think that distant fields were greenest. We rode out to the main highway and met the coach, placed our baggage aboard, and with another goodbye to our youngest brother who came with us to take the horses back home, we took our seats. A crack from the driver's whip and we were off, not forgetting to wave goodbye to our young brother Louis for the first time, and not knowing whether it might be the last. We usually say that we will meet again soon, but that only takes the place of whistling to keep up our courage. Soon we were travelling along a road through a maiden forest, to be broken only at intervals by a stray building now and again, until we reached a seaport town, Cunningham, just beyond Lake Tyres. We stayed the night at Cunningham, and got the steamer next morning for a place called Sale, where we took the train for Melbourne. That was my first ride in a

train. We also travelled by rail to Sydney, where we stayed two days.

We then sailed in the old S.S. Waiora. It was my first sea voyage, and also the roughest. We were seven days reaching Auckland from Sydney. My brother Jack did not leave his bunk except of necessity for the whole seven days, and he said that he didn't think that he would ever go back to Australia, and he never did.

We stayed at the Thames Hotel on arrival, and then took the steamer to the Thames; then by rail to Paeroa, and by coach to Karangahake, and that was to be our future home. Just a gorge with houses built on either side of the road extending far up the mountain-side, and looking around at things it just made me wonder what I could expect from a rock-bound higgledy-piggledy show as it was, but the strangeness of things created a new interest for me.

There were, at the time, three mines and two batteries working. Our friend Angus got work from a contractor, and my brother and I got work in the Crown mine pushing trucks: Jack receiving 9/- per day for work that should have been done by mules or horses, and I pushing a smaller truck in a higher level received 7/- per day. Later on I got a job at the Talisman battery at 8/- per day, excavating for a new battery, and after deducting wet days there was very little left after paying for board and lodgings. New Zealand at the time was over-rated.

There were two tunnels being driven on co-operative contract to connect the railway from Paeroa to Waihi, and a strike took place, while I was there, for a rise in the contract price, and Mr R. Seddon arrived on the job and managed to get the men back to work. The men received 4/6 per shift in one tunnel and 4/9 in the other, and what they got after that I don't know as I didn't stay there very long. To get a job in either end of the tunnels it was considered necessary to have some big influence. I couldn't see any openings where a fortune could be made, so I moved back to Auckland and got a job from a registry

office. The money was 15/- per week, but I was told some big "tips" could be expected. The job was at New Plymouth—quite a long way to go for 15/- per week, but as there were more men than jobs "a beggar could not be a chooser."

The night before I left Auckland I was standing outside the Theatre Royal and I looked over the faces to see if there might be someone whom I might know. There was a big crowd which was waiting for the doors to open and there happened to be one man whom I knew at Karangahake. I wanted to talk to him but my efforts were entirely frustrated by a young fellow of unusually smart appearance who was bombarding my friend from the goldfields with questions, and sometimes the answers. Finally the doors opened and gradually swallowed up the crowd, and I was left standing on the street somewhere in the centre of a town with a population of about 40,000 and with nobody to talk to.

The following day I caught the train that connected with the boat at Onehunga for New Plymouth. I got my ticket and went aboard and stood on the carriage platform watching people laughing and joking, saying good-bye and good luck, etc. While I was standing alone on the platform thinking how nice it would be to be home the whistle blew. A young man sprang on to the platform, nearly bumping into me. I noticed he had been reading a page at the rate of nineteen to the dozen to some friends that he had just left on the station. Up to the present I had found the New Zealand people inclined to be quiet and reserved, but this bird made up for all that. Without a doubt he was a very friendly fellow, and what is known today as a good mixer. Let us call him Mr William Munro, which was not his name. He was not long in educating me up to the fact, as he put it, that we were mates travelling together, and told me to call him Bill, because, as he explained to me, all the elite in Auckland called him Bill. After trying to measure the flow of his language I suddenly discovered he was the man who was conversing with my friend in front of the theatre the night before. Well, there is no doubt

Bill eased the monotony a good deal. I had no need to think of failure while I remained a friend of his. He could do anything or go anywhere. He could smash his way through places where a lion would fall down in fright. All this was something new to me, born and bred on the Snowy River. I had never actually met these human giants although I had previously read a few "Buffalo Bills" without being sure that such wonderful men existed.

Bill was fed up with Auckland. The place was far too small for him. His head was sticking out one end and his feet the other. In fact, to be candid with me, New Zealand itself was also too small at times. He felt as if he could grasp the North Island in one hand and the South Island in the other and rub them together until they fell into dust. I asked him what he would be standing on while he was doing that, and he admitted the job might be difficult but fortunes were easily made. This fellow Bill created a new interest in life for me. I had already flinched at one or two obstacles which to Bill would have been like blowing out a candle. I was only a little past my eighteenth birthday, and I had already learned that Bill was twenty-six. I was half inclined to think that I would be more than grateful if I only had half of his strength. Bill was just taking a job managing a hotel in New Plymouth. Anything would do until he got the hang of things, and then he would open out. I learned afterwards that he was second cook. Two weeks passed and he called on me and advised me that he had resigned his position and we were going to Wellington the following day, and telling me not to argue the point about it as there was no need to worry, as he had relations down there who owned half of Wellington. As a matter of fact I had terminated my job, and I intended to try the West Coast, so away we went and arrived in Wellington to take charge with Bill at the wheel. Neither of us had much cash, but Bill did scrag one or two of his relations, and I saw them give him money, which raised his status with me a good deal.

We got no work in Wellington, and, of course,

brother Jack was my bank, and I couldn't see Bill throwing Wellington to the ground and going through its pocket, or seeing any chance of making a living, so I wired my brother for money, and when it arrived, I had already decided on going to the West Coast. I packed up and for the first time I was taking the initiative as Bill was coming with me.

While staying at the restaurant in Ghuznee Street, Bill had ample time during the two weeks' stay, to try and convince the boarders that he had served his time to about half a dozen trades although only twenty-six years of age. When taxed he would always shuffle off on to another subject. It was unknown which trade he would follow when we reached the goldfields.

We got our luggage aboard the old "Wainui." I don't know how old she was but she smelt her age and a little to spare. There was very little space and the passengers ate where they slept, and that apartment was bedroom and dining-saloon combined. Shortly after we put to sea, Bill engaged the steward in conversation, and Bill seemed to ride waves pretty well. I heard him giving the steward some hair-raising stories of some of his adventures that he had had at sea. It seemed that the steward knew nothing about sailing ships, and that played right into Bill's hands. He seemed to be able to convince the steward that he had been second mate on a four-master sailing from Auckland to South American ports. We arrived at Greymouth, disembarked, and I then learned for the first time a weak spot in his stock-in-trade when he informed me that his cash was done, and I would have to advance him his fare to Reefton, which I did. I think, by the way, he was acting. At Reefton he seemed to think that I had a well of gold that only needed tapping at any time, but the position was just the reverse, as the last money wired to me in Wellington from my brother added up to a total of £12. I had become very miserable to think that I was moving further and further away from anything that might bring me a return sufficient to pay what I owed. However, I considered that I had dug into my brother's

pocket deep enough, and had decided that, come what might, I intended to suffer it, and I did.

We stayed at one of the leading hotels in Reefton, a place where commercial travellers, mine officials, and cadets fresh from the universities stayed who were engaged at the mines or batteries for a term before sitting for their examinations for the different occupations which they intended to follow.

I landed in Reefton with about 6/- in my possession, and Bill seemed to require more cigarettes than usual. He seemed to be pleased when I disclosed the fact that I was broke, and when I told him he said that we were brothers in arms, united we stood and that united we would fall, and was never finished telling me that I always made too much fuss about little things that didn't matter. He could see great opportunities in Reefton for a couple of wide-awake fellows; just keep our eyes open and step in when the opportunity came. We went out every day looking for work. We walked to the Globe Hill and came back to the Inkerman and the Globe battery. In most cases the boss would shake his head before we had time to ask him, and when we moved on to see the next boss Bill would always start up singing a new song and laugh and say that there was still plenty of corn in Egypt, and Nero played the fiddle while Rome was burning. When he sang I would moan, and when I commenced to moan he would laugh and sing louder. We used to land back at the hotel tired, and after dinner we would congregate in the commercial room, and there was always a good coal fire burning which made the place look cheerful for that part of the day at least. It did not matter who was in the room or what their occupations or callings were Bill would engage them in conversation, and as usual know all about the subject up to a certain point. I think that we were recognised as future cadets for the mines or batteries.

We had been nearly a week in Reefton, and it was nearly midwinter and things looked fairly blue. Of course, the proprietor knew that we were in need of some work, and one evening he told us that the

engineer from Newton Flat Sluicing Co., was in the house and he wanted men for cutting a water race. We were introduced to him and both got a job. He asked us a few questions as to what we had been used to and Bill lost no time in telling him that he had just recently finished a big contract cutting a water race for a mining company in the far north. I was very pleased to think that we would be making a start by Tuesday next, this being Saturday, our minds being free from thinking about where we might get work, while we were going to bed. For a considerable time afterwards Bill would be priming me as to how we would get the whole thing on contract and sometimes he would make several thousand pounds before we would fall asleep.

Monday morning arrived and we were all ready to leave by the coach at 8 o'clock, but there was just a little awkward problem right in front of us; we each owed a week's board and neither of us had a red cent. We had previously discussed the matter and Bill always dismissed the question as just a passing phase of our triumphal march along the road that held so much for us, telling me to leave it to him and he would fix that little matter as he knew how to explain things to the old man. We were standing looking at each other and I said, "Bill, you had better go and speak to the boss about our board," and he just stood looking at me. Here was this great giant of the human family who could take the world by the ears and shake it if he wanted to, held up with a small problem. It was just wonderful to see a man of his strength shrivel up within himself. He said, "No, you had better go and see about it as he would give you a better hearing than he would me," and so I had to see the old man, and he was not pleased as he seemed to have thought that we were men of substance. However, we got fixed up, and we had to sign an order on our pay, and later on we had to sign another order on our pay for the coach fare, and then we set sail for Newton Flat, about forty miles up the Buller. The coach was full of chaps similar to ourselves going to work, but not before their time. As a matter of fact

Reefton had shed its coat of a coach-load of would-be parasites. There was only one man in the bunch who had any money. His name was Mat, and his brother had a pub in Reefton, and Mat had been staying with him for about six months, so his brother got him a job, and gave him a couple of pounds pocket-money to see him get a start. Mat was a good fellow. He shouted for all hands at the Inangahua Junction Hotel, and Bill was not long in making up to him and securing the price of a packet of cigarettes. After lunch and a change of horses, we crossed the Buller by punt, then continued on to Lyall, an old mining field which was gradually dying, and Mat spent the last of his cash amongst the boys at a pub where the coach pulled up. Then we did the last stage of the journey and we were all unloaded at a house which was serving as a boarding-house, but was much overcrowded. It was raining and the fog was fairly thick, and I might say the place did not appeal to me. There were some good talkers in the company, but Bill just about held the floor all the way, though the other boys were not swallowing all he had to say. We were all finally parked in the boarding-house, until the following day, as we had to arrange about tents and stores from the storeman, who used to come from Murchison twice each week.

I managed to get into a tent already built, about one mile in the bush from the main road leading towards the water race which we were to be engaged on. I was taking a tent and cooking gear all complete on the hire-purchase system. A man alongside wearing a Captain Kettle beard, and with a peculiar look in his eye, had bought it from somebody who was getting out. I was the eighth would-be purchaser, and he seemed to be proud to know that the other fellows were unable to stand up to the hard conditions in the bush of the upper Buller.

Bill and I dissolved partnership as soon as we reached the boarding-house. Bill was very keen that we should be camped together, but I thought otherwise as he had given me many a good headache. I could see that Bill was losing a good deal of his mana,

as the boys got fed up with his bragging, but I will give him his due, he seemed to keep a cheerful face even in that God-forsaken country. He was camped further along the main road and came to work in a different direction. Most of us were stripping and benching, and others were shooting out the rock and completing the race. I was stripping and benching and Bill was doing likewise. We were separated by another man doing the same work. Each man was allotted a piece to do, and the ganger would walk up and down not to see who was doing the most, but to see who was doing the least. Needless to say Bill was not a fast worker, and there was no extra pay for talkers, or for fellows who wasted time filling a pipe or making a cigarette.

One day, I had occasion to go down the race for a billy of water, and when I arrived back Bill was in my section, and my tools were over on his section, and, of course, that was the signal for trouble as Bill wouldn't shift, the reason being that the boss would be along at any time and Bill had made the poorest show along the line. Anyhow Bill had changed places and wouldn't budge, so I just upended him out of the section and threw his tools after him. In the scrimmage I gave him a nice jolt to the chin, but he had no stomach to fight. Now that I was rid of Bill I just want to go back to Wellington.

While we were staying in the boarding house there, the landlady told me to watch him, but I was already watching him, as one day when I opened my box to get something, I noticed a big-sized man's coat. I asked Bill about it and he said that it was his, and I asked him, in fact I challenged him, on the ownership as it was so big, and he said that his father gave it to him. I then asked him what right he had to put it amongst my belongings, and he put over his usual bluff, but I instructed him to keep his clothes out of my box, which he did until he got to Reefton, when I found that he had slipped a pair of kid gloves into my box, and we had another altercation about that, and I noticed that he had a pair of tan boots which he didn't have in Wellington; but up till then he was the

boss, and I wasn't prepared to have a mix-up with him until the proper time and place, which now arrived as already explained.

Now we go back to the misery of the bush camp. The fellow with the beard, who was my sole companion, used to come over to my camp every night and pump me as to whether I would be staying or going, and finally, one evening, I came to the conclusion that, if I stayed any longer, it would be perhaps a little more than I could bear, as I had been fighting against myself all the time trying to hang on until I could get a little money to go away with. I had nothing, but I decided at once that I would go in the morning, which I did. I gathered up what little I had in the camp and got out to the main road where a few of the men were camped, and they were just having breakfast. I had no pay coming to me as it was mortgaged before I started. I stopped to talk to a man in the first camp I came to, and he asked me how much I was going out with, and I put my hand in my pocket and pulled out one shilling and told him that was all I was carrying away from the job. He told me to hang on for a moment and he went over to another camp and came back with 5/-, which I accepted with thanks, and I moved on, commencing my little walk of forty miles to Reefton.

I had six shillings in my pocket and was making fair progress. I had covered about six miles when I heard footsteps behind me, and on looking back whom should I see coming after me but Bill, the man I never wanted to see again. When he got alongside me he didn't take long to get into his stride again so far as talk was concerned. He was sorry to see me going away and tried to induce me to come back, saying that he was sure we would do well, but I had an idea that I could do better without him, and therefore wouldn't entertain any of his ideas, and so we walked on to the Lyall, and Bill, having money, shouted drinks and gave me a packet of cigarettes. We had dinner and Bill would pay, and then handed me 5/- to help me along the road, in doing which, taking all in all, he showed a good spirit. The money was very helpful

to me as when a fellow is down in funds every shilling counts.

I left the Lyall with 11/- in my pocket, and Bill walked a little further along the road with me, and when he decided to return he shook hands several times, and my instructions were that wherever I went I must write to him, and we would link up again. I promised him faithfully that I would, which I never intended. As far as I was concerned Bill and I were separated for ever. Bill had one big idea and that was he thought he could lead me and control me, but he had another think coming. Bill went back to the works, and about another week later was arrested for stealing out of the men's camp, and got one month's imprisonment in the Lyall jail. A few years later, when I was a warder at Mt. Eden jail, Bill turned up there, and I had the pleasure of showing him to his room each night; and just to be sure that he would be safe for the night I would turn the key in the door behind him. Bill also turned up at Featherston Military Camp in 1915. He was posing as a carpenter, as one of his many trades, and all the tools that he had were a saw and a hammer. He was there only a few days when the overseer came to the conclusion that Bill was no carpenter, and the camp could be built without him, and Bill was paid off, and I have not seen or heard of him since. This bringing to an end my acquaintance with this great bluff and skite, I will now continue with my journey.

CHAPTER II

I REACHED the punt at Inangahua Junction when darkness was falling. The puntsman put me over and gave me shelter for the night. I slept on two boxes, with one bag under me and two over me. It was a fearfully cold night, the most miserable night in my life. However, I was alive in the morning, got a snack, and started for Reefton, twenty miles, and that was one of the hardest days I ever had. I was scarcely able to walk at times. My bones were frozen, and I couldn't get enough speed up, or there was not sufficient warmth in the atmosphere, to thaw me out. I had to walk every yard of the distance, and I had nothing to strengthen me for the whole twenty miles, except a drink of water now and again along the road. I was too modest and too proud to call in at one of the houses and ask for even a cup of tea. I was foolish not to do so as there is always someone who cares, and would be even eager to assist. I reached Cronodon about three o'clock in the afternoon, and there was a school house just before I reached the village. I went over and lay down in the porch, and the sun was out and the temperature was reasonably warm, and I had a good sleep and was much benefited by it, but I was very hungry so I set off to complete the journey, another seven miles, and walked every yard of it, sometimes nearly dragging my feet after me.

I walked into Dick Dunphy's Hotel a little late for tea, but was obliged by a little girl by the name of Mary, who was the waitress, and her courtesy and manners were charming. By this time I considered myself a common wayfarer, but Mary was pleasant and talkative, which seemed to cheer me up, and the atmosphere generally seemed to be entirely different from that which I had left behind me. It was Friday evening, and I still had 11/- in my pocket. I had a good sleep that night, and a good breakfast in the

morning, and while in the sitting-room having a smoke I suddenly remembered I applied two weeks ago at the Reefton Post Office to have £1 transferred from Auckland, and it should have arrived. I went up to the Post Office and drew the £1 and twopence interest, that bringing my funds up to £1/11/2, and I had another £9/5/- waiting for me over on the other corner at the Bank of New Zealand, but didn't know it was there until about eighteen months afterwards. In the first place it was £10 that I had transferred from Australia, and through shifting around so much the money couldn't keep up with me, and I had given it up as lost, and didn't bother any more about it.

I got the information the night before that I might get a job trucking at the Globe mine. The manager, Jimmy Martin, lived down the Buller Road just outside Reefton, and he came home every Saturday on a bicycle. He always had a little white dog following him, and he passed a certain spot at a certain time within a minute or two either way. He was a short chubby man with a tuft of whiskers growing under the bottom lip. Now I had my prey well described I was on the spot, and, sure enough, along came my quarry and I walked out to stop him as nervous as a young man proposing to a girl, and wasn't I glad; it was like drawing blood with the first punch when he said I could start trucking at the Globe mine at four o'clock shift on Monday, which suited me better than the day shift, as it gave me until about midday on Monday to get fixed up with board, etc. On the Monday morning after breakfast I walked into the bar, and pretending to be prosperous, I tendered a pound note to Dick. He looked at the pound and then looked at me and said in a gruff sort of way, "If you are short, another time will do," so I thanked him and said that I thought I could manage. That little incident reminded me that I was on the West Coast.

I caught the brake for the Progress Junction, and enquired at the hotel for board, and was offered lodgings for one week only as the old man was short of staff, and I suppose boarders didn't pay as well as the other part of the business, although he didn't

touch on that, but only said that the girls were overworked, etc. The hotel was about six miles from Reefton, and it was another mile up to the mine where the coaches didn't go on account of the hill being too steep. There was only one boarding house near the mine at that time, and about 150 men used to have their meals there, and sleep in ranches and huts scattered here and there. Several men had their wives with them, and some had children, but there was no school at the mine at that time. There were also a good number of men baching in huts. Before my week was up at the hotel I arranged for board, that is meals only, at the big boarding house run by Mr and Mrs Ogorman. I had to have blankets as I had also to sleep in one of the Company's ranches, and I had to call upon myself for another effort. Blankets were required and I hadn't the price of them, and I was forced to play another part for which somehow or another nature forgot to supply the armour plate, what is generally known as having a good thick hide. However, it had to be done, so to save expenses I walked to Reefton in the morning, as I was off until 4 p.m. each day, and I walked up Broadway right to the top end of the town, and over on my right was a fairly big drapery shop and I walked straight across and entered the shop. I interviewed the manager and bought a big double blanket on credit without any trouble whatsoever. The blanket was to be paid for on pay day but I couldn't manage it until the following pay day, and the draper was well pleased when I walked in the following month and paid him. I landed on the Globe Hill with one blanket in the dead of winter. I had no mattress and it is no good trying to explain in words what I went through for two months. The only time I could make up for loss of sleep was when I was on the midnight shift. I would go to bed when I arrived home a little after 8 a.m., and sleep all day. A couple of months later a man whom we used to call "The Yank" came to me and asked me if I wanted to buy an outfit. I didn't know what he meant, and when he explained I said, "Yes, I will have a look at it," and he took me

into the next ranch and showed me two heavy Canadian sweaters with big cuffs and collars, four heavy blankets and a mattress, the lot for £1, and he was going out right away. I gave him the pound and it was one of the best deals I ever made in my life. As it was I hadn't sufficient bedclothes to keep me warm, and the suffering I was putting up with was telling on me. I happened to be on the midnight shift. I made up my bed with the new outfit and turned in, and instead of being up for tea I didn't wake until eleven o'clock that night.

I was a good deal more comfortable now and I was trucking on the surface conveying the quartz from the shaft to the hoppers from where it was again filled into aerial buckets and then carried three miles over to the Globe battery close to Crushington where Jack Lovelock, the Olympic runner was born. My job was fairly hard at times, but I could do it and was told by the man who was winding out of the shaft, that it was hard to get fellows to stay on account of the monotony of the job. I stayed there about nine months and paid off all my debts, including the twelve pounds that I owed my brother. It didn't pay one to leave one's job too readily in those days as the labour market at that time could be described as being in a state of flux, as there was always a constant stream of men moving from one mine to the other looking for work, and the bosses were so tired of meeting them, that if no men were required they would, when approached, shake their heads and walk past. I was keen on getting a shift to a job underground, and because I couldn't get what I wanted, I left, but if I had my days over again I would never ask to be employed underground.

From there I shifted to Reefton and had a look around, and got a job at the Globe battery—just a casual job but it was a good change and I benefited considerably. I was boarding at the Crushington Hotel and the food was better and the surroundings also seemed better. I was working for a Mr Bell, and when my job finished he told me to go over to the Wealth of Nations and ask for the manager and tell

him that Joe sent me over, which I did, and the manager laughed and said that he had never heard of the man. Nevertheless it was not a deterrent as I got a job all night shift trucking from a chute that was filled by contractors who were sinking the inerjetic shaft up above it. I was the only man in that part of the mine at night, and there was supposed to be a ghost in the tunnel, and fellows wouldn't stay. Well, this ghost yarn didn't trouble me for quite a while until one night I fancied I could hear something. Of course looked-for things like that can easily be imagined. I might say I was a bit scared as the tunnel would be about half a mile long, and sometimes when coming out with the truck, a shadow would be thrown by the light here and there, and I sometimes used actually to think that this ghost was following me. That was the worst part of the job as the other part was fairly easy because when the chute was empty I had no more to do. I emptied the chute on the last shift I worked at it, and was sitting down in the blacksmith's shop when the day shift arrived, and the boss came over to me and told me to join the rest of the men at 8 o'clock the following morning, and go trucking in No. 6 in the Wealth of Nations proper. I stayed there about nine months and might have stayed longer but my room mate, George Phillips, who was working in the battery, said to me, "Jack Blake and I are going to South Africa, what about coming with us?" I said "Alright, I will make another mug," and George said, "Oh, it is nothing, Dad is over there and things are very good, and Mother and I are going whatever happens." The South African war was not long over and I thought from what I heard from men who had travelled, that that should be the place for a young fellow.

We didn't lose much time. In a month we were on the coach at Reefton to connect with the boat at Westport for Wellington. Something appeared in the Reefton paper about three somebody's having left for South Africa. I have often thought since that we should have been described as "Three Mugs" as none of us knew where we were going. It was just a case

of the blind leading the blind. Jack Blake's brother "Bill" met us somewhere on the road and was so excited he rushed back to collect his wages and baggage. He was unable to connect with our boat but wired that he was coming on the "Canopus." Before Bill arrived Mrs Phillips came down to meet George and she had a letter from Father telling her to advise George not to come at any price as things were very bad indeed. George was very shy about giving us the information but it didn't matter as far as I was concerned. I had done a couple of years fairly hard in New Zealand, and I thought I would like to go home to Victoria for a trip, and the Blake brothers were also easy about the turn of events, and George stayed in Wellington and bade us good-bye when we sailed for Sydney on the first boat going. I can well remember while in Wellington we hired bikes to go to Petone, and the road was very muddy and so bad that we never reached Petone. Things have improved in that locality since then. We landed in Sydney and met one solitary man from the Globe Hill, Bert Emerson, and then we took the train for Melbourne. I left the Blake brothers in Melbourne, and I have never heard of or seen either of them since.

I went back to the Snowy River to see my mother, brothers and sisters, and stayed about six months, working for farmers, *60 hours per week for £1 per week and found.*

CHAPTER III

I WAS NOW a man, 21 years of age, and decided to go back to New Zealand, and as my young brother Louis had not been getting along very well with one of our sisters-in-law, I decided to take him with me. We got away with some gusto on a couple of good horses and met the coach on the main road. One of our brothers came with us to take the horses back, and as usual we passed through Lake Tyres, and stayed at Cunningham that night, went by schooner the next day for a township called Sale, and when we were on the journey we found that each of us had left behind his top-coat and other little incidentals. When we tallied up, we came to the conclusion that our luck was out, so we decided to take up the line of least resistance; and we turned around and went back home. On the return journey there was no one to carry our luggage, and we had to carry our grips about six miles through a bush road. When we came in sight of our home my heart sank because there was no important reason why we should not still be on the road to New Zealand, and perhaps forgetting about any interest in the old homestead which we were denied. Our old home was built back about two hundred yards from the river, and the ground rose steadily at the back for another ten chains, and then ran back flat. When we arrived at the top of the hill we halted and sat down and rested, and I could see that Lou was as much disturbed as myself. We had no need to be in distress, or to make any excuses for our return. We had had a trip by coach and steamer, and paid our own expenses, and were under no obligation to anyone, but the big boy down at the house saw us arrive at the top of the hill through a dog giving the signal. We knew that he wouldn't be pleased because the ownership of our father's properties was in doubt to most of us, at least only two of our eldest brothers knowing the true position,

which actually was that we had as much right in the home as he had, but we were not in a position, or inclined, to challenge his attitude. Lou and I discussed the situation thoroughly, then picked up our things and walked down the hill like two beggars. Our big brother came out to meet us, and if we had been obedient sons we couldn't have tried to give a more reasonable explanation why we returned. I was the spokesman, and when I had finished my discourse, his retort was, "You are smart hacks." He might as well have said that he was disgusted at seeing our faces again. However, it pays to be diplomatic, and remember "It is a long road that has no turning," and also the fable about "The Lion and the Mouse." We didn't intend to stay long. It was in the spring of the year, and plenty of labour was immediately required on the farms. In our effort to reach New Zealand we were not decided whether we would go to Auckland or Wellington, and as far as I knew, if we had reached Melbourne, the next boat which was leaving Sydney was the "Elingamite" which was wrecked on the "Three Kings," and I think all on board were lost. Anyhow we were not on her, and "a miss is as good as a mile."

My brother Lou and I turned to the farms again for a few months, and the last farmer's name was George, and George had two blocks of land out west from Toowoomba, Queensland, and he was prepared to give this to anyone if they would pay him, or the Queensland Government, a small amount due for rent. This proposition was put up to me so many times that I decided that this "spec" might be worth a trial. I had my young brother to look after, and it seemed to me farming in Queensland would be better than inhaling dust in the mines in New Zealand, and creating dividends for some swell fellows who held the shares at the other end of the world. This little incident about George having land in Queensland reminds me how stupid some people are, especially young people. I didn't know whether George had any land there or not, and never saw any deeds or any writing to verify his statement that he was giving

me 1,280 acres of land, and all I had to do was to go up to Queensland, find the land, and start clearing it ready for the plough. With this attractive bait in view I discussed the matter with my mother, and she thought it a good idea to get some land and make a home. The land in question was part of a big block that the Queensland Government threw open for selection, and was known as the Victorian Settlement. A few families from Orbost, my home town, were up there, and a mate from Karangahake, who went to the South African war from Auckland was also there. Mounted men were required. My brother Jack was too heavy and I was too young, so our friend Edward Watt served until the war ended, and didn't return to New Zealand, but went back to Australia, and then to Queensland, with his mother and father, one brother and two sisters.

Before starting on this journey Lou and I stayed with our mother in town for the night, and I can always remember our poor old mother standing at the gate watching us getting into the coach and waving good-bye, not knowing whether it would be good-bye for ever, or not. The driver cracked his whip and we were off once more for Cunningham, then steamer for Melbourne, and we landed in a remote part away from the busy area of the wharf and the place was so quiet and deserted looking that Lou was astonished, and the first question he asked me while walking along the wharf was, "Is this what they call Melbourne?" We took the train for Sydney, and then steamer to Brisbane. We stayed, or put up, at a wine shop in George Street. My brother went to bed early and I strolled down town, and when I got back and went up to our room, I struck a match and crossed the room to see how Lou was. He was asleep, and his face was covered with bugs. That meant that I had to go and find another place, and we both shifted.

When we arrived at Brisbane it was December, and the weather was very hot. We arrived in Toowoomba as directed by George. He had told us to ask anyone where the Victorian Settlement was, and we would be told. We put up at a boarding house for

a couple of days, and I made enquiries at the Lands Office, Police Station, Post Office, and any place where they might do business and be known. To all intents and purposes our mission was at a dead end, until one day I was out on the balcony when I saw a man coming up the Main Street on a bike. I didn't recognise him until he got past, and I watched him go into another boarding house about four chains up the street. I ran down the stairs and up the street as fast as my legs could carry me, and around the back, nearly to run into Ted Watt, our old mate from Karangahake. It was a big surprise for him to meet me in Queensland, and as I had grown up to a man, he didn't know me until I told him who I was. Now my troubles were over, or just starting. The following day we entrained for a place called Johnson at the end of the line, and on the way we stayed at a place called Oakey, a coalmining town. We met a man there from the Snowy River, Mick Gargen. I left my brother there and Ted and I continued by rail to Johnson. He had his bike with him. I hired one at Johnson, and we set sail for the Victorian Settlement. I don't know how far it was, but it seemed a great distance through bush country most of the time. My partner had been a track rider in New Zealand, and I had to keep my legs moving to keep up with him. We called at innumerable grocers' shops who all sold beer, and we emptied a great number of what they called "long sleevers." The glasses were long enough but the solid bottom used to come up a third of the way, and there was only about two-thirds of the glass that I was interested in. In spite of all this I used to stop at nearby cattle troughs along the road and have a good drink of water. One of the biggest problems that I found difficult to solve was quenching my thirst.

We duly arrived at Ted's place and his people were greatly surprised, and didn't remember me of course as they hadn't seen me for a few years. I stayed with Ted for a couple of days. We went to a dance the first night and the following day I had a look over the settlement, made some enquiries, and from what

I could gather from those who had been there some time, they didn't know whether the land would grow anything or not. One couple showed me some vegetables by their house that they used to try and promote the growth of by putting washing-up water on the plants, but the results were very poor, and they were not bothering about their holding, but were working for another settler. It didn't take me long to make up my mind that my hide was getting dry. I longed to get over to New Zealand where I could see something green, and some fresh clear water running. So I bade good-bye to my friends and started on my return journey. I picked my brother up on the way and we arrived at Toowoomba and stayed there four days. My brother was fidgety and rightly so. We had lost a good deal of time since leaving home, and the fault was mine because I was the leader of the expedition, and one of the problems troubling my brother was that he was growing out of his clothes and funds were getting low.

Then we went back to Brisbane, and stayed there for one week. Not that the place was attractive, but it was Christmas time, and 110 in the shade, and I thought a rest wouldn't hurt, but it did later.

We shipped back to Sydney, then booked to Lyttelton, as I decided that Canterbury would suit us, as my brother would be better on the farms than in the mines. We went into a restaurant at Lyttelton for a meal. We had our luggage with us and we were well burnt and tanned, and could be identified as Australians. The proprietress said, "What a lot of Australians are coming over here. I wonder if they will all get work?" I said, "I don't know," and felt rather hurt that she should make such a remark.

We caught the next train for Christchurch and had a look around for something to do. The place seemed to be full of men looking for work. I suppose there would be a lot of experienced men amongst them. We had different ones pointed out to us. This one was a champion shearer, and so and so over there was a champion grass seeder, and so on. It didn't look as if we would squeeze through the crush until

at least all the old hands were placed, and funds were melting like sugar in a hot cup of tea. My brother's money ran out when we reached Brisbane, and from then on I was the bank.

We could see no prospects in Christchurch, and we didn't care about taking a risk and going into the country, so we decided on going to the West Coast, and I booked via Wellington—our destination was Westport. No doubt my judgment was bad in selecting or seeking work in a coal mine. We went to Millerton and lined up with several others, but the boss shook his head and somehow I felt glad for my brother's sake, as pushing trucks in a coal mine would have been far too heavy for a boy only just a little more than seventeen years of age. The coal mining surroundings didn't appeal to us, and, needless to say, would have no charm for anyone but those with the biggest muscles and the stoutest hearts. I then decided on Reefton, so we got the train back to Westport, and when we reached there the purse was empty, —all but 4/-, and the fare to Reefton was £1 each. I was unable to think up some means of getting to Reefton until I met a girl who used to be a waitress at the Globe Hill boarding house. I explained the position to her, and she said that was only a small matter as no fares were collected until we reached the Inangahua Junction. She told us then to tell Billy Newman that we had no money, and that we would pay him when we got work. We were not looked upon with as much favour as the other passengers from then on, but we got through, got work, and Newman's got their £2, and nobody was hurt. I took my young brother out to the Globe Hill and parked him with my brother Jack, and Lou got a job in the Globe mine trucking and later as a miner. I went back to my old job at the Wealth of Nations, and it was there that the force of suggestion was worked upon me. I was fairly light in condition compared with what I was when I left the district a year before. I was also well burnt with the sun. First one would tell me that I didn't look well, and then another, and so on, until I really thought I was

ill. I even stayed away from work and went to bed, and the mine manager came up to my room to see me, and to know when I would be starting work again. I was obliged to tell him that I had no intention of going back into the mine again. Notwithstanding the fact that my nerves were fairly bad, and I was well used up, I couldn't be classed as a sick man.

The Reefton line was being extended at the time, and I decided to have a go at the pick and shovel work for a change, so I shifted into Reefton. It was necessary at that time for anyone applying for work on the line to register their names at the Police Station, and while I was signing my name the sergeant said to me, "Have you been drinking, young man?" I said, "No, I haven't had a drink for some time," and he said, "You are not fit to do pick and shovel work. You are ill, and you had better go to the hospital for a while, and you will be better able to work after you have had treatment." I said, "They won't take me into the hospital when there is nothing wrong with me." He said, "Oh yes they will. I will give you a note, and you go up and see Mr Cohen and he will get you admitted." Of course, I agreed, and went up and saw Mr Cohen, and he gave me a card which was to admit me into the Reefton Hospital for treatment, and with the card in my pocket I was walking down the street and I met Pie Adams, the man who arranged for me to join their gang, and he asked me when I was going to start, and I told him that I was not starting as I was going into hospital. He wouldn't believe me, and I showed him the card. He told me there was nothing wrong with me, and to come to work along with the boys in the morning, and I did and started to put on weight, gaining nearly a stone in a matter of a few weeks.

I was not long on the line. A big day's work was required for the small wage of 8/-, and 48 hours per week. I did short spells in the mines, the last being the Globe. I was shovelling behind the machines and I developed a very heavy cold and was down for about a week, and also developed a haemorrhage through continual coughing, and when

I was able to leave my bed I shifted to Reefton, and was on cod liver oil for a couple of weeks. A man arrived back from Puponga who wanted some men for development work around a coal mine, and another chap from the Globe mine, and I were members of the party of six who were selected to go. It was quite a good change for me as I had not seen Nelson before, and everything seemed to be so handy and cheap. Several cabbies were standing on the wharf when the boat arrived, with their whips, calling out, "Cab, sir. Cab, sir," and the fare up to Nelson was sixpence each way, beer 3d. per glass, and meals and beds one shilling all round. We only stayed one day in Nelson, which we enjoyed very much in spite of the antipathy of the Nelson people towards strangers.

We left Nelson in the evening, and arrived at Collingwood in the morning by a small steamer that used to do that run. Collingwood is one of the oldest mining fields, but very little alluvial was being worked when we were there, but a couple of small quartz mines were being profitably worked at West Wanganui, about thirty miles from Collingwood.

We then left Collingwood for Puponga by coach,—horse and a two wheel cart,—and we travelled along a mud flat and beach combined, which gave a reasonable surface to travel on. Our driver was a very secretive kind of fellow. He had no inclination to talk, or give any information about the locality or its inhabitants. He was Harry Riley's man, who drove the men out and took orders for stores and also delivered them. My mate Sam and I were able to get a room in a house where some other men were baching, and managed to arrange about our meals at McGowan's boarding-house. That little arrangement completed, we were able to commence work the following day, and Puponga suited us immensely, the salt from the sea which was only a few yards away, and the smell of the mud flats, seemed to have a refreshing effect, and we were always hungry.

We got on very well at the boarding-house except for the attitude which my mate used to take up when in conversation at table or in the sitting room. He

frequently, without any cause, would suddenly tell someone with whom he might be debating a question, that he and his mate were not afraid of any two men on the job, and that was one of his faults that I did not like; otherwise he was passable, although he had the same style about anything associated with his work. He was not popular in the boarding-house as there was nobody in the place quarrelsome, or even if they were they would be no match for us.

After we, along with other men, excavated a place for some machinery, we were selected to start the main drive, which went in on the level for about one chain, and then dipped somewhere about one in fourteen, which became the main dip, or main haulage way, for the mine. We started one afternoon when we had a fair-sized audience. When we had orders to start I got over fairly quickly from where the boss and the others were standing, and I put the first pick in the tunnel, but when I mentioned it to Sam I was not sure whether he was pleased or not.

Now that the tunnel was started, another shift was begun, and we left the boarding-house and took a bach, as shift work makes more work for the boarding-house people, owing to the early and late hours worked. That meant we were baching together and working together, which is a breach of the old miner's custom, or idea, that is to live with a man and also work with him, is seeing too much of him, and there is always a possibility of a quarrel taking place. I had heard all about this from the old miners on the West Coast, but that was not troubling me as I considered that Sam was mine at any time that he might cut loose.

We were both doing well. Sam was putting on condition fast, and I was 22 years of age and had left my Reefton sickness behind me, and had actually developed into a man. I was now over six feet and thirteen stone, six pounds, and the breeze fresh from the ocean had cut away the dust and dynamite smoke which I got in the Reefton mines. I was young, and vain like many other young fellows, and Sam used to ignore me in everything. Sam would be about 26

years of age, and shorter than I, with a face that looked as if it could stop a clock at a pinch just by looking at it.

We were now working two shifts and the tunnel was moving along towards the point where the dip was to start. On the day shift we used to start at six, and finish at 2 p.m., and when on afternoon shift we would go on at 2, and finish at 10 in the evening. We were on the afternoon shift, and a rule which is fairly well recognised among miners is that when two men start working together they generally agree as to who shall take the lead, and when that is agreed upon, the leader at times, as a matter of courtesy, will sometimes ask his mate what his opinion is about a certain part of the work which they might be engaged on; but with Sam things were slightly different. He knew everything and I knew nothing, and I had quite a while back made up my mind that sooner or later I would just have to ask him to step out and show me all that he knew. We were on the back shift, as they call it, and I was not satisfied about the way Sam was running the show. I was nobody. I only had to do as I was told. We were driving through a good class of country where a good job could be made of the tunnel if the holes were properly placed, and the correct amount of explosives used. I spoke to Sam a few times about it, and I always got a snub, and this night in question he said, "That is a matter of opinion, and I am prepared to back my opinion up." I waited until we fired the holes and were outside, and I asked him what he meant when he said that he was prepared to back his opinion up, and he said, "I meant what I said and you can take it as you like." I said, "Alright, step out," which he did, and to make a long story short, I gave Sam a good dusting, and I enjoyed every bit of it. I knocked him down several times and I broke my hand badly, and Sam suddenly cried, "A go."

We finished the shift, and in the morning when I could have a good look at Sam's face and see what a good job I had made I was elated, and when Sam saw my left hand, which was entirely out of action,

he wanted to have another go. I don't know whether he could have beaten me even with one hand.

We continued to live together and work together. Sam was inclined to be more friendly, but it was only superficial. I got a shift out of the mine on outside work, and Sam and I parted not bad, but not very good, friends.

My new work consisted of trucking timber and tipping it over the end of the tram line where the logs would roll down to the mud flat, and when the tide came in, they would be towed down to the position at the wharf, which was under construction. From that job I was drafted into a fairly big gang of navvies who were engaged in making a big breast-cutting about half a mile long. When the cutting was completed coal was hauled through by a small locomotive which we used to call the coffee-pot. When this construction work was in progress the navvies talked about all kinds of feats of strength, about how many yards of gravel could be shovelled in eight hours,—and various other things that required enormous strength.

When we first arrived at Puponga there was a good deal of enmity between the mine workers and those employed on the beach, who were known as Quinlen's men. There was a man who lived just on the boundary of the two factions. His name was Tim, and Tim liked a bet on the horses, or anything else, and I had not long made his acquaintance when I could see that he was endeavouring to get me matched against something, and now and again he would feel his way. He imparted the knowledge to me that he could wrestle, but wouldn't consider himself as an opponent for me as he was a little on the light side, and I think he preferred to be the promoter. Tim, as it happened, was contracting with Sam on the job that I had just left, and, of course, Tim was a good talker, and also a good negotiator, and he had a two way line of news between the mine and the navvies. There was a young fellow at the mine by name Andy, who would be about my age and weight. Tim suggested to me a match with Andy

for £5 aside, and intentionally I did a good deal of side tracking, and, of course, Tim came at me and finally, just to see the fun, Tim laid me £5 to £4 that Andy would beat me, and we were to wrestle, the one gaining the first four falls in seven would be the winner. There was, working in the mine, an old wrestler by the name of Tommy, and Tim suggested that Tommy would be the referee, and I agreed. We wrestled on the grass land near the beach, and I threw Andy fairly easily two falls in succession, and being young and a little foolish, I could see at once, as I thought, that there was a good deal of easy cash to be picked up in this locality providing I made the match look something like being even, so I let Andy get the next two falls, and don't forget he brought me down heavily each time with his whole weight on top of me. This shook me considerably, and when we took hold again we were wrestling Cumberland style. I went flat out and threw him, and the referee gave it a "dog fall," which means both down together. We took hold again, and I threw him again, and the referee gave it "dog fall" again. Now I knew how things stood, and that I was wrestling not only Andy, but the referee also. Although practically a teetotaller I had a flask of whisky in the camp which I had by me in case of sickness. I had this with me, and after each round I would have a nip, and we had already had the sixth round, and that means that I had had six nips, and my legs were shaking. I turned prohibitionist on the spot, but it was too late. I was unable to throw Andy to the satisfaction of the referee, and I lost the match.

I was not worried over my little experience. I was only 22 years of age, and that was my first match for a wager. I backed myself with my own money, and therefore no complaints could be made. I could see quite plainly that the team against me was far too well organised, and up till this time I had not been drafted in amongst the bulk of the men who were building the line, etc., but was placed with them shortly after. Andy and Tim were very pleased with the win which the latter had, but Tim could button

up so far as Andy was concerned, because his father would not allow him to take part in any more wrestling contests as he didn't want his character stained when such events did not coincide with that of a respectable coal miner. I had no need to worry as Tim had little on the right side of the ledger, and assured me that he would get me another match shortly.

A couple of young fellows from Denniston Hill coal mine were camped just near me, and they could get just about all the news from the mine, although they were not a part of the mine camp. They gave me the information one evening that Tim was organising another match for me and my opponent would be my old mate Sam, which pleased me very much, as by this time my hand which I had injured so badly had mended, and a match with him would give me a chance to let him know how we stood in relation to each other. I got the information from my two neighbours, Dick and Charlie, that Sam had a try out with Andy on the previous Sunday and Sam threw Andy five times on end. It was to be kept very quiet so that a good match could be arranged. Now that some business was coming my way, I cleared a piece of ground in a manuka patch which was a very quiet place and definitely private, and in the evenings I used to get Dick and Charlie over to give me some training, and although they were only light men, they could give me a good worrying. In fact they woke me up to the fact that I was not as up-to-date as I thought I was.

Everything was going along nicely, and the talk was going around about the coming match, but so far nothing had been arranged. I didn't know what Sam was doing, but I just continued training. I knocked off smoking, and had been in training, such as it was, for nearly six weeks, and my hide was cracking to get into grips with something in earnest. We were all working on what was known as the big cutting, and I already knew that they would be along any day to fix up the match, and just before knocking off for lunch at 12 o'clock one day, Sam and Andy and a couple of other chaps were waiting on the other side of the cut-

ting from where I was working. Sam seemed to be enjoying himself immensely, and was wearing a continuous and shrewd smile.

When we stopped for lunch and we all sat down, they approached me. Sam lost no time telling me in an aristocratic kind of a way, that he had heard that I wanted to wrestle him, and all hands were giggling. I said I was prepared to wrestle him, and he said, "Which style would you prefer?" and I said that I would prefer catch-as-catch-can — Cumberland — collar and elbow, and Cornish style. I wasn't afraid of Sam's bluff. I was pretty sure that he was only relying upon his strength, and as it turned out he had some knowledge of Cumberland style. We each put up a deposit of £10 on the spot, and Martin Hardigan held the money. This happened nearly at the week-end, and the match was to take place on the Sunday, which meant that everything so far was all down hill for me, except beating Sam and collecting the cash.

Sunday came and we arrived at 3 p.m., and the balance of the money was put up, £20 a side. A referee had been appointed previously, Dan Connelly from Brunner, and a real good man too. Dan read out the rules; no biting, pulling hair, gouging of the eyes, kicking or scratching, etc. We were wrestling four styles, and that meant seven falls were required to win, and we also agreed that whatever style we were wrestling we would wrestle the three rounds in each style, and when either contestant had obtained seven falls he would be the winner. We then tossed a coin for the choice of styles, and I won the toss, and chose catch-as-catch-can, and I had already had my mind made up when the referee said, "Shake hands." I walked up briskly, took Sam by the hand, swung in under him and brought his arm over my shoulder and gave him the "flying mare" right over my head on to the broad of his back, and I'm afraid I didn't do him any good. The referee didn't say anything so I got to work and put the "figure four" on Sam, which is a strangling hold, and Sam gave in. We had a blow and in the second round I downed Sam within seconds, and did the same again. Sam tried to fight me off

but was obliged to give in. Sam notified the referee that he didn't want another round in that style, and that counted three falls to me. The referee then told me to choose the next style, and things were going so easy that I gave Sam his choice which was Cumberland, and I threw him three straight falls without much trouble, although if I hadn't given him such a spill in the first round he might have troubled me in the Cumberland. It was now my call again, but I let Sam have a say, and he called "collar and elbow." He got the first fall, and I got the next, which spelt finish, and I collected the cash.

I was told afterwards that Sam's partner, Andy, who put up the cash between them, stepped out at a critical stage of the contest, and was going to punch me from behind, but I was working with a solid gang of Irishmen, and one of them stepped out and pushed Andy out of the way.

The bulk of the navvies had a central camp and a big galley where they all had their meals together, and they took me home to their camp for tea with them that evening. This ended very well in a triumph of a little strength and sense over what might be termed bluff, vanity and pig-headedness.

Most of the men about the mine said that they didn't consider it a very nice way to treat a mate, and Sam was very sore indeed. Most people didn't know what he had wrapped up in his hide, but now they knew and his status was down to zero.

CHAPTER IV

EVERYTHING was going better now. I was showing a profit as a result of the wrestling, and also cash in hand for money earned since my arrival. Wrestling was not encouraged or looked upon as a dignified class of sport, and the manager of the mine sent down word that any man on the works whether at the mine or on the line, taking part in wrestling or fighting would be paid off, and my name was specially mentioned, but that didn't trouble me as I had had nearly 12 months in the back country and could do with a change, which came.

The line was nearly completed and a good number of men were to be discharged, and one Saturday our ganger, a big Cousin Jack, mounted a truck and announced, with a sheet of paper in his hand, "Gentlemen, I have some sad and awful news to tell you. There are to be about 50 men to get the sack, and I have all their names. Will someone read them out?" Charlie Isaacson mounted the truck and read out the names, and needless to say my name was amongst them. We said goodbye to Puponga and took the boat for Nelson, and quite a few of us got work on the new dam which was being constructed at the far end of Brook Street, at the foot of the Dunn Mountain.

The work was being done on contract, the wages being eight and nine shillings per day, and that was termed in those days as the sliding scale of wages, 9/- for good men, and 8/- for the rest.

The Arbitration Court sat in Nelson while this work was in progress, but the employers were not cited as it was considered that eight and nine shillings was a fair wage. Later investigation disclosed the fact that only two men were receiving 9/- per day, and all the rest were receiving 8/- per day.

Nelson was a good change and we were well catered for for awhile, until the man who was running the cook-house did a midnight flit and forgot to pay the

business people. Losing the cook-house changed the situation considerably so far as I was concerned as I had an antipathy towards baching, so I moved back to Nelson and stayed at Lloyd's boarding-house in Hardy Street until I got a job prospecting for the Maoriland Copper Company on the Dunn Mountains, which lie at the back of Nelson, but were reached by travelling beyond Stoke, I should say about nine miles from Nelson on the main highway leading to the West Coast. We branched off at this point and climbed a steep hill, and down the other side into Aniseed Valley, on my first trip to the base where the staff were living. I called on a Mr and Mrs Stratford, living at the top end of the valley. Their house was very interesting as everything was home-made, except the iron on the roof, and the nails, and everything looked good and comfortable.

The life on the mountains was interesting, but the prospects for copper didn't look bright, or give the appearance of developing into anything but looking for copper, so I left the job and drifted back to Nelson just before Christmas, 1903. As I had had a fair schooling as a wrestler, I wanted to be properly tried out, so I decided to compete at the Caledonian sports to be held at Dunedin on New Year's Day, 1904. I left Nelson in good condition and we had the evening meal on the boat leaving Nelson. I had tinned fish and didn't feel well that night, and continued to feel seedy all the way to Dunedin. I was a sick man when I competed and did very poorly, only winning my heat in the Cumberland. I drew a tough boy in the Cornish style, that is wrestling in jackets. He gave me a rough pulling around which did not improve matters for me. When I got aboard the boat at Nelson I met an old workmate of mine who used to push trucks with me at No. 6 level in the Wealth of Nations, Reefton. Alex Todd was his name—we used to call him Sandy—and Sandy was going to Dunedin too. We travelled all the way together, and when I got on the train at Dunedin on my return journey Sandy was on the train on his way back to the West Coast. It was just by accident that we met both going and

returning. I was a long way from feeling well, and when we got to Christchurch I went to see a doctor and he told me I was passing stuff through the kidneys that should be going through the bowels, and the case was diagnosed as yellow jaundice. He gave me a bottle of medicine but I had no relief and was lying in Wellington waiting for the boat for Nelson. I had all my belongings with me, including a bike, as in the first place when leaving Nelson I thought I might stay in Dunedin. I got my baggage aboard the boat, and left my bike standing on the wharf. I went to my bunk and fell asleep, and I heard someone say, "We are off." I raced up the stairs and grabbed my bike and would have got the boat but I was wearing a big panama hat and it blew off, and I had to abandon my bike and chase my hat, and, of course, lost the boat. My mate Sandy was on the boat, and I wired him to attend to my luggage, which was in the cabin, and when I reached Nelson by the next boat, Sandy was there waiting for me, and also my luggage—a good friendly act indeed.

I landed back at Lloyd's boarding-house, which was run by Mrs Hawksworth. I was about half my former self, and when Mrs Hawksworth saw me she advised me to go straight to the hospital. Until then I didn't have a chance to think what I should do. I knew that I was a sick man, but I had to get back to Nelson first, which I called home, and now something must be done, so I went up the street and entered a chemist's shop owned by a Mr Ancel. He gave me a bottle of pills, and I took one in the shop and walked down to the next corner. I could feel my head was clearing, so I took another one, and then I felt sure that I was on a simple cure. I never looked back: I just steadily improved until I was my usual self again.

It was now 1904 and I went back to Collingwood cutting wood at Stancel's flax mill, near the West Wanganui Inlet—just temporary work, and from there I moved to the other side of the inlet which was known as Parkinson. A Mr Pearson had a store there and an accommodation house, about half-way between the Golden Blocks gold mine and Collingwood. I got about

ten tons of coal for Mr Pearson from a surface seam, and then got a job at the Golden Blocks. When I arrived there, there were already 25 men engaged in and around the mine. The mine was situated on a fairly high hill overlooking the sea, about 30 miles from Collingwood towards the Karamea. I worked in this mine for a few months and the place agreed with me. I was bigger and stronger then than at any time in my life. I was nearly 14 stone and in my twenty-third year. There were two men working in the mine who saw me in action in Dunedin, and they didn't hesitate to let me know that they didn't think much of me, and the showing that I put up was very poor indeed. Their names were Bob and Jim. Bob was a Dunedin native. A fine built man about my own weight, and was considered a bit of a wrestler. I had met Jim before at Reefton, a countryman of mine, a flash arrogant Australian, who gave me a lot of cheek in Reefton when I was recovering from a fairly serious illness, and, of course, Jim used to get away with it. Bob could be classed as a fine young man, but Jim, who was much his elder, seemed to have a big influence over him. Harry Riley of Collingwood had a branch store at the mine, and it was run by a man we called Spider, and Spider was known as the West Wanganui "Times" and "Advocate." He knew everybody's business, and according to his ideas he was capable of running a group of stores in London, but this just happened to suit him at the moment. I was not there long before I could see that Spider would arrange a match with Bob and me, so I cut out a pair of heavy clubs and used to fill in my spare time swinging them, and, without a doubt, after a few weeks I was feeling strong, and I had the information imparted to me through Spider that Bob was prepared to stand me on my block at any time, and there was plenty of money to back him, but I realised I must be careful. I was only a stranger at the mine, and was likely to be as I didn't play the same games as they did, and was unlikely to become one of the boys. Spider unofficially had got the match made, and he was only waiting to publish the results. I rather liked Bob, a very decent

manly fellow, and I didn't like to approach him, and, as far as the match was concerned, I was easy whether it came off or not, although at this stage of my life I was anxious to try myself with the best that could be found.

Well, time went on and I used to pass Bob at times on the road, and bid him the time of day, until one day I met him and I approached him in a friendly way. He was very keen and he preferred Cumberland, and we made a match of £5 a side. The money was deposited with Spider, and we met on a level Paikaihi at the back of the mine. A referee by the name of Billy was appointed. Billy knew nothing about wrestling, but he was one of the boys. However, we started, and I hyphed Bob twice in succession, and things looked bad for him. We were wrestling best four out of seven, and I could see when we started the third round, Bob wanted to try the buttock, so I let him go in, as through our tramping around on the previous falls we had broken the surface and we were starting to sink into the ground. When Bob got in I got well behind him and hung well down, for, to bring off a good buttock, it is necessary to bring your opponent right over on to the broad of his back, and Bob had as much chance of buttocking me as he would have of jumping over the moon backwards. He had me on the buttock as it were, but he was trying to get me over, and I was holding back behind him bogged nearly to the knees, and the more he tried the deeper I sank, and when I thought I had used up enough of his strength, I threw my whole weight forward, and Bob fell face down and I on top of him, and now was the time for Billy to speak for his friends, so he declared it a "dog fall." I disputed it, but no notice was taken. The same thing happened in the fourth round, and I could see that it was useless to continue. Here was a man who was perhaps as strong as myself but was not capable of demonstrating to his friends that he was a better man than I was, but he was evidently prepared to fall in with the referee in cheating me out of the few pounds which we were wrestling for, as he there and then wanted to

claim the money. I put on my clothes and walked down to my camp alone, and left the mob to talk the matter over in their own way.

I stayed on working in the mine for a few days and decided that a change would do me good, so packed up for Collingwood, after telling Spider not to pay over the stakes.

Bob's mate was away on holiday and he was not present when the match took place, and on my way out I stopped at Parkinson's for lunch, and Jim and a couple of miners were on their way back to the mine. The mine manager and his wife were also there, and, of course, the news was already out about what had taken place at the Golden Blocks, but, of course, Jim must keep on probing me about being beaten by his mate Bob. I just ignored him until he found that his shots were bringing nothing back, so he tried new tactics by challenging me himself. We were on our way to put up some money when he changed his mind and said that he would fight me, and he did, but he came in with a rush without thinking what might happen, and the next thing he found himself sprawled across a manure dump beside the stable. His two mates took him away to give him advice, and stayed inside until I left with the store cart for Collingwood. After all this frustration, I was able to see the manager and asked him to see the shift boss who knew all about what happened, and that if he was satisfied that I had been taken down, to make some endeavour to see that at least my money was returned. I was not long in Collingwood when word arrived that my money was at Riley's store. I learned afterwards that the manager told them what to do, and they did it.

I now returned to Nelson, and after thinking things out, I decided on going to the West Coast, and thought the State mine at Seddonville would suit me. I arrived at Seddonville and found that the place was overrun with men, and I was put unto the Co-operative mine at Mokihinui. I bought a share in it, and started work of which there was plenty, but no money. We couldn't sell the coal, but I thought that difficulty could have been overcome if we had had a business man at the

head of affairs. All any of us knew was how to get the coal. I worked six months and I received £2 which, was only the deposit I put in when I started. We held a general meeting and to all intents and purposes the mine was finished. We only had one sleeping member of the party. He was a business man in Westport, and he bought my share for £2, and I was a free man in the world of unemployed again.

I was staying at the Mokihinui Hotel and was slightly behind with my board, and something had to be done. I was sitting down to tea one evening when a man touched me on the shoulder, and on looking around, who should be standing there but my young brother Lou. When he said that he had not yet dined I asked him to sit down beside me, and I didn't care to question him too closely while others were sitting at the table. At this moment some thoughts were running through my mind which made me feel a bit uncomfortable. After tea I took him aside and got him to unfold his story which was not very comforting. He had been hard pressed in the Auckland Province to make a living, and had stowed away with another man, in a boat travelling to Westport for a load of coal. The boy was very thin, but looked hard and tough. He had been working hard and spending fast. I was about in queer street, but I made some excuse that I had just come out of a bad deal. Now something must be done, and if we couldn't get work from other people, we would have to create work for ourselves. There was an empty hut on the top of the hill near the mine, and we had to get straight into that and start baching, which we did, and then I took out a miner's right and got a broad axe and a chopping axe. There was a bush at the back of the mine; so we went sleeper cutting, and we cut about 300 sleepers, and I had some cash in hand which was sufficient to find us in food until we sold some of the sleepers. The bush had been previously cut through, and we were, as it is generally called, scragging, and we had a good many condemned.

We then got a job in the State mine. I was on the coal and my brother was trucking, and they put the

boy on a horse's job, and he used to complain to me about it. One day just before knock-off time, I felt miserable to think that so much could be expected of one human being by another. He was only 18 years of age, and he had the hardest job in the mine. I spoke to the boss but no alteration was made, so I decided that something would have to be done. I heard about a contract of filling between two culverts at Karamea; about a £50 job. I got it and we both left the State mine.

We went to Karamea where the job was, about six miles on the Westport side of Karamea. We finished it, received good wages, and made sufficient money out of it to give both of us a clean start again.

Lou stayed at Karamea, and I came back to Westport, and got a job at the Britannia gold mine which was situated on the hill between Denniston and Millerton coal mines. As all the huts were occupied I had to buy a tent, and cooking utensils, but while I was pitching the tent the weather became bad and I didn't get a chance to make myself comfortable. I was unable to boil the billy for nearly a week, so when the weather cleared up and I was able to get some dry wood and cook a meal, I appreciated it, and after I had fixed up my camp to combat the weather I became very comfortable. The place agreed with me, and I might have stayed there, but it was lonely and dreary. We used to go to Westport sometimes at the end of the month, and I went in at the end of about the third month and didn't go back. I left everything upon the hill.

The Britannia mine was fairly rich and paid some good dividends. The late Mr Tom Bailey of Westport was the principal shareholder.

The Britannia reef and mine were somewhat similar to the Golden Blocks. I might as well give some details about the origin of the Golden Blocks. The Golden Blocks was an offspring of the Taitapu mine which was already working when the Golden Blocks was found. A lone prospector found the Taitapu reef and was persuaded to part with it for £100. A man was trying to float it into a company, and he

met another man in Nelson who was a man with money and good connections in England. His name was Mr Goldsborough, and the other man's name was Muggins. Mr Muggins had a sugar bag full of specimen stone which was very attractive as the reef was very rich in gold. Mr Goldsborough, after seeing the stone, said to Mr Muggins, "I can handle this." It is not generally known what the terms were, but Mr Goldsborough made a rough survey of the waste land surrounding the Taitapu reef and estimated it to be about 98,000 acres of gold bearing country, and his next move was to get a mining lease over this area, but before doing that he went home to England, taking the bag of specimens with him, and showed the stones to his friends, and they enquired as to what the extent was of the area of ground that could be worked. Mr Goldsborough told them that there were approximately 98,000 acres, and he was given authority to return to New Zealand, and acquire this area on behalf of the company, which was already formed.

Mr Goldsborough came back to New Zealand, and saw Dick Seddon, who was then Premier, and enquired as to how much land would be granted to him for mining purposes, and was informed by Mr Seddon that 100 acres was the most that one man could hold, and Mr Goldsborough said that such a small amount was not worth bothering with. Mr Seddon said, "Well, how much land do you require?" Mr Goldsborough explained that he required approximately 98,000 acres, and Mr Seddon said, "Why, you could never mine all that land." Mr Goldsborough thereupon explained that the people he represented wanted something big or nothing. There would be some difficulty because, if Mr Seddon agreed to give a mining lease of such a big area, it would be necessary to alter the statute. Mr Goldsborough then said, "We will buy the land right out if you will give us the freehold title," and Mr Seddon said, "Well, how much would you be prepared to pay for all that land?" Mr Goldsborough said, "We are prepared to pay £98,000 cash." Mr Seddon then scratched his head, and suddenly thought how handy £98,000 would be, especially in the days of

orthodox finance, when it was necessary or customary, when money was required, to send the Minister of Finance to England with some ready made speeches about how wisely loan money was utilised in New Zealand, and that all, or practically all, loan money was spent on reproductive work. Then after the ground had been sufficiently softened, the Minister would go begging for the loan of a paltry million pounds, to pay the interest on money that we already owed, and on being obliged, would come back and boast about what a huge success the new loan was.

A million pounds was a lot of money in those days, and £98,000 easily got, was not to be turned down, so Mr Seddon said that he would have to bring the matter before Cabinet. This he did, and the £98,000 was accepted. Thus the biggest land deal in mining property that ever took place in New Zealand, or the world perhaps, was finalised and the Taitapu Mining Company set to work on the Taitapu reef, which being very rich gave some handsome returns. Soon after the Taitapu Company started operations another reef was found on the estate. This block was known as the Taitapu Estate, and some bargaining had to be done with the new company, which was known later as the Golden Blocks Mining Company. This company, as far as I could see, broke all New Zealand records. The condition of the lease was that the Golden Blocks Company had to give to the Taitapu Company 25 per cent. of all gold produced, and it did comply with these extraordinary conditions, and in addition paid to its shareholders a handsome dividend every month, and continued in this healthy condition for years, until the reef gave out a few hundred feet below the surface.

Anyone who knows anything about gold knows that those two mines were only scratched, and there is more gold lying there today than ever was taken out of them.

I have now said all I am able to say about the Taitapu Estate, but perhaps, when I am dead and gone a greater account will be written about the successful

operations in the deep levels of those hills. The stuff is still there and some day it will be brought to the surface.

CHAPTER V

NOW LET us go back to Westport. I was staying at a boarding-house and just thinking things out, and decided that I might do better in Wellington. Perhaps I might get a job on the railway, or some other government job, so I proceeded to Wellington. I went from one place to another, and there was a big waiting list, more men than jobs, so I decided to go back to the Coast. On my way back I called at Nelson, and got a job at the mental hospital, and it was a good experience. Long hours and short pay. I received £70 per annum, and in addition to working long hours at a tedious job, I was expected to salute the boss every time that I met him, which didn't always happen, not that it cost any extra physical exertion to raise the hand, but it seemed to me to be the stupidest thing in the institution. The superintendent was never in uniform, and was not entitled to a salute. I stayed there one year, and got my annual leave of one month. The money was so small I decided to leave, and I would have one month on pay, which would give me time to dig in again. I resigned and went back to the coal mine at Puponga, and after having a collar and tie job I didn't like the coal mine. I worked a month and then packed up for Wellington, and I got a job working for Jack Limer and Paddy Lynch, who was the travelling foreman. The work was cutting back the hills for the Karori tram line, with a good deal of hammer and drill work which I liked. I was working with Dick Evans, a good fellow, a good worker and companion. We were boarding with the boss, and after I had put in a couple of days the boss sidled up to me coming home, and told me that I was down on the book at 9/- per day, and I said, "Alright." Jack and various things were talked about until we got home.

The wages on the job were 9/- for good men and 8/- for the others, and it transpired that Evans and I

were the only ones getting 9/-, and the third evening on the way home, the boss sidled up to me again and immediately started to praise me up saying what a finely built man I was, and asked me how much I weighed, etc., then gently sounded me for the loan of 5/-. I had already had a little experience of this class of gentleman, and I had enough sense to tell him that I didn't possess 5/-. I exchanged notes with my mate Evans that evening, and he told me that he had had the same experience. It was amusing to see old Jack now and again, if a new man came on the job, repeating the old scheme over again. I don't know whether he ever succeeded or not, but I know he obtained nothing from Evans or myself.

I met Bob Power, a West Coaster, in Willis Street, one day. He told me he was working in the Kilbirnie tunnel, and recommended the work to me. I told Evans, and we decided to give it a go. We got a job on the night shift starting at 12 o'clock. We had some difficulty in finding the tunnel, and when we arrived considerably late there was a big burly boss to meet us. He told us to get our coats off and fill that truck as quickly as we could. Evans and I looked at each other, and I said to the boss, whose name was Dick, that we were engaged as miners and filling trucks was not our work. He said that we had to do as we were told; so we decided that we wouldn't start. Then some discussion took place, and we were not in a good mood on our first night out—to be lost for about an hour and then get a rough reception. The big fellow was fairly saucy. He was a big tough-looking fellow with a nose that had been well broken by someone. We learned afterwards that he was credited with being a champion bare-knuckle fighter from Australia. When I thought that he had said enough I asked him what sort of a man he was to engage us as miners, and then ask us to fill trucks. He said, "Come up in the morning and I will let you see what sort of a man I am." I accepted his challenge. Evans and I started for home, and for what reason I don't know, we got lost on the way. We arrived about 3 a.m. Evans was anxious for me to let him take my place in the

morning at 8 o'clock, but we slept in and didn't keep the appointment.

We were still boarding with old Jack, our previous boss. He was pleased about our misadventures, but we were not worrying. We met Paddy Lynch that day in Willis Street and he advised us to go out and see Jack Limer, from whom we got a job in a quarry.

My mate left the work and went further north. Then I shifted and obtained board in Willis Street. One of the other shift bosses was also working there, and his name was Harry. Dick, the other big boss that we encountered, had been threatening to give Harry a hiding. Harry was afraid of him, but when he heard about our little adventure he asked me if I wanted a job, and I said, "Yes." He said, "You will be on my shift, and we all go up to work together. You will be expected to walk along with me." Of course I agreed, and could see that I was expected to be a sort of bodyguard; but nothing untoward happened. We worked along in the tunnel, while Dick and his two brothers left to work elsewhere in Wellington.

Shortly after I started in the tunnel, I learned that several of the men were boarding in Marion Street at the Fountain Hall, so I shifted along there, as it was better to be in a house where that class of work was catered for. I already knew beforehand that Dick was boarding there, and I wasn't there long before he began to cast some sly glances, and later on he used to cut in if I happened to be discussing anything with another boarder. There were always about thirty to thirty-five people in the house—it was no place to start quarrelling, and I always allowed him to "frizzle in his own fat." It is unwise to do as some people say "scratch a flea." We don't actually "scratch the flea," but ourselves, and by doing so only make the flea more active, because he is getting some results.

Dick, so far as I could see, was heading for a spill; but when it would take place I didn't know. When previously wandering around the country in a miserable condition, I was a good target for the bluffer and the bully, but I had long since made up my mind that

this kind of behaviour towards me would be met with force. I was a man now and wouldn't look for trouble, but having been well trained in boxing and wrestling I was quite capable of meeting anything.

Christmas arrived and we were bound for the Catholic picnic at the Hutt on New Year's Day. There was a wrestling competition on the programme, for heavyweights, which was what I was looking forward to. But I had no training—I would be at a dance about three times a week, and on the morning of the sports I came off shift at 8 o'clock and left Wellington for the sports ground about 11 o'clock. The wrestling came off after the tug-of-war. I was a member of the winning side. I met Tom Toughey in the final. Toughey would be about 15 stone, whereas I would be about 12 stone 4 pounds. We were wrestling Cumberland style, and Toughey, although getting on in years, was still one of the big boys in that style. I drew a "bye," and Toughey and I wrestled off for first place. It was the best two out of three, and we had a fall each, and although I say it myself, I should have won. I had nobody to blame but myself as in the last two rounds I speculated with something that I had never got any results from. I nearly always obtained results from the "inside hyphe," and we were not long under way when I found that Toughey was trying for the same thing. However, we had a good solid encounter, shook hands, and when I walked away to get my clothes that were in the care of a man at the side of the ring, who should turn up but Dick, who challenged me to wrestle "catch-as-catch-can." He wanted the secretary of the committee to announce that he would wrestle me in a month's time for a wager, but the society was not interested. After a fair amount of nonsense from my future opponent, everything blew over.

Now that the principal event of the day was over, I had some good friends on the ground, and we decided to go and have a quiet drink together. In the company were Diego Rush, Barney Mullins, Jim Skelly and myself. We went over to the hotel and had a few drinks and were returning to the grounds when

we met Dick and four or five of his mates. He started probing again about Toughey beating me, which didn't trouble me in the least, and I told Dick that I was a better fighter than a wrestler—that there was plenty of room up the back where there was a kind of flat gully. Dick was reputed to have cleaned up all the classy bare-knuckle fighters in Western Australia and Tasmania. When I challenged Dick I don't know whether his heart dropped, but he stood and looked, and I had to repeat my challenge. His mates were looking at him, and one of them said, "What's the matter with you, Cock," as that was his nickname. Dick was still looking at me, and then he said, "Yes, I will give you a hiding now." We started for the battleground—I well in the lead because I knew the fight had to be of short duration as we had to be in time to catch the last train back to Wellington. Tommy Dwyer, who was one of Dick's friends was appointed referee, and a fairer man couldn't have been found. Dick stipulated that there was to be no wrestling and that we were to fight with a clean break. We did that for a few rounds which were of short duration. He wouldn't shake hands, so we shaped up, and before ten seconds was up I dropped Dick with a rip from my left as he was trying to duck my right which was only a dummy. In the next round I used the left for a dummy and dropped him with the right. It is not generally known that it doesn't always pay to knock your opponent down as it gives him too much time to recover. That is especially so when there is no time limit such as the count of ten. I put him down in every round because I knew that he was safer there. He disregarded all the rules of British fair play. In one part of the fight he nearly had a good grip of my throat and I was just able to fight him off as he was tightening his grip. After every knock down he grew weaker and his mates advised him to quit. When I went to shake hands he spat some blood at me, and then he turned round and started to abuse my second, Diego Rush. Rush told Dick that he failed to see what he had against him; but Dick was very bitter because Rush was with me. Perhaps he thought that

if Rush wasn't there he could have made a "free for all" and won the day by force of numbers. However, he was decisively beaten, and it was a great shock for his companions to see their idol fall. The fight was over and my friends and I caught the train for Wellington, and in my opinion we had a good day's sport at a small cost, including train fare, etc., amounting to only a few shillings. For my part I was well satisfied. I was on the winning side in the tug-of-war, second in the wrestling competition, and won a fight that I had been looking forward to.

Dick and I were still boarding in the same house, and he and his companions arrived home later than we did. I was in the sitting-room and he came in with a rush. I thought he was going to make a mob fight of it, so I slipped out to the front lawn and waited for him there. When he saw that I was ready for him he said that he didn't intend to fight me there, but asked me if I would give him another fight in six weeks' time. I agreed. We continued to board in the same house. At the week-end Dick approached me, and we decided that the battle-ground would be somewhere at the back of the Newtown Park. On the Saturday night, just for fun, I went into the kitchen and ordered underdone steak. It appeared that Dick had also done likewise, and the news went around that two "he-men" had ordered raw steak for breakfast in the morning. One of the boarders said that their only hope was that the steaks would not take effect until we were well away from the house; but nothing happened.

I left the house for the scene of the battle first, accompanied by Diego Rush and Archie McKiver. Dick followed behind with a couple of bulky fellows and a trail of smaller fry following. All the way up to Newtown we seemed to be objects of curiosity as everybody was obviously watching us. When we were well up Ridderford Street we passed a policeman and he also appeared to be interested. So when we got through the park I was in front and I continued up a small hill which looked as if one might have a running chance of getting away should a policeman come. There was a reasonably level place at the top,

and, when I got there, I was so hot that I started to remove some of my clothes. Dick lost no time in telling me that he wasn't going to fight there as we could see all round Wellington, and Dick being such a modest fellow for the time being, had no desire to be possibly charged for fighting in a public place or within view of the landscape.

It seemed to me to be a very hot morning, and to tell the truth I had no inclination to fight. I knew enough to know that Dick must have been a little more uncomfortable than I was. I suggested that we go to Island Bay and fight on the beach, but Dick wouldn't agree to that as he said that one of us might get a black eye, and it wouldn't be very nice coming home in the tram like that. I didn't force the argument on that, but I could see that it looked as if the fight was off, and I wasn't worrying either. There was no purse of sovereigns attached to it, and I had already given him a dusting. Dick and I were the only two who had anything to say. All the rest were as silent as the tomb.

I then suggested that we go down somewhere about the back of the zoo, which we did, but that place didn't suit Dick, and I could see that he was wet; but he suggested, as he had done several times, that we should fight in the Council quarry, somewhere along towards the Kilbirnie tunnel, but I had heard of the rough mobs in Sydney using blue metal with some effect, so I declined the idea of the quarry.

The fight was declared off and Dick announced that he would arrange some other place at some other time, and with that we all trailed home again. The only excuse that we could give our fellow boarders why we were alive was that we couldn't find a piece of ground big enough to fight on.

Dick and I still boarded at the same place, but after a few weeks Dick shifted. That is forty years ago and I haven't seen him since nor have I been worrying about it.

I worked on in the Kilbirnie tunnel until it looked dangerous. A good number of us left the job on the

Tuesday, and three men were killed on the following Friday.

I then worked on the erection of tram poles at Miramar and Seatoun. Next I got a job with the Prison Dept., at Auckland, and stayed there one year doing duty at Mount Eden and Fort Courtley. I liked Fort Courtley, but I had an antipathy towards Mount Eden. I suppose I may as well say why I left. I was doing a good deal of night shift and at a certain time every morning I would go to the bath-room for a shower. There were two bath-rooms at the prison for the use of the staff, and one evening the Orderly Officer was following me as usual putting out the lights after I had looked at each prisoner through the small peep window which is for that purpose. This night the Orderly Officer said to me, "You put out the lights on the other side of the wing and I will do this side." This was the first time I had this practice suggested to me, so I said, "No, I want to see that every man is in his cell, otherwise I won't sign and take over."

The Orderly Officer was a bit grumpy about the matter, but had to agree and walk behind me and turn out the light as I would see each prisoner. If I were unable to see the prisoner I was expected to call his name, and he was expected to show himself or answer the call. When the rounds were over we went to the Orderly Room and I signed for the number of prisoners locked up. I was responsible that the number had to be there in the morning. This night in question my senior officer was not pleased, but the job was done in the proper way and I signed for all prisoners locked up and took over, and in the morning as usual I went down to the bathroom for my shower. When I opened the door my superior officer was having a bath and ordered me out. He had walked past a similar bath built in the same design in the front of the building specially for the officers at that end. When I was ordered out I took my towel and was walking away while my superior continued to chastise me, telling me not to let this happen again. This man evidently didn't know that I had long since made up my mind

not to be bluffed, and furthermore I would not back away from any man. I decided to go back, and I opened the door, went in and hung up my towel.

By this time my would-be master was out of the bath and standing on the grid. He looked such a miserable creature to have such a lot to say. I advanced and got him on the "headlock." "What are you going to do?" he asked. "I am going to give you a bath," I said, and he immediately lost his status, and said, "I have just had a bath." As I was pulling him towards it he cried out, "You will pay dearly for this." Just as he announced the last word I gave him a clean "buttock" into the bath. It was a good clean fall, and he struck his buttocks against the far side of the bath. But this didn't subdue him, for he continued to threaten me, and every time he would start to rant I would shove his head under and hold him long enough to let him taste some of the water that he had washed his dirty carcase in. After a few of these operations he said, "Mundy, old fellow, if you let me go I promise you that there will be no more said about this." Whether there was any more said about the incident or not didn't trouble me. After breakfast that morning I wrote out my resignation, handed it in to the gaoler and remained on duty until my resignation was accepted by Colonel Hume, Wellington, and then I made straight for Wellington.

CHAPTER VI

WHILE in Auckland I was wrestling and boxing instructor at the Y.M.C.A. for a time, and there were a lot of fine boys attending, but the task was too big for me. In my opinion it would have required two more instructors to cope with the requirements. I also won a heavyweight boxing competition, but no credit could be taken by me because the first time I appeared to meet my opponent he was there, but gave me the decision by default, and the next night was the final, and I was a little geared up because I had no training and had never fought in the ring before. A tournament was being staged and our names were called to get ready. I stripped, and when I got out of the dressing room I could see my opponent was already sitting in the far corner of the ring. I don't know why I did it, but I took a flying leap and jumped the ropes into the ring, and while the gloves were being pulled on for me, the referee came over and said, "You win, the other man is not going to fight you," and when I looked across to the other corner my opponent was not there. The trophy was a five guinea gold medal. I had forgotten all about it when I met the president of the association in Queen Street one day, and he asked me to call and collect it, but I had no desire to do so, and didn't.

I travelled to Wellington by boat and landed back at the old boarding-house in Marion Street, and considered that I was home again.

I got a job with Mick Lynch at Karori, working in a drain where some sub-division was to take place, and while I was employed there, a boxing and wrestling tournament was coming off in the Theatre Royal. After work each day I used to walk into Wellington and do a little sparring with the boys, and also on Sunday mornings. Of course I was a heavyweight, being a little over 12 stone stripped, and as far as I could see and understand, it was only a matter of

doing a little sparring exercise around the ring and the championship was mine. I had had no previous experience of meeting men who were in hard training for several months, and to win both boxing and wrestling I would have to beat several men in the two nights' tourney.

I lined up the first night and my first bout was wrestling Ted Lanauze, who got the last fall and defeated me. My next bout was boxing Jim McDowell from Palmerston North, and I was advised to get right after him as soon as the gong sounded, and I did. I was as full of fight as an egg is full of meat, and so was McDowell. We were just enjoying a good ding-dong, when I slipped to the floor, and McDowell apparently hit me while I was getting up, and Dr. Napier McLean put his hand on my shoulder and declared me the winner. I protested and wanted to proceed but the old man was very strict, and that was my first win. Later in the evening I met Busby, and the towel came from his corner in the second round, and that didn't seem to suit me either, as I had always so far been deprived of the privilege of beating a man decisively, and that ended the first night's tournament. Two wins in the boxing and one loss in the wrestling, which I was not concerned about as the style was "catch-as-catch-can," and I was far too light to be opposing the men who were competing.

I was now quite sure that the following night I could easily win the Wellington Provincial Heavyweight Championship, because Percy Hale and I were in the final, and I had sparred a good deal with him, and could have stopped him at any time. The following evening Dick Templeton and Ten Lanauze were to wrestle off in the final bout, but Ted had a bad shoulder and wouldn't compete, and they asked me to wrestle an exhibition bout with Templeton, which foolishly I did. I was not in a fit condition to stand up to that which was asked, but I obliged, and when I met Hale I was making a hack of him; in fact he said to me, "Don't knock me out, you are winning." That seemed to undo me, and I started playing to the gallery, cutting some humorous antics which

brought a good deal of applause. When about half way through the third round I could feel my legs were getting weak, and obviously I had been burning up more fuel than was necessary, and more than I could afford. I had no idea of ring-craft, or of many other tricks of the trade, but experience teaches, and that tournament was an object lesson for me in many ways. I learnt that the man who elects to beat himself in the ring is the easiest man to beat. While watching the other bouts at that tournament I took note of anything which I thought would be useful in the future. One boxer, who drew my attention most, was Billy Shields from Palmerston North, which district was well represented by pupils of Bob Rollo, who was an expert of the noble art. In addition to Shields were Jeff Watchorn, Tommy Watkins, Jim McDowell, and the Havel brothers. I concentrated on Shields, who had a perfect defence, and had a peculiar way of reversing his stance with a simultaneous movement of hands and legs. I afterwoods learnt that he was doing Bob Fitzsimmons' famous right and left shift, and when Shields went into reverse it was very spectacular, but there was no sting in his punch.

I knew that I had a good punch in either hand and I decided to practise this movement.

After the tournament I got work with the Post and Telegraph Department, and worked up the Manawatu line; also at Palmerston and Masterton. While working on the telegraph line, I got a match with Joe Cole of Palmerston, but arrived in the ring out of condition, and lost on points, and learnt another good lesson, and that is, that if you can fight, get in and do your best instead of allowing yourself to be beaten by a mug in condition. If any man enters the ring out of condition, it is necessary for him to win the fight as soon as possible. Another thing that I learnt was, when you have your man groggy, don't play the gentleman by stepping back and allowing him time to recover, but get in and knock him out at once, because he might come to light and knock you out.

I shifted down to Wellington and worked at Ngaharangua freezing works, also Petone. I was working in

the freezer one night at Ngaharangua when one of the men in a playful way got a hold of me in Cumberland style, and I took a hold and slipped in on the "buttock," and this man gave me a lift, and as he did I struck the back of his heel with the side of my feet, and at the same time threw my weight back and fell on top of him. He got up and laughed heartily and said, "Do that again," and I did it again, and the boss was looking on and he said, "You didn't laugh that time, Jack," and Jack said, "Let me see you do it again," and I did it again and the fun ended, and nothing more was said.

We were all staying at Jack Shartis's hotel, and we were all on night shift. There was a good style of a young fellow staying at the hotel with us, and one day I was showing him a holt in wrestling, when Jack appeared on the scene, and asked me if I was a bit of a wrestler. I said I was, and he asked me what style, and I said that I could wrestle any style, but Cumberland was my best. He said, "I must have a holt with you one of these times," and I said, "Yes, what about having one now?" and he agreed. It had been raining heavily and at the side of the pub where we went to have a try-out there was a big hole of water, but there seemed plenty of room. I don't know how Jack measured me, but I looked upon him as nothing compared with the giants that I had been used to. I nearly always had to give away about three stone, but this fellow was giving me over a stone. We took holds quickly, and I suppose each one under-rated the other, and we had quite a tussle, and I soon learned although he was light he made up for it in science. I could swing him off his feet, but when I went to lower him to the ground he always landed on his feet, and would look around at one of his mates and say, "He's willing, isn't he?" which gave me the impression that he was having a game with me. We finished up "stronging" each other to the ground, which would have been a "dog fall" as we both hit the ground at the same time. When we got up I said, "I could have thrown you, but I didn't want to throw you into that hole of water," and he said, "Oh, don't

let that trouble you. I don't mind a bit of a wash." We took holds again, and I wrestled Jack right back to the hole of water, and back-heeled him right into it, and I on the top of him, and that finished the bout, and we had to go and change our clothes. I learned later that I was wrestling Jack Hall. Hall was the only man at the time who was considered to be class enough to put against that man-eating champion, Harry Dunn, and therefore there was nothing to be alarmed at when he gave me so much trouble. Hall was past his prime when I met him.

CHAPTER VII

I HAD 445 acres of land down at Murchison, and and went down and felled 40 acres, and moved further on to Greymouth, allowing the bush time to dry for burning in the autumn. I got work in the State mine and later on at cutting timber for the mine. When I was felling bush at Murchison, sometimes, when I was chopping, I would suddenly get weak and would have to go home to the camp and rest. I didn't know at the time that I was developing what is known as bushman's heart. However, I went back to the bush again at Greymouth, but I was having periodical heart attacks, and I started to think that I had been burning up too much fuel, and would sooner or later have to take a pull. I continued in the bush and my weight had gone down to eleven stone seven pounds, just two stone lighter than I was five years back.

A boxing championship was being held at Greymouth, and of course I had to be in that. I weighed in for the heavyweights at eleven stone, seven pounds, and met Ted Creigh, and I won on a K.O., in about 90 seconds, but was disqualified in the final for staying down without being hit very hard. I was not worrying about that part of the business as I had just about made up my mind that I was through, but if I had my time over again I wouldn't do what I did then. Bob Fitzsimmons once said that on one occasion he fought a stumer, and that one dead 'un was enough in a boxing career, but I shall say for the benefit of young boxers that one dead fight is one too many in any man's career.

I left Greymouth for Sydney, and arrived at Botany Bay the morning before Dave Smith fought Arthur Cripps in the Stadium, Rushcutters' Bay. I saw the fight and went out to Botany the following morning to work in the wool-wash. I was staying close by the Sir Joseph Banks Hotel, and the big pavilion where

athletes train. Jack Johnson trained there for his fight with Tommy Burns. When I arrived there were in residence at the hotel, Dave Smith, Johnny Thompson, Jimmy Clabby, Bronson, and other boxers. Jack Donaldson was also there. I sparred with Jimmy Clabby only, and I felt sure that I could have beaten Clabby, but I knew that something had gone wrong with the works, but what it was I didn't know, nor did anybody else. I wanted to fight but somehow or another I didn't feel inclined to, so I left it at that. After a couple of months in Sydney I slid back to Wellington, and on to the West Coast and worked in the mines for a few months, and then on to Westport, and while there took part in two tournaments, one at Millerton, and one at Westport. I won the heavyweights in both tournaments, and my young brother Louis was runner-up. I was working on the railway at Westport when the Millerton tournament was near at hand. Lew was working at Millerton, and a few days before the tournament took place, Lou came down to see me, and to make sure that I would go up as there were seven entries. He wanted me to give him a hand to knock some of them over, and teach them that they couldn't fight. There was a big fellow up there who had been training for three months, and my brother thought that he would be difficult, but I thought differently, because I had seen him in training. His name was Lucky Webber, and his weight was 15 stone, 5 pounds, stripped. They had to send to Wellington for a pair of boxing boots specially made. I just forget what percentage of the hide he took. They named him "The White Hope." I hadn't been feeling the best, and didn't want to go up but Lou seemed to think that there was far too big a field to go through, so I went up and arrived in the hall early, and made it my business to contact the "White Hope" and see how he looked, etc. "The Hope" was very confident. I asked him what condition he was in, and he assured me that he couldn't be better. I asked him his weight and he said, "Fifteen stone, five," chewing vigorously at some gum. I had already seen the Secretary, and he told me that there would be only four competing in

the heavyweights, myself, The Hope, my brother, and a man by the name of Hunter. My brother and Hunter went on first, the bouts were the best of three "three minute" rounds. Lew and Hunter entered the ring, and when ready walked out to the centre of the ring for the first round. These two contestants were settling some argument about a girl, and something in the shape of fireworks was expected. After getting instructions from the referee, they walked to their corners. Hunter was a well built man, and seemed to be well developed and in condition, and a good stone heavier than my brother, who would weigh about 12 stone. The gong sounded and no time was lost by either man as both men were continually on the move apart from little skirmishes now and again. Hunter was good on his feet and made good use of the ring, and when the gong sounded at the end of the first round I had an idea that Hunter would be keeping Lew busy for the full distance. Round two commenced in real earnest, and from a spectators' point of view it was easily seen that there was no love lost through being brought together in the ring. Hunter was still making good use of the space in the ring until about half way through, when he began to slow down, and Lew was able to get closer and mix it with him. As far as I could see the Marquis of Queensbury rules were not known to either of them, and they were just trying to annihilate each other in the most convenient manner. In one of their embraces Lew grabbed Hunter around the neck and buttocked him to the floor, and gave him a tap on the jaw as discount, and qualified to be disqualified, and Hunter was declared the winner. The conclusion of that bout meant that I had the field to myself.

The "White Hope" and I went in next, and this man did look big—the biggest boy that I ever met, but he was not worrying me although the betting was "three-to one" against me. We were ready and the gong sounded. I had made up my mind to put him down as soon as possible, and hit him hard enough to make him stay down. We met about half way and I sold him the dummy, stepped back, and sold him the

dummy again, and got him a good upper cut to the chin. He sagged backwards, and travelling fast I was just in time to give him a left hook to the chin, and another left as he was going down. He was out with his head under the ropes in his own corner in the short time of 10 seconds, and when I assisted him to his chair and shook hands I retired to the dressing-room. I was just hoping that I would meet with as much success with Hunter in the final when the Secretary came and told me that Hunter would not be meeting me in the final, so that meant that I had won the tournament with just about 10 seconds' fighting. It seemed hardly worth while, but everything helps.

Jim Mitchell was a spectator, and I heard someone call out, "How do you like your chances against him, Mitchell?" but I don't know whether Mitchell, who was heavyweight champion of New Zealand at the time, answered or not.

Later on a tournament was held in Westport, and there was a fair entry for the heavyweights, but only my brother and I competed, and while we were doing our part I again heard someone call out to Mitchell and ask him how he liked his chances with me. I had been trying to get a fight with Mitchell and could have beaten him anytime that he held the championship, winning and losing it on three different occasions that he was professional champion.

It was the morning of Boxing Day when Billy Hannon fought Billy Coates at Westport, and as curtain raiser there were some special bouts, and a couple of boys from the North Island were matched with a couple of local boys. I was fairly busy that morning. I was "seconding" the two boys from the North and I also "seconded" Billy Coates in the professional fight.

I had known Mr Mitchell for a couple of years. I had nothing against him, but he was professional heavyweight champion of New Zealand, and I wanted to fight him for it. He had never told me what he thought of me, but I knew that he didn't like me, and on one occasion he wanted to fight me bare knuckles, which was not acceptable to me.

We were just getting ready for the second bout

before the professional fight, and I took the bag to the ring and found that the towels were left in the room. I went back to the dressing room, got the towels, and Mr Mitchell followed me into the room and remonstrated with me for making application for a fight with him, and advised me to try someone further down the ladder. I was not prepared for an argument because they were all waiting for me to return with the towels, but Mr Mitchell wouldn't let me pass, so I hung one on his chin and knocked him up against the wall. Then Mitchell started taking off his coat, and the championship would have been decided there and then, but one of the Boxing Association officials asked us to call it off, which we did, and what Mr Mitchell said to me at parting made me more firmly convinced that he had no love for me.

I left New Zealand for Sydney, and I got a little information from Jim Maloney, who used to be heavyweight champion of New Zealand before he went to Australia. I had a rather strange experience when trying to find Maloney's house somewhere up Waverley way. He gave me the number of his house and the name of the street. One evening I went out, found the street, and memorising the number as I thought, went to a number on the left hand side of the street. I knocked at the door and a man came out. I asked him if Mr Maloney lived there, and he said, "Oh yes, come inside," which I did. He told me to be seated, and I was sitting down just waiting for Mr Maloney to come, but as nobody appeared I asked my host where Mr Maloney was, and he said, "I am Mr Maloney." I don't know what he thought, but I was mystified and hardly expected my explanation to be accepted. However, when I had explained matters I went further up the street and found Jim Maloney on the other side of the street. Maloney knew all about the fighters and their grading, etc., and he advised me to go to Wollongong, and I did. I wanted to recruit my health, but instead of improving I went stale, and lost weight.

I fought Dutch Hickman at the Wollongong Stadium. I entered the ring at 10 stone, 13 pounds,

against Hickman's 14 stone. I lost the fight in the ninth round. I was down nine times in the first six rounds. I won the second half of the seventh round, and the second half of the eighth round, and had a rough chance of knocking Hickman in the last half of the ninth round, when the fight was stopped, and my end of the purse was £2 and a good pasting.

I returned to Sydney and lived at Waverley and worked on the trams as a conductor, but the job was too strenuous for me. While at Waverley I used to do a bit of surfing and a little exercise, and was feeling a bit stronger. One day, I went out to the Waverley Hotel where there was a pavilion where Johnny Thompson and Terry Kelleher were training. I had a spar with Thompson, and just as we were finishing the last round, Thompson brought a heavy one over and I dropped to my knees. I got up and was prepared to continue, but the gong went and that was the end of it.

I turned up again the following day and Thompson apologised as he thought that he had offended me, but he was mistaken. I had returned to see if I couldn't knock him down, but he wasn't working that day as he was fighting in the Stadium in two days' time, but he said, "You can spar with Terry," to which I agreed. Terry was a new man from America, and had come out with Johnny on this, his second visit to Sydney. Kelleher was getting ready, and there were four sparring partners, including myself, waiting to be knocked out. There were the Middle and Heavy Amateur Champions of N.S.W., another man and myself, who were sitting together on a side seat in the pavilion. The heavyweight was brought in first and was knocked cold in the first round; then the middleweight was brought in, who did better than the heavyweight, lasting a round and a half. He received a vicious uppercut under the nose from Kelleher's right, which to a certain extent tore the nose upward. When that happens it causes much pain and brings tears to the eyes, rendering the recipient incapable of further action for some time. After this happened the middleweight retired. My neighbour and I were

watching, and Johnny Thompson and his wife were delighted with the performance which Terry was putting up. Mrs Thompson said, "It requires a man standing by to pick them up." I said to my partner, "If he cuts loose on me like that I intend to give him a go for it." Jim Maloney told me when I first met him that if I sparred with a Yankee boxer, the best rule was to fight him, as they on their second visit had started knocking every man out who came along to spar with them. When the first team of Yankee boxers arrived they were such nice boys to spar with, etc., and some would-be champions would go along and tear into them knowing that the Yanks would not retaliate, and then go away and boast what they had done to so and so. The Yanks got to hear about this, and decided to revise their tactics. I could plainly see that Kelleher was out to stiffen everything that stood in front of him. After the middleweight retired in the second round Kelleher called out, "Bring that long fellow along," and I went out, but I couldn't wait to see what he intended to do. I sold him the dummy, hit him, and clinched several times, and I knew that I was hurting him, but Terry never let on. As we came together each time he would laugh and pretend to be playing, but I was not going to be caught, and I took no chances. I was well ahead since the gong sounded, but I was just beginning to calculate whether I had enough condition to see the round out at such a speed, when I got him a good one to the jaw, and I followed up with both hands. I could have knocked him out but he backed off the boarded floor on to some concrete, and I wouldn't hit him, as in the condition that he was in, it was almost a certainty he would have struck his head against the concrete floor. I walked back into the centre of the ring, and when we sparred up again I felt tired because I had put in a fast run for about half a round, and had to sacrifice a golden opportunity. Nevertheless, I pretended to be fresh, but Terry put me down with a rip to the solar plexus, but pretending I was not hurt, I jumped up and renewed the attack when Terry threw down his hands and appealed to Johnny Thompson,

and said that he refused to continue. Johnny asked him to finish the round, but Kelleher refused with the plea that I couldn't box.

I went back to Wollongong for a spell, and while I was there Sid Thorn, who was a good sort and well known on the South Coast, often used to tell me about a potential champion in a man that he knew by the name of Barney Barnes, and while I was there Barney was matched to fight Francy Barrett. Barrett had been to America, and done some fighting over there, but Wollongong was his home town. He was Lightweight Champion of the South Coast, and Barnes was considered to be the man who could relieve him of the title. Barnes was training at Keeraville, where I was living at the time, and he used to pass my place of abode on his way to the library and "gym" where he used to train. I didn't go to see him training as he had refused my offer of training him on the grounds that after he was through with Barrett he would be expected to fight me, and anyone else who might be available, and then he would sell up and shift down to Sydney, and go into the game properly. After Barnes had been floundering around with the boys for about three weeks, he called on me one evening, and asked me if I would come over and see how he was going, and I agreed. Next door to me lived an old miner who used to come along and have a spar with me when I was training. I arranged for old Jack to come along and have a spar with Barnes, and old Jack was delighted. Old Jack was fifty and looked his age. We arrived at the "gym," and after Barnes had a warm-up with the skipping rope he donned the gloves, and I got old Jack ready, and told him that this was a try-out with the future Lightweight Champion of the South Coast, and I wanted him to fight from gong to gong, and fight to kill. Old Jack was delighted because, when he used to spar with me, I only looked upon it as merely exercise, but it appears from what I heard afterwards that old Jack considered himself a match for me. The gloves were on and after getting a time-keeper, I called "time." The two champions faced each other each with the grim deter-

mination to kill the other at the first blow, and each was so eager to despatch the other that their timing was bad, each one in such a hurry, that they were just simply mauling, and pushing each other around the ring. The fight was to last three rounds, and each contestant was eager to register a knock-out before the end of the third round. The exhibition was inclined to be after the style of a melee, and old Jack was not doing any damage, but seemed to be crowding in on Barnes all the time. I didn't know whether they were flat out or not until the third round ended, and Barnes said, "Gentlemen, I think I will postpone this fight as I am out of condition, and have gone stale." The fight was to take place in a couple of weeks' time, and I advised Barnes to go on with it as he had gone so far, and if he couldn't beat Barrett he might as well put the gloves away, and go back to driving horses in the mine. Old Jack's brother came along to me next morning and asked me what we had been doing to old Jack. He said that his wife was alarmed about some idea that he had got into his head about selling up and going down to Sydney to get into the fight business, but it ended there.

I undertook the training of Barnes, but he had neither science nor physique. He was nearly six feet high, and was launching out as a lightweight. He was so thin that when stripped and lying on his face, down in readiness to have his back muscles rubbed, you could see that his buttocks were considerably spaced. The fight came off at 3 p.m., at the Wollongong Stadium, and I took the coming champion along. I had him nursed up as well as possible in ring-craft, and one of the points was that if knocked down, he was not to get up too soon, and upon arising, if not sufficiently recovered, to go down again if the opportunity occurred. The gloves were on and the gong sounded, and the two champions got to work, and they were not in action long, when I could see that my man was a flop. He was outboxed and outclassed in every department, and Barrett could see in the early stages what a good thing he had, and wasn't in a hurry to dispense with a harmless client. He just

contented himself doing a little fancy stuff that he had learnt in America. Up till now Barnes had been down a few times, but managed to weather the storm and get through the fourth round. In the fifth and last round it was easily seen that Barnes was through, as he was going down so often. The last time he rose clear from the floor, but when Barrett advanced to attack again Barnes just touched down with one knee. The referee awarded the fight to Barrett, and I took Barnes up to the hotel and gave him a rub down. He turned into one of the beds, and was moaning about what a fool he had made of himself when a knock came to the door. The manager of the stadium wished to see Mr Barnes. I answered the door and invited the manager in, and he seemed to have no time to waste over mincing words in connection with his mission. "Mr Barnes," he said, "your side bet of £10 which you insisted on before you would agree to fight Barrett, was to be taken out of your share of the gate money." "Yes," said Barnes, who by this time was sitting up in his bed. "And," continued the manager, "your share of the gate money does not cover that amount, and would you mind making up the difference of £2/8/-." Barnes, up till this time, seemed to be a sick man, but this demand for £2/8/- seemed to bring him up to fighting pitch again. Barnes looked at the manager and said, "What do you take me for? Do you mean to tell me that I am going to lose two days' work, buy gear to train costing me over five pounds, come down here and get a good hiding, and pay you £2/8/-? You must think I am mad." The manager seemed to think that he could make Barnes pay, but I think it ended there. Now the next thing was to get Barnes home, but it appeared that he was afraid of his wife, but after a little coaxing we got him home, and later on he settled down to work in the mine, and that was the end of another champion who couldn't produce the goods.

From Wollongong I got a job with the Permanent Way Construction Department. I worked in the yards at Newton, and then removed to Komo on the George's River, and I stayed for a while in the old

hotel. Out on the grass beside the hotel is the spot where Larry Foley and Tony Ross fought a good part of a day with bare knuckles, but I am unable to say who won the fight—taking all in all I should say they both lost.

Komo is three miles from Sutherland, which was a holiday resort, and a rendezvous for fighters while in training. Langford was training there. The place consisted of a hotel on each side of the line, and a few shops. My work was near the Komo railway station. The George's River ran past, and there was a fairly large boat-shed just below the station where men used to train. I was not long on the job before I was approached to act as a sparring partner to a middleweight from down the line, who was up amongst the heads in that division, and, of course, I obliged. After using the pick and shovel all day I would go down after 5 o'clock and have a try out with this middleweight who was in full training. Although nothing more than a spar took place between us I could see that I could have got him at any time.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOW LANGFORD and others were at Sutherland training and that was too much for me, so I left my job and shifted up to Sutherland, and intended going into training for another fight. I had improved on my Wollongong form. I went up from eleven stone to twelve stone, five pounds, and that was working condition, but the improvement was too brief, for as soon as I left work and went boarding at a hotel I developed indigestion again. However, I wanted to see something of this coloured champion, Langford. When I arrived I interviewed Sam about coming along for a spar, and he assured me that I was welcome. I went along that afternoon. The full team staying at the hotel on the other side of the line comprised Colin Bell, Liver Davis, a coloured man who came from America with Sam, and there were Duke Mullins, trainer, Joe Goodman, manager, Terry Kelleher, and another, both sparring partners, and myself, who was not actually in the team as I was staying at a different hotel on the opposite side of the line. I used to go over to the pavilion every day and strip off, and await my turn to be called by "His Majesty," Mr Langford. If Sam felt like a good mauling around he would call Colin Bell, and if he felt like a light fast spar he would call Liver Davis, his coloured companion, who came to Australia with him. I don't just know how many Sam had on the pay roll, but there were six of a staff, not including myself. I was not on the pay roll. I was just an outsider. Sometimes we would have an audience of about 150 people from everywhere, just come along to see Sam having a work-out. When I would be doing my turn with Sam, he used to try and get some fun at my expense, and one day when we got into a clinch Sam tried to throw me and I struck the back of his heel and threw him, with myself on the top of him. One day by some manner of means he imprisoned both of

my arms and was punching me, which didn't cause any fun. Then he would get my head in chancery, and, of course, I knew what to do and did it, sometimes causing Sam a good deal of inconvenience. Sam had announced to the reporters that he had a "white hope" in the camp, but would not give his name until later on, and thereafter I was generally known as the "white hope." I was faster on my feet and quicker with my hands than Langford was, and I always showed up in the loose. One day Sam and I were sparring, and I was doing a bit of fast in and out boxing, and indulging in a little flippity flap, when Sam put his hands down and walked up to me and got hold of one of my gloves and said, "Close up those gloves boy, and hit." I said, "Alright boy," and that advice just suited me. I stepped back, came in with a weave, sold Sam the dummy, and got him in the solar plexus. Sam pretended that it didn't hurt, but it did, as I knew that one man is no tougher than another, when he gets a good punch in that region, but whether it hurt or not, he had some more to come. He asked for it and I was the one that could give it to him. I sold him the dummy again and put his head back, and followed up with both hands, and was well and truly licking him in my corner when Duke Mullins rang the gong for a short round. I don't remember what happened, but that was the last spar that I had with Langford. My status to most people was rather confusing. Langford wanted to back me to fight Sid Cox of Sydney, and just wanted to know how Hickman of Wollongong beat me, but excuses are not readily accepted. When I fought Hickman I wasn't fit to fight, and that was all that there was to it; and at the moment I was going back to my old form of indigestion, and couldn't see my way clear to make any contracts. I now went back to Sydney and worked for a few weeks in the railway workshops on night shift, but my condition was declining, so I decided to go into the country, and went away into the mountains felling bush on Mt. Monga in the Kelly country. We were near the Glen Rowan River, and I walked across the head of it one Sunday. After I had been

using the axe for a few weeks I was improving by leaps and bounds, and I was looking forward to the future, when we all got dysentery through a certain class of water, and eventually I had to pack up and move on. I chose the long way round going back to Sydney. I travelled over Mt. Monga by coach to Neligan's Bay, then Bateman's Bay, and Jervis Bay, where the Federal capital now stands. The trip was worth while just to see the country.

I went right into Canberra and got a job which was supposed to be quarrying, and when I lined up in the morning I was put to work grubbing some big slabs of granite out of the sand. The temperature was fairly high, and I was working alone on a big sand dune sweating my body away getting a place ready for the nobility to strut around in the years to come. I had been working about ten minutes, and was wondering how long I would stay or would I stop now, when along came the quarry manager, an ex-barber. This barber fellow, with no knowledge of quarrying, but possessing some influence somewhere, had the cheek and audacity to take the pick and demonstrate to me how to grub stones out of the sand at Canberra, the future talking ground of Australia. Well, that seemed a little too much for me, so I got my coat, and told him that he could carry on like that, as I had somewhere else to go. He asked me where I was going, and I said I anticipated Sydney, and then New Zealand, and right there I left this lone barber on the sand dune clearing the way for the Federal capital.

We now travelled by a small steamer, and it took us around the Bay to a small wharf, and there was a boarding-house run by the Mayor of Nowra, where I got a job for about a week helping the blacksmith, then moved on by coach to the railhead on the South Coast, which was Nowra. I liked the lay of this country all the way to Wollongong, which was all new to me. While travelling through I pulled in at Port Kembla, as there was a big quarry there, and I might get a job. The temperature was 110 in the shade, and all the men were idle on that account, for the day. I strolled down to the beach, and it was

crowded with people. I longed for a dip, and when a big aboriginal asked me if I would like to go into the surf, I said "Yes." He lent me his bathing suit, which was not quite big enough for me, and for many reasons I was an object of curiosity. Nevertheless I enjoyed it, and later caught the train for Wollongong, stayed there the night, and proceeded to Sydney the next day, to catch the first boat for Wellington and then Westport.

I was interested in a man working in the mine at Millerton, and he interested me because he was champion of New Zealand and I thought that I should be.

I landed at Westport just before Christmas 1912, and worked for the Railway for a time, and then on the wharf. It was while I was on the wharf that I got a wire from the Secretary of the Millerton Boxing Association asking me if I would fight Jim Mitchell at Millerton on March 24, 1913, for a purse of forty sovereigns, and ten pounds training expenses, the winner to take all the stake. I wired back accepting the offer.

Now that the wind was blowing in the right direction for me I had to look around and see where I could best set myself up with training quarters. I had to have a man to rub me down. Jack Bourke, who lived at Cape Foulwind, was recommended to me, so I moved out to the Cape and got a house at McKay's Mill. Bourke was living a few doors up the line. I borrowed a punch-ball, and a set of gloves from Jack Lamplow, butcher, of Westport, and now I was set up, but with only a little more than four weeks to train. I was suffering from indigestion, and that was the principal reason why I wanted to get out of Westport. I was sure that I could do the job satisfactorily without a hard preparation, which I could never have stood up to.

I worked in the bush with Jack Lenihen for a few days and then I made a deal with Bourke to do a half day for him cutting posts, in return for his services as trainer. In the afternoon I would punch the ball, and go for a trot along the beach, and after tea in

the evenings Bourke would give me a rub down, and that completed the day's training.

I had refused all outside offers of sparring partners, as I was afraid I might break down, and the fight would fall through. It would also mean that I would be through as I was now in my thirty-second year, and I looked upon the fight as a beginning. I was very fidgety during the last few days before the fight. I used to punch away at the ball in all idle moments, right up to the day before the fight. My brothers Jack and Lew came up from Greymouth to see the fight, and that was the first time that Jack had been over the Greymouth bar for eleven years.

One day when the three of us were together in Westport, Jack suggested that we have our photographs taken in a group, as we might never be together again. Lew and I were not interested and the idea fell through; but Jack was right, the three of us were never together again, and never will be, not in this life; whether we will be in the next I don't know. I very much doubt it as it seems too good to be true, and if I thought I would meet those two boys in the next world (if there is one) I would welcome death at any time.

On March 24th., Bourke and I went into Westport by the morning train, and met brothers Lew and Jack there. We got the afternoon train for Granity, and from there climbed the hill for Millerton, and got parked at Fitzgerald's Hotel, just before the evening meal, after which I went to bed but didn't get much rest as it was pay day for the mines, and a big crowd of visitors had already arrived to see the fight, which would take place about 8.30 p.m. Men were tramping up and down the passage calling out the odds "three to one Mitchell," but my brothers told me afterwards when they went to get it "it wasn't there."

I entered the ring at 11.7, and Mitchell was about two and a half stone heavier, and when I looked across at him he looked very big. When the gong sounded for the first round Mitchell came at me like a bull at a gate, and instead of stalling him I used to meet him, and mix it with him. I soon found that he was far

too strong and vigorous, and when only half-way through the first round Mitchell dropped me with what is known as the "under and over," a hook to the ribs and over to the jaw. I didn't know how he did what he did until I went back to the corner, and Bourke told me. I was careful that he didn't do it again. I stayed down for nearly the count, and rose and finished the round, using more care, and making better use of the ring. When I got back to my corner my face was all smeared with blood, which I did intentionally to give Mitchell the idea that I was done, and induce him to chase me around the ring. Bourke asked me how I was getting on with him, and I said, "I don't exactly know, but if he can keep that pace up he will murder me." Lew said that he had all his money on me and was getting married tomorrow, and if I lost, the wedding would have to be postponed. I assured him that I would do my best to see that the wedding took place.

We went out for the second round and Bourke had previously told me about Mitchell's little straight left, which Jimmy was now bringing into play, which comprised a continuation of straight lefts with not a great deal of sting in them, but just enough to be annoying. Mitchell, in my opinion, thought he had the fight nearly won. I had weathered the roughest of his onslaught in the first round, and now his speed was slightly reduced, and every time that he used to poke the left out, I used to take it throwing my head back while back-moving at the same time. While Mitchell was playing along with this little left he had a vicious right lying handy, which now and again he would try and bring into play, but I didn't want it and wasn't there when it came. Mitchell seemed to be settled down to something permanent with this little straight left, and I had been timing him every time that he put it out, and let him go until he became a bit careless, and I back-moved, and Jimmy overreached, and I gave him right and left and drove him to the ropes, where he was clinging for support. The referee was not counting, and the crowd were calling to me, and Bourke called out to go in and finish him,

and foolishly I did, only to be pulled away by the referee with my left hand broken. Now I was obliged to continue the fight for the remaining thirteen rounds with only one hand, and to win on points. I beat my man all the way, but I was glad when it was over. Using caution and judgment I should have won on a knock-out in the second round.

After the fight we all walked down the hill, and caught the train for Westport, and while sitting down in a restaurant waiting for a meal to be brought in, I took a bad turn, and walked out without the meal, and went to my lodgings, and to bed.

Quite a few people congratulated me on my performance, and used to say that I had "landed the bacon," but I was not sure whether I had or not. I was quite satisfied now that as I was, I was just a thing of the past, and only a shadow of my former self, and that I had been keying myself up, and asking myself to do just a little more than my physical condition would stand. Something would have to be done about it.

I stayed about Westport for a couple of days, and at the week-end Mitchell and some of his supporters arrived in Westport, and interviewed the match-makers of the Westport Association for a return fight, and the Association was agreeable, but I could see, with my hand in a sling and my health getting worse instead of better, I was obliged to turn away good money.

I decided to go away into the bush, and I got a job out in the never-nevers, nine miles from the railhead, at Mokikinui, cutting sleepers, and only stayed one day, travelling back to Westport, and taking the first boat to Wellington, and then on to Sydney.

Bob and Bill Morgan of Kumara, West Coast of New Zealand, had a bush contract at Tarramurrah, about thirty miles from Sydney. I got a job with them, and later took a contract myself at the same place, clearing thirteen acres of land for an orchardist, later on to be planted in fruit trees. I got half way through with my contract when it became too much for me, and I was obliged to hand it over to a man

whom I took in as a partner when starting. I had bought a machine for pulling down trees; a hand winch, and I seemed to be the only one able or willing to work the thing to advantage. I was improving in physique until I took the machine. I not only lost my physical strength but my nerves were broken, and the job was too big for me, and I was glad to get out of it, a poorer but a wiser man. I wasn't a loser except the time that I had worked, and strained myself on that infernal machine known as the Trewellagh Winch. My partner had no money to buy me right out as he had shares in a few pubs in Sydney, and usually on pay days would take what cash he could spare, and deposit it with the barmaid, and the interest was a pint of beer and a smug smile. I was to get full payment when the job was finished, which we will hear something about later on.

CHAPTER IX.

I WAS NOW a free agent once more, and decided to have a look at the timber lands on the North Coast. I landed in Newcastle and stayed for a few days, and then on to Dungog, which seemed to be about the beginning of the timber country, because so far as I can remember all the way from Dungog to Taree, seen from the train as far as the road was visible on each side of the line, there were bullock teams one behind the other, all engaged in hauling mostly timber squared with the broad axe, to be used in Australia, and for shipment overseas.

We reached Taree, which was the end of the completed line, and the end of it entirely was Kew, which was reached by Public Works van. There was a big gang of men at Kew, and a lot of foreigners including Cingalese. I stayed the night at Kew, and I met the sergeant of police in charge of the station, who was a very sick man. We exchanged notes on cures for nervous dyspepsia, and he told me about something new. I got some of it later on, but it was of no value to me. I think he called it paw paw, grown in Queensland.

When travelling to Kew, I thought I would make a start on the railway construction works, but viewing the human element, and finding them a rough crowd, I was not inclined to stay. Although I had been through a few "dust-ups" in my time, I never cared about the rough element.

I decided to go up the mountain. I had a premonition that something awaited me further on, and there was a fairly big settlement well up on the tableland where ploughing and cultivation took place, and a sizeable number used to send milk to the factory. This place was called the Combine, and there was a boarding-house there just about full of boarders who were of a very good type. They all seemed to be well versed in many subjects, and one young fellow. who

was only 19 years of age, was very keen on international socialism, and they were all anxious to know something about New Zealand. Travelling from Kew to the Combine was actually travelling back towards Sydney. Now I had heard about a man down the Sydney side of the mountain who wanted some bush felled, so I walked down the hill one Sunday morning, and my belongings came later by the cream-wagon. I stayed the night at an accommodation house at the foot of the hill, and the following day walked on three miles, to the land-owner who wanted scrub cut, and bush felled. His name was Alf, and he had been born and reared in the district. We were now on Killebark Creek, which ran across the main road from Kew to Wingham, on the main line to Newcastle and Sydney. I asked Alf about the bush, and he said, "Yes," but he didn't know whether I could do the job or not, as the undergrowth was pretty thick. However, he pointed out the place where the bush was, and I walked over and stood at the fence, and looked at it without getting through. The under-scrubbing in New Zealand would be done for about 4/- or 5/-, but Alf was offering 12/6, and 12/6 for felling the bush up to a foot, and there were not many trees to an acre.

I went back and told Alf that I would do the job, and he asked me how long I thought it would take me to do it, and when I told him he was a little doubtful. As Alf explained to me, there were parts of the ground with no scrub on, and he said that was all in my favour, and it would have been, but when we had a settling up he cut out the clean strip from the contract. When I taxed him with going back on his word, he made the excuse that I had made good money without it, which, of course, I had.

Alf told me when I started that he wanted all the scrub cut first, and then the bush felled afterwards, and I was working as per agreement. I had made such progress that I was averaging nearly £2 per day, and the under-scrub was nearly finished, and as I only had a verbal agreement I was slowing up for a day or two. One day I was sitting down figuring

things out, when I heard someone coming on horseback, and presently Alf came into view and remarked that I had done very well, and that when I had finished I could start on the felling, and I think the chap was genuine enough, although he refused to give me an agreement when I started.

Now that I had him on the spot I wanted to know if he would pay me for this part when done, before I started on the felling. He "hummed" and "hawed" for a while, and then said he thought that if I was paid and went to Wingham as I had mentioned, I might get celebrating, and not return to do the felling, but when I told him that I didn't drink, and that I would go in and back in the one day, he agreed to pay me, and asked me how long it would be before I had that part finished. I said, "Three days." He thought another week, but it was done easily in three days. I collected, did my trip to Wingham, and started felling. I had about one-third done when Alf and two other men, started in on another block of the same size as mine. I gave them a good go as to who should be out first, and when I finished he paid me like a man, in small cheques that he had received for cattle and other things.

I liked the place, and I had made the best money that I had ever made at any class of work, but swinging the axe was killing me. I had averaged nearly £2 per day, and there was plenty of that work to be had within walking distance of my camp, but I couldn't stay as I was a sick man. Something serious was wrong, but what it was I didn't know.

I was now a free man again, and I packed up for Sydney. It was a miserable man who travelled in the train to Sydney, and I had no idea what to do about it. I had had a considerable amount of overhauling by different men, but their ideas varied, and I could never get anything to relieve me of the distress which I used to get into.

I arrived in Sydney and bought a couple of suits of clothes, and a Yankee hat, which used to be worn by the George Street Yanks in those days. I stayed in Sydney for a few days, and didn't know whether to

go home to Victoria. As I was I thought that New Zealand would suit me better than Victoria, so I sailed for Wellington, and I got a job with the Post and Telegraph Department on line repair work at Dannevirke. I liked that work, and the climate, but the lifting didn't agree with me, so I travelled back to Palmerston North, and was sitting down in the Square one day thinking it out, when two West Coast miners came along. They sat down and we exchanged notes, and I learned for the first time that there was a quartz mine working between Nelson and Blenheim. These two men gave me all particulars about the place, and I decided to try the mine again, and I packed up for Wellington. I saw the managing director, who at the week-ends used to live at Newtown, and I got a job, but I would have to wait until it rained before I could start, as the battery was short of water.

Now that I had got a job, I decided to go over to the Wakamarina, where I was to work in the Golden Bar, commonly known as "The Bar." When I arrived at The Bar, I was surprised to find a little bush township had been built. The place had two stores, a billiard room, and several boarding-houses, and about seventy men were employed in and around the mine.

Quite a lot of Coast miners had found the place, and were working in the mine and battery. There were Bruiser Moore, Dick Ronkey, Alf Belcher, and several others. The mine looked very good from a lasting point of view, as in one place the reef was three sets wide. The reef generally was giving good returns of scheelite and gold, and the stone was good for easy milling, taking mining and milling at a total cost of 14/- per ton.

The rain arrived, and I made a start in the mine, and was doing fairly well, when I was sent away up the valley to fell some timber for a pipe line across the Dome stream. While on that work I developed a weakness, and used to have some difficulty in getting home at night. I was baching, and the miners, and Bruiser Moore in particular, used to chide me about not feeding myself, but that sort of stuff,

though only partly meant, was wounding to a degree, as I was definitely a sick man, and nothing that I could think of could be done about it.

I finished the job and went back into the mine, and started to build up, but not to last as I was put to work in driving the main level in No. 3, and the going was very hard, and all hand labour. I was obliged to beat all the holes when drilling, as good hammer men were not plentiful, and it was hard to get a mate who knew how to manoeuvre a drill when turning it in difficult ground. I could see that this job was killing me fast as I used to have great difficulty in breathing when going up the hill to work. I used to put it down to indigestion, and I got so bad that I took a spell for a couple of weeks, and finally decided that I would go for a long sea voyage, as that was usually a doctor's prescription when dealing with a case that he knew nothing about.

CHAPTER X.

I WENT to Wellington and saw a specialist, and he couldn't find anything wrong with me, so I asked him if he thought a sea voyage would do me any good, and he said, "Yes, it would."

A big cargo boat, the Clan McDonald, was lying at anchor at the Wellington wharves, and I went aboard and interviewed the captain, and arranged to work my passage "Home." I got my gear aboard, and we set sail for Gisborne, anchored out in the stream, and we took aboard frozen meat which was loaded from lighters, which came out and stood alongside.

When we finished loading at Gisborne, we returned to Wellington for more cargo, and then we would be homeward bound. When we touched the wharf at Wellington, I considered that my career as a seafaring man was at an end, and I was to be seen walking down the gangway with a big tin trunk on my shoulder, as I always carried my worldly goods in a fair-sized trunk, and to save expense always did my own portering.

I went into lodgings for a few days until the Sydney boat sailed. Now that I decided to be a passenger to England I reduced my baggage, leaving the bulk of it with my landlady until my return. I booked from Wellington to London for £14 third class. I had to travel third because there was no fourth, although after having had the experience of travelling third I don't think I would like to experience travelling fourth.

I got aboard the Norseman at Sydney. She had been an old tramp ship carrying cattle and live stock between Britain and the United States, and the bull rings were still fastened to the sides of the ship where the bulls had been fastened.

We were loading coal at Sydney, and I was standing on the top deck watching operations, when I got into conversation with one of the men who were attending to the coal containers as they were lowered and

raised from the hold. When I told him I was going on a long sea voyage, he seemed to think I was very lucky, while he could see nothing for himself in the future but loading ships for overseas, carrying passengers on joy rides. I said, "Yum-Yum," because it would have taken me too long to explain to him that I was not going on a joy ride.

From the day we left Sydney until we reached Plymouth it was just ten weeks.

The Norseman carried about 100 passengers, and I don't think there were any millionaires amongst them. Quite a number of them were people returning home who had not made good, and on the other hand, one man out of the eight including myself, in our cabin, was, on his statement, going back to show his relations and critics that he was capable of going out to the Colonies and keeping sober and making money. He had £200 that he had saved on an outback station, and hadn't tasted intoxicating liquor since leaving England. Now that he had money and good clothes, he would just move around amongst his old friends, still keeping sober, of course, and not letting them know anything about his business generally. The idea was just to let them have a guess about what he was doing it on. Harris was the name of this lucky man, homeward bound, and to all intents and purposes master of his soul. He just wanted to let a few of his old pals know that nothing was impossible.

Harris was a good cabin mate, and could always tell us some interesting stories about his life at home, and also in Australia. He was one of those fellows who liked company, could hold an audience so well that his friends usually, and at the conclusion of a good story, thought it worth while to have something to wash it down with.

Everything was going well. We were about two weeks out from the Australian coast, and getting into warmer weather, and one evening I was in bed about 8.30, when my cabin mates arrived. I could hear a good deal of giggling, and noticed that Harris was the principal offender, and after taking notice for a while I could see that Harris had broken all his good resolu-

tions, and was about "three sheets in the wind." He remained that way for the rest of the journey, and what surprises he had in store for his old companions had probably fallen through.

We arrived at Plymouth, and a special train was waiting for us for the journey through the country, to its destination, Paddington Station. We reached the station, and a queer motley crowd stepped out on to the platform. After the long voyage, and the rumbling of the train, I felt properly unnerved. I walked away from the station after booking my luggage. I seemed to be looking out into an empty unsympathetic world, and I was actually afraid. I was looking for diggings, and was just going in and inspecting rooms where a sign was showing in the window. I didn't know where I was, but the lay-out of the places that I visited did not appeal to me. One thing that seemed to be uppermost in my mind was the danger of robbers. My nerves were partly the cause.

I eventually decided that I required assistance, so I made enquiries, and was advised to try Fenchurch Street, which I did, and came up to a shop window displaying a card, "Rooms, from 4/6." I went in and enquired, and a girl took me up and showed me a room, and it seemed rather elaborate for the money, as I thought it meant 4/6 per week, but was not long in being told that it was 4/6 per night. The place was run principally for the convenience of week-enders. I moved on to Paddington Green, and got a room at 5 Albert Street, and stayed there until I left on my return to New Zealand.

Up till now I was in the same position as a lot of women who don't feel well, and spend a lot of time trying to find out what is wrong. I had been advised to take a long sea voyage for the benefit of my health, and it was disappointing to end up a physical and mental wreck after doing so. There were one or two sad cases of people suffering from bad health coming over in the boat. One man in our cabin knew all the hospitals and infirmaries in London, and I held in memory what he had told me. I called on one or two of these places, and got examined, and finally went to

see a specialist at the St. George's Hospital. He didn't enlighten me in any way, but I was admitted to the hospital and put to bed for observation. I just lay there for a day or two, and my diagnosis was that I had no digestion, and the organs seemed to be inactive, but I had been seriously injured by previous treatment, by drugs that had done me more harm than good, and I found that I felt considerably better without medicine.

I told the doctor when I went there, that if an operation was not necessary, I was going to take no medicine, and he agreed on that, and said I would be X-rayed, and receive an overhaul. Everything was going according to plan until one day the nurse brought me a cascara pill, and a dose of paraffin oil, and I told her to leave it on the table and I would take it presently, and when she went down the ward I bowled the pill down the floor, and put the oil in the spittoon. When the nurse discovered what I had done, there was a bit of a noise, and a young medico came along to explain the benefits to be derived if I would just take my medicine. I just explained that I had taken that same rubbish in New Zealand, and I refused to take any more. Later on, after I had been in there for five days, the nurse came along with the same stuff, and I asked for my clothes and left the hospital, very much disgusted to think that I had travelled 12,000 miles to see a specialist, and to be handed up the medicine which I had long since rejected as being unsuitable for me.

I went back to my lodging at Paddington Green, and just took things easy for about six weeks, and left London feeling fairly good.

I joined the "Benella" at Tilbury Docks, and by the look of things the trip back to New Zealand would be more interesting than the long weary trip we had on the "S.S. Norseman." We had six hundred passengers, nearly all immigrants, and an aged couple returning to Tasmania, who were shipmates on the trip home.

While in London I took advantage of cheap clothing, and rigged myself right out, and I think I looked prosperous, as I could appear on deck with a change

of apparel fairly often, and this couple referred to, remarked one day that I must have struck oil in England. I said, "Yes, I have collected the money that I went home for," and from then on I was looked upon as a very nice boy, especially by the girl immigrants, who didn't say so, but might marry a wealthy bachelor if he was offering.

A collection was taken up one day for a sports day, and we were all at lunch when the collectors came around, and they got me unawares. I felt with my hand in the match pocket of my coat to fish out that which seemed like a sixpence, but when I dropped it, it turned out to be a half sovereign. The people next to me said, "You have put in a half sovereign." I suppose they knew I had made a mistake, and to smooth things over I said, "Yes, and I think it's enough," but it was more than I could afford, and I was too proud to say anything about it.

We were travelling down the West Coast of Africa when we received the news that the Kaiser had declared war, and we travelled, as I understood the captain to say, the longest way around and the sweetest way home, to avoid the chances of being sunk by enemy action; but nothing happened and we all walked ashore at Sydney, safe and sound. Special editions of the daily newspapers were being released several times during the day, and by the look of the progress being made, Germany should be suing for peace within three months.

I hadn't much time to worry about the war for the moment, as we were in a state of war and I wanted to get back to New Zealand, and there was a restriction on money withdrawals from the banks. I decided to stay in Sydney until I could get some money sent from Wellington, which would take three weeks I was told. I suddenly found that I would have some trouble in financing until my money arrived, so I went to the bank for advice, and was told that if I took the next boat for Wellington I would get there before my money was remitted to me. Even now that I was going by the next boat to New Zealand, I was going to have some difficulty in getting enough money to pay for

board and meals until the boat sailed. I now started to think. I had a fair quantity of calabash pipes that I got at Capetown, and I sold some of them. I then came to remember that my old mate that I had in the big job at Tarramurrah promised to pay me a sum of money when the job was completed, so I must now try and contact Bill, and if he was in town the most likely place to find him would be somewhere about the corner of Park and George Street.

I now proceeded up George Street in search of Bill, hoping that he would be financial if found. I walked up on the Town Hall side of George Street, stood on the opposite side to the Town hall, and surveyed the different ones about the locality, and over on the other side, leaning up against a post, sure enough I saw Bill. Bob Morgan christened him "the Blower" because he was so good at concocting a story. Having found my man I strode across saying to myself "to be or not to be," when "the Blower" advanced, extending at the same time a dirty paw for a good friendly handshake. It was not necessary for me to introduce the nature of my circumstances to him, as he lost no time in asking me if I had the price of a drink on me, which I had, and I took "the Blower" in to the bar right at hand. "The Blower" was very dry, and said, "Will you shout again?" and "What about a packet of fags?" I said, "Yes, Bill, anything to oblige an old friend." By this time I began to think about things, and wanted to hear from "the Blower" what he did with all the money that he got out of the job that I turned over to him half-finished, so I suggested that we go along to Hyde Park and sit down, which we did. "The Blower" didn't take long to tell me that he did well out of the job. He had money in the bank and used to write out cheques, until his arm used to ache. He would come into Sydney, and start to blow about how much money he was making, and all the boys got to know "the Blower," and they would wait until he came to town, and they would say that they wanted a job, which they didn't, but it was very nice for "the Blower" to have followers sticking him up, especially in a public place, or a public bar, and ask him for a job. Of course,

"the Blower," although a member of the employing class with a banking account, and a cheque book in his pocket, was not a man to forget that he also was poor once, and was prepared to do all in his power to help a fellow worm.

The hobo is a well educated man in his line of business, and knows very well how to proceed when once he has contacted his client. In the first place he knows pretty well that "the Blower" can't give him a job without joining the ranks of the unemployed himself, but he knows that "the Blower" has got some money, and that he is sure of a drink, or perhaps several, and perhaps a meal. Now the hobo knows that "the Blower" is a hard-working man, and naturally would have respect for any man with similar eccentricities, and if he pushes the question of work, the lemon will be all the more easily squeezed, and he keeps bringing up the question and saying that if he only knew where he could get a job he would be the happiest man in the world, and then he pauses to listen. In all probability this particular hobo has been pestering "the Blower" for some time, and "the Blower" thinks it would be a good plan to get rid of him, so he thinks out a scheme. He knows of a man well back in the country who does want a man, and he asks the hobo if he will go to work for this man in the country, and the hobo is delighted at such a prospect, and will "the Blower" kindly give him the address, and how many miles by train, etc., which "the Blower" hands over to be eagerly scrutinised by the hobo, who then exclaims, "And how am I to get there? I haven't got a rarzoo." "The Blower," with the look of a millionaire in his eye, pulls out a cheque book from his pocket, being quite sure that the barmaid sees him, and exclaims, "Will you go there if I advance your fare?" The hobo nearly leaps into the air, being so pleased to be at work earning an honest living, asking at the same time does "the Blower" mean it, and "the Blower," without answering the hobo, asks the barmaid in a loud voice to give him a pen and ink, and while he is writing out the cheque the hobo is whisper-

ing in his ear as a parting shot something about incidentals apart from the train fares.

Now that the hobo has been a guest of "the Blower" for the best part of the day, and must play his part successfully, he tells "the Blower" that he must get home, and pack his swag for a start with the early train tomorrow, and heartily shakes the hand of "the Blower," and wishes him a Merry Xmas. He leaves the bar and hurries along to the bank, and cashes the cheque, and shifts along to another part of the town to try and make contact with another "Blower."

The "'Blower" will still be in the bar celebrating another victory of sending another man to work and letting people know that he has got a cheque book. "The Blower's" days as a financier are ended, and he is now sitting down beside me in Hyde Park wondering how he can raise the money for the next meal, and a bed that night. I gave him the price of a meal, and I could see that he had developed into a hardened "bum," as he challenged me about my financial position as I was wearing a gold chain and a gold ring, which he said could be pawned. I was fairly short of money and pawned my ring that day, after leaving "the Blower," hoping that I wouldn't see him again, but I ran into him again that morning, and I again shouted a meal for him, and he hung on to me like a leech, and wanted the price of a bed, but I decided to button up the purse while I had anything in it. He finally pleaded that he would have to go down to the Police Station and register for a bed, and asked me if I would stand for him doing that, and I said, "Yes, I will." I walked away from "the Blower," and I haven't seen him since.

Now that I am rid of "the Blower," and have only my own requirements to attend to, I get around and I sell some more calabash pipes, and I redeem my ring, as I want to take it with me. I have my room paid for until the boat sails, but I am running light on money to pay for meals, and the day the boat was due to sail I went and had breakfast at a restaurant in George Street, which cost 9d., and while I was

having breakfast I knew that when I had paid for breakfast I would have sixpence left, and, believe it or not, when I was walking out I picked up threepence on the floor, and that put me right for my last meal in Sydney before the boat left in the afternoon. I had my dinner with the ninepence which I had, and carried my luggage down to the boat on my back, and landed on the boat without any money. I explained the position to the stewards, and they raffled a pipe for me, which realised seven shillings and sixpence, and now my financial troubles seemed to be over.

We landed in Wellington, and I went straight to the bank to learn that my money and bank book had just left for Sydney, and that I had passed it on the way over. Now I had to wait until my bank book arrived back before I could get any money. I didn't just know what I should do in the meantime. I just carried on until I had to do something. The landlady was not concerned about the rent until I got my money, but I didn't care about asking any of the eating-houses for meals on credit. Meals could still be obtained for sixpence, and I was on my way down to breakfast with my last sixpence in my pocket, when I picked up sixpence, and that carried me over for dinner, and in the afternoon I had to go down to the House of Parliament, and contact one of the members. The first one I met was a man with a very long beard, and the way he received me in my endeavour to get some money to tide me over a little difficulty satisfied me that in all probability he had been bitten a few times. It didn't matter how I tried to explain matters, he was unable to see why I should be in such a difficult position, and finally referred me to a younger member, who he said would understand me. I contacted him and he seemed more business-like as he came along to the bank to have my statement verified, and he wanted the bank to guarantee that he would get paid the ten pounds which I wanted. The bank wouldn't guarantee payment, and for a while I thought that some difficulty had arisen, but the accountant got me to write out a cheque for ten pounds, and the member paid me ten pounds for the cheque, which was cashed when my money arrived.

Now I was a free man again I travelled back to the Wakamarina Valley, and the Golden Bar, and after the long sea voyage, and other stoppages, nearly nine months had passed. I was a poorer man financially, but I had gained in other ways, and my health had improved considerably, but not to last. I had a bad attack of influenza coming out from England, and was actually recuperating in Sydney, and while I was laid up on the boat, I got an Irish doctor, who was a passenger, to give me a check up, and he asked me if I had ever strained myself, and I said that perhaps I had. For the first time after all the examinations by doctors, I was told the truth, which was a guide to work on, and information which was worth remembering.

I started work again, and was looking well, and was a good stone heavier than I was when working there before. I felt real well, but was not quite sure whether I was a hundred per cent well or not. Indigestion which I had suffered from for a number of years had been completely cured, and when asked by different ones what had cured me, I was unable to tell them because just by accident I had made a very important discovery in medicine, almost, but not entirely, unknown by the medical profession. In my youth I always had an idea that I would like to be a doctor, but my people used to tell me I didn't have enough brains to be a hospital porter, but now I was thinking differently, and had something which would enable me to prove that I had some idea about the profession that I once claimed I was suitable for.

I started work again in the Bar Mine, and as I looked big and strong I was given level work, which requires strength and endurance. I seemed to go ahead very well for a couple of months, and then the old pump started to fail me again, and at times I was afraid of the engine failing me on the hill, so I decided on something different, and went to Wellington and registered a patent medicine, labelled to cure indigestion, and all allied complaints. This medicine business was something new and interesting to me, and I went to my work with a great amount of enthusiasm. I

rented a house at Ngahanaranga, five miles out from Wellington, and used to go around taking medicine with me and selling at 2/6 per bottle, to anyone who was in need of it. I found that the only ones that would patronise me were the ones who had tried everything advertised in that line, and could be classed by orthodox standards as incurables, and notwithstanding these facts I put on a good show. I travelled the surrounding district, and could plainly see that I would have to move into Wellington and get a small shop, which I did in Vivian Street, and set up as a herbalist, and ran for about six months, and during that time I had sent medicine to many parts of the world, and would have done well in time, but the World War was in full blast, and I wanted to get up to Featherston Camp, working for the Public Works Department.

I had been turned down by medical examination in Wellington, and thought I would get a chance by being employed on the job, but that was my undoing. We worked ten hours per day, seven days per week. Every chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and that link gave way, and I was obliged to look for some easier work.

I left the camp, and went cutting wood for Jack Bourke at Kaitoke. Bourke had been my old trainer at Cape Foulwind. From there I went back to the West Coast cutting sleepers and posts in the State Forest near the State Mine. I was cutting timber adjacent to the road where Eggers held up the pay car for the State Mine, and shot Coultard dead, and wounded Hall, who died in hospital afterwards. I would have to get lighter work, and I put the tools away and went on the road as a traveller, with any line that I could make a living out of, and although some people think that a traveller's job is an easy one, that is entirely erroneous, as I would sooner do any manual labour that I was capable of doing, in preference to being a traveller.

I stayed at this work until the war was over, and then I travelled back to Australia, and put in a claim for some property which was left by my father, who

died intestate. The property was administered by the Curator of Intestate Estates, and we had a sale of one farm, and two town blocks at Orbost, on the Snowy River. I went up from Melbourne to see the property sold, and left there the following day with £1 in my pocket, travelling to where I did not know, and a sick man into the bargain.

I landed in Morewell with three shillings in my pocket, and the following day I walked out to get a job on the big coal seam, which was developed for the purpose of supplying Victoria with electric power. The manager of the works had been a mine manager on the West Coast of New Zealand, and he was prepared to give me a job, but I was afraid of the place. It was the greatest potential mass of combustion that I had ever looked at. The thickness of the coal seam was from anything to 200 feet, and lengthwise some miles. I got put up in a spare tent on the job for the night, and left in the morning before breakfast for Morewell, a small township beside the railway line between Orbost in East Gippsland and Melbourne. After I had done about one mile of the road I got into conversation with a farmer, and asked him for a cup of tea, and he told me that breakfast was over, and there was no fire alight. He wanted a man to help with the milking, and there was practically nothing to do, and it was more for having someone as company, as the work was really nothing. I said, "Just so, but let us get down to business. I have had no breakfast, could you spare me a cup of tea?" and he advanced the plea again that there was no fire, and when I drew his attention to the smoke coming out of the chimney, he said, "Oh, that is only the wife burning some bills." I could see that I had struck a hard nut, and as I walked away I thought that he was one of the lousiest dogs that I had ever met.

I walked another mile, and I was hungry and tired, and I walked in off the road a couple of chains where a house was standing out in the open, with no fence around it, or a garden, or anything resembling a permanent habitation. The place didn't look very prosperous but I just knocked at the door and explained my

mission, that I would be obliged if I could get a cup of tea. I must say that I felt very small indeed. I was met at the door by a young woman, who said, "Come in," and the tablecloth was still on the table as the breakfast had not long passed, and the good girl started in a business-like manner clearing a place at the table, while mother set to work cooking eggs and bacon, and then I was asked to sit down and eat. I felt too small to ask any questions as to how they made a living, but just simply ate a good breakfast, thanked them as well as I could, and proceeded on my way to Morewell, where I came in contact with a farmer who wanted some ploughing done. He was in a sweat to get it done as soon as possible, and he drove me out to his farm to have a look at the ground and the horses, to see what I thought about the job, and how long did I think it would take me to do it. I had a look at the ground and it seemed fairly stiff, and I guessed it would be tough going. He had a crop of potatoes in the ground that had been flooded, and he wanted them ploughed in as manure.

We had a good deal of discussion about the ground. He wanted some returns from the place, and he knew that I was used to the maize land. He asked me if I thought the place would grow maize, and I thought it would. Now about the cost of getting the ground ready and fifty acres planted. "Do you think you can do it in six weeks?" "Yes, I do," and then he took me along in his car to see the horses, and we got them in the yard, and I had a look at them. He had five useful light harness horses, which I could see were very fast, and he explained that only three horses were needed to pull the double furrow plough, while the other two would be spelling, and when any of those pulling the plough showed signs of knocking up, a fresh horse was to be brought in. I didn't mention the matter to him, but I thought what a fine idea it would be if he had a couple of spare men to replace me if I happened to fall. After I had a look at the horses, and was satisfied in my own mind that I would never drive them, but seeing what a lousy dog I was dealing with

I pretended to be pleased with everything, and the farmer also seemed to be pleased.

We got into the car and drove back to the house, where his wife was wrestling with some calves, and haply she had afternoon tea waiting for us, and the farmer unfolded a big mouthful of news to her about his new find. He had dug up a man from the Snowy River who understood maize growing, and could work those horses, and cultivate and put the crop in in six weeks, and wifey exclaimed how nice that would be. Maize was 10/- per bushel, and even forty bushels to the acre would show a good return. I was listening, but my interests were right in front of me with the cake and scones, and another cup of tea. Now the farmer wanted to know when I could start, and I had already arranged my answer, and told him that I would not be able to get my belongings down from Orbost for at least a couple of days. I would have to go into Morewell, send a wire, wait, and when my luggage arrived, I would ring him up and he could call for me, and place me on the job. The farmer could see all through this idea, as he could see that I had a good set of teeth, and knew how to use them, and it would be no use keeping me there eating my head off and not earning anything. We discussed this matter at length, until I could see that he was starting to get fidgety. Of course, I had been making good use of my teeth all the time, and there was far less cake and scones on the table now than there had been when I first sat down. The farmer now suggested that he would drive me back to Morewell, and I could let him know at once when my swag arrived, and he would come and fetch me. We now got into the car, and proceeded to Morewell, and when we got out of the car on arrival, I asked him if he had the price of a packet of cigarettes, and he looked at me very hard, and then handed me one shilling, and I went and bought a packet of cigarettes, came out and handed him the sixpence change, and he put it in his pocket, and once again he wanted to know when I would be coming out, and I told him I didn't know how long it would be before I got my swag, but

if I didn't ring him up not to be disappointed, and I walked down the street, and haven't seen that bird since.

I got a job in Morewell driving two horses and an express, but the job only lasted a few days when the boss sent me away on a job back on the hills beyond a place called Bullarah, driving two horses, while another man ploughed up a road, and on that job there was another man driving five horses that were pulling a grader, and nearly all the horses were broken winded, and had sore shoulders. I put in a very miserable time during the few days that I was there driving these poor animals, who were not fit to work. The job which I was expected to do, thrashing animals trying to make them do the impossible, was beyond any man with a semblance of feeling towards dumb animals. I left the job and caught the cream van for Bullarah, and then by rail back to Morewell in time to catch the train for Melbourne that evening. I knew that I was going to Melbourne, but what I would do when I got there I did not know. After getting my ticket I got into a carriage, and met several of the boys from Orbost, going down to see the Melbourne Cup, which unbeknown to me was being run the following day. All the boys were glad to see me, and wanted to know what I fancied for the Cup tomorrow. Little did they know that four shillings which I had in my pocket was all the money that I possessed, and someone remarked that one of my sisters, and a brother, were in the next carriage behind, and that I should go through and see them. They didn't know either, that whatsoever be the circumstances, I had, and still have, no wish to see them in this life again.

We stopped for refreshments at Taralgan where a lot of fine looking girls served the meals. You paid 2/6 in the dining room where you waited for your meal, and 1/- at the counter, where there were big enamel teapots full of piping hot coffee. You helped yourself, and there was plenty of bread and butter on the counter, in addition to a plate of curried sausages, pushed along to you all for 1/-. I invested 1/- on this lot, leaving me with 3/- to land in Melbourne with.

Nothing very interesting happened on the way to Melbourne, except that I was trying to think out a plan whereby I could make two shillings do the work of two pounds. I booked my box at the luggage room, which cost me one shilling, leaving me two shillings cash in hand, and the Cup was to be run the following day.

Now that I was fully aware that the Cup would be run the next day and that people at the moment were in Melbourne from all parts of Australia, and New Zealand too, the position, as far as getting accommodation was concerned, looked serious, but I was not worrying as it was summer time, and if it came to the worst I could sleep out somewhere in the park.

I found myself still walking around and it was nearly midnight, so I suddenly remembered that there was a building up at the corner of Queen and Lonsdale Streets that used to be a hotel, but was now a store and boarding-house. I walked up Lonsdale Street, and turned into Queen Street, and knocked on the first door on my left. I could hear some life upstairs but no one came to the door, so I walked back into Lonsdale Street. It appeared there was actually no door at this side of the house except two blue folding doors, and after everything quietened down I quietly pushed the doors open, struck a match, and I was in the passageway of the old pub, which acted as a small bedroom, with a single bed on my left hand side. I was never brought up to this kind of thing but I just smiled and thought, "What have you come to, and where are you going?" I had a brief-bag in my hand, and I put that down very quietly and examined the bed which had no mattress or blankets, but a counterpane spread over the wire stretcher, and a counterpane over the top. The bedclothes seemed to be inadequate, but I had no justification in raising the landlord to make a complaint, as I had made up my mind that this should be my bed for the night free of charge. I took off my boots and coat, and turned in, and it is surprising when you don't want to be heard, how every movement seems to cause everything to make a creaking noise. I rolled into bed as quietly as possible, but

the wires on the stretcher seemed to rebel against my intrusion, and after lying for what seemed a lengthy period, I wanted to get on my back, but the wires seemed to object, and I had a great deal of difficulty in getting stretched out and settled down.

I woke in the morning at 6 o'clock, after having had a good sleep, and there was no sound of life in the house, so I decided that I had better be moving or I would be paying the rent. I got out very quietly, nuggeted my boots, and brushed my hair, straightened the counterpanes out as I had found them, opened the door quietly, and walked out into Lonsdale Street a free man, and a citizen of the universe once more.

I walked down over Flinders Street, and entered a tea and toast joint, and was served with a teapot of tea and two big slices of toast for fourpence, and that left me with 1/8, cash in hand, which would come in handy later on, as I was unsuited to heavy work, and would have to get into some commercial line of business, or I might break down with serious consequences.

Later on in the day I found myself walking down Bourke Street, still smiling with only one shilling in my pocket, but this was not the worst because I found myself in Bourke Street that night with nothing in my pocket, and things looked serious indeed, until I met a rich relation of mine who had a small cattle station in Southern Queensland. He was down to see the Melbourne Cup run. This man was a brother of mine—one of those good-hearted fellows who couldn't bear to see a man starve—he would prefer to close his eyes. His name was Harry. We always called him Hen for short, and when Hen got a full account about how I had been coming along for the past few days he was somewhat alarmed, in fact, was of the opinion that I would eventually land in jail.

All the time that I was partly incapacitated in meeting people, it was impossible to convince them that if the engine won't turn over and the pump won't work, it is useless for you to try and do something that you know you can't do. My brother was so sympathetic in a way, but he couldn't understand me being hard up —a big strong fellow, and plenty of work everywhere.

Anyhow I wasn't to be browbeaten. He was my brother, and I intended to stick to him, especially as he was down to see the Cup run, and must have a spare jingle in his pocket. Whenever I had him near the point where I could make a thrust for a loan, he would start telling me how ill he was, and he didn't know how long it would last. Finally, to boil him down, he was a very hard client. We were still talking about the miseries of life, when he suddenly said, "Well, I have decided to give you some money, but I will have to go and get some change. You had better come with me and have a drink." I thought that he might have a fair-sized cheque to cash, so I gladly accompanied him into the bar of a hotel. After getting our drinks he produced a one pound note, and when he received his change he carefully placed the rest in his pocket, eyeing me very carefully all the time.

We walked out to the street again, and stood for a while talking. I could see him feeling round in his pocket all the time. Finally he produced two half crowns, and as I took the money and thanked him, he expressed the wish that it would see me through. I didn't see much of my dear brother afterwards, and have never heard of or seen him since. I don't know whether I have lost anything by it either.

It was a general rule for me to be broke about twenty times a month while in Melbourne, but to speak the truth, I found it easier to battle in the city than in the country, and made up my mind to stay in Melbourne until things picked up.

I was hard pushed one day and went to a friend of mine. I got him to lend me 10/- on a gold chain that I used to wear. I went along to a wholesale stationer and bought nine shillings' worth of stationery, and set out selling at business places, and timing myself. I could for a start make 3/- per hour without any undue effort, and I thought that I could keep this up. Later on I would draw some money from the sale of the property at Orbost. After doing a good portion of Melbourne, I was obliged to do the suburbs, and

the further I travelled from Melbourne the harder my work became. I tramped and tramped to save tram fares until the heels of my boots were worn right up to the last layer. I had been running flat out now for nearly three months, and if it hadn't been that I was expecting money at any time, I most assuredly would have broken down.

I had to retreat back to Melbourne and work the big buildings. I managed to carry on from meal to meal, and day to day, until one day I thought that I was about through. I decided to call on the Curator of Intestate Estates, and after making enquiries the clerk told me that the accountant said just hang on and he would pay me ten pounds on account. I waited and the accountant got me to sign a receipt, handing me a cheque for ten pounds on the Royal Bank. I lost no time in getting it cashed and depositing the most of it in the State Bank.

I was now on the way to establishing myself in business. Instead of carrying small stuff I switched over to drapery, and I found that the drapers in the suburbs could sell goods to me far cheaper than I could buy from the warehouses in Melbourne. After I got to know where I could buy cheap and sell dear, I could make a living much easier.

Now I was in business and about a month had passed, I decided to call on the Curator again. I got another ten pounds. Balancing up my books after I had paid my expenses and bought a few articles of clothing, I had £24/5/6, cash in hand, so I now decided to get a stock of soft goods and travel into the country, which I did. My last trip was to Wanthaggi State Mine, and after returning from there decided on Sydney, but when I arrived there Sydney was not the place it used to be. There seemed to be no work, and very little money about.

I was looking around for something to do, but seemed to be at a dead end. One morning I got a letter to report for duty on the trams as conductor, and I worked on that job all through the Christmas holidays. It seemed to me a non-stop job. After the holidays I was discharged as medically unfit.

Now I had to think of something else. New Zealand appeared most attractive. I landed in Wellington just at the end of the influenza epidemic. Mr Massey had just produced his budget with a surplus of £6,000,000, but that was only six million less imports than exports at a high price. Nevertheless, there was plenty of work and money in circulation. The soldiers were getting their gratuity money and putting it down as deposits on farms or businesses of any kind. Most of these chaps lost their deposits, and walked off their farms and businesses. Conditions became fairly tricky after the First World War.

In the year 1919, goods started to arrive in New Zealand in plenty. The importers had their warehouses stacked to the roof, and were still unable to quit some of their old stock. Having had a little experience as a salesman, I stepped in on some of the old stock, and did very well; but I always expected that my nerves some day might give out on me. I was on the end of a line of pre-war stocks, and had been travelling north and south, and doing quite well until I reached Westport. Some goods that I had forwarded from Christchurch had gone astray, and I was hung up in Westport during the Christmas holidays. My nerves were gone, and I knew it. I would decide to go to a certain place up the line, and when I got there I would decide to go back again. One day I put the whole day in like that. Some people might think the incident amusing, but I can assure you that my sympathy goes out to anyone who suffers with this nervous trouble, as no particular explanation can be given, and sometimes nothing can be done about it. I once read about Marie Corelli and her nervous attacks. On one occasion when describing her own trouble, she mentioned all the different ones who tried to do something for her. The only one who was able to do her any good was an Italian Count, and when asked what he had done, Marie wouldn't tell them.

I was obliged to pull myself up and stay in Westport until the holidays were properly over, as I hated to be where a crowd of people were congregated.

After the holidays I got a passage in a coal boat leaving for Greymouth, and from there I went up to the Waiuta Gold Mine. I did very well and had a good mate, but it used to take him too long to spend his money after pay day. One pay day it took George four days to consume his earnings at the nearest hotel, and when he came back the manager sacked him. I was supplied with this one and that one, and got fed up and shifted to the Big River Gold Mine. I worked a fortnight, quite long enough, and couldn't describe the place as anything but a stink-pot, and a good place to develop miners' consumption.

I left the Big River and also the West Coast, and went up to Napier for a spell, and back to Wellington. I got the boat for Sydney and express for Melbourne, and when I reached Melbourne my nerves left me and I went down and booked a passage back to New Zealand. Next day I decided not to go. I was able to get a refund on my ticket. I proceeded on the Gippsland train to Orbost, and went cutting sleepers at W.R. Creek with my brother Lewis, but I was a complete failure and was obliged to take on stripping wattle bark for Mr G. Ross at Ewings' Marsh. I had bought a covered-in wagon in Melbourne costing on delivery £35, and when I wanted to sell it all possible buyers didn't want a cover on it. I cut the hood away and every possible buyer immediately wanted one with a hood on. Eventually I was obliged to send it 60 miles by rail before I could realise a paltry £7 on it.

I did fairly well out of the bark stripping, and later did a lot of discing for Mr Ross, and killing snakes in my spare time.

With the money for work done, and several instalments from the Estate, I was able to leave Orbost with a fair amount of money, and proceeded to Melbourne. That was the time when the prices started to crash, and the wholesalers and retailers were stocked out with goods, and they were panicking to get rid of some of them.

Up in the country where I had been, men were wearing anything as long as it complied with the law of common decency. I have no doubt that that

system prevailed in most parts, and was having some effect. I thought I could see a chance of making some money, so I stepped in and got a pack of goods, and travelled around the big construction jobs. Quite a lot of business was to be done, but I found the work tiring, but cleaned out what stuff I had remaining. I set sail again for New Zealand, and started work again for the Post and Telegraph Department, Greymouth. I continued for three weeks, and never had one hour's sleep during all that time, and I decided that something must be done. I used to notice my room mate doing up his time sheet. He had been a Post and Telegraph man who had left the job to work on the wharf, and I found that he was making a living. I thought that if I could get some work where I need fix my mind on nothing in particular, I would be better off, so I left the Post and Telegraph Department and went on the wharf. The job seemed to suit me and I could earn more money, and I regained the sleep that I had lost. Things were going along very well until the secretary took it into his head to remove my name from the Union Register. I fought the case in the Supreme Court and lost and the less that is said about the whole thing the better.

I now bought a car and started a taxi business, but competition and jealousy forced me out. I went fishing for whitebait on the Grey River, and some men came along and knocked my stand down from under me with hammers.

I then went to the warehouse to buy drapery, and was told that the retail drapers objected to me being supplied. I then went to the Syrians for my goods, and did some travelling, but the going was too hard, so I said goodbye to Greymouth once again.

I then departed, lock, stock, and barrel, for Christchurch, and got an agency selling a carburettor control for Ford cars. After going to Wellington and giving demonstrations I found that I had a good line; but something happened and supplies were cut off. The agency ended, and so did I,—about square on the deal.

We were not in a gazetted slump in those days, but things were slumpy, and many a good man went down. One consoling piece of information that one man gave me was that no matter how badly off you thought yourself, there was always someone worse off round the corner.

Now I was in Wellington; things were tightening up with me, and I had to look around. I could see that there was money to be made constructing and selling electric light wire frames. I was engaged on that for a few months until I got a job managing a billiard saloon at Greymouth, which turned out to be a "white elephant." I worked six months on the fifty-fifty basis, and went out slightly to the bad.

I was once more a citizen of the empire, and a free man to try my luck at something else. I packed up and went to Wellington, and enquired about some mining property in the Marlborough Province. I was assured by the Mines Department that in regard to a certain claim I would have no difficulty in getting a prospecting licence over it. I proceeded to the spot with the hope of opening up something good which I had found about fourteen years ago, but when I arrived on the ground and made further enquiries I discovered that the ground was held by some people who lived further south, and most of them were clairvoyants. They had divined all parts of the ground that were carrying gold, and some rich patches were discovered.

Gold divining was having a big run in the district at the time. It was no trouble for I met a certain farmer who, when it suited him, would put a fair-sized nugget in his pocket, go out and get the pick and shovel, and just go wherever he would like to lure any prospector who happened to be in the locality. This old schemer would take the main road on his return journey, and show the nugget to everyone he met, and say that he got it at a certain place. He worked this dodge so often, that the nugget could be identified by anyone who saw it the second time.

While I was there on this occasion I was after a reef, but the ground was not available, so I did a little alluvial mining. I was told about a miner down the

river who wanted a mate, and as a result of my enquiries I came to the conclusion that Mack (as he was called) was not popular with the residents; but in spite of all the talk I decided to interview the man myself and hear his story. I walked down the river about four miles, and located Mack not far from his camp, which consisted of a tent and a bag fly. Mack was a short man with one leg lame and a little shorter than the other. As he approached he appeared to be gruff-looking, but wore a smile which seemed to indicate that he knew something, and that he was very happy about it. Mack was cleaning out an old water-race, and reconditioning it for the purpose of bringing water on to his claim, which was near by. After telling each other that it was a good day, and passing other needless remarks, I quietly introduced the reason of my visit. I had heard that he wanted a mate, and I was a deep ground miner but knew nothing about alluvial. When I made this statement Mack's eyes seemed to sparkle, and he said it was a pleasure and something to meet a man who would admit that he knew nothing about winning alluvial gold. His experience was that all the fellows who joined him as mates pretended to know everything, and after they were on the job a few days they wanted to run the show.

He then invited me over to what he called the shaft, which was actually a hole in the ground about twenty feet deep. He lost no time in telling me that when this shaft was put down another five feet, it would not be pulling dirt but buckets of gold up the shaft.

All this information was something new, and sounded good to me. I wanted to be rich because experience had taught me in the past that I couldn't afford to be poor. We now discussed a verbal agreement, and Mack was sure that two men working the show properly, could easily produce £3,000 worth of gold in six months. I would be a partner drawing my half share, but would I be prepared to present him with £100 out of the £3,000. "Yes, I would," and the partnership was there and then completed. I must now get my gear down the river. A farmer nearby was kind enough to give me a house to live in,

and I was soon on the job, as gold is a very attractive commodity, especially when it is about to be produced in large quantities.

The first morning I arrived on the job about nine o'clock, and thought I was a little late, but Mack informed me that 11 a.m. was early enough for this class of work. Mack seemed such a carefree fellow I was beginning to think that this alluvial mining was an easy way of making a living. We got over to the shaft about 11 a.m., and Mack wasn't anxious then to make a start. He seemed to be concentrating on the value of convincing me that there was a fortune down that hole, and to save time I was in no mood to argue with him, besides as a layman I hadn't the right to.

After Mack had, in his own mind, made me feel rich, he decided we make a start. We wouldn't bother the shaft just now, but would get the water on and sluice away around the shaft. This would give us enough gold to pay for sinking the shaft to the bottom. In two weeks we had the water laid on to the shaft, but Mack's idea was to dig a channel from the shaft to the river, put the sluice boxes in the channel, and run the tailings into the Wakamarina River. So we did the channel after several days' hard work, and in addition to sluicing around the shaft, Mack already had a quantity of pay-dirt stacked also to go through.

We turned the water on and started the big works in full blast, but all we did was to pile up a heap of gravel each side of the first box. The channel was too flat, and wouldn't carry the gravel, so Mack, being the boss, suggested we take the boxes out, and raise the channel one foot from the river to the shaft. Even then the stuff wouldn't work.

I now took a hand and told Mack that we only wasted time digging the channel, and finally we had to raise the first boxes above the top of the beach level. Then we didn't have sufficient fall, but we manhandled what was there, and got it all through after making more noise than ten Chinamen.

We turned the water off and wiped our brows after a strenuous battle, and Mack commanded me to bring

the dish. He was going to clean up the boxes. I just stood by and watched. I was expecting him to tell me to keep my eye out for possible robbers, but Mack was busy with the dish, and when he had finished panning off the last dish we retired to his camp where he lit a fire and warmed the concentrates in front of me. He explained to me that he always liked his mate to be sure that he was getting his share of the gold. After he had given the dish a fair roasting, he started to blow away the rubbish, and I watched the process very carefully. I had often heard the slogan "Anything for money," but I was just trying to figure out how much those few grains of dust cost the two of us. After Mack had thoroughly blown the grit from the gold, he weighed the precious metal, and the result of two men's work for a fortnight tipped the scales at twelve fine grains. I said to Mack, "She looks like a blue duck," but Mack laughed and answered me that a return like that from dirt around the top of the shaft was a sure indication of rich gold at the bottom. He then suggested that we get the pump going tomorrow, de-water the shaft and get on to the big stuff. We made a good start the following day de-watering the shaft and also raising a fair amount of pay-dirt, which was carefully piled up by the shaft. As working the hand pump was too heavy for Mack, he arranged that he would fill the bucket, while I pumped the water, and hauled up the gold by hand winch. Everything looked as if we would be able to do the job by the afternoon of the second day. Every bucket taken out made the shaft deeper, further to pull the dirt, and also more water to pump. At this stage it was very obvious that within one hour the job would be too big for me. However, as we had gone so far, I went flat out to see how far down we could get, as I was quite certain that it would be our last day by this method.

The going was tough, when suddenly Mack started to send up slimy blue clay, and in a short time the water started to gain on me, and Mack started to bog in the sludge which he had reached. Different remarks and suggestions were sent up and down the shaft,

and finally Mack asked for a crowbar. I handed it to him. He just pushed it down almost out of sight—six feet and no bottom. He sent the bar up, and I gave him a ten foot water pipe. He pushed and hammered that down also nearly out of sight, and still no bottom.

It seemed a pity to leave the job knowing that there was about £3,000 worth of gold down there. Mack came up the ladder, and he said to me, "What do you think of her?" and when I told him he said, "And that's what I think too." This ended a chapter in my first experience of alluvial mining.

We put things in order, and stacked the boxes above flood level, and went over to Mack's camp, and Mack was anything but down-hearted. He said, "Now we will have to get those boxes up to Deep Creek, as I know of a bit of rich land up there where we can clean up a few ounces in quick time," and he seemed quite surprised when I said that I was not very much interested in alluvial mining but would have a fossick around on my own for a couple of weeks, and then I would be moving on. That ended our partnership.

I did a little prospecting here and there, and opened a claim about one mile up-stream from Mack's shaft, and while looking around between my claim and Mack's I came across a man whose name was Alf. He was filling a shovel with gravel, and casually carrying and emptying it into a sluice box several yards away into which he would deliver the gravel. He would stand and watch the water carry it over the ripples leaving some colours behind. I watched him continue this process for a while, and I was curious to know what the return would be for such a small and casual effort, and was surprised to learn that he was making 16/- per day. That was 6/- above the ruling wage at that time.

My claim seemed and was much better than Alf's, and I was filled with hope about what I could get once I got the water laid on. I was in too big a hurry to see gold in the boxes, to bring on more than one stream at a time, and water was my big drawback. I eventually brought in Quales Creek, which gave me a fairly

good supply of water, and I continued to work the same ground for about eighteen months. I gained enough experience during that time to know that no fortunes were to be made in the Wakamarina Valley.

Alf had saved up all the gold that he had produced, and sold it in one parcel, weighing all told 1oz., 10dwts. About how much I produced I have a poor recollection, as I would have to exchange it for flour or some other commodity, sometimes before it was properly dry.

Later on I shifted to the opposite side of the river, and struck a very good patch, but was only able to gather up 2oz. altogether. By the time I had cleaned up this little find, I had tried all the likely places, and was obliged to go back to claim No. 1, and hung on until I had sold and pawned everything that I possessed, and was prepared to sell or pawn my best clothes, but nobody would deal with me.

I carried on a little longer and decided that I would either have to shift or starve, and I chose to shift. I sold a few things which I possessed, including some tools, and I was a free man once again.

I managed to get to Wellington, and my clothes were in bad shape. I had no hat to wear, and my best boots were leaving me after a long and faithful acquaintance. My old friends were surprised, and some of them apparently pleased, to see someone else besides themselves up against it, but taking it all in all I met good people, and I started out again making and selling electric light shades, but I had previously worked Wellington.

I went into the country but was only partly successful, and rather than take any risk of being stranded in the interior of the North Island, I got back to Wellington as fast as possible, and was just able to scratch up my fare to Picton, landing there with nothing except a coil of wire and two pairs of pliers. I put up at a boarding house and set to work at once making up electric light shades, and my good landlady didn't ask me if I was a millionaire or a pauper. I didn't know myself until I made the first sale the following morning. I sold a dozen at a shop dealing in electric fittings, and another sale or two which netted me

about £2, and this enabled me to pay for my board, and take train for Blenheim.

I also did a little business in Blenheim, but the going was tough, and only with a struggle was I able to reach Nelson. There was little doing in that city, and as far as a job was concerned, the bosses were for the most part out of work.

I didn't have my fare to the Coast, but I got my box down by a cargo boat, and hitch-hiked down to Westport. I had some ups and downs doing odd jobs, and then went to Waitua Gold Mine, where I got a job. My mate's name was Fitzy, a humorous Irishman who could see that I was doing it hard, and that I was not the flash young fellow that I used to be. We were on the four o'clock shift, and up till then I had worked a couple of shifts with Fitzy, and even then I didn't know where we were working. I used to follow Fitzy, and whether he used to travel the long way around to get to the place where we worked or not I don't know, but we seemed to travel a long distance after leaving the cage which took us to a certain level. My nerves were gone; they were somewhere in my boots. I used to follow Fitzy when he went up ladders, and then travel along and down another ladder, and up another one. There seemed to be no end to it. I used to be afraid that the rungs would give way. In case my strength gave out I used to carry a piece of rope, tied securely round my body under the armpits, and when I thought I was about through I would tie myself to the ladder and stand for a while until I felt like moving again. While I did this, if Fitzy was at the top landing, he would call out in a gruff voice, "Where are you?" or "How long will you be?" and when I would be getting near him, I would take the rope off and put it in my pocket; but I think he used to watch me knowing I was in trouble, and enjoying the fun.

This business went on shift after shift, and I didn't seem to improve. One evening I lined up at the brace as usual. A few of us were sitting down waiting for the day shift coming up, and we would go down. Fitzy was sitting on my right, and a man near, just to have a jibe at me, said "Where is your mate, Fitzy?" and

Fitzy said, "Oh, he is about somewhere. Two of us will go down there but only one of us will come back." I knew that this was all fun, but I didn't like it, as up until the moment it was just a touch and go whether I could carry on any longer. Carrying the rope was only partial relief, because, when I used to tie it to the ladder, I used to be afraid that it would pull the ladder away from the timber to which it was fastened. I stayed only a few shifts after that and then drifted back to Reefton.

Reefton was the first town in New Zealand to have electric light, and I had a bundle of wire with me, so I made up a quantity of electric light shades, and picked up about £2 from the sale thereof.

I put up at the old Gladstone Hotel that Dick Dunphy used to be in, and the hotelkeeper told me that there was a man in from Murchison who wanted men for road work, and I saw him and got a job with him. He had a truck, and we were going right to the job the following day. This man, who was a Murchison County foreman, was also staying at the Gladstone. The publican was trying to get us together, but I had a job to go with him and make a road for other people to make the most use of. The work would not be easy, and therefore I was under no obligation to the foreman, although he had the power to give me leave to work.

I was in my room counting my money as silently as possible, when I heard the foreman ask where I was, and the publican said, "Oh, he is in his room counting his money," and I was too, but if he heard me he must have had great hearing. I wanted to see how much I had, and how far it would take me, but at the same time there was nowhere that I knew of that I would like to go to.

By the time I lined up for the truck in the morning, I was perfectly satisfied that I didn't want to go to Murchison, a place that I had said goodbye to twenty years ago, and was sure that I never wanted to see again, either as a worker or a tourist. Going back there, almost broke, to work on the roads, was too much for me. However, we got into the

truck, and I must say that he was a good driver. He kept up the same speed all the way to the Inangahua Junction, which is twenty miles from Reefton, and all the way I was wondering whether I would go to Murchison or get out at the Junction. I think he must have known, because when we got to the Junction I said, "Stop, and we will have a drink," but he was in too much of a hurry, and before I could say Jack Robinson we were over the bridge, and speeding on to the Lyall, eleven miles away. We seemed to reach the Lyall in no time as I was wishing he would go slower to allow me more time to think. We stopped at the Lyall and we went in and had a drink. I went out and pulled my trunk off the truck, and told him that I was going no farther; but when he had left and turned the corner for Murchison I was sorry that I hadn't gone on with him.

I returned to Westport and got odd jobs here and there, and my nerves were very bad. I was getting no sleep, and one morning I was on a truck heading for Nelson when a man came over and asked me if I would paint a house for a Mr Sunley, and I said, "Yes, I will," and I got the job and did it, but the misery I suffered through sleepless nights and bad food! If it had not been for Mr Sunley giving me morning and afternoon tea, I could never have finished the job. I was glad afterwards that I went through with it, as I finished up with the price of the job—£23, to the good. Now I made another bid for Nelson, and travelled in a truck bound for that town. We called at my brother's place at the 12 mile on the Buller Road. He advised me to ask the overseer at the 18 mile for a job, which I did and got a job, starting the following day with Jimmy Bunns' gang. My nerve trouble was not finished.

The huts on the Buller Gorge railway construction were two men huts. My hut mate seemed to be more concerned about the harshness of past events than I was. This man had just lost £2,000 in a gold mine that didn't exist, somewhere near Blackball, and when in the hut he wanted most of the room. If he wasn't pretending to be reading, he would be moaning

about losing all his hard-earned cash. The only thing that used to console me was that there were quite a few on the job troubled with the same complaint, and to boil the whole thing down, their troubles resulted from their errors of judgment, but paying the price was the sore point.

I had worked on the Buller Gorge construction work some years before. The work could be described as heavy, wet and dirty, and many a man couldn't stand the test of the first few days, which were classed as initiation, or a try-out. If he didn't show form in about three days he was usually voted out by the gang as being unsuited for the work, and another ambassador went forth to tell what a tough place the Buller was.

We used to cross the Buller in ordinary rowing boats, but they were propelled by "The Flying Fox." "The Flying Fox" is composed of a bow and stern rope rigged in such a way that when the boat is pushed into the current, the current propels the boat across to the other side. Although I was a good swimmer I never liked the idea of using the boats instead of foot bridges, which would have been quicker, cheaper and safer.

There had been some trouble brewing on the job that I went into, and it came to a head when I was nearly completing my seventeenth day at work. A walk-off the job was ordered at short notice, and we crossed the river for the last time, for me, at any rate. Our pay came to £11/11/11, and a couple of weeks before this a fellow on the job asked me to write down in figures eleven thousand, eleven hundred and eleven. I found it rather puzzling, and no more was heard of it until I was asked to sign for, as the pay clerk put it, 11.11.11, and somehow I stopped to think, and he said, "That is your pay £11/11/11," and I was still thinking, but in four years I discovered what it meant; my brother Louis was drowned on the 11th February, 1933, and the three elevens gave the year, and also the date.

I drew those three elevens and told my brother about the danger of crossing the river in the boats,

and said that I thought that he would leave his bones in the Buller. In the year 1911, my brother Louis and I were working on a Government survey. One day we had to go out to Ngakawau to survey a site for a library, but after we got started a man came along to see Mr Springhall, the surveyor, as some dispute had arisen about the site. Mr Springhall went away with the man to view the other site, and we had to remain until he returned. We filled in some of the time playing at Chinese wrestling, and then we lay on the grass looking out to sea. I remarked what a nice day it was, and tried to visualise what the future might have in store for us. I said, "Here we are lying in the sun on this beautiful spot, but who knows that one of us in twenty years' time might be drowned out there, and be washed up on to this beach." It was just twenty-two years later that my brother was drowned in the Buller. His body travelled about fifty miles with the current, and was washed up on the beach about five miles beyond the place where we were lying.

I was paid off the Buller Gorge job, and became a free man once more, and a citizen of the Empire, but not so badly off as lorries came by frequently, and I wasn't sorry that I was finished with the Buller. My brother Louis came up to say goodbye to me, and he said, "We will meet again," and I said, "Well, I don't know where it will be, as you will never see me here again." He being a married man with a family, I couldn't see how or where he would overtake me. Whatever was in the man's mind I don't know, but he didn't seem to want to let go my hand. Anyhow, we parted for the last time, and I was whirled through the Buller Gorge, with my lifetime's belongings and a little over £20 in my pocket. I landed at the Gowan bridge in good order, and got a job at Grassy Camp, where there were 100 men, and I was allotted tent 96, and I was pleased; nine is my number, and the six turned upside down also becomes a nine, and a real good companion I found in tent 99, Dan Sullivan. When my tent was allotted to me I felt very happy indeed. I now had a house to myself. The tent had a boarded floor, a table, bunk, and a

small chimney, and the P.W.D. supply a mattress cover at 11/-, and a bundle of straw free; you can either eat the straw or lie on it.

I was placed in a gang near the cookhouse, and also near my camp, which meant that I hadn't far to walk to work, and could easily arrive home for the mid-day meal, and comparing everything with the Lower Buller, everything was better. There was not so much mud and slush on the job, and we didn't have to risk our lives crossing the river as they did down there.

We were on co-operative contract, and our job used to pan out nearly every pay at fourteen point one, which meant fourteen shillings and one penny per day, which seemed to me to be very remarkable.

Our job was situated between the Gowan Bridge and the Owen River, and what is known as the Murchison earthquake took place while we were all engaged at our work. My mate, Monty Warne, was just going to the tip with a barrow-load when I heard a terrific explosion, and it seemed to be at Westport. The shake didn't reach me for several seconds, but when it did it made its presence felt. The trees on both sides of our cutting were bending over so much I wondered how they stood up again. Some of the men were very frightened, and the gang all left the job but myself. One young fellow who was suffering from a heavy drinking bout seemed to think that the devil was after him, and I had some difficulty in keeping him from racing into the standing bush, where limbs were falling in all directions. Some people were badly affected. The licensee of one of the hotels at Murchison went to Nelson and refused to return. While in Nelson he wouldn't go into a public bar for a drink. He would insist on it being brought to the door-step, and he would stand on the footpath to drink it there.

There was one chap by the name of Lofty who got a big scare, and rushed to Nelson. He tried hard to find his way back, but each time he made a start the earth might give a little bump, and Lofty would turn around and go the other way. He never returned.

It cost £1,600 to shift the refugees from the Murchison district, and I fail to see how such an

expense was warranted, but Sir Joseph Ward was Premier, and he was very ill at the time he gave the order to get those people away from Murchison. Some of the old boys who hadn't seen Nelson for forty years got a free ride out and were well looked after in Nelson. The Nelson people gave freely to all those who they thought were in need. In fact, they used to look them up and give them parcels of clothing, and sometimes money. I heard a few humorous stories from some of the spongers who were posing as 'quaked out refugees.

After the 'quake there was a transformation of our gang, and I was appointed head man, which meant another 1/- per day for me. When we got going again I thought we might get our pay increased, and indeed we did a considerable amount more work that month. When the pay came along, however, it was 14/1. The following month we did more than the previous month. Our pay was still 14/1, and I had a look at our contract sheet and found that we hadn't reached the point in the cutting that had been paid for as completed before I started on the job. From then on I forgot about the contract and did as Rome did.

We finished that job and some of the men were moved down the line. I got a job as foreman on the big cutting near the Gowan Bridge. We had a small steam navvy that was brought from Palmerston North. Several navvy drivers, and others came with it, and also a small locomotive. These boys were hard to handle. They were always quarrelling about who had the loco, or who was supposed to have been sent down from the North Island to drive the navvy, etc. The whole trouble was that there were too many of a kind, and they refused to do any other work. They were consequently a difficult crowd to handle.

I had made hay while the sun was shining, and had a good amount put by, and possessed a whare, tools, and sluice boxes in the Wakamarina Valley. I decided to give the goldmining another trial, so I packed up and arrived in my old camp exactly three years from the day that I built it. My whare was intact and much grass had grown about it. The stove had been

stolen, and a few boards from the blind side, but I wasn't worried about small losses. I had money now, and I could buy timber, drills, explosives, and other things which I had previously required to successfully carry out the operations of a gold digger.

I decided to turn Fuller's Creek and clean up the creek bed, and applied to the Mines Department for a subsidy while I was on dead work. I got a letter from the Department stating that I would not be allowed to do that, but I went on with the job, and when I turned the stream I wrote to the Mines Department stating that I had turned the course of Fuller's Creek, and asked what was to be done about it. I got no reply.

That work resulted in a dead loss, and then I concentrated on some deep holes a couple of chains towards the river, and did a good deal of boring and shooting; but the amount of gold won was not enough to pay for explosives.

I had a motorbike with me at this time, and decided on a trip to Motueka. I got as far as Tasman, about 20 miles from Motueka and stayed the night. The motorbike was not pulling well; the benzine was leaking into the oil tank, so I decided to return to Nelson where I stayed the night, and came back to Fuller's Creek the following day, and discovered that my whare had been broken into by removing the back roof. I found out who the burglar was; and whether it was wise or otherwise, I caught up to him on the road one day and gave him a thrashing. I was charged with assault, and fined £2 and costs, with no right of appeal.

I paid the fine and made my roof a little more secure against future burglaries, and continued working Fuller's Creek until I was satisfied she was a blue duck, and then shifted to the opposite side of the river, where I did a considerable amount of work only getting enough gold to lead me on.

Old Mack, my old partner, had been carrying on ever since, and was able to get a party from Auckland, and the leader was a man by the name of Fisher, who was later interned after making a meritorious cruise

to the Chatham Islands in a small yacht. This little party consisted of five men including Mack himself, who was subsequently appointed head cook and a director of the company. The object of the company was to de-water the shaft, and then send up the gold in buckets. Things looked good for a time, but some disagreement arose, and first one and then another left, until three Macks were left, McCurdy and son, and old Mack himself. McCurdy, senior, was an experienced miner, and he and his son, and old Mack set to work and bottomed the shaft. As soon as McCurdy, senior, saw the bottom, he said, "That's enough. This is old ground; the dredge has been in here, so let us get the tools up." McCurdy and son packed off back to Auckland.

Old Mack was a typical bush confidence man, rather crude in his methods, but was able to pick up a client now and again just to keep the pot boiling for a while. Although it is strange to relate I have met more confidence men in the back country than in the cities, and was bitten more than once in my young days by those unregistered tricksters.

Mack's shaft was opposite the road leading up the Wakamarina Valley, and when any newcomer happened to pass by, Mack would spot him and travel up a couple of miles, cross a bridge, and accidentally meet this possible client, and give him a hand to carry his gear, if he had any, just by way of softening the ground for the main thrust, which would sometimes be aimed at a possible pauper, which didn't trouble Mack, as he had to take the thick with the thin, in most cases the latter.

Mack picked up a couple of tramps one day, and made an agreement with them to supply them with food, and they were to go down the shaft and bring up the gold. Mack was to take one half, and they the other. It was not known where Mack got the dust to supply the grub, but he was producing the goods, and his two new partners were doing full justice, and were quite satisfied that that was how things should be. These two men were well satisfied, and were putting on flesh very fast, and Mack could notice that the

preliminary work around the shaft should have been completed, and some gold should be in production. With this problem, unforeseen in the beginning, it now dawned on him that at an early date it would mean the end. Mack held a consultation with his partners and tried to speed up the work, but the two sundowners had no intention of going down the shaft, and when Mack woke up to that fact, he decided that he would have to get rid of them as soon as possible. This was not an easy matter, as eviction orders were not so easily obtained, and two votes to one in a partnership carries the day.

The old sundowner and his mate had no intention of leaving while the grub was coming so readily, and Mack could easily see the point, so he let the rations run low, and one day he came up from the store with a good load of supplies. He arrived at the door in a tired condition, and parked the swag of food outside the door in view of the two hoboes, who were inside awaiting its arrival. Mack strode inside, sat down and wiped the perspiration from his brow, and the old bo said, 'Ain't you going to bring the stores inside?" and Mack said, "No, I am going up the river for a few days, and am going to take my stores with me. I shall probably be away for about a week, but you needn't be in a hurry—that is if you are going away." And the old sundowner said, "Oh, and that's the end of it," and Mack said, "Yes, that's the end of it." Mack shifted up the river into an empty house about 200 yards away, and next morning with some delight he had the pleasure of watching his two guests carrying their swags down the road, to join up with the Coates and Forbes four-year plan.

Mack now moved back to the whare, and waited for the next client, and nobody even to this day knows who he was. The first indication of Mack making another strike was an order for 40 gallons of benzine. He built a stand in a high conspicuous place that could be plainly seen from the road on the opposite side of the river. Any stiff who was unable to obtain benzine would at least have the privilege of looking across and seeing where forty gallons were

stored. Mack also had stores, and that is as far as things went for a while. Everybody was waiting to see the remainder of the project, but no smoke was seen coming out of his chimney. A young farmer went to investigate, and found Mack lying dead on the floor.

When I heard that Mack was dead I went along to see him. He was lying with his left cheek pressed against the earthen floor, and his left arm on the hammer lock. It had evidently been well forced as his hand was well in line with his shoulders. I am satisfied that somebody killed him. An enquiry was held; but there was no evidence. Thus ended the life of a lone prospector, who spent most of his life chasing the precious metal.

Now we go back to the serious part of the business. I lost about another year and a half, and had no returns. I had no gold scales, and don't know how much gold I produced, which wasn't much, so I made up what I had in a parcel, and posted it to a girl friend in Wellington, and, of course, I suppose the little girl, thinking that I had sent her a small portion of my newly acquired wealth, expressed astonishment at how well I was doing.

I decided to move, so I packed my gear and got away in a lorry for Nelson. I didn't know where I was going, but Nelson would be my base for the time being, until I could see or hear of something. I stored my gear and booked for Wellington, had a look around the outlying parts of the capital, but nothing seemed to get in my way that would be of any use to me. Everywhere I went I met people out of work. At Petone, Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt I saw big groups of young men standing talking about the slump. Whether the slump was man-made or not, it does not get away from the fact that at that time people were actually underfed, and children were suffering from malnutrition, while the corn bins and meat bins were bursting in every part of the country. Now that I could see what a mess our social system had got into I decided that the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know, so I took the boat back to Nelson, and gathered

my gear and got straight back to the Golden Bar to try my luck once again. I did a lot of heavy work in Nuggety Creek for a very poor return.

I tried other likely places, but the old diggers of the 'sixties and 'seventies left very little behind them. Furthermore, they did work by hand that we of the present day wouldn't care about doing. They put in cuts, shot tail races, and sank shafts from one end of the valley to the other, using hand pumps and other primitive appliances.

A man came along from Dunedin a few years ago with a modern apparatus for cleaning up the bottom of the river, and after a lot of hard work he found the primitive crates that the old diggers had abandoned. He also discovered that the pioneers had left behind them no payable dirt.

I couldn't see my way clear to make a living in the Wakamarina, so I once again packed up my gear and went by timber truck to Nelson, knowing where I was going, but not knowing what I would be doing when I got there.

Men on pick and shovel work on the Rai Saddle between the Rai and Nelson were receiving on contract 2d. per yard on the road. It reminded one of the convict days. The only things that were missing were the chains. One man that I knew worked on that job for two years, and saved 13/-. Of course, he was a steady fellow. He came along when the subsidy for miners was introduced, and he showed me his savings. He had them in a tin, and explained to me why he had been so thrifty—he thought we might get a slump.

I packed my gear in a shed in Nelson, and parked myself in an old boarding-house. The building was sheltering a fair number of fellows who were mostly out of work, and were constantly trying to unravel the economic tangle. We used to gather around the fire in the sitting room in the evenings, and it was surprising how many of those chaps knew how money might be made in large quantities, and yet their ideas were only in their heads, with little to show in their pockets.

I had been nearly thirty years trundling my dunnage around the world, and staying at this and that old boarding-house, and met a lot of millionaire paupers in those places. Most people were thinking hard in those days, and I was doing likewise. Thousands were out of work through the Government's inability to balance the budget, through working on a system of trying to get more and more from less and less.

It was in the middle of June, 1932. I was approaching my fifty-first birthday with no work, and no home, but I had a swag, and a little courage left, so I said, "Mundy, take up thy swag and walk." I advertised and got a second-hand tent, and bundled my gear aboard a timber truck going into the Wakamarina Valley on June 15, 1932. I bought a residential site of one acre, fenced and cleared, with orchard and garden. The place gave me the idea that one need not starve, as the soil was good, and I could grow a good deal of my own food, and there was a good prospect of getting gold adjacent to my section. I built my tent on a frame of sawn timber, and also made a boarded floor, and the chimney I made of stone and remnants of iron from here, there and everywhere. When I had completed the job I stood back a few paces and looked at it, not with pride as my future home, but with disgust and disappointment, which made me ask myself, "What have you been doing all your life?"

After my house was built, it got as big a thrashing from the wind as any tent ever did. A man was living in a tent about two chains from me, and he woke one morning to find that his tent fly had blown clean away. He asked me where I thought it would blow to. I told him I didn't know, but judging from the class of weather we had just experienced, I advised him to put an advertisement in one of the West Coast papers. I bought a claim for one pound near my section. That was considered a good price for a claim at the time, as the bottom had fallen out of the Wakamarina so far as gold was concerned. Nevertheless, when I shot a tail race through the rock and got into the deep ground I found good gold up to half ounce pieces, and produced gold for about twelve years. The ground was

very heavy and the face rose higher and higher along the years, and with continual lifting my heart became enlarged. I was now over sixty years of age—too old to start trundling my gear around the country. I decided to apply for the pension, and call it a day.

It would be wearisome for me to describe what I went through during my ten or twelve years digging for gold, and trying to make a living. To cut a long story short it was a continuous nightmare, always appearing to be just on it but never getting there.

Alluvial mining is a very fascinating occupation, as a man will work long hours in all weathers, year in and year out, including all holidays, always expecting something that may not be there. No man should be encouraged and subsidised to do that which the machine should do. Let the machine be a slave to the man, and not the man a slave to the machine. When I look and think of all the work that I have done whether profitable or not, I consider that if I died tomorrow, I would owe the world nothing for my presence during the time that I have been in it.

After a couple of years' misery in a tent, I was able to buy some iron and put a roof on, which made things a little more secure from the heavy storms which we frequently got in the Valley. Later on, at intervals, I managed to build a couple of weatherboard rooms alongside my tent, one of which I used as a bedroom, and disrated the tent into a common cookhouse. I must confess it was the most wretched looking galley that one could look at. I often used to feel like putting a charge of "gelly" under it, and blowing it up, but it was my home and my castle. Bad as it was, quite a lot of people didn't have anything as good. We must take the bad with the good in this life, and remember that the darkest hour of the night is the hour before daylight.

I got some back debts paid off, and was in a position to build. I bought sufficient timber and iron, but was unable to get it carted, and was obliged to sell the lot for practically nothing.

Later on I bought some more timber, and the same difficulty arose. I was unable to have it moved two

miles, and nothing could be done about it. I wrote to nearly all the Ministers of the Crown, and they all took me for a ride and dropped me in the same place standing on the road wondering how I could have the timber carted, and get my house built.

This wrestling with transport continued for years, and things looked rather blue until one day I met a woman who wanted some potatoes dug, and I was able to make a deal with her. She agreed to cart a load of timber if I would dig the spuds. This woman brought the first load, and a very good one too—quite a creditable performance, and that seemed to break the ice after two years battling with the transport and the Government. The job now seemed to be running easier, and I got two other drivers to bring a load by horse and cart. I had previously carted iron for roofing by wheelbarrow. I lashed a couple of long pieces of two by two's to the handles of the barrow and put a rope over my shoulders, and tying the ends to the handles of the barrow, I carted fifteen sheets of iron along the main road. By this time I was fairly well on with my house.

While I was transporting by wheelbarrow, two transport trucks passed me but the drivers didn't stop to enquire whether I wanted any assistance.

I now had a quantity of iron and timber on the job, and if it came to the worst I would have enough to build with, but my luck seemed to change unexpectedly. A man came along and sold me a fair-sized quantity of timber stacked by the side of the road. I had been held up so many times in everything I wanted to do, I decided to work by the system of just keep going and do what you can when you can. I just trusted to luck for the carting, and having tried out the long handles to the wheelbarrow, I thought I might do it that way, but it wasn't necessary. A young fellow was doing some private carting down the valley, and I was able to get some of my timber carted by him. The going was slow, as I could only put a little timber at a time on the top of his load.

I again approached a transport driver and he

agreed to bring the balance of the timber, and that was the end of that phase of the trouble.

As previously I had used the first structure as a cookhouse, and the place was frequently catching fire. I woke up one night and the place was on fire from end to end. The tent inside got ignited and burnt itself out, leaving the iron roof and the shell standing. Later I got up one morning at 7 o'clock, and the chimney was well under way, and that gave me an idea that the neighbours might come along some morning, and find a small portion of roasted man in the burnt-out ruins of that which used to be a miner's home.

I still used the cookhouse for some time as it stood, as I was trying to get a carpenter to build my house in something like orthodox fashion suitable for a bachelor. There was no carpenter available, so I decided to do the job myself, and then I had to do some real thinking. I knew that I could put the building up to suit my own requirements, but I had planned to build two concrete chimneys, and that is where the job looked sticky. After long delays and postponements, I stepped out one morning, took a reef in my belt, and started an attack upon the cookhouse in earnest. By twelve o'clock by my watch, which sometimes kept time, the old cookhouse looked as if it was prepared to apologise for all the trouble that it had given me. Although the structure had served a purpose for a number of years, I endured many miserable days and nights in it. When it rained, whether the door was closed or not, the water used to run down the middle of the floor, and other miseries crowded in on me.

I was unable to fall in with the actions of other people in similar circumstances, who were having their places photographed and published in the papers, actually craving for sympathy, saying, "Come and see where I am and pity me."

I had the show flattened right out by night, and then I marched up and down feeling as proud of my ability to destroy as any German ever did. I dislodged an enormous number of black beetles, and also found one penny. Without telling an untruth there were

times when I would have been glad to have known that it was there. I would have dug it up to buy a box of matches.

After pulling down the cookhouse, I took the partition out of the other rooms, and built a concrete chimney in the end, and fitted a big Dover stove into it. I paid £1 cash for the stove, a 28-year-old job, but still going strong, and when I got a fire roaring and the room warmed up I felt really happy and comfortable.

I could manage like this at a pinch, but I still had timber and iron, so decided on building another compartment as a spare room, to accommodate any stray visitors who might wander along occasionally. I wanted to build this room as a carpenter would do it, but I made many mistakes, and incidentally spoiled a few pieces of good timber, and, of course, we never discover mistakes until we have made them.

Progress was rather slow, but I did the job reasonably well, and the next headache was planning to build a concrete chimney. I had already built one with three sides, but building one with four sides was a horse of a different colour. The more I thought about it the further I seemed to be away from it. I finally made three sides, with iron for the top cemented in. The chimney was a success as far as being free from smoke.

I still had more timber and iron, so I built a fairly good shed after the style of a hut without lining. I had a considerable amount of soldering to do, and made the roof free from leaks.

I now have three rooms and two sheds. The rooms are lined and papered, and everything is reasonably comfortable, and after all the years of misery and hardship, I don't think the open air life has done me as much harm as if I had been living in the city on the bed and tray racket.

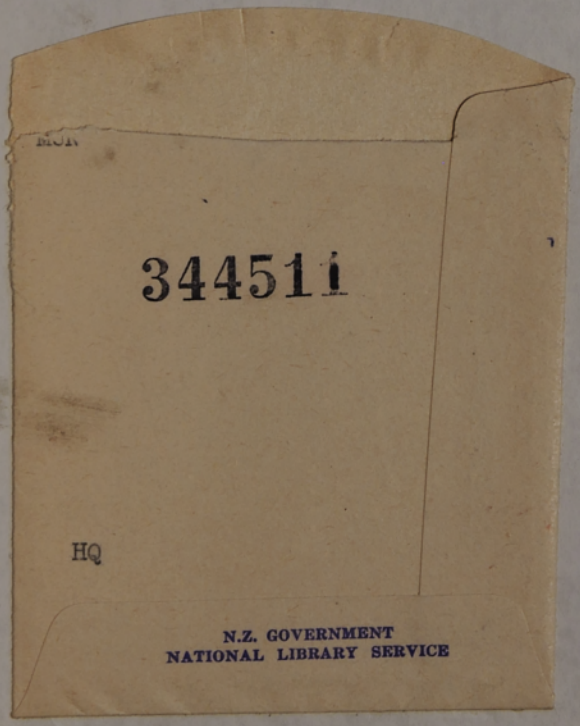
The last time I was in Wellington I was so cold that I had to take the carpet off the floor and put it on my bed.

This is the year 1945. Germany has been defeated, and the Japs will not last long. The world will be left in a very poor state indeed, including many homeless people.

I am now pleased to say that I have a home quite good enough for me to live in, and I have no doubt the material in the building will last as long as I will, and having concrete chimneys the chances of fire are very remote. I am not as well off as some people, but I am better off than the majority, not that I am pleased about that fact, as I think that any good dog is entitled to a decent kennel. Why not the humans?

This is the year 1947, and if the angels are looking for me, I am still in residence in the Wakamarina Valley, and when the devil claims me, may be that is where he will find me.

THE END



THERE'S GOLD IN THEM HILLS

MUNDY

[illegible] & Williams