The Plodding Shoe

By KITTY O'SULLIVAN

NEW ZEALAND'S MODERN
WALKING GREAT GRANDMOTHER

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KITTY O'SULLIVAN
N.Z's MODERN GREAT GRANDMOTHER

1953

I dedicate this Book to the young women of the world and the rising generations, and in gratitude to the wonderful women and men of Australia who ministered unto me on the Pacific Highway.

— K.S.

Introduction

"Brisbane to Sydney, Pacific Highway, Sea-Coast 667 miles.

Some Extracts from "Australian Pix," May 21, 1949.

This is a graphic description of Kitty O'Sullivan — Internationally known as The Modern-Walking Great Grandmother of Auckland, New Zealand. "Five feet nothing high, eight stone light, 68 years young." Her message is Health. Her philosophy Youth — a state of mind — not a time of life.

Holder of five "World Records" — (one a cycle ride), making tests of endurance and proving walking the best exercise of all. At the age of 51, she weighed 13 stone. An invalid for many years, she couldn't walk then. Gradually at first: with the aid of physical exercises, she reduced 5 stone in 14 months, without the aid of drugs or diet of any kind. Since that time she has never known an ache or pain, she declares . . . "But she didn't come to Australia to do another walk." She already held the Melbourne-Sydney record — on the Hume Highway — 563 miles in 18½ days, created in 1933, the same year as her N.Z. trek, from Spirits Bay (extreme North) to Bluff (extreme South), 1466 miles in 57 days. In the summer of 1938, she crossed to Britain and created the "Classic Walk" from Land's End (in Cornwall) to John O'Groats (tip of Scotland), 881 miles in 34 days. Her average time on all these records was 30 miles each walking day. Her best effort for one day was 40 miles (Patea to Wanganui), New Zealand. In 1935 she rode a man's roadster cycle with heavy pack from Spirit's Bay to Bluff, New Zealand, in 8 days 11 hours — (for free milk for the children of N.Z.). The "Pix" also presents her in pictures, exercising at Langridge School — under the Caption, Energetic Apostle of Youth through "Health" — by physical culture. Her great ambition is to show people how to grow old the young way. She makes a last appeal to the Women of the World. Would you EACH DAY give those wonderful muscles of the body — just five minutes — stretching exercises. For the aged, No! But the middle-aged and especially the younger generation — keep it up — it keeps you youthful and gives you Life's Greatest Gift: "Health!"

Signed: Kitty O'Sullivan, June 16th, 1951.
(70th Birthday).

CHAPTER I.

"The Plodding Shoe."

When we set out to accomplish some big undertaking, we plan and equip ourselves in a way that seems to be through sound experience. But always it happened in my case that the things I planned within the confines of my own small country were entirely changed when I went overseas.

This trip proved no exception, because nothing was further from my mind than the idea of doing another walk in Australia.

We are told that all the truly great men and women have left their footprints on the sands of time. I do not aspire to greatness, but would like to leave a modest footprint on the great highways, which lead to Health, by the print of my plodding-shoes. One paper, in describing my footwear (American Navy boots), men's size 7½, said, "each boot must have hit the road at least 660,000 times on this last march." Yet the soles did not wear out. It was necessary to bandage feet and ankles, and allow for swelling, hence the out-size in boots. Also, I bandaged my knees.

For several years I'd been planning to go to America and keeping in touch with Langridge School, with the idea of taking a course of intensive training, and then leaving from that school for a New York Physical Culture College. You will see—"mostly the way was through difficulty"—how I came to do this last—unforgettable—great walk. Tragedy and hardships dogged my footsteps, over

mountains and rugged countryside. Ten days of terrific heatwaves; held up for five days through floods; mosquitoes in swarms drilled into my flesh and whined into my ears, adding to the discomforts of the road.

There were long, lonely stretches, too; days when the rain poured down in torrents. Dismal days when the bluegums moved their branches in a plaintive rustling.

I saw snakes (some squashed on the highway), foxes, a stray dingo at dusk, perchance, a kangaroo came bounding through the gums and over the road in front of me.

I chose the Pacific Sea-coast Highway, thinking it would be similar to the sea-coast highways in New Zealand, where for days on end one walked beside a sun-kissed shore, or gazed on ocean which sparkled and beckoned.

I met the cream of the men and women of Australia on that back road of the Coast. For all these things I thank my God that I can still prove Health.

Notes from my Log-book.

A log-book is always carried by one who sets out to create records, etc. It's a measure of "checking" the progress of the holder of the book. First, you must have the Mayor's seal of the City where you reside, the Commander of the ship on which you sail, and the person who sponsors you when you reach your destination; then follows a chain of authentic entries until you return home again.

I have many such log-books—coupled with road maps they make very interesting reading.

Perhaps there's no better way to begin my story than by giving a few extracts on my departure from Auckland to Sydney.

Having obtained the Auckland City Council's Seal, Sir John Allum, Mayor, writes as follows:—

"Mrs. O'Sullivan leaves New Zealand with our good wishes for her success and that she will return safely.

"New Zealand's Modern Great Grandmother is an inspiration and example. Kia Ora."

(Signed) J. A. C. Allum,
Mayor of Auckland,
Oct. 7th, 1948.

M.V. Duntroon,
at sea, 11/10/48.

"Mrs. K. O'Sullivan, New Zealand's Great Grandmother, travelled on this ship from Auckland to Sydney. All on board wish her success on her latest effort in spreading the message of health."

H. C. Griffiths,
Commander.

The Langridge School,
Sydney, N.S.W., Australia,
Oct. 12th, 1948.

"To my very dear friend, Kitty O'Sullivan. Wishing you good luck in Australia and welcoming you back to the Langridge School of Physical Culture."

Tom Langridge,
Principal.

It was ten years since I had passed through Australia on my way to Britain to create the Land's End-John O'Groats Record, but I had kept up correspondence with Tom Langridge.

Having disposed of my "Studio" in Auckland after 12 years' tenancy, and parting with the knick-knack bits and pieces so dear to a woman's heart, I consoled myself with a photo of four generations—a large press-clippings book of records and travel, and

very little else. My legal adviser saw to the financial side of the business.

It was a delightful, happy feeling when the Duntroon sailed out of Auckland harbour for Sydney. The thought of seeing my friends again after ten years, and working at the Langridge School, lent added pleasure to the voyage. The day before we reached Sydney, the ship encountered a cyclone. Consequently, I didn't arrive to schedule. It was late afternoon when we berthed, and because of that, no one was there to meet me. Seeing my visit to Sydney wasn't in any public capacity, imagine my surprise when pressmen came aboard and enquired for me?

"May I ask who sent you?" "Oh, we know more about your movements than you think." The Sydney Herald man spoke for the others. "You flatter me," I told them. "But no photos, thanks," and I avoided the cameras.

Unabashed, they persisted in following me, even through the Customs, until some fellow passengers intervened. Sometimes life seems to be full of bad jokes. Was I one of them? Maybe, yes! But a very good joke for the pressmen, who, seeing a small great-grandmother, travelling alone, and no one to meet her, looked fair game for their cameras.

When I collected my luggage, the Customs officer said that my friend had been waiting all morning for the Duntroon, but left a message for me to go to the hotel she had booked. It was past eight o'clock when I arrived at my destination. On entering, the receptionist informed me that a gentleman from the press was waiting to see me. A paunchy man hurried forward, camera in hand.

"Can I have a picture?—anything in gymnastics," he begged. "Say, pull yourself up on the door, for instance!"

His face was eager. He paused and grinned.

I was too astonished to speak. The lady at the desk ordered him out. Then we both laughed.

"The Sydney press are like that," she explained. "They mean well, but they are not responsible."

Scarcely had I entered my room, than my girl friend "Teddy" 'phoned me to come right over to her flat.

How good it was to hear her voice. Teddy's flat was but a step from my digs, and in no time I was there. And how good to see this lovely friend. There was so much to talk about. She was married now, and so happy. The door bell rang. It's unbelievable; but there stood another pressman. He had followed me in. "Yes," he beamed, "I'd love a picture—just one." "You had better see Mr. Langridge about that, he's my manager now." "Thanks a lot," and he hurried away.

"Tell me why you sailed on the Duntroon and not the Aorangi, as you said in your letter," Teddy asked.

"It was a last minute change over, Teddy. The Aorangi was a packed ship when she arrived from 'Frisco, so the Company gave me a berth on the troopship Duntroon, which arrived from Japan that day, with returned soldiers, 300 for New Zealand and the remainder for Australia."

The Duntroon left about 30 hours after the Aorangi. Then I described the scene on the ship with the Pressmen. It couldn't have been Tom Langridge who sent them, because he didn't know about the change of ships. I didn't send him a radiogram. I can explain that when I see him.

"Anyway, I'm glad you are going to America," Teddy said, "and not doing any more of those terrible walks."

"You're right, Teddy, I'm tired of windswept highways and mountainous, rugged country. My

hope is to lecture and demonstrate what physical culture can do for young and old."

Teddy's husband arrived, and we had supper. "Call me Bill," he said. "And you may call me Sally." "But you know, Sally, I'm not in favour of great-grandmothers, or any woman for that matter, doing such things as you demonstrate." "Well, don't let us fall out about it, as soon as we've met, Bill." We chatted away till past midnight, when they both accompanied me home.

My couch called loudly. In a few minutes I was floating in a paradise of cosiness—the just reward of a hard day.

You will see how my plans worked confusedly right from the start. But, as events will show, it was all for the best in the end.

In the morning, the maid brought tea and drew the blinds. The sun was shining. I was happy and mildly excited to be in Australia once again.

Soon I was out of bed, bathed, dressed, had breakfast, and at 9 a.m. set off for the School in George Street. For the next few days things happened so fast that it leaves me wondering still!

The City had grown greatly in ten years. It took awhile to get one's bearings.

At last I stood before the School entrance. A long stairway, with shining steps and brass handrails, led right off the street to the offices above. Time and space seemed but a dream as I mounted to the top and entered. The same lady sat at the office desk. Nothing was changed. "If it's not the lady herself!" she cried.

Tom Langridge appeared from his private room at that moment and greeted me warmly, saying, "you're the same bundle of energy and haven't changed a bit!" To me he looked older—only I didn't say so. "But I thought you were coming on the

Aorangi," he said. He had been giving treatment to a gentleman whose home looked out on the harbour, and saw the ship arrive.

He 'phoned the Aorangi to find I wasn't on board. "She's missed again," he thought, and felt disappointed. "But now that you're here, those ten years have melted away." There was so much to do —plans he'd made for me—work I'd do before leaving for America, etc. He was proud of his school—and justly so. He was the founder—30 years ago. Some 600 Doctors in New South Wales had chosen Thomas Alfred Langridge as their masseur.

Yes, he was a great man in the physical culture world, tall and straight as a ramrod for his 62 years. As a master of physical education he looked the part. He was a kindly man, too, slow of speech—sometimes melancholy and plaintive—yet somehow it had a soothing effect on his patients.

His School was the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. All athletic and sports teams from other countries were invited to use the gymnasium when on tour. He himself had many friends all over the world.

For two years previous to my visit he had travelled with competing teams through the Australian States. English cricketers, All Blacks (New Zealand), and many others. His last tour was with an Indian team. He used to write me about his work. It was his letters perhaps that kept me to my training. "Sport has many aims and ends," he would often say, "but physical education is at the basis of them all." Yes, it is a truly great factor in our lives.

It was interesting also to note that everything must be done in the Langridge way at Tom's School. After the first flush of excitement, Tom settled down to business. I was to be a big "ad" for his School. The Press rang him to know if I'd arrived. "They

wish to meet you and take pictures," he said. "Whatever you think is best," I agreed.

"I've arranged for you to broadcast from Australia's Commercial Station ABC. We'll go there now," he said, and rang for a taxi. After introducing me at the Station he left me, saying "hurry back, won't you?—the Press will be waiting."

At ABC I was put on the air immediately. At the conclusion of my talk the interviewer said: "Coming from New Zealand, what can you do in Maori?" I put over a "Haka," which greatly pleased him. He thanked me for an easy released broadcast and engaged me for several other talks.

Back at the school, the press camera men had a royal picnic at my expense. Tom Langridge chose the pictures to be taken, and posed me for them. The first, a back-bend on a table, against a mirrored wall. It photographed double. Making my body and limbs to bulge like balloon-tyres! But my real gymnastic feat was holding a head-balance . . . and still is!

Having arrived only the previous night, after four days at sea, with a cyclone thrown in for good measure, the effect became evident when I put my head down to take the balance.

Tom Langridge never did approve of this particular exercise (it was likely to cause blood-pressure), and any medical man would endorse his opinion. With so much in my disfavour—I felt disappointed, and not a little hurt—I failed miserably before the cameramen. Some weeks later I had this pose taken, and did a perfect balance.

The Sydney press have large window displays of notable personages in "caricature." These displays attract large crowds. "Clever!" they say. For instance, Bernard Shaw with a long face reminiscent of a horse. "Our Gracie," Members of Parliament —in fact, anyone publicized can see themselves as others see them. Yes, I was there, too!

The camera had not failed to produce the balloon tyre effect, also the imperfect finish of a head balance. Later, when speaking to a young lady at the Press Office, she was amazed that I didn't like the "cartoons," "It's clever—you should be proud!" she exclaimed. I told her I had come to thank her paper, because at fifty years of age I did look like a balloon tyre. To-day, I thank physical education for proving to the world that that which I started twenty years ago is no myth.

Within a week of my arrival, Tom had worked out a routine for me. Several hundred women's clubs and organisations exist in New South Wales. He planned I should lecture and demonstrate at some of them. Also, should any of the ladies wish for physical instruction, I could take them at the School —with my own training. "Don't attempt to force your beliefs on them," he said. "A demonstration is more persuasive than mere words." I wished that all that had ever happened to me could be forgotten, brushed aside. Wishful thinking didn't make it easier, either. Yet thoughts persisted.

For the next five months, with scarcely any variation (except weekends), my day began after this fashion: Breakfast at my apartment. Then tram to George Street. Call at the School for mail and instructions. Perhaps a broadcast or two, or a talk at one of the clubs. If no bookings, then I would proceed to the other part of the Langridge School, a couple of blocks further along George Street. This was a magnificent place—a large concert hall with stage and fittings, squash tennis courts, women's turkish-baths and massage rooms on one side, men's baths, massage and training equipment in the opposite wing.

Here, I had complete freedom to do my own training. There was every kind of device known to physical training. I was thrilled and ever so happy

in my work. Each day I put in four hours. After a workout and shower, I made my way up George Street to a milk-bar, for fruit salad or coffee and biscuits. Then, perhaps, two hours at a picture house where newsreels only were shown—this gave me the World's news. My pleasures were modest, but I was content. Busy days consisted of bookings for broadcasts—mostly charity affairs—for example: Broadcasting Station 2GB (Key Station of the Macquarie network). "We thank you for the broadcasts that you gave both Mr. Barry and myself for our respective mid-day and Friday night programmes. Your talks aroused considerable interest, and I hope that after your next big walk you will give us the privilege of once again interviewing you, so that you can tell us just how it all worked out."

Standing at the mike, I was presented with a photo, signed "John Walker," Broadcasting Station, with Mr. John Walker (but no payment).

Then there was Radio Columnist A.W.A. I was allowed to hear the recording when made. In my logbook they wrote: "The most interesting great-grandmother I have ever met or interviewed—Good Luck and continued Good Luck" (but no money). I could write pages and pages of this kind. On other walks, too, people were wont to ask, "Are you making a good thing out of it?"—this with a crafty look in their eyes.

Truthfully, I can state that never at any time did I make. I gave—gave my body and soul to my work, feeling I was being used as an example of health for the world! And that goes for to-day, too!

Now a few examples from the Women's Associations and Clubs. (This one is of particular interest.) Mr. Langridge had received on my behalf a most pressing invitation from the Progressive Housewives Association, N.S.W. Its founder was an unmarried lady—a very thin person with an

impatient look. The object of this club was to keep down the price of meat.

The letter asked if I would speak to a group of housewives at their next meeting, being held on the first Friday each month. "The speaker comes at 2 p.m. for a talk of twenty or thirty minutes. Dear Mrs. O'Sullivan, we would be interested to meet you."

Duly I arrived at the appointed time. Tom always saw to that. The maiden lady—the founder—was also the Chairman. As I write, the memory of those lovely Australian women who filled the hall, rises before me. "Isn't she lovely," they cried, as I mounted to the platform, and the Chairman introduced me.

The audience clamoured to hear about the walks I did, etc. They wanted to crowd up to the stage—to make a fuss of me. The Chairman rapped loudly on the desk. "Order! Order! ladies," she cried.

Turning to me, she asked: "But tell us what you eat?" My voice sounded afar off . . . "Whatever the popular trend of thought in regard to diet may be, my experience has been to eat of the things we fancy. Nature will then do her own work—or why have we fancies?

"To do these long walks demands patience, perseverance, courage and self-denial, as well as physical training. Such a fallacy as diet for me is a thing of the past, and ever will remain so. Mostly I eat cakes and drink tea," I concluded.

There was a tense silence. "What!—no meat?" exclaimed the Chairman. Her astonishment was great. "No, Madam, no meat!" The whole room burst into loud and prolonged applause!

Very different was another Ladies' meeting. The reception was given in the President's own lovely home at a suburb on the outskirts of the City. Here I met many famous people who will long remain in my memory. Of course, I had to give a short talk,

explaining how the results of physical training were surprising after a short period. Because of physical fortitude and strength of mind, disease has no foothold on a healthy, well-trained body. The President invited me to her home on other occasions. In fact, she wished to keep me always with her!

At some of the Clubs, I replied to the sceptics who thought physical education was a waste of time. "Wouldn't we have to keep it up always?" they complained. "But you always eat, isn't that so?"—"Surely we don't need it at middle life?" There was almost a pleading note in the question.

The world generally makes a fetish of food. And there is every reason to believe that quantity, and not quality, is at fault. Some may laugh at this, but nevertheless it's true. Overeating leads to loss of figure, charm and beauty, which everybody desires in life. You will all agree.

How many women for the sake of fashion will suffer a tightly laced corset, or intolerable days and nights caused by a tight shoe and high heels? Some will endure these things for years, and try different cures that only add to their suffering. These in turn manifest in the features, giving many ugly wrinkles to the face. Your mirror will not lie! Exercise, and common sense at the table, will save you from the tyrants.

My weekends passed happily. With so much to see in a large city, and a mind filled with pleasant memories, loneliness at first found no place. A ride on a decker bus to the suburbs put me on top of the world. At first, Teddy insisted that I come to her for week-ends. Other ladies, too, from the clubs coaxed me to their homes, but visiting and gossip left me cold. I preferred the decker bus, and never tired of looking at that big Australia. Quickly the months passed. Christmas holidays—and the School closed for six weeks. Tom Langridge left on a camping

expedition through the bush. He was a famous cross-country hiker—not a road Record walker!

On New Year's Eve, Teddy and her friends took me to a dinner reception at Hotel Australia. It was the only social function I attended during my visit to Sydney. Having a small appetite myself, it was of interest to note, from a health point of view, how the guests gorged and drank, and at the same time paid exorbitant prices to destroy the delicate mechanism of their own wonderful stomachs. No wonder they were ill, as well as intoxicated—and they thought it was clever!

The school had opened after the holidays and the large staff were back at work. I found my holiday was ended, too. I had finished my course of training—my weight and measurements were exactly the same as when in the year 1933 I set out on my first New Zealand walk.

Ladies from the several clubs came for lessons, both private and class instruction. My time was fully booked with pupils. Tom Langridge had long talks with me about joining up with the School. "America will keep," he pleaded. "Besides, the lectures at the clubs are a great success. The ladies wouldn't wish to lose you now."

At various times Tom allowed a few favoured cameramen to interview me at the gym. Soon I noticed that these gentlemen were bent on trying to get me to do another walk. Then they taunted me. "You couldn't do a walk now," they said. "It's ten years since you did the British Record." The answer was always "No!" Here was a pretty dilemma. My heart was set on America. Tom wished me to stay. The Press taunted me.

CHAPTER II.

The Man with the Money Bags.

Behind a "papier mache armour," I held my own council, inwardly vowing that something must be done about it.

It was the end of January. The nights were unbearably sultry. My window on the third floor overlooked a small courtyard. I scarcely ate anything at work, and Tom complained that I was getting too thin.

"You're working too hard—you're not fretting about America, are you?" "No, not fretting about anything," and I shook my head.

So Tom thinks I'm getting too thin. Was it to be wondered at? And that evening as I hurried home I bought a bottle of good sherry and a pound of cheese biscuits.

Settling in the window seat amongst the cushions, I relaxed, nibbling the biscuits and sipping the wine. After a second glass of wine, a zeal that made hardships no obstacle gradually took form in my mind, and finally a clear idea stood out.

The work I had commenced so long ago must not be lost now. Tom was right. America would keep. I would take train to Brisbane and walk back to Sydney. My answer to the Sydney press. I felt compelled to do this for the sake of my country, and to benefit humanity. Even though it proved to be a hazardous undertaking—still, anything was better than being shut up all day teaching.

As I lay in the window seat, gazing at the stars and the gay moonbeams against a dark sky, I felt

mine was a loveless life. I climbed into bed without a thought of what Tom would say when I broke the news to him.

It was late next morning when I arrived at the School. "How are you, Sally?" Tom greeted, looking up from his mail, and added, "I've a little surprise for you, and trust you'll be pleased."

Without waiting for a reply, he continued: "You've been working too hard—it's time you had a holiday."

Briefly I explained how I'd been thinking the same thing. And without giving him time to reply, plunged into the scheme uppermost in my mind.

There was a long silence when I'd finished—a silence which said more than speech.

At length Tom spoke, slowly: "I'd much prefer you left for America than see you attempt this walk."

"Tom, I'm sorry—I'm a great disappointment to you, isn't that so?"

"You are saying it," he said in resentful sorrow. It was the first and only time I'd seen him angry. "It's my only answer to the Press, you must admit that."

"I know the Press," he answered bitterly. "Of late years, when overseas sportsmen come here and have pictures taken at my school, they publish the photos and names of the sports, but don't say anything about my gymnasium."

Anyway, when the Press heard of my challenge they almost shouted with glee! Such a thing was never known before. A great-grandmother would attempt to walk 667 miles, which they (the Press) had deliberately dared her to do! Here was an opportunity to prove to the world that sickness and helpless old-age were a myth!

Generations of thinking that people at sixty or

seventy were finished with life was a false conception of God's man!

The Press were friendly and co-operative now, and easy to get along with. With camera and questions they must verify the fact. I chose the Pacific Highway, when it should have been the New England Highway (for better surface).

"How long will it take you to walk the distance?" they asked.

"About three weeks, maybe" but alas, I hadn't seen the roads then that really weren't roads at all! Meanwhile there was much to do by way of preparation. On other record walks it was necessary to provide suitable clothing for the weather. But now I was impatient to be gone! And apart from the boots, raincoat and sun helmet, I wore only an ordinary light costume.

A small ruck-sack (which almost cost me the record) was presented to me. The shoulder straps were fastened to a round buckle at the nape of the neck, and when I put my arms through the front straps—my gear weighed 10lb—made a heavy bundle, looking like a plumduff in a cloth, that rested in the small of my back.

The one good point about it was that it kept the water out. The giver meant it for a blessing. The gift was a curse. Many times on that trek I was sorely tempted to drop the thing off my shoulders and walk away without it. Such little things are sent to try us!

Having purchased the big boots (which for me took the place of a plane for an aviator), I then secured a berth on the Brisbane Express, leaving Monday night, February 9th.

Tom had gone on one of his week-end cross-country tramps. He still didn't think I'd take on the walking challenge. "Anyway, why the desperate

hurry?—think well before you go—it's the wrong time of the year, too—heatwaves and frightful floods, Sally—don't go, please don't do this terrible thing again." How he pleaded, but it was of no avail. "Without consideration for the privilege of serving, we must pay the cost to self," was my final answer.

My logbook contains an entry from the New Zealand Senior Trade Commissioner in Australia, New Zealand House, Martin Place, Sydney. He, too, warned me about it being the wrong time of the year. "Be careful," he said. He wished me Godspeed. Also, he had made an appointment for me with the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Town Hall, Sydney.

Lord Mayor's Room,
February 7th, 1949.

"Dear Mrs. O'Sullivan,—This conveys my best wishes for the successful completion of your Inter-state walk—New South Wales and Queensland. The essentials in such an undertaking are, I imagine, good health and determination."

Signed with Seal,
E. C. O'Dea, Lord Mayor.

The Press, too, had arranged for the "Brisbane Telegraph," the "Pix," and the "Movietone News" to officially start me from the G.P.O., Brisbane. When Tom Langridge returned on Monday I was ready to leave, and called at the school to say "good-bye."

"You're really going, then," he said. "Well, I must say you do look nice in your walking kit." Then followed more instructions, always instructions!

He thought the boots were too long; he repacked my gear in the ruck-sack, to show how to balance the weight, but it always worked back to the plum-pudding shape (when I walked). I declined his offer to drive me to the Station, explaining that I must call on Teddy.

"Perhaps you'll get a greater ad. from my walk

than you think." He answered, "I know you'll do it."

Usually I dined at Teddy's flat every Sunday night, with the exception of the last one. She had invited friends to give me a reception, never thinking for a moment that I'd not be there.

Everybody was disappointed, especially a wee girl who was to present me with a bouquet of flowers. Bill was most offended, and told me just what his opinion was about the whole business.

However, I had learned to keep a still tongue under unfair criticism and provocation. There are people who only make a big noise when they talk. Others from out a golden heart let gracious words fall from their lips. But Bill's harsh words fell like the lash of a whip—cutting and cruel.

Teddy shed tears as she kissed me good-bye. "You'll always be my Teddy," I told her, and departed. All Australian trains are noted for discomfort. The express took 24 hours to reach Brisbane. The only other occupants in my compartment were a stout woman and her paunchy husband. They were a jolly couple returning from Sydney after a holiday. They had read about me and seen photos in the papers, and now, seeing me in walking kit, knew who I was. They made as much of me as though I were Royalty.

Later in the night the kindly woman produced a hamper of edibles. "We always prepare for this long journey," she explained. Strangely enough, I'd forgotten all about food. They insisted I have supper with them, and so the time passed quickly enough, until the husband took off his boots, loosened his clothing and stretched full length on the broad seat. "You'd better get comfortable, too, Mother," he advised his spouse. And she, too, settled down on the carriage seat. They lay (head and tail) and snored loudly until daylight. For hours I sat beside the window, gazing into the blackness of the night,

while the train speeded onwards. I could tell when we rattled across long bridges, or the engine snorted up steep hills.

I had never been to Brisbane, but had friends in New Zealand who came from there, and was looking forward to seeing Queensland. Always I travelled alone. Surely one of the loneliest people in the world! Yes, I had lived lonely amid all attempts to unravel the mysteries of human life—and now, as the snores of my two companions rose and fell in duet, I wondered why sleep had evaded me.

Things over which I had no control rose up before me. Was I foolish, as Bill said, making these hard-won tests of endurance, while others slept, and millions lived in fine homes, had nice motor cars, a fat banking account—and such things? But also I noticed that these didn't bring happiness, health, safety or content. No! I had found more and better things than all these—Health.

However, there was another record to be made. It was a sporting effort—the same as any other title to be won. This walk was to create a record on the Pacific Highway. As I've written in other books published, my records are open for any age to try; yet so far none has been challenged! How I wish they would!

The long night passed. In the dismal dawn I must have dozed. When I opened my eyes the sun was shining, but my friends on the carriage couch slept blissfully on.

At that moment the guard passed along the outside passage calling the passengers to breakfast in the dining-car. I left my friends to their toilet and hurried after the guard. There's a certain fascination in dining on a train, having a meal while moving along the countryside. And when my friends joined me, I still sat on, while they pointed out places of

interest along the line. There wasn't much of interest, only the hillocks made by monster ants—some mounds being over six feet high, and close together, so that the land in those parts was useless, after the ants had made it their kingdom.

No, it proved a dismal journey as far as scenic beauty went. Mostly the railway stretched through barren country, with very few stops at stations. Summing up—the clouds, the ant hills and the blue gums. This may sound harsh criticism, but it's all there was. At 8.30 p.m. the express pulled into the Brisbane Station. The bad dream had ended!

It was getting dusk. Seeing all my gear was on my back, there wasn't anything to do but walk off the train. Quite a little gathering was waiting to greet me. A cameraman accompanied by a young lady with pad and pencil hurried forward. Once more I belonged to the public, and although I was honestly tired, I tried to look pleased. Then a tall gentleman came forward.

He was the Manager of the Theatre Royal. He graciously invited me to be presented to the people of Brisbane from the stage the following night. It was a nice gesture, and I consented. Some ladies wished to take me to their home, but I'd promised a lady, whom I'd met in Sydney some weeks before, to stay with her for the two nights at Brisbane. I was in a hurry to get on the road. I wish now that more time could have been spent in the nicest City I've ever known.

The people, too, were as nice as their City, which is shaped by the double curve of its river. Great bridges span from one reach of the river to another, almost parallel. Many large vessels and smaller craft were discharging at the wharves, right alongside the town. That night, and the following one, I slept at the friend's place whom I'd met in Sydney.

The lady wrote in my log-book, February 10th,

1949: "We met by accident in Sydney. We enjoyed your stay with us, and wish you happiness in this huge undertaking." Her husband wrote: "Au Revoir, Kitty, and God bless you—Carry on!" This lovely family were of the kind who from out a golden heart let gracious words fall on their guest. My one day in Brisbane proved a busy one. The heat was terrific, but as yet I'd hardly noticed it. A visit to the Town Hall for the Lord Mayor's Seal in my log-book, came first.

He seemed to fit in, along with the rest of Brisbane's lovely City, courteous, dignified and meticulously dressed in a light grey suit. After the City's Seal—it read:—

> "Mrs. Kitty O'Sullivan called on me this morning, 10/2/49. I hope she will be successful on her walking tour."
>
> (Signed) J. B. Chandler, Lord Mayor.

Other appointments were with the Press and "Movietone News." I travelled by bus across one of the large bridges to a part of Brisbane called "The Valley," to discuss plans in connection with the official start next day. Now that I was about to try for this record, I welcomed newspaper criticism!

Returning to the City, I had morning tea with the Manager of the Theatre. He had advertised my appearance on the stage and expected a full house. Afterwards I stayed on to watch the ballet at rehearsal.

It is generally admitted that all theatrical people are sociable and charming, but the manager of Brisbane's opera house was the most charming personality I'd ever met. He had reserved seats for any friends I'd care to bring along. "I'll collect you from the circle after the interval," he said, "and spirit you around to the stage." Also, he desired I give a short talk—"impromptu, anything you choose," he said.

When I reached my friend's place and had some tea, it was almost time for us to set off again for the Theatre. There remains but a vague idea of the context of the play, but a vivid picture of waiting in the wings for my cue to go forward to the manager, who stood before the mike. He was even more charming on the stage, as he introduced me to a crowded house.

I never prepare a speech. It comes spontaneously when before an audience, as if they draw forth the things they wish me to say. I have no knowledge if others feel this way, only in my case it is always so.

A storm of applause greeted me as I walked on to the stage in my big boots. After thanking them, I explained the purpose of the walk I'd commence the following morning from Brisbane to Sydney—my mission was to prove health first by right thinking and healthy living. "Make the Golden Rule a practice," I said, "and exercise the wonderful muscles of the body—you remember how, many centuries ago, man made an image of a golden calf to worship before it. To-day, the calf is made mostly of paper money, and as of old, many people make it their God. 'But money speaks all languages,' they say. Money cannot buy Health for the human body—and not one penny can be taken past the grave. These things we know for a certainty. Also, the ugliness of greed never made one healthy or grateful."

CHAPTER III.

"The Great Big World"

The official start:—

February 11th, 1949, Brisbane G.P.O.
Departed 9.40 a.m.
(Signed) "Movietone News,"
"Pix,"
"Brisbane Telegraph."

The cameramen accompanied me from the Post Office, through the main street to Victoria Bridge, taking photographs for motion picture films. Here they left me to continue my walk.

For the next ten days I battled against one of Queensland's worst heatwaves, which I'd been so often warned against before leaving Sydney. Perhaps some verse written by a gentleman at Valla who evidently knew his countryside, may not be out of place here.

"She started out from Brisbane
Beneath the Town Hall Clock,
Through mud and slush and heat
And roads of broken rock.

She is walking down to Sydney,
To prove without a doubt
That as long as you've got health
You're not too old to walk about.

Her life is one ambition,
It isn't one of wealth;
She walks the rugged countryside,
Which proves that she is health.

She has walked thru' the land of the Kiwi,
The Lion and the Kangaroo,
And on the roads of Scotland
Left the prints of her plodding shoe.
And may our love go with her, when she
leaves our golden shore."

Crossing Victoria Bridge, I turned left to follow the tramlines for over two miles to Fiveways Cross-roads. Thank heaven there was a tea-room. I entered, mopping my face, and was soon at work trying to quench a terrible thirst, which persisted all the way to Sydney.

For the next seven miles, at intervals, there were small shops and milk bars. I never passed without entering. My thirst increased with every mile. Then a long stretch (eight-mile plains). In 15 miles my log shows only two entries, both from shops, and both supplied the much-needed tea.

The intense heat caused my feet to swell right away—the outsize boots were not too big then. All things considered, especially the hold-up by the Press taking pictures before I started—15 miles wasn't so bad.

At dusk, I stopped beside a fruit stall on the Highway. The dwellinghouse stood in off the road, surrounded by orchards. These kindly people—a man, his wife and daughter—took me inside and insisted I stay the night. Soon my feet were in a dish of hot water and the bandages rolled again for the morning. This treatment was most necessary and was the only one used throughout the trek.

After a nice tea and a long chat, I was allowed to have a few hours' sleep before leaving early in the morning. My log-book reads: "Nita Rest, Slacks Creek, Pacific Highway. After her first day's walk Kitty O'Sullivan stopped here and drank 'oceans' of tea! May God bless and speed her on the way."

The heat was terrible, almost frightening. It was a dreary walk next day. I pushed on, crossing a bridge over the Logan River, then followed south to Beeuleigh. My road-map had to be studied here.

An hotel is passed on the right at Beeuleigh—a short distance further on the railway line is crossed on the level. Pacific Highway is then followed to the left, and the way is well defined to a subway before reaching the Albert River; cross bridge and continue south and pass through subway to Stapleton Station.

Mostly bush country is then passed through to Pimpama River. I am writing this to show how like a motorist I was—only difference, I always arrived under my own power! Of course, I had refreshments and some rest when reaching a town.

A wayside Inn, called "Yatala Hotel" (not marked on the map). S. C. Line, the proprietress, wrote in the log: "Mrs. O'Sullivan called for refreshments. Wishing her good luck. God bless her." The refreshments this nice lady gave me consisted of beaten egg, hot milk and brandy. Guess I needed the stimulant.

Leaving Stapleton, six miles further on through bush country, trees, trees and more trees. Yet, I loved bluegums, loved the Australian bush, and never tired of them. At Pimpama River I rested for a few hours. Here was something I'd never seen before —mud crabs.

A large shed opened on to the road, where tourists stopped to purchase Queensland's succulent mud crabs, selling at anything from 8/- a crab. At a table inside the shed I sat eating home-made cakes and drinking oceans of tea. A delightful change after so much bush country.

Crabs were cultivated in a dam of the river nearby. Close to the table there was a place with low concrete kerbs, wherein huge crabs crawled

about, making a shuffling sound, while others were being cooked in a vat.

Later I was invited into the house, where I bathed my feet and readjusted the bandages. Two miles further on was the township of Pimpama, where I stayed the night, leaving very early in the morning, with the best wishes of my kind hostess.

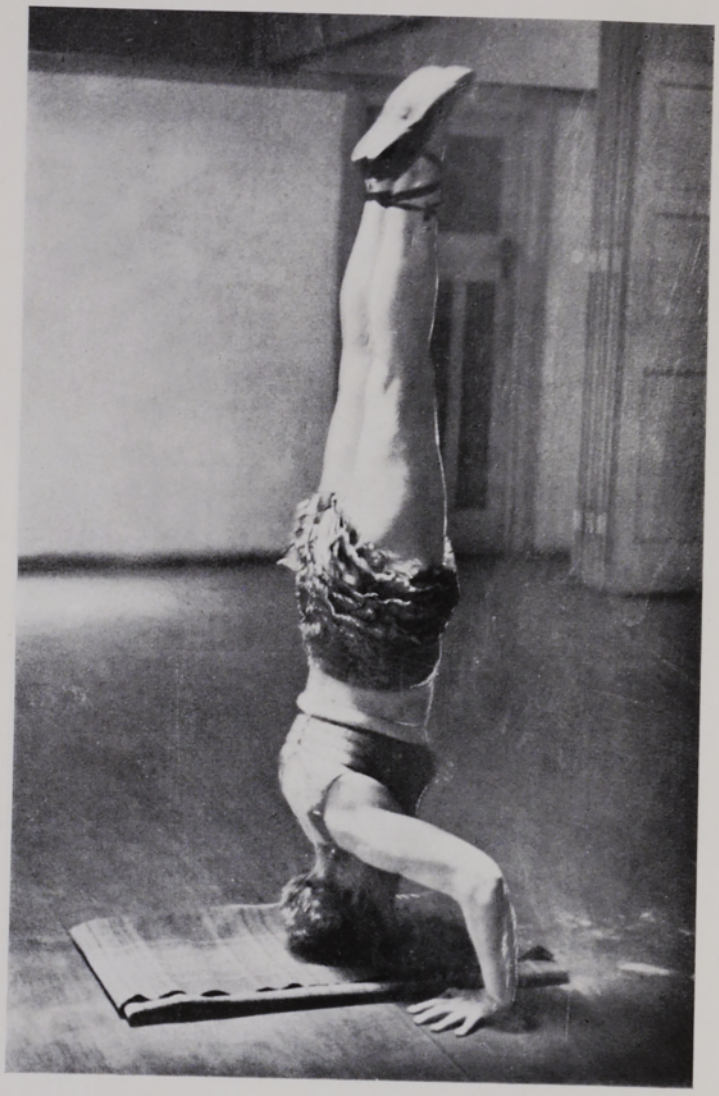
At daylight I was on the road again. Even at that early hour it was warm. Before I reached Coomera, four miles distant, my clothing was sopping with sweat, which trickled down my spine. How I detested that ruck-sack!

At a store in Coomera I had light refreshments. "Our good wishes go with her," signed by the owner. After leaving the township, the Highway for the next eleven miles was followed through timbered country to the outskirts of Southport, with scarcely any habitation. The heat through the bush was more intense, and made progress almost impossible.

At times the timber would afford a little respite from the great heat, but at noon, the sun overhead appeared like a ball of burning brass, beating me almost to the ground. Approaching the settlement, I had light refreshments at a store in Miami. My log reads: "On behalf of the Progress Association of the district, we wish you every success and many years of enjoyment of a very full life." (Signed by the President.)

It was a relief to get a level stretch of country along the waterfront to the town. That night I rested at the Pacific Hotel, Southport. After leaving Southport, the main Highway travels close to the coastline over level country to Burleigh. The heat lessened somewhat on this stretch and, at intervals, rain fell. Wearing a raincoat was impossible. I welcomed the showers. There were houses along the route now—I was making for Tweed Heads, the border between Queensland and New South Wales.

"I arrive at Sydney"



At 70 years of age — A head balance by Kitty.

There were places with aboriginal names, such as Tallebudgera Creek, Currumbin Creek, also a township by the same name. There were many bridges to be crossed, and some attractive ocean views open out on the way to Coolangatta, a short distance from Tweed Heads.

The tourist beach-house is a large, comfortable dwelling at the beach resort. I decided to spend the night, but only desired a bath and bed. The kind landlady, however, insisted I have a tray in my room. How good it was to get between sheets after long, gruelling hours on the road.

I would be away before anyone was astir next morning. My log has this entry—with a postcard photo of the hotel: "May sunshine cross your path where'er you are. Good Luck and God's speed!" (And for all this, no charge.)

On the way to the border the ocean beach was on my left. The heat was still great, but what I'd been through so far was only a prelude to what lay ahead. Alas, for after knowledge!

Passing through the Border Gates, the keeper told me that no Australian would undertake such a walk, and added, "you must have a very tough and durable heart!" Finally, he concluded with a shake of the head: "If I hadn't seen you, I could never believe it!"

Tweed Heads itself was a quiet little city—people were in bed, I imagined; it was too early to begin the day's work. I was making for Murwillumbah, 18 miles ahead. My feet were troubling me, mostly because of the great heat, and also I needed fresh rubber heels on my boots, but on all that trek there were no large towns to speak of—they called them Settlements.

Continuing south into New South Wales, the road turns and twists with the Tweed River. Many bridges are crossed until Chinderah is reached.

A Log Cabin tea rooms! What a welcome sight for tired eyes and sore feet, to say nothing of sunburn and a peeled nose. Tables were set in an old-fashioned garden. Soon I was having a royal feast of delicious dainties, home-made scones and cakes, goat's milk in my tea, and fruit salad with thick cream.

The beauty and fragrance of that flower garden will live ever in my soul. While resting in this oasis, off the hot, dusty road, the owners of the place entertained me by introducing themselves. Besides the tea rooms, they supplied passing motorists with flowers and fresh produce off the farm. My log contains a photo of a milch-goat and her kid, as well as the good wishes of these "ministering angels."

From Chinderah, the road kept ahead through the settlement. Picturesque river scenery was a feature of the trek along the Tweed to Tumbalgum. I passed through numerous sugar-cane plantations, and at places the Highway runs close to the banks of the Tweed River, the scenery being attractive all the way. Condong Sugar Mill was passed further on.

I reached Murwillumbah in the evening and stayed the night at the Terminus Hotel—after a twenty-mile trek. My feet were beginning to tell me about the hard roads. In the morning I was held up at a bootshop to have sponge rubbers put inside the heels of my boots, and a change over of rubber heels on the outside.

The chemist's shop was in another part of the town, across the Tweed River. Here I purchased cotton wool and fresh crepe bandages, and returned to the main highway again. Strange as it may seem (even though my feet were very tender), I made my best day—thirty-four miles—from Murwillumbah to Bangalow.

At a shop at Stoker's Siding, I had light refresh-

ment. Then seven miles over the Burringbar Range. The road rises through heavily timbered country and descends to the village of Burringbar on the southern side of the range.

After leaving the village the Highway continues over more hilly country. Timbered country then continues to Billinudgel. My log reads here: "We were very glad to have Kitty O'Sullivan and wish her the very best. We were glad she enjoyed her tea."—J. B. Boyle, North Coast, New South Wales.

A mile further on the coastal scenery was very attractive. Now the road passed through farming country to a bridge over the Brunswick River on the outskirts of Brunswick Heads. There was a fine view from the hill north of the bridge. From now on the entries in my log came thick and fast. "Findley's Kiosk, Brunswick Heads—called for beaten egg in milk—heat terrific!"

"Tyagardh, called for a cup of tea, which was much needed.—A. L. Snow. Heat terrific!"

The heatwave grew in intensity. My log had many notes about terrific heat, sore feet, and much-needed tea. The afternoon sun rode high in the heavens, with a blistering heat. My face, neck and hands were burnt black, making me look like a black Gin. The Highway led through more open country now, and I missed the shade of sheltering gums.

I was making for the township of Bangalow, seven miles distant, but had to rest many times by the roadside. Coming to a green patch beside a culvert, I sat down and slipped the ruck-sack from my shoulders. "You or I must go!" I spoke strongly to that pack, as I emptied the contents out on the grass. It was evident I must lessen the weight or give up the walk. Like spilt salt, I tossed things over my shoulder—silk undies and expensive face cream, etc.—and never looked behind!

A hill two miles long had to be climbed before

reaching my destination. It was dark before I reached the top and turned on to a flat, straight road. A limousine, which had overtaken me on the hill, stood in front of a large, brightly lit dwelling round the corner. Hearing the dog bark, the owner came out and invited me inside.

It was a beautiful place, much more beautiful to me after a hard, gruelling day in the heat. There were several guests there, and I was given wine and dainty cakes. The owner was R. L. Anthony, who owned large pineapple farms—a photo is pasted in my log which reads, "Pineapples in the making." Also, that late at night I had stopped for refreshments at Sunny Crest, 1½ miles from Bangalow. "Best of luck in your wanderings." He rang the proprietor of Byron Hotel to say I was on the way.

Coming out to the road from a brightly lit room made the outside world appear inky black. Tall trees on either side added to the gloom. The distance to the town seemed much greater in the dark. It gripped me like a nightmare as, keeping to the middle of the road, I tried to hurry forward.

Eventually, I reached the lights of the town, crossed a railway bridge, then continued down the main street to Byron Hotel, which stood at the southern end. The time was 9.30 p.m. A small group of townspeople, including the Police Sergeant, waited at the Hotel to welcome me.

It was nice of them—only they couldn't know how I craved to get the bandages off my poor feet, have a bath and climb into bed. However, I couldn't rush away, no matter how bad I felt, and it was quite late before I did so.

This hotel was first-class—the bath was hot, the lovely bed soft—yet sleep evaded me! Nevertheless, I rose early next morning, but my hostess was there before me. Evidently she intended that I should have breakfast.

Situations which appeared to be overwhelming in the darkness faded out in daylight. How humbly grateful I am for the many kindnesses showered upon me by those lovely Australian people. Their writings in my log-book "sparkle" as I read them over while writing this book. A symbol of the power of Love!

CHAPTER IV.

How Tough is the Task.

Hilly, farming country was my portion for the next day. Fifteen gruelling miles over rugged country roads from Bangalow to Ballina. Steep grades and long stretches without habitation. Two settlements only on the way—Newrybar and Knockrow. Farm houses, mostly, stood far back from the Highway; the heat warned me not to add extra mileage, even to secure that precious and most necessary "cuppa."

Four entries in my log-book for that day, and all were for tea! One at Knockrow read: "Had beaten egg and milk—we were proud and pleased to have met such a wonderful woman—God bless her." Another wrote: "Our great-grandmother has just arrived and is having a cup of tea—Good Luck and God Bless." Strange how many people on my walks have asked God's blessing for me.

There appeared to be a certain protective force, too, ever since I set out on my first walk in New Zealand. These good people who supplied my modest needs were like "ministering angels" unto me.

There wasn't anything of interest to see on that day's trek. The highway was well defined, over hilly, farming country. Approaching Ballina, the grades became easier, and level going continued to the main street in Ballina. I am logged as staying the night with kind friends, who state "I'm welcome to stay, and wish me every happiness and safe journey in my undertaking." (181 River Street, Ballina.)

Next day was a Sunday. From Ballina to Woodburn my map and log-book clocked me at 23 miles. The main street of Ballina is followed in a westerly direction through the centre of the town. The way ahead is followed to Burns Point ferry, where the Richmond River is crossed.

After six miles in roasting waves of heat, a small settlement named Empire Vale was reached. The lady reported per log—"Very hot," and that I had a short rest and "God Bless." Another entry, Empire Vale: "Mrs. O'Sullivan has called and is having a rest out of the dreadful heat—we are very pleased to meet her—she is really lovely."

For the next nine miles, picturesque river scenery characterises the road along the Highway to Broadwater. How many mighty rivers were crossed on that Pacific trek—all infested by sharks. Massive reinforced concrete bridges spanned the turbulent waters. The Hawkesbury—the greatest!

Two entries from East Wardell. One read: "Sheltering from a bad storm—the heat has been terrible." Along this stretch I now had the river on my right—the left, sugar-cane plantations (infested by black snakes).

The sun still rode high. The sweltering heat beat me to the ground. Perhaps some shrub or a tall bush along the path by the riverbank offered momentary shade, and I was grateful. Then I'd strike out on the Highway again, passing through larger sugar-cane plantations and banana crops.

There were many nice homes, too, around the township of Broadwater. Passing through, my log reads: "Had tea and a good rest—wishing her every success and a safe journey."

Next log entry was: "Woodburn, Richmond River. Had tea and rest—heat terrible."

I had difficulty in securing accommodation in the settlement of Woodburn, where I intended to

spend the night. Being Sunday made it awkward. However, there was a Post and Telegraph Exchange office. The young man in the exchange rang several places trying to get me a bed. To make matters worse, a storm blew up and rain fell in torrents. I was marooned at the Post Office. And herein lies a story.

A very special ministering angel, in the person of a charming young lady, arrived to take charge of the telegraph at nine o'clock. Both surprised and pleased to see me, she at once set about making much-needed tea. She, too, 'phoned several places to find me a bed—none was available.

Then a bright idea came to her. She was engaged to a young engineer who owned a garage and large workshops at the end of the town that I'd pass on my way next day. Sometimes he slept at the garage. A corner of the building was boarded-off like a bach. This she decided was where I should sleep.

When the young gentleman called later to drive her to her mother's home (at the end of the town), she unfolded her plan—he could stay at her place. He drove away to collect fresh linen for the bed and tidy the bach before I took over. Then they both drove with me to my strange digs. I would be on the road early in the morning, so this Angel named "Clarice" logged as follows:—

"Woodburn—Have seen Mrs. O'Sullivan safely in a cot for the night—may good luck be with her always—Post Office, Woodburn."

They left me to bolt the big main doors on the inside. The oil lamps cast eerie shadows as I passed along the workshop to my room. Clarice had boiled some water for me to bathe my feet, and as I sat on the bed with them in a tin dish, and rolled the bandages, my heart was full of humble gratitude.

Surely a great protective force surrounded me.

In all my travels of record making, never once was I allowed to sleep out, although many times I arrived late at night.

Waking in strange surroundings wasn't anything new. My first thought was for my feet. Placing thick layers of cotton wool on the soles, I bandaged them carefully before placing them in the big boots. The rest of my toilet was over in a jiffy. I opened the big doors to a wet world.

Having arrived in the dark, I was amazed to find the garage stood off the road in a grassed patch. A house cow grazed outside the door, and my first step was a big boot into the middle of a huge cow-pat! I climbed through a fence on to the Highway, which again led on through timbered country, over roads of worn gravel and some ten miles of bitumen.

From Woodburn to Maclean was one of the strangest trips on the trek. Not even a settlement—habitations were few and far apart. My map reads: "Nothing of particular note on the run." My log reads: "Trees—8-mile gates, via Woodburn." That I arrived at 11 a.m., refuelled (with oceans of tea), and "gave an interesting description of her unique feat." Toll-gates here were also called tick-gates, where cattle and sheep passing through were examined for sheep tick.

Several cattlemen were engaged in this work at stockyards beside the Highway. A large, old-fashioned dwellinghouse, with steps leading to a wide balcony, looked most inviting. People sat or reclined in easy chairs—having refreshments. Another oasis, and was I thirsty and hungry? In my haste to accept an invitation I almost tumbled over my own feet.

There was a long rest here. Everybody complained about the heat (temperature 98deg.). I enjoyed lots of tropical fruit, as well as oceans of tea.

One of the guests—a learned elderly gentleman—sketched a small plan of the road ahead. "The paucity of habitation makes it necessary for one on foot," he said.

He 'phoned ahead to another tick-gate keeper, at 14-mile peg, Clarence Road, to keep a lookout for me. Belts of thick trees on either side of a heavily loose-metalled road, lined the Highway, with only one break in front of the keeper's shack, which stood back a distance from the road. There wasn't another shelter in twelve miles. Then my aged friend signed his name in the log. He wrote: "Proud to have my name carried about by such an interesting and wonderful person."—Charles P. Hardy.

Out into the merciless heat again, and soon I was climbing the Richmond Range. Rugged terrain over mountainous places—the world to myself. My clothes were beginning to rot off, with sweat and rough weather. I started from Sydney weighing 8 stone; now my clothes were hanging loosely on my small body, but in myself I was 100% fit. Scarcely had I started the ascent of the mountain than a big motor car stopped beside me. "How far are you going?" asked the man at the wheel, while his passengers looked out at me with evident pity. "To Sydney," I told him. "Well, we can give you a lift part of the way." "Thanks, but I'm walking; I'm New Zealand's Great-grandmother." "Great Scott! you're not the lady doing a record, are you?" "That's me—yes! I know I'm looking pretty dirty—getting more like one of Doble's masterpieces every day." They tried to load me with fruit that I couldn't carry. Besides, I'd had a wonderful lunch at the "Tolls Gate."

As I climbed the mountain range the summit appeared remote in cumulus cloud. Bending forward and making zig-zag turns like a horse and cart, I tried to lighten my arduous task.

A fantastic figure with a plum-duff pack resting in the hollow of my back. How long it took to reach the top I cannot say—only that it seemed extraordinarily high, and beyond that just a vast nothingness.

A blood red sun sank behind gathering storm clouds. The air was too thick to breathe. The long road ahead looked dark with its thick avenue of trees. Fearfully, I tried to quicken my pace, as I kept to the middle of the road, which changed from bad to worse, so that my efforts at speed were frustrated.

A hidden moon made borders of uncanny light. Suddenly a great fear seized me. What if I should go past the opening at the tick-keeper's shack! How foolish to be so fearful in the night. "Thank God," I said fervently—at last the break in the trees. A light shone from a house back off the road.

In answer to my calls, two men came out to meet me (one carried a hurricane lamp) and escorted me inside. And herein lies another story.

It was quite a step from the Highway, through a paddock of long grass. There wasn't any path. It was the queerest habitation I'd ever seen—there wasn't any door! We entered by a clay passage beside a raised platform the entire length of the room, evidently the living room. A bright lamp stood on the table. There was a long form against the wall on the inside of the table, and a bunk at the head. The men had been playing cards while waiting for me. This time the ministering angels were men.

My poor feet were giving me particular "fits." Trying to hurry on the metal roads, after the mountain, and the fear of missing the shack, had taken its toll. Soon I was seated on the bunk with my feet in a small tub of steaming hot water, a tasty hot meal before me that I tried to eat for politeness sake. I gradually recovered.

The host, who owned the shack, explained that his work was riding through back country to examine cattle on the ranches. His home was at Grafton, which I would pass through, and that sometimes his wife came and stayed a few days. Two weeks before they had lost their only daughter. Everyone had their own special sorrow, he concluded.

His friend worked a road-grader on a certain section of the highway, and lived in a hut on the opposite side of the road. He himself employed a boy to look after the horses and do odd jobs. Luckily, the boy was away for the night, so I could have his bunk in the harness shed, not far from the shack.

Then from a wooden trunk he took sheets and pillowslips, the other ministering angel carried the lamp. My slippers were the big boots, and we set off through the long grass for the stable. The bunk, too, was on a kind of platform like the shack, and after making it comfortable, they left the lamp, telling me not to be afraid, and to come to the shack for breakfast before leaving.

The grader-Angel said he'd look out for me on the road next day. In the lamplight my surroundings looked fantastic. An old Ford car stood facing me. An assortment of harness hung from rafters and from the walls, while sacks of horse feed were piled round the door.

Somehow sleep evaded me, as it often did when I was overtired and my muscles were strained and painful. As I lay between clean sheets and watched the flickering lamplight, none of it seemed real. These two Australian gentlemen had received and tended to my needs as if I were a little girl entrusted to their care!

Towards daylight the lamp spluttered and went out. The stable surroundings looked ghostly in the dawn. I could hear the horses outside cropping

grass, and once or twice they bumped against the wall. As soon as it was light enough I sat up and began to prepare my feet for another day. That they were swollen didn't alarm me. It happened on all the other "walks," and they remained in that condition for some time after a trek was finished.

A horse's legs will swell if kept on a hard road over long distances, and it's a proven fact that it will give in before a man.

Now, on opening the stable door, I was greeted by one of the horses, who quickly thrust his head inside, and his nose into a bag of oats nearest the door.

The shack comprised one other room—a kitchen with the usual fireplace—so large that a man could stand upright while he cooked. Cooking utensils hung from hooks above a large grate of glowing coals. The charming host served breakfast—bacon and eggs, rounds of buttered toast, and delicious tea. Never before or since have I enjoyed a meal so much.

He accompanied me to the gate of the horse paddock, while I walked out on to the road, and waved the farewell that I couldn't speak. Determined to conquer the rough roads, I trudged steadily on, soon to be overtaken by the grader. At least he was clearing a path through the rough places, and I followed in his wake. Of course, I couldn't keep up with him. As it was, moisture began to ooze through the sleeves of my coat.

"Give me the pack and peel off your jacket," he said. "I'll wait for you at the boundary where I meet the other grader." Soon he was far ahead. There was a smooth path now, and light rain began to fall, so I made good progress; but Oh, the dreadful thirst —it must have been the bacon and eggs. On reaching the boundary, I found a truck as well as the two graders, and several workmen repairing the road.

Quenching my thirst from a tank on the truck, I collected my things from the grader, who passed me on to the other grader, going my way, telling him to supply me with lunch at the schoolroom, two miles further on.

From 14-mile peg, Clarence Road, my log reads: "That I arrived at 8 p.m. and rested there for the night—a very interesting and learned person—may she have a safe journey for the rest of the way to Sydney." —Signed by both the ministering Angels (who were real Australians).

So many people keep asking me such questions as, "Where did you sleep? How did you find your way? Weren't you afraid in the dark?"—and so on —that I'm writing in detail some of the most important facts that may be of interest to the reader.

CHAPTER V.

Come, Walk with Me.

Come! Let me take you along the Highway! Your judgment will mean a great deal to me. Although there were many peculiarly difficult problems to be faced at times, I could still laugh at myself —see the funny side.

There's nothing wrong with that, is there? Nothing of high-flown vanity in what I write? It is for you that I make this book. Please accept it as such.

There were other things besides: roads full of pot-holes, and polished boulders that dotted the iron hard surface, where one had to keep one's eyes down, looking like a game of housie-housie; hilly and winding, steep upgrades corrugated on corners, and worn metal; then long stretches of flat, timbered country, over rough, scoured surfaces (from flood waters).

Thunder and lightning were God-inspiring. The merciless lashing of the wind and rain alarmed me at first. There wasn't any of the "it can't happen to me" feeling about all this. I was scared! I was burnt black, my palms white, my clothes rotting off, yet my only thought was for my feet. I twisted an ankle on one of the boulders and limped along for fourteen days. There was never a thought of giving up.

At this stage, the giant mosquitoes put in their claim—my looks were not improved after meeting up with them. Fortunately, a friend in Sydney had

presented me with a mosquito veil. "You'll need it in the bush," she said.

With the veil draped over my helmet, and a branch of gum-sapling in my right hand, I switched it like a horse's tail over my shoulders to keep the enemy at bay. Left to my own devices on long stretches in the solitude of the bush, I conjured up thoughts that made a world of difference as I walked —to study first-hand from nature, find out nature's secrets. Yea, the deep things of God.

The rhythm of carillon bells from Cathedrals were not half as grand as the song of birds in the Australian bush. My friends, the Kookaburras, were sure to greet me in the early mornings. I had learned to love them when walking the Hume Highway years before.

Another little feathered friend would follow along in the tree-tops. His imitation of a man whistling his dog at first startled me, making me halt suddenly in my stride. He had other notes, too, which I tried to imitate, and this happened many times along the way. Then the whip-bird, who had copied the crack of a stockman's whip—the long swishing sound and quick staccato bark—the glittering rays of sunshine through tall gums—and the chorus of numerous birds, with their similarities and contrasts, were superbly realistic. There wasn't any time for loneliness.

Sometimes in boisterous weather I travelled in pouring rain, the dye from a blue raincoat staining my hands purple. Then the sun would come out, and patches of blue sky made shadows which seemed to move along with me.

And now back to the school-house for some refreshment after that sprint over the track made by the Grader Angel who handed me over to a truck driver that would get me the much-needed "cuppa."

Naturally, I expected to meet the school teacher. And being mid-day, the children would be playing in the grounds. Instead, large timber and logging trucks were parked there. The workmen were busy preparing their lunch, which they set out on tables along the school verandah.

"Come on in and get your tea," they called, as I stood bewildered on the road. "This is a real surprise," I told them, as I sat on a stool with a large piece of plum cake in one hand and a mug of delicious tea in the other. I learned that the "Mororo" school was a disused building now. Children were taken by bus to the nearest township.

It had become the meeting place where roadmen and lumber workers congregated to make their lunch. Each man had his own locker and provided his own fare. Providence provided for me again, through these men. And I thanked them. One signed my log "that passing through I'd had my tea" with them. "Wishing her the best of everything in Australia."—Signed, The Old School-house. In a short time the playground was empty—the men and motors had vanished.

Shouldering my pack, I strode off, thinking it could all have been a dream. I noted, too, that they hadn't washed up the dishes—how like men!

The road led through sparsely timbered country, flat and dusty, with not a house in sight, and not a breath of wind, as I sweltered along.

With eyes trained on the distant landscape, I fancied that something white fluttered amongst the thin foliage close to the Highway. Perhaps a house —and that meant tea—the panacea for all my ills. The thought made tired feet hasten. The distance lessened. It was really a house—washing on the line and, best of all, a mangoe tree laden with fruit and hanging over the fence.

An old gentleman with a grey beard leaned his arms on a wooden gate in front of the house. "We've been on the lookout for you," he greeted, as he opened the gate and invited me inside. What beneficence. It was one of my extra lucky days. The good wife sat in an old-fashioned armchair on the low verandah, peeling fruit.

How peaceful it all seemed. With its beautiful garden and well-kept paths, it looked like paradise to me after the road. Let my log-book tell you the rest. The place was Chatsworth Island, Mororo, on Pacific Highway. "Mrs. O'Sullivan sat eating mangoes for half an hour today and enjoyed them, especially as they were picked fresh from the tree—I hope she will come back to enjoy some this time next year." But my kind "Angel" didn't say that, as well as mangoes, she supplied me with a tray of cakes and cups and cups of tea.

Greatly refreshed and refuelled by the tea, I set off once more, over Mororo Bridge, where the north arm of the Clarence River is crossed. On the southern side of the river the Highway goes to the right. After crossing the Island and a bridge on Serpentine Creek, it then passes over on to Harwood Island, at the southern end of which the Clarence River is crossed by ferry, opposite the Morpith Hotel, where I rested the night. Everybody at the hotel came out to wish me God speed. Crossing this wide river by ferry, one could imagine what it looked like when major floods came from the catchment areas far up river.

From the ferry, the way was unmistakable along the river to Maclean, one of the few large townships on the Pacific Highway. Here I made some necessary purchases, enjoyed a rest in a tea room, and had lots of ice cream. Logged as "having called for ice cream and wishing her good luck on her journey."

No time was wasted at Maclean. Continuing

along, Pacific Highway keeps ahead. It is easy going along the southern arm of Clarence River to Shark Creek Bridge and Tyndale. The road now passed through picturesque surroundings, and I loved to walk beside the river.

The day was hot, and my right ankle, that I'd twisted the day before, was painful and much swollen. This slowed me up, and, worse still, I walked with a limp. It wasn't so bad if I kept going, but every time I started, it was like having a stiff neck—an experience we've all been up against at one time or another. I made funny noises like a dog barking—Ouh! Ouh! Ouh! till I got going again. And this condition continued as the roads led over tortuous, winding country, and added considerably to my discomfort.

Regretfully, I watched the lengthening shadows that warned not to be left out in the dark. I was trying to reach a place called Cowper on my map. Darkness had fallen—there were no habitations and nothing I could do about it but forge ahead.

So many unpredictable forces surround us in our daily lives, and I appeared to be having more than my share. Keeping my eyes on the middle of the road, I was suddenly halted. What looked like a house being carried on a logging truck blocked the way. Men's voices raised in argument brought me round to the front.

One man was trying to persuade a boy to climb into the cattle frame on top of the truck, which contained a huge bull. "Go on," he called to the lad, "it can't hurt you, it's tied up." Then I limped into the headlights. The boy paused half-way up the frame. The man at the wheel got out of the cab. He had one boot on and the other foot bare. The first man just stood and stared. Then, "Who might you be?" he questioned.

When I explained, they couldn't believe it, and wanted to lift me bodily into the cab. Again I explained that I must walk. "How far to Cowper? or is there a house near," I asked. Without a word the spokesman led me across the road to a gate and, putting me inside, told me to follow a track across the paddock till I came to a farmhouse, where I'd meet the finest lady in New South Wales.

The bark of a dog made me cautious, as I paused by the backyard gate. A door opened, and a stream of light flooded the path. When a lady appeared I tried to explain my mission, only fame had preceded me.

Taking my arm, she almost lifted me inside and placed me in a big chair before the kitchen fire. She was a large, motherly person. The large, comfortable room, brightly lit by lamps hung from the ceiling, reflected her personality. Yes, she knew all about me.

She belonged to the housewives guild of the Brushgrove district. "Couldn't I stay to give a talk for the Club—just one day?" Only that morning she and her husband had arrived back from Sydney, after a few days' shopping. All this and more she related, while she made a hot tub for my feet and set the tea table beside the fire.

"You just sit where you are," she said, adding more hot water to the tub. I hadn't any desire to move, I assured her, as I looked on the nicely browned crust of a steaming hot steak and kidney pie. A tray with my dinner rested on my lap, while these good ministering angels sat at the table.

After supper, I dried my feet while she rolled the bandages. "How do you manage for stockings?" she asked. "That's quite a problem, and especially in wet weather," I replied. With that she hurried away, to return with a pillowslip full of discarded

hose, all colours and made mostly of silk, which she emptied out on the floor.

My worries about stockings were over, as I watched this good lady (surely the finest in the world) as she ran a hand through each hose, regardless of colour, exclaiming—"no holes in that one," and rolling them in pairs. She did so many that my pack bulged and some had to be taken out.

Later, when on the trek, I found that the silk had perished, hence ladders ran riot, making the stockings look like lace, against the big boots—it was a melting sight.

Needless to say, while all this was taking place I'd forgotten the world outside. And I might add that the Highway led through wilderness and country more wild than any already traversed. Sydney was forgotten; as for the Langridge School, the memory had faded completely.

That night I rested in a lovely soft double bed, a small shape, far from the city crowds. Each day as I walked (or limped) along was widely varied—some with fascinating occurrences. There are, however, a few shining exceptions worthy of note—such as my present benefactor. I shall write in full her entry in my log. It reads: "Kitty O'Sullivan arrived here when the light of the day was gone, birds had gone to rest, flowers had fallen to sleep. With her journey ended for the day, she will rest for the night; but on the morrow she will go forth again on her pilgrimage, to offer her good message to the less fortunate than herself. May her faith and God's greatest blessing of health remain with her to her journey's end."

CHAPTER VI.

When the Destination is Desirable

Expectation speeds our progress. A gentle philosophy that I had often studied now seemed out of place as I tried to adapt myself to unpleasant circumstances. At first I was heartened by the thought —how soldiers who were frequently marching, had to do a lot of training as well. It was desirable that I reach Sydney in a given time.

I had trained and I was fit! But after marching over the next few hundred miles, through mud and slush and roads of broken rock, as well as colossal hills, it left me thoroughly disillusioned.

How could Mr. Tom Langridge (who must have known his own country) allow me to take the route over Pacific Highway? Motor traffic rarely used this route.

Occasionally a Pioneer Tours coach passed. There wasn't anything glamorous about me as I limped along, and I avoided them if possible. Then one day I met the coach going to Brisbane. It was a fair catch! The distinguished looking tourist passengers were deeply interested. "How are you making for time?" they questioned eagerly. "Getting along splendidly, thank you, only for the roads, which are a nightmare, even in daytime," and I added that it was really unimportant, anyway. "Would you like a juicy papaya—they're most refreshing?" smiled an old gentleman as he handed out the fruit.

They asked numerous questions, which I answered readily enough, thinking how comfortable

they looked in their de luxe coach. From my vantage point on the hot, dusty road, I noticed, too, that many of them, especially the males, sported a "dewlap" (loose flesh that hangs from the throat). No, I'd not change places with any of them! With their departure I felt as if I'd escaped into rarified atmosphere.

Most of the families I'd met on this back road of the Coast were people of small pretensions—with hearts of gold, their welcome always a feature of the journey. Another meeting with a Pioneer Tours Coach was very different, and although it happened near the end of my trek, may not be out of place here. To save the reader being bored by my constant lament about the hard roads, I much prefer to write about the people, and shall explain later what happened at Mount Kuring-gai when I reached there.

Jim Geran, c/o Pioneer Tours, Brisbane, writes in my log: "As driver of a Pioneer Coach over the Pacific Highway, Brisbane to Sydney, I know it as a very tough drive, let alone a walk, and I take off my cap to a very indomitable spirit, which must have kept Mrs. Kitty O'Sullivan cheerful, as I found her in Mount Kuring-gai—a fine effort!"

It was rather lonesome leaving Brushwood, and the kind lady who made me forget the Highway for one night—but not for long. Logged at Cowper as having stopped for a few minutes to eat a mangoe. Then South to Ulmarra: logged as having much-needed refreshment at Vogees Cafe!

The next entry is South Grafton, eight miles ahead. It was mostly easy going and the way well defined. Approaching the town, the Pacific Highway for Coff's Harbour bears to the left, and those who are continuing straight through on the highway follow this route.

Grafton town is reached by leaving the Pacific Highway and turning to the left under the railway

bridge at South Grafton, and then turning right, later crossing the Clarence River Bridge (double-deck), into Grafton. Darkness had fallen long before I reached the turnoff. Utter confusion attended me, and I was almost exhausted by trying to reach a place to spend the night—a very trying experience.

Grafton's town planning appeared to be a higgledy-piggledy jumble. Bits of it here and bits of it there. At length I inquired from a man, "How far to the police station?"—this being the correct procedure in a strange town. The Sergeant's name was O'Brian. I was O'Sullivan. Graciously he accompanied me to the Great Northern Hotel. The proprietor's name was O'Connor. "I ask you?"

The hour was late. Mr. O'Connor was the only one not in bed. He conducted me upstairs (my legs were stiffening and painful), showed me the bath—thank God there was boiling water—told me the number of my room, and departed downstairs. As I lay in that hot bath I thanked God for all His care.

Again I was to rest in an elaborate double bed—it was my first introduction to a mosquito curtain, hung from a frame over the bed, and covering it entirely. From now on the mosquitoes would accompany me on the journey. Scarcely had I seemed to be in bed than it was time to rise again. A nice waitress supplied me with toast and tea. Mr. O'Connor was at the desk—"let me see," he said; "five shillings for the bed and one shilling for the toast and tea."

Perhaps the good man may have mistaken me for some celebrity travelling incognito. However, he signed the log—brevity his motto—that I had arrived late at night, at the Great Northern Hotel—"she is very interesting to talk to." I'm sure I didn't say more than a few words.

Let's take it from here—where the real battle

of roads began. A study of the next four pages of the road-map clocked the distance 230 miles. The broad line marking Pacific Highway is heavily crossed with ink, where I was clocked off each day. Along the margin of each page I made notes after this fashion: 18 miles rain—devil's road and rain—bad rain—floods ahead—day of bad weather—rain and shocking roads—terrible road—more shocking roads. And then a detour over a clay road—the most dreadful trip of all, of roads and rain.

These four pages in my map really deserve a frame. My spirit never sagged. There wasn't anything sluggish about the pace I kept, though I limped, yet it was futile to try for big days.

Leaving Grafton Hotel, I made my way back on to the Pacific Highway. For a short distance small houses lined a hilly street. Then open spaces, with only two stops in 18 miles. Heavy rain lasted all day. I had been going steadily forward for several hours, when, lo—a house! With water running off my raincoat like a water-spout, I made my way round to the back door. The family were ready to sit down to lunch, set out on a broad verandah. The place was owned by the State Foreman, who signed the log: "That I called about mid-day in heavy rain. We were all very pleased to meet her—we were just about to have lunch, so we helped her to refreshments. Wishing her all the best on her endurance test, which seems extraordinary for a person of her age." They were a lovely family.

Greatly refreshed and cheered after meeting this family, I lost no time in pushing on again. The rain was my constant companion, and as I tramped along, I soliloquised. No longer was I anxious to get back to Sydney. Probably as never before, I realised this walk I was engaged in wasn't a time limit affair, but a mission of goodwill and a message of good health to these people on the back roads of the Coast.

How some aspects of life can be made easier, and a pleasant smile can win you the world, a gloomy outlook chases all good things away, and hope deferred maketh the heart sick.

My mind teaming with ideas, every mile I walked brought me nearer to some lonely housewife or sorrowing family. Many paper reporters on other walks, as well as this one, tried to drag my secret from me. What were my thoughts as I tramped out the miles? Though they bored into me like the mosquitoes did, I never told them.

I was on a stretch of tar-sealed road in open country and could see far ahead. What appeared to be a large shed with openings for windows, but no glass, stood close to the road. A woman stood at one of the windows. As I approached, she came out to meet me. She had been on the lookout for her grand-daughter, who travelled on the School bus, and seeing me in the distance, wondered who it might be, as nobody ever came that way on foot.

Thinking there might have been a car accident, she waited. Was I seeking help? When I explained my mission, she invited me inside. It was a comfortable place, even though it was old-fashioned. The table was set for tea, and a big plate of pancakes was on the stove. As she got busy over the teacups her grand-daughter arrived, and we sat at table to enjoy hot buttered pancakes.

The lady wondered at my being so small. Reading about me in the newspaper, she imagined I'd be a tall woman with a walking-stick. She pressed me to stay the night, as it was five miles to the next habitation and would be dark before I reached there.

Logged as "having called at Box 297, 13-mile peg, Mrs. O'Sullivan had refreshments, and feeling well and doing well. Pancakes much appreciated, and I was very pleased to see her—God bless her."

And so once again I shouldered my pack and walked out into the rain.

How often my treks involved the lives and fortunes of many people. It's worth all it costs when you enter with open eyes. Try to understand their lives and share their work and worries. In fact, it was difficult to get an early start in the morning because they held on to me. A lady seeing me to the gate, or across a paddock, as it often happened—to show me a short cut—would beg me to stay for another day. "You look so small to be out on these lonely roads," she would say, the tears in her eyes, as she held my hands. And I'm not ashamed to admit that tears came often to my own eyes, and looking back before I turned some bend on the highway, they would still be standing to wave good-bye.

Long before reaching my destination darkness had fallen. Over the last two miles, tall, thick trees on either side of the road made it darker still. A watery moon cast a dismal light as it sailed over the tree tops. How long ago it seemed since I'd had those pancakes.

Suddenly I found myself in the open again. The lights from a small Inn right in front of me. The place was called Halfway Creek P.O., via South Grafton. It was also a store and wine saloon. Logged as "having arrived at eight o'clock in pouring rain—had refreshments, a hot bath, and the best night's rest so far—I am sorry she can't stay longer with us."

My hostess was another one of those "special" ministering angels. Her husband having died only a short time before, she was left with three nice boys, who helped her with the business. She couldn't do enough for me. I slept in a feather bed, with the novelty again of a mosquito netting over me.

On leaving next morning, she said I'd find a small store off the highway on the right, where I

could obtain cotton wool for my feet, as well as refreshments. Duly I arrived at this store, and was logged: "At 10 a.m. had refreshments, and was overjoyed on getting a roll of cotton wool." Henceforth I must remember people by some service rendered. I cannot sign their names as in my log. I've not asked their permission, and not thinking of writing this book—it's too late now.

CHAPTER VII.

The Eternal Hills

The way gets tougher. The road rose steeply as I climbed laboriously to the top. It's a wonder I'm not hump-backed from bending forward on the hills.

The worst day of the trek clocked to my credit —only ten miles, though it seemed like a thousand as I dragged my sick ankle over the rough roads. Speaking aloud, I tried to coax my feet. "Come along, little doggies, you must walk—you can't let me down, you can't let New Zealand down, or anybody else." Then I prayed! If this walk costs me my life—I must go forward! There wasn't a house in sight and I met no one. As I study my map and log, while writing this book, although my feet are not walking, my spirit is with those dear people. I'm seeing you—talking to each one and blessing you all, as you so often asked God's blessing on me! Only for your encouragement and kindness I should never have finished the walk.

On reaching the summit after my long climb, I found a broad, tar-sealed road, so steep that it needed great care to descend. It was a long way down to the flat country. Close to the highway (at a place called Dirty Creek) was a two-roomed shack built on a clearance in the bush.

A young bushman, his wife and little girl, lived there. Am logged as—having arrived at 2-15 p.m.— and the usual refreshments.

The lady said they had a newspaper with my photo that her little girl treasured. The memory

makes me shudder. It was the one in front of a mirror that made me appear like balloon tyres. They were deeply concerned about my swollen ankle. "You'll need a good, strong stick to help you over the hills," the husband said, as he went into the bush and returned with a sapling, which he whittled down to smoothness and presented to me. It was a long, rounded pole, that I could dig into the ground and take the weight off my foot, then trail it and dig in again, like a ski stick. My hosts came to the road to see me off. I assured them that I was grateful, and started away full of pep, thinking how like one of the Patriarchs of old I must look, and hoped I'd not meet a Pioneer Tours coach.

Again I met no one as I trudged on. The day was Saturday. The sun was sinking and still no habitation in sight. Then I met a man driving some house cows along the road. He directed me to a house further along. "They are sure to take you," he said, "and besides, there's not another place till you reach Woolgoolga." At last I came to a wooden gate that opened into a cattle paddock. A large house with a fence round it stood well back off the road. I entered and closed the gate, then crossed the paddock to the house gate. A young woman came out and opened it for me. She seemed rather puzzled until I explained who I was. Then she invited me inside.

Surely these places and ministering angels were provided for me by unseen hands? It couldn't be mere accident—it happened in all of the 3,600 miles of my record walks!

A young mother was in the process of bathing her two young children while I worked frantically to free my feet from the bandages. How I managed to walk the last 10 miles I don't know.

"If you can wait," the young mother said, "I'll fill the bath and you can get right in instead of just

bathing your feet." The young person who had let me in the gate brought methylated spirit to mop the stinging pain from my feet. She was a younger sister, also married, and she and her husband had come to spend the week-end. It was heavenly to stretch out in a hot bath. What kindness! Also, they supplied a wrap and insisted I should sit at table for a hot meal. I learned that their mother had passed away only a month previously. Their dad was a broken-hearted man. He and two sons owned a logging plant and timber mills, and would soon be home for tea. Eventually these three stalwarts arrived, and I was introduced. It was a large family round the table. Anyway, for a while at least we all forgot our troubles, and much merriment was caused when the younger sister tried to describe what I looked like coming along the highway with a long stick, and then entering at the gate. "Come and have a look," she called to her sister, "whatever is it?" No wonder they looked so puzzled. Someone masquerading—but as what? Seeing me nice and clean in the wrap they provided, and full of laughter, they tried to ply me with all the good things on the table. At least I must sample a banana off the tree!

Most houses in Queensland, and going south to Sydney, are built on stout posts, high off the ground. Broad verandahs for shade as well as for sleeping purposes are very popular. In one of these beds, with its net curtain, I was to sleep. Explaining that I'd be on the road at five next morning, the log was signed overnight. It reads: "Corindi, Clarence, via Coff's Harbour—that I'd arrived at 5.30 p.m.—had supper and several cups of tea and sampled a banana —staying the night and leaving at 5 o'clock in the morning—Best Wishes."

One of the sons wrote: "To remind Mrs. K. O'Sullivan of the timber country of Corindi, which she is passing through on her great walk—all the best from Dick." Also, he drew "the stick," and put

a photo of a huge logging truck loaded with giants of the forest.

I never closed an eye all night. Unknown to me, a dog slept under the verandah. His movements suggested perhaps a snake wriggling around, and besides, my feet pained terribly. Early that sabbath morning I was out of bed, thinking I'd limp away before anyone was astir, but the dad was there before me. "No you don't," he said, "trying to steal away like that," and he insisted I sit down to toast, fresh eggs and a great pot of tea! "It's seven miles to Woolgoolga, you know, and how can you last without fuel?" After the meal, he handed me the walking stick, saying, "don't trouble about how you look, just keep going—God bless you." Trying hard not to limp till out of sight, I leaned heavily on the stick, and turning at the road gate to wave farewell to my host, who hadn't moved, made a lump come into my throat. Sorrow had entered many homes on that long trek, and I wept for the pain that must be in their hearts. God would not let me fail. Why did I carry a stick—and as soon as I got out of sight of that home I stood and heaved the long sapling over a fence. In fact, it was hard work dragging it along.

Seven miles is quite a tidy step—usually I covered three miles an hour, but not that day. The roads were winding and undulating—toboggan country I called it. Climbing up and down and each time on reaching a ridge—what have you? Just more ridges, only some higher than others.

Then rounding a bend on the highway I saw a large building on a hill a long way off. Thinking I couldn't ever climb that for tea, I just limped along, not caring much about anything. More winding roads, and I lost sight of the house on the hill, and kept on winding and climbing—then a long road with straggled houses, around another bend, and I stood right in front of Sea View Hotel, Woolgoolga.

Logged: "Mrs. O'Sullivan arrived here after travelling over very rough roads—enjoyed morning tea—all best wishes from Woolgoolga."

The lady must have read about the tea drinking, for she brought the hotel kitchen teapot, and the most delicious sandwiches—but her husband beat her in the race to serve me. He came with a large glass of wine, saying, "drink that first—you look all in." These nice people were personal friends of Tom Langridge. How glad I was that I'd rid myself of the stick. Should he ever hear about that stick he'd not forgive me. I've not carried one since, and trust I never will.

Greatly refreshed—as much from the kindness of the people as from the food—I lost no time getting under way again.

Only a short distance away a small car was stopped in front of a fruit shop. Evidently the people in the car had been buying fruit, and as I came abreast of them they called me over. Deeply interested, they had been on the lookout, and were delighted at meeting me. They insisted on loading me with fruit—grapes, bananas and oranges. The heat was intense.

On the margin of my map is written "Devil's Road," and as I pushed along the iron surface I thought ruefully, "Will I always be on the outside looking in?" Further on I unloaded my cargo of fruit, all save the grapes, which I ate, as it was easier to carry them inside than on my back. The same kind of surface on the highway led on and on, with never a habitation in sight, for nine miles. Reaching a bridge over a creek I decided to rest awhile, and leaned over the woodwork to the approach before taking the long grade of the hill on the other side. It was my turn to say, "Whatever is it?" Down the hill came the strangest turnout with two sturdy horses drawing it along. Let me try and describe it

to you. Whatever it was, it rested on waggon wheels —the horses almost sitting (swing fashion) in the breeching, as their iron-shod hoofs slid over the iron-clad surface.

Coming on to the bridge it drew up beside me. It looked like a square room with windows, and a comfortable porch in front, wherein sat a large native woman, her legs spread out, and holding the double reins loosely in her lap. A little ginger man sat, almost obscured, beside the amazon woman. He was the spokesman. The woman looked on and smiled a big fat smile. The horses dozed, and this is the story he told: They were "on the road to anywhere." It stood out in large letters on the front of their home on wheels. They had travelled all around Australia, periodically camping outside a town to rest the horses and themselves. From Adelaide to Sydney was their latest, and now they were on the way to Brisbane.

Oh, yes! they knew all about me and were fortunate in meeting up with me. Suddenly the little man descended to the road, a camera in his hand. "Had a bright idea," he beamed. He was writing a book, the title was printed on the waggon, and he pointed proudly to the sign. He wanted a picture of me to put in his book. "No photos, thank you." Thinking of the Sydney press, I wondered how calm I could be. "Think what a good advertisement it will be," he coaxed. "Look at it calmly and fairly." He was amazed when I declined his offer, saying firmly, "No pictures, thank you." Surprisingly enough, it was as if someone had put on a play for me to cheer me along the way. In other ways the scene was entirely different.

Standing there on the bridge I watched this strange caravan out of sight. The body had slogans written all over it, the tiny windows were curtained, the back view intrigued me. Hanging from hooks

and nails on the back, as well as underneath on the axles, were pots, pans, buckets, brooms and sundry housekeeping gadgets, as well as bags of horse feed. Everything swung, pendulum fashion, as the horses zig-zagged over the road, leaving a broad wheel mark as it dragged over the surface. It would take some beating, and gave me food for thought as I moved on. How would they manage the steep climb when they reached the hill that one could scarcely walk down? My sympathy was entirely with the horses. How many times was I forced to sit down? Heat, thirst, sore feet; and now, the absence of habitation was becoming a habit.

Haltingly I did my best to keep moving, keeping self-doubt at bay with a determination that I would not give in. In answer to my faith a large limousine pulled up beside me. Such a distinguished-looking old couple they were. The lady opened the car door and, pouring a cup of tea from a thermos, handed it to me, saying, "You're a brave little woman." In answer to my question, "how far to the next house?" they told me that two miles further on was a place right alongside the road. Two miles—seemed like two thousand—always the last few miles of any day seemed the longest. I will draw the curtain on this particular one. Sufficient to say that when I arrived at the house by the roadside I wasn't galloping—nor did I shuffle—just limped—and, throwing off my pack, sat down on the verandah steps.

A tall lady appeared at the door, stirring cake mixture in a bowl, followed by a little girl. Looking their amazement, they just stood gazing down at me, and no wonder. My heart was pounding in my eyeballs—what if the lady refused me shelter?

When overtired the nerves play tricks on us. This lady just couldn't imagine I was the great-grandmother she'd been reading about. Five minutes later I was seated—with hot water up to

the knees. Everybody down the coast used primus stoves, therefore could supply the essential methylated spirit.

Logged: R. M. B. Moonee, via Coff's Harbour. "Mrs. Kitty O'Sullivan arrived here at 6 o'clock tonight (per boot)—bless her soul—we are most happy to meet her—talk about wonders! She is a wonder woman, without doubt—she is staying the night with us. When she leaves, with her go our best wishes on this long journey—God bless her."

This was no mean home, but a prosperous family who owned timber lands and timber mills. The tea table fairly groaned with good food. The family comprised the parents, a grown-up son, a daughter of fourteen, and the pretty wee girl who never took her eyes off me and sat beside me at table. She looked like a beautiful angel.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Old Age Is Just A Bad Habit"

So writes Mr. Bernarra Macfadden, 83-year-old physical culture exponent and wealthy publisher of health magazines, New York, who parachuted into the chilly Hudson River to demonstrate this fact. "I was determined to demonstrate to our boys training to become airmen," he said. "What we need is more youth and fewer wheelchairs around the country."

Doing feats of endurance, I, too, wished to demonstrate the same thing, only I called it "old age is just a myth." It's so difficult to impress people that in their own homes they can practise the science of physical culture and keep fit. They simply cannot believe. As an example: A lady who had nursed me during many periods of illness, and not hearing from me for some years, seeing in the newspaper how Kingsford-Smith was taking a grandmother north to walk back from the extreme top of New Zealand to the extreme south, she wondered who this "old crank" could be! And I was only 52 years then. Later, on reaching the city where my friend lived, and learning that she kept a milk-bar, I duly presented myself in hiking kit. She didn't know me; nor could she believe it when I explained. All she could exclaim was, "It's you! It's you!" and later told me the story.

Reading this latest demonstration of that wonderful exponent, Bernarra Macfadden, gives me courage to keep on keeping on.

It was raining when I stepped on to the Highway in front of the home which had sheltered me for the night. The wee girl shed tears—"Mother, why must the lady go out in the rain?" she said. The mother begged me to rest for one day—had I stayed just for one day at all the places, I'd not be in Sydney yet! Later, when in Sydney, the mother wrote to me, saying that when rain fell she could picture me going along the Highway, and hoped people would be good to me. I wrote and assured her that they were.

Over the next 10 miles a rocky, twisting road and never a house—just on and on. Some fine coastal views from the high ground, and here I rested, gazing down at the ocean, and wished I could stay there for ever and ever. Hoping to get my footwear adjusted at Coff's Harbour, I limped off again, my feet calling out loudly. Nearing the town, roads were better and traffic more frequent.

It was early afternoon when I reached the outskirts, and could see the shops higher up the street, but couldn't make it all at once. Seeing a dairy with ice cream for sale close by, I climbed the steps and sat on the top—all the buildings had steps and broad verandahs. A little podgy man looked out and, thinking I was a black gin, took no notice of me. Then he came out, and when I asked for an ice cream and said who I was, he was greatly surprised. I'm fond of ices, but nothing could ever taste like that one. The shop was attached to the living quarters, and after inquiring from his wife if she would make some tea, I was invited inside. Their name was O'Toole, and their kindness and modesty I'll remember for a long time to come. They gave of what they had. Also, they directed me to the only bootmaker in the town. His name was Fogerty, and although he fixed the rubber heels on the outside of the boots, he didn't have any rubber sponge to nail on the inside

—nor could I obtain them until I reached Kempsey, several days ahead. I rested quite a while in the shop, and then at his direction called at a tea rooms, where I'd meet the Secretary of a Ladies' Club who would put me up for the night.

Retracing my steps and going back the way I came into the town, I arrived at the tea shop. The lady was busy serving customers, but gave me tea and cakes. I wasn't hungry any more, only wanted to sit down. One of the nice lady customers spoke to me, and said if I couldn't get a place to stay, she'd have me, and then directed me how to reach her home. It was on the way out that I would take to continue the walk.

The Secretary had a place that was miles out in the opposite direction. Oh, dear! Such queer towns —straggled about, and at places rather mixed, like Grafton. An hotel I thought might be best, instead of bothering people in their homes, but as I passed one there was a crowd of men outside, and I continued on to the lady who had invited me at the shop. Evidently she was the chosen ministering angel—as she said herself.

So much tramping about the town didn't help my feet. The house I was seeking was quite a distance away, yet it would be so much less to cover in the morning. Thoughts that crowd the mind at oddest times and places were mine as I pressed the door bell at Grafton Street, Coff's Harbour.

The lady who had invited me to her home welcomed me. "I'm glad you've come," she said. "I've been thinking about you all the time." She showed me to the front bedroom, which contained two beds —one a double with rich silk coverings, the other a low single bed. Turning back the bedclothes of the latter, she invited me to sit down while she brought a hot bath for my feet. "It's my daughter's bed; she will soon be home from school and can change

the linen," she said. "Don't trouble about the linen, it looks good as it is, and I don't feel I can move," I replied. She was busy preparing a hot meal in the kitchen at the end of a long hall when I arrived, and now went back and forth as she talked, and added more hot water to the tub.

Sorrow had entered this home, too. Her husband had passed away only a short time before. Her grown-up son put a photo in the log, himself holding a huge bunch of bananas. Her daughter was a lovely girl, and after tea they all came into the room for a talk. The mother said that when she and a lady friend first saw me, on my way to the bootmaker's, they couldn't make it out. Her friend remarked, "Whatever is it? such a girlish figure—but there's something the matter with her feet." This caused a good laugh, when I explained that I wasn't trying to put on a show, but it is interesting to note—do clothes make the woman as well as the man? I assured them that no time was lost gazing in mirrors, and once, when passing through a town and catching sight of myself in a plate-glass window I felt nauseated, and hurried to get out into the bush again.

Logged: "After a good night's rest, Kitty O'Sullivan is ready to set off again. As a member of the County Women's Association I feel I have done a great service to such a good lady—what an inspiration to our rising generation! Best wishes for a happy landing."

Traffic was more frequent now, and people stopped to chat with me. With envious eyes I'd note the cosy comfort, then when they passed, imagined it an optical illusion.

The highway keeps ahead at Coff's Harbour through timbered country. All that day I trekked through bush lands. After five miles was logged at Boambee: "Arrived today, had tea and a rest for her

poor feet, after travelling in terribly wet weather—Boambee wishes her a safe journey."

Another log—Bournville: "Called, had tea and rest after walking on very wet, rough roads—everyone now logged—very wet, rough roads."

That day's map logged 14 miles, chugging through quagmires of mud and slush.

Clocked at Repton, Bellingen River: "Arrived this evening in terrible weather, had tea, a hot bath and staying the night. We hope her walks are not overlooked by other women of the world!" (Another little story.)

This young couple—a returned soldier, his wife and wee son (their photo in my log)—didn't appear to have much of this world's goods. They seemed to just gather me in off the road. The husband quickly heated water in kerosene tins on a stove, while I released my feet. In a large, roomy place off the kitchen, used for keeping bushmen's gear, I enjoyed the novelty of a good hot soaking in a collapsible bath. The back of the house was built high off the ground, the plug fitted over a hole in the floor and allowed the water to escape down the hillside. After the bath, had some hot food. I slept on a makeshift couch in the tiny passage just inside the front door. It was still raining. How grateful my heart was for this shelter. The mosquitoes collected blood transfusions, but I slept on.

In the morning I set off again, after thanking my good friends. The rain had stopped, and my way led over hills, through bush country till I reached the settlement of Repton—a sawmill and some small houses built on the hillside.

A little further on heavy rain set in with a vengeance, filling my eyes with water, and my boots and bandages were soon soaked. My log has a photo of a house, back off the road, the usual verandah on

both sides. "Longing for some hot tea, but not caring to go in." My wishful thinking must have brought an elderly gentleman to the front door. "Come on in for some tea," he called. I was too wet to go inside, so these dear people fed me on the verandah—and what a feast!

Just as I was leaving, some visitors called and I was introduced—later they overtook me on the road and stopped for a chat.

Logged from last stop—River View, Raleigh, Bellingen River: "Mrs. O'Sullivan was passing here, in very heavy rain—my husband called her in for shelter and a cup of tea."

The Highway continues south to a bridge over Bellingen River. A little further on it continues through timbered country to another bridge, over the south arm of the same river. A short distance south of this bridge the Highway keeps ahead.

Only one other logging for that day, Road Box 33, Pacific Highway, Urunga: "It was with great surprise and pleasure that we found out our visitor was Mrs. O'Sullivan—she seemed in excellent spirits —God bless her. After lunch she will continue south to Nambucca—this wonderful great-grandmother." Signed Mother and Daughter.

For a while the weather cleared somewhat, only to set in with greater intensity, and never stopped for two days. Nothing spectacular, as the road led through miles of thick blue gums, with the rain falling thick and straight from the heavens. A gloomy outlook, as I followed the Highway up broad, steep grades—at one part there were workmen mending the surface—for now I was entering the flood area.

I was making for a place called Valla, at a turn-off to a railway siding, one mile in off the Highway. It was getting dark as I started up the slope of a long hill. A dingo on the roadside watched my approach,

then slunk into the bushes, to re-appear higher up, his ears pricked. After a second look he turned and raced ahead, and never stopped as he vanished out of sight. Guess he, too, wondered "Whatever is it?" Nervous apprehension that a pack of dingoes might be lurking somewhere in the undergrowth, and failing to reach Valla—perhaps to go past the turn-off with floods ahead—filled me with alarm. I tried to hasten while twilight lasted, and was suddenly rewarded by seeing a tiny puff of smoke rise at intervals and circle over the trees. A little further on I beheld a log cabin made of neat split logs from the bush, and painted white.

Constant rain had scoured a wide path along the side of the house, where some young children still splashed and played, as the water cascaded from the ridge above.

Frequently events happened quickly, and this was one of them. As I leaned on a solitary post and watched the children, a tiny mother, with a wee baby in her arms, appeared from the back of the house, with two other children, and invited me inside. "Oh! I couldn't think of crowding in on you," I said, looking at the small log cabin and the large family of young children. "You'll have to come in," said the little mother, in a voice of particular charm and gentleness. "There's no other place for miles; besides, the flood waters are across the Highway ahead."

I needed no further pressing, and was amazed when entering to find a cosy four rooms with a huge fireplace, and a nursery at one end of the large living-room. It was the home of the gentleman who wrote the poem about the rocky roads of Pacific Highway. And now, on meeting him for the first time, anyone could see that he was one of those rare husbands who loved his home and family before anything else. There were six children, the eldest a boy

of ten years. This little man was worth his weight in gold, and nursed the wee baby sister, who looked like a doll. A bed was given me in the room amongst the children. My little man-nurse waited on me all the time. Hot water for my feet, and water to wash hankies and bandages, and then he dried them in front of the fire. It was still raining heavily, and continued all next day and the following night. The father said it would rest my leg and was a gift from heaven to keep on raining. Sometimes I sat up and nursed the wee doll baby. It was so sweet and good, and its mother kept it beautifully clean in its home-made bassinette. The father also built the house. He could cook, too, and while I was there he made a lovely plum-duff. For this meal I was allowed to sit with the rest of the children on a form against the wall. My little man, with the baby in his arms, sat beside me. "Gee!" he exclaimed, "when I read about you I didn't think that you would be sitting here near me!" He was clever, too, and could play the violin. He liked comics. It was written on the page of my log and I duly sent them. What a happy experience to live for a short time amongst such dear people—as I write, I'm living it all over again.

Road Box 23, Valla, Pacific Highway. Logged as having arrived in very heavy rain. "We were very honoured to have such a distinguished guest for the night, and feel that she certainly is an inspiration to womanhood. The following day I persuaded Mrs. O'Sullivan to remain also, as the weather was too severe in my opinion for her to continue, although she firmly protested that it was endurable and she wished to continue. With a lot of pleading from my wife and myself she finally consented to our reasoning."

"May God bless this little family," is my earnest prayer. And the little group stood and watched me limp out of sight—I can see them still.

The next 12 miles was heavy going.

Arrived at Nambucca Village. I remembered that it was my daughter's birthday in New Zealand. The Post Office happened to be at the end of a hilly side street, with about 20 steps to climb. The postal staff were most helpful, and advised that airmail greetings would serve as well as a cable. Also I wrote a letter-card to Mr. Langridge while I rested at a small table on the Post Office verandah.

Painfully I retraced my steps, and a short distance ahead rested at Pacific Cafe, Nambucca Heads.

Logged: "Arrived in very bad weather—hungry and footsore—having a meal before continuing on her way—the very best from my husband and self."

For the next eight miles I travelled along the northern bank of the Nambucca River to Macksville, entering which the river is crossed by bridge. I seemed to have the world to myself, and encountered only a few straggling aborigines.

CHAPTER IX.

Faith in the Future

What if the public did laugh immoderately? Wasn't I taking the part of a motor car, and not a bobby-soxer? My clothes were inadequate for outdoors, and didn't improve as the days went by. Just the simplest thing—like a sand storm, for example, coupled with a heat wave, that blew dust off a newly made road like sands from the desert—what it could do to you! Lorries engaged in carting metal travelled back and forth, so that for several miles it was like blind-flying. As lorries appeared out of the fog, my brown costume was white with dust, my eyelids were too stiff to close, and as for my throat, I couldn't swallow. I pinched my arm to see if it were real. My feet made me wince, but didn't bark, so I knew we were still walking.

Some parts of Pacific Highway still figure in nightmares, even now. For instance, I had been walking for hours through heavily timbered country —the road in places menacingly dark, even in daylight. A hurricane sweeping south with full fury roared through the thick gum trees, covering parts of the highway with wind-borne limbs of trees. It was a terrifying experience. And worst of all was the fear of being left alone in the night, and afraid to go forward in flood areas where rivers spilled over the Highway, are thoughts I never wish to know again.

In contrast, there were occasions when one had to make difficult decisions, when confronted with some weird or fantastic situation, trying not to give

offence to simple, kindly folk who only wished you well. These Australian people were so entirely friendly and trusting all through my trek, that the following stories are written unbiassed and in no spirit of jesting. My own appearance, travel-worn and whatever is it, keeps me wondering still.

On this particular morning of which I write, there were no trees for shade, the heat stifling, and the roadway appeared to come up to meet me. After crossing a long bridge, it was a relief to see some scattered, unpainted shacks on the opposite side of the road, and I called at the one nearest me. The door stood ajar. Angry voices reached me from within, and I lost no time in getting back on the road again. Some little distance further on was another shack, built right on the edge of a narrow footpath, with no fence around it—the door stood wide open into the living-room. "Come in," greeted a large woman seated inside the door. "You shouldn't be walking in the sun, my dear—people don't allow the cattle to move around at mid-day in this heat." When my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness of the place after the fierce light outside, and I could find my voice to thank her, she had risen off her chair and set about making some tea, talking heartily the while. Yet so full of complaints.

"I can never do anything properly," she complained miserably. "What with 'me veins' and 'me legs' bandaged to the knees, it's trying like, to get about in the heat. I wish I was young again like you, and able to travel round the world, but it's almost past the power of 'me poor legs' to get up and down the kitchen steps." She fairly glowed with pleasure that I'd called on her, as she placed a cup, saucer and teapot on the table beside me. "Little things like the neighbour's chickens always up on the table the minute me back is turned can be a deal of trouble," she said, while pouring the tea.

From where I sat gingerly on the edge of a rickety chair, I could see the chickens amongst the bread and butter she had prepared for me. A jug stood on the table, and the cat was quietly dipping its paw into the milk and contentedly licking it off. My host complained that as well as "me veins," she suffered from murderous headaches—just a wreck of the woman she used to be.

"Few people will believe this," she said with a broad smile, showing the one tooth in the front of her mouth. I assured her that I could quite believe it. This sent her into peals of hearty laughter. Holding her sides, her portly person shook till she wiped the tears from her eyes.

When the laughter died away, she explained that years before she and her son had come to Australia looking for a land of opportunity—"so here we are. He's worked in the bush these many years and now is an old man at fifty. That's his bed," and she pointed to a heap of old clothes and overcoats on a mattress in the corner. "Mine is on this couch." Her face was serious as she told me all this. I was glad she hadn't noticed the untouched tea.

Thanking her from my heart for sheltering me from the heat, I stepped out into the sunshine like someone walking in a dream. "A depressing discovery" my only comment.

Another day, in an endeavour to escape the midday heat, I hit the road at 5 a.m. The highway led over devastated flood country. By 7 a.m. the temperature was unbearable. My clothing was saturated. There wasn't any shade—and by the map the nearest habitation was miles away. Consequently I felt tired and was forced to sit down. A patch of spindly saplings offered slight shade, and I crept close to escape the fierce sun. Talk about putting your hand to the plough—I had put both feet on the road—it was all the same thing, one satisfaction

being that the ground I had covered I'd not have to travel again. Perhaps we learn too late.

"Thinking such things won't help you any," I spoke strongly to myself, as I scrambled up and out into the heat again. Sitting on a fence was no part of my make-up. How true it was, as rounding the next bend I beheld a house, an unpainted four rooms with the usual verandah and high steps, built back off the road. On reaching the long wooden gate into the paddock I slipped back a wooden lathe and entered. Evidently a patch of ground had been cultivated not far from the gate. An exceedingly tall scare-crow in a battered hat leaned on a long-handled hoe. What a novel idea! But nothing grew in the patch, and I wondered. There didn't appear to be any life up at the house, either.

So I waited. The verandah was stacked to the roof with paraphernalia of old junk, mostly broken furniture. There was something fantastic about the whole thing, and I was about to leave when I fancied the scare-crow had moved. No! I thought, the sun had got at me. But when it started to walk towards me, I knew it was alive. He must have been dumb, for he never spoke, but his manner was graciousness itself. My fear vanished as, with a wave of his hand, he invited me to accompany him to the house. Crossing a stile and mounting the steps, we entered a large kitchen with the usual fireplace at one end and a large iron kettle hanging on the hook.

Apparently my tall guide didn't live alone, for no sooner had we entered than a younger man, with bare feet, trousers turned up and shirt sleeves rolled back, popped into the room, like a jack-in-the-box. Evidently he suffered from fits of shaking. "See," he said with a squeaky voice as he waved a newspaper, "it's your photo at Brisbane—it says you cured yourself with exercise—I've been trying it, too

—see, when I hold my arms out, I don't shake—you think I'll get better?"

His disability at once claimed my sympathy and help. "Keep on trying every day and see what happens," I told him. Then he said, "You mean a new kind of power within myself?" "Yes, that's the correct idea!" "My brother is a mass of business but doesn't talk," he informed me. "He wants you to sit at the table and have your tea." I should say there was room only for the teacup and pot on that large, old-fashioned oak table—the rest was litter. A friendly foxy—too friendly—snuggled up to my chair. First he would scratch, and then a good shake; fleas crawled along his nose and fell to the floor. The tall brother just stood silent, like I first beheld him with the hoe. But not so his brother. Oh! Dear! No! He left the kitchen to return with his best hat on his head. He was bent and twitching, like a fakir in deep thought. Then darting away again, he returned, this time with a handful of soft arrowroot biscuits—which I passed on to the terrier.

He informed me that he had no pride of ancestry. He appeared blithely satisfied with a pension—he and his brother went to the nearest town to collect—it gave them security, if ever so little. At least, that was his hope.

They owned the property where they lived; his brother was trying to farm it, but for want of water it was rapidly withering. He was brimming over to entertain me and gave a very good imitation of a twittering budgerigar. Then suddenly he became speechless and the shaking fit came on again. Quickly he stretched out his arms and it stopped. He had found a way! When I was leaving he warned me not to be left out at night. When a dingo uttered a long howl, he was hungry. The tall brother escorted me to the gate. Looking back to where the younger brother stood on the verandah with out-

stretched arms, I left with pleasant memories of two charming people.

My recording log: "Puts me back on the Highway at Nambucca Hotel, Macksville—a fair-sized township with nice shops and nice people." After purchasing bandages and cotton wool, I retired to the above hotel to doctor my feet. In the bathroom, with my feet in hot water, I held court. The lady who owned the hotel brought me brandy; the chef brought a tray with tea and hot jam tarts. By the time I'd bandaged my feet the bathroom was crowded, while others stood out in the passage. The landlady introduced the amazed inmates: "Meet a very marvellous person." She also wished me to stay over the week-end. A note to her daughter, who kept an hotel at Telegraph Point, was inserted in the log, telling her to look after me when I reached the Point.

Impatient to be moving while my feet felt comfortable, I dragged my mind away from these kind people back to the Highway. After passing through the town I turned north for Warrell Creek. It was a dreary walk. The only place of interest was an aboriginal settlement, built by a religious society as an experiment. Bungalows with many windows opening outward were built amongst the bluegums. A clearance was made leaving enough trees standing to give shade.

The Highway led through the settlement and down a long slope. When half-way down the hill I heard someone shouting for me to come back. A group of young natives stood on the brow of the hill, waving and beckoning me back, to have some tea. Cupping my hands, I called them to come on down. Just one mad rush down the hill and I was surrounded. Boys and girls about 14 years and under. The girls were really pretty. All spoke good English and were well mannered. I had a long chat with

them. They knew about me, but were having dinner and missed seeing me pass. They were hoping I'd call in for tea. Later (on the trek), when I reached "Raymond Terrace," I met some of the girls. They wore slacks and looked very nice indeed. Nothing primitive about them.

Very little tea was consumed that day, only one stop from Macksville. Dry, dusty roads almost choked me. My eyes were bubbling out with looking ahead for the sign "Tea Rooms."

The sun was sinking when at last I came to a cottage on the side of a hill. The front was obscured by a hedge, and numerous steps had to be climbed, but I was in desperate need and ventured to call.

Logged: "Very pleased to meet Mrs. O'Sullivan and entertain her at late afternoon tea."

This lady accompanied me over a short-cut across a paddock to avoid climbing down the steps.

Late that night I arrived at Warrell Creek Village. Logged: "Mrs. O'Sullivan spent the night with us—we feel honoured to have New Zealand's great-grandmother as guest. After a night's rest and refreshments she is leaving early—what a wonderful lady in a hard undertaking. May God bless and take care of you."

In the log is a photo of this sweet-faced lady and her husband, as well as their lovely home. I slept in a delightfully soft bed in an elaborate front bedroom. There were many comparisons about the places where I had slept, but one and all looked beautiful to me.

Next day was through mostly timbered country to Eungai. An entry from a small Post Office at Eungai, kept by two elderly people who were brother and sister: "Much-needed tea was supplied, as well as their combined good wishes."

Further on was "Nestle's" Cream Factory. Several times their truck had passed me on the road. I thought the long tank carried petrol. Later I learned about the cargo of milk and cream. Mostly timber country, isolated by floods. Silt, hard-caked and lumpy, was like walking on broken rock. Needless to say, my poor "doggies" barked all that day.

Gingerly I picked my way over the worst places, my pace a painful crawl, my mind filled with a mixture of small things. How long would my wardrobe hold together was a quandary. People tried to find a frock that would fit me. Alas! they all trailed on the ground. I was thin—but I was still 100% fit.

The dreariness of the Highway was suddenly brought to a full stop. Just a small store with a few weather-beaten shacks around it on the slope of a hill. Here the Highway takes a sharp turn at right angles, leaving a high camber that curved up to the verandah of the store. Being Sunday, the door was closed. Nevertheless, I climbed the steps and, sitting on a form against the wall, rested my damaged ankle along the top. Stacked around me were cases of merchandise and crates of empty cordial bottles.

The place was Eungai Creek, N. Coast. The couple who owned this unpretentious little store had eleven children. They had just finished dinner and begged me to come inside. Explaining that I preferred to rest my leg on the stool, they insisted on bringing me refreshment where I sat. Much hot tea and cold ice were consumed as I again held court for the amazed inmates.

My first impressions were of a kindergarten as these nice, healthy, well-behaved children crowded out the door and draped themselves around the cases and crates on the verandah. Mother, baby in arms, filled the doorway, while father looked over her shoulder. But their kindness was their great asset.

Mother it was, too, who signed the log. They were ever so pleased to meet me and hear some of my interesting experiences while I rested at their store. "May God bless you and give you strength to your journey's end."

After meeting this interesting family the Highway seemed less dreary. The father of the children warned me to keep a lookout for the next habitation at Roadside Box 23. If I missed it there was no other for eight miles, and flood waters still covered the road in places.

In the after-glow of the setting sun I beheld an old building like a long shed, without any opening, on the side facing my approach.

In the next few hundred yards the Highway made a sharp turn to the right. Imagine my surprise to see several people on a verandah of what I'd mistaken for a shed. They just stood and stared. "How far to the next house?" was my parrot cry. It was the first that they had heard of me.

"You'll never make eight miles tonight," they warned. "Come on in." They had visitors and were about to have tea.

CHAPTER X.

Marooned In Flood Regions

Logged: Barranganyatti. Roadside Box 23, via Eungai Rail. "The place I was seeking—and all was well."

The photo of these dear people is before me as I write. Nanna, Pops, and Skipper the dog. Nanna described how I had arrived that evening, and they had the pleasure of asking me to stay the night at the old half-way house. "It was the first we had heard of her wonderful walk—my husband and I wish her every success, and trust God will guide and keep her safe to the journey's end."

I learned that an hotel had once stood on the site —had been burnt down and now only the old building and the name remained. Their son was away for the week-end, and I slept in his bed.

In the morning Nanna walked with me across a paddock, a short cut, and stood holding my hands as she begged me to stay "just one day."

How could anything hurt me? The goodwill of the people and God's blessing surely kept me safe. The ease with which the days slipped by on the calendar was not for me. I must fight them every foot of the way.

This day's walk was an unattractive one. At one place water still covered the road, leaving a narrow strip at the side, which I managed to cross. Seeing the condition of the highway in daylight made me shudder—thinking had I tried to walk in the night! Some puddles and quagmires of blue clay

were unavoidable, and I just walked through them. but worse was to come. A stretch of road had been carried away by the floods. Workmen had filled the gap with thick, blue clay, built high on either side like a viaduct, preparatory to metalling the surface. Wheels of passing motors made ruts a foot deep in the centre, with only a margin of a few feet on either side. The roadmen were evidently away having lunch. I was afraid to get in the wheel track in case a car shot round the bend, so decided to keep on the margin, as it was the only place left. Looking straight ahead and afraid to look down the steep bank, I was nearly across when my big boots, weighted with clay, stuck. Well and truly I'd got into a rut, and had to remain there until rescued by the workmen.

How that mud stuck! One serious-minded chap trying to clean it off with handfuls of long grass remarked that the "fellers couldn't make out what it was, when they first sighted me on top of the road." The muddy boots only added to my unflattering appearance, and a delicacy of feeling perhaps hastened my departure, or the risk of being tagged an "old crank," who rightly or wrongly demonstrated HEALTH by physical culture. I must prove its worth. And in doing so, found plenty of unrehearsed incidents for profitable meditation.

Frustration and discouragement were ugly words—I must fight against them, too, on my day-to-day battle with the Highway.

In my log are photos of a family at Claybucca, via Kempsey. One is a wedding group standing on the chapel steps. Such a sweet little bride, and two wee sisters gaze enraptured at the newly-weds. Another photo of her mother and another sister. Then one of a monster truck with giant logs. I'm also logged "as having afternoon tea, and we all think she's a lovely lady."

I'm convinced they were trying to uplift my morale, for my clothes must have been at their worst. And yet, offsetting the hardships of the Highway, was the enchantment of its people.

At seventy I've stopped chasing rainbows, content with the riches of health and the knowledge of having fought the good fight.

Timber country is passed through, tramping over hills, large and small, and finally reaching dairying districts. These farms were the richest in Australia, making Kempsey on the Macleay River a very prosperous township. However, I wasn't to reach there till the following day.

Coming to a large shed alongside the road, and hearing the welcome sound of milking machines, I presented myself and begged a drink. While I rested on the platform where cans are placed in readiness for the milk waggon, I was given a dipper full of milk straight from the cow. "Get that inside you," said the man, "it's what you need." I did my best to obey and, greatly refreshed but feeling like a calf, I took off again.

Vainly I tried to clean the clay off my boots in the long grass on the roadside before reaching a house I could see in the distance.

A schoolgirl leaning over the gate watched my approach, then raced inside to bring her mother. A remarkable reception awaited me here. Literally, I was just scooped off the road to find myself in an exclusive home.

To these good people who moved in their accustomed grooves, what I was doing was an unheard of idea. A little difficult to understand until I explained my mission. The young girl seemed to understand best, and, like my little man-nurse at Valla, constituted herself my attendant.

"Run and prepare a good hot bath," her mother said, "while I pour a cup of tea." They were excited

at having me. Another sister arrived by bus—she worked at Kempsey—a beautiful young woman about twenty. Her first sight of my boots sent her hurrying to the kitchen for a floorcloth, and while I drank the tea she knelt on the floor and wiped the clay from my boots. My little friend listened intently —she would be proud to tell the teacher all about me. School children had passed me in the bus on their way to school that morning.

A bath—then to sit at table and partake of good hot food before retiring to my comfortable couch. My bandages were rolled and my plodding shoes were blackened and polished. How grand all this made me feel—and how grateful.

My little girl pasted a photo in the log. I am looking at her in a gymnastic display—the group is taken out-of-doors. The place was via Kempsey, Macleay River, Private Mail Bag. Log recording states that I arrived tired out after a treacherous journey over muddy roads from the Macleay—"we all wish her a safe journey, and may God bless her always." But mostly I carried something from it all in my heart—"How Great are They."

Unfortunately, this was not to be the case at Kempsey, especially as I'd been looking forward to reaching that town and having my boots adjusted with sponge-rubbers.

After covering 12 miles over flat, rocky roads, I reached a small place with an hotel and a few shops and some nice houses—Frederickton.

Had a short rest at the hotel and a pot of tea. The lady owner was interested and signed the log.

The Highway turns to the right down a long hill, then continues over level country into Kempsey. From the rise I could see the township three miles away. Then heavy rain set in, the kind that whips in under your helmet and fills your eyes, and I limped

into this prosperous city looking like a wet fowl. The bootmaker's shop was next to an hotel at the entrance of the city's main street. The door was shut, and I waited. Then I walked further along and rested at a tearoom. Returned to the shop—it was still closed. Walked to the other end of the town, along another street, and came to another bootmaker. Here was a nice little man, and he soon fixed the boots.

With a sigh of heartfelt relief I went to make a few necessary purchases. While there, a reporter from the Argus Press Office across the street asked me to call and give them an interview. By this time I was ready for a full stop. The Press told me I'd be wise to stay at Kempsey till next day, as there were no habitations for miles, and, seeing the rain had set in, there was danger of flooding. There were three hotels in the town. I applied at one, where a very hard-faced female looked me over, saw no prospect of making gains out of "whatever is it?" The shine put on my boots that morning by my sweet little attendant was gone. No room at the Inn—back to the one at the entrance to the city. The boss, paunchy and pink, sat in his office. He would have let me a room, but his good woman, flushed and full-bosomed, looked, and shook her head. I was so tired I sat on the arm of an easy chair. The man told me to try a boardinghouse across the bridge on the east side of the river.

I was aware that the Police would make the proprietors of any hotel give me lodging had I applied to them, but after so much tramping about the town my feet were agonising, and inwardly I felt assured that the right place was waiting for me—or else it would be the first time I was left out for the night.

Painfully retracing my steps through the town and crossing the long bridge over the Macleay River,

I was stopped by a schoolgirl who asked if I was looking for a place to sleep. I nodded. "Then I'll show you where a lady takes in people for the night," she said. "It is on your way out, too," she added. It was quite a step and a climb to the house, but, alas! the lady hadn't a spare bed—she herself was sleeping on the floor.

My little guide was almost in tears, and I felt like sitting on the verandah. It was still raining, and darkness was closing in as we reached the street and I bade her good-bye, telling her not to worry, I'd be sure to find a place. "There's only a few more houses to the end of this street," she said, "and then open country, with no habitation." "Somehow I'll manage," I assured her.

A few houses along I met a group of people who were just about to move away from a newly erected bungalow, not quite finished. They looked like newly-weds, in-laws and relatives, admiring the home of the happy couple. There wasn't anything wrong about that, either—yet herein lies a parable.

A Siamese cat family were shown at the Cat Show in London. Father Tom, a huge white fellow, Mother Tabby sported a black face, and the eight-weeks-old kittens pure white. Grouped under the caption "First Family Photograph," their big round eyes were staring at the camera, a feature of the picture.

I was seeking shelter for the night—"did this group of happy people know of a place?" No; they just stared and stared. I have the cat picture before me. I can see those people now. They are photographed in my mind—I can still hear them laugh.

There's a clear mind-picture of Kempsey also. How one half-day I pounded the streets of the town and should have been left out in the night but for providence leading me to an exceptionally nice home —almost the last house in the street. I'd crossed to

the opposite side after my encounter with the "happy group," and as if commanded to halt, I stopped before the gate of a house where a boy stood waiting on the verandah.

"My mother says you're to come in," he told me. Somehow today my mind pictures are very clear. I can imagine that sweet-faced lady, how she welcomed me in as though she had known me always. She was preparing some articles of clothing for her husband to take to the hospital for his nephew, who had met with an accident that day by falling off a telegraph pole while at work. Yet these people had time to care for me. The boy and his sister at once took over and attended to my needs.

A table was set before me while my feet rested in a hot tub underneath. My two young ministering angels plied me with tea, cakes and jellies.

A room off the kitchen with a double bed was given me. However, my feet pained so terribly I couldn't sleep, but was rested and grateful to be inside a house. In the morning this kindly lady insisted I ate porridge and bacon and egg before taking to the road again.

Recordings for Kempsey in that day's log: "East Kempsey—having arrived in the rain at 7 o'clock this evening, I had tea and related some interesting experiences." "She intends getting off to an early start in the morning—congratulations, Mrs. O'Sullivan on your progress so far, and here's to luck in the future."

Another small entry is from J. Cooper, Bootmaker, Kempsey, who fixed the "plodding shoes."

Before my departure I felt compelled to explain to my hosts that my appearance was a lesson of unpreparedness in not having suitable clothes, and there was nothing that I could do about it. "Never mind your clothes," they said, "we know you'll finish the walk."

Five minutes' walk brought me to another great concrete bridge over the Macleay, which I crossed and continued into open country. At the side of the road I saw a silver fox, and paused to admire its white-tipped brush.

I was glad to leave Kempsey. It was the most inhospitable town of all my "World Record Walks" —such shabby sports, apart from the home that had sheltered me on that wet night.

A digression.—Let me digress a little: Some short time after my return to New Zealand the newspapers headlined—DISASTROUS N.S.W. FLOODS. Large pictures of the flooded town of Kempsey itself and photos of portions that were reduced to piles of rubble.

I have the pictures in my press clippings book. A close-up of the bridge leading out of the town, with the water on a level, gives me goose-bubbles with the thought that I might have been there. In another picture I could place the position of the house where I slept. Reading the press reports, and how the carcases of cattle were strewn from Kempsey to the sea, make me sad with the thought of the farmers and their losses.

A small item of interest to me was that inside Kempsey all hotels are closed, but I'm not holding any resentment against anybody, though it was grim for me. Australians are noted for their resiliency and determination. All that practical sympathy and help can do for the Kempsey sufferers will be made available to them. For them, too, there will be much sympathy in New Zealand, for our favoured land also has known tragedies beyond the power of man to avoid.

Heavy rain saw me into Kempsey; I departed in a heat-wave. The black band on the map indicating Pacific Highway wriggles and twists, like a black snake, over wide roads, through hilly timbered coun-

try, which reminds me that I saw several young snakes squashed on the hard surface, the point of the tail so fine one could thread a needle. There was nothing of interest and only one entry that day.

After several miles, I came to a solitary residence tucked away in a paradise of flower gardens. It was the home of a forestry manager. Logged: "This morning Mrs. O'Sullivan called at my home for refreshments—I was very pleased to meet her and wish her God Speed and good walking the rest of the journey."

This lucky break for me was like meeting an angel in the wilderness.

CHAPTER XI.

Dim Vistas

Leaving tired footprints on the boglands of the Macleay, I found a mild kind of respite to walk on hot, dry roads again, although isolation and long stretches without tea were a feature of both treks.

Other variations were the harassing activities of mosquitoes in the quiet of twilight, causing me to drape my helmet with the mosquito veil, and find a gum branch to swish them off.

Through this wilderness of bush there is little to relate, unless the heat and hard roads made a record for consistency. They helped to develop mental alertness, and I found myself trying to escape the heat, shifting from patches of shade, as the position of the sun altered, with the twists and bends of the Highway.

When a break in the trees occurred I sat down, reluctant to proceed into the shimmering waves of heat. This continued all day, and I met no one. At length the bush ended. Seated beneath the last few spindly trees, I gazed across vistas of barren, dusty country, glittering in the dying rays of the sun like sand on the beaches. Tired and foot-sore, my big boots stretched out before me, yet glad to have come so far, I decided to move on.

Imagine my chagrin to think I'd been sitting so long, when I beheld a house just round the next bend in the road. It was a small place, set in a large paddock, though there was some pretence of making a garden in the front, also a wire fence and a small gate.

The locality was Piper's Creek, via Kempsey.

There was a family of eight children and their parents, living in a small dwelling devoid of any modern convenience so far as I could see; but I wasn't there to criticise people's way of life. On the contrary, this mother is worthy of the highest honours. A tall, handsome lady of Spanish descent, welcomed me into a comfortable, old-fashioned living-room, where I pulled off the big boots and bandages while she brought hot water. The relief almost made me swoon. She wondered how I endured such hardships to bring people a message of health and goodwill. She apologised for the place being untidy. "Some days I don't get time to comb my hair," she said.

The eldest girl was fourteen, the youngest six months—four boys and two younger girls attended school by bus, and their father worked at a logging camp. The baby wakened and she brought it into the room, the mother's eyes shining with hopeful courage and mother-love as she held a beautiful, rosy-cheeked cherub in her arms.

What mattered if its face was grubby and its dark curls uncombed—like it's mothers? I forgot the pain in my feet as I pictured mother and child in a rich setting. Perhaps I reached the hearts of these people more readily because I was little, humble, and poorly clad. Or maybe it happened that my heart was full of love for each one of them. A bed was fixed for me in the room opposite where I sat. Again I would sleep amongst the children. After meeting the rest of the family—including father—I marvelled more and more. Mother was preparing a hot meal in the kitchen, the eldest girl mothered the younger ones, all beautiful-looking children. Mother and baby were to sleep in the big bed beside my stretcher, while shakedowns held others. Father with his four tall sons slept on the back verandah.

I sat up in bed to eat my tea, and mother brought

the tray with nice hot food. The whole family wished to wait on me. This little home in the wilderness had never known such excitement.

During the night the mother got up several times to spray the mosquitoes. My feet wouldn't let me sleep and I was glad when daylight appeared. I determined to get an early start, as the father explained that the next day's journey would take me over much timbered, hilly country, including Mount Kundabung, and no houses before reaching Telegraph Point. Mother regretted having no tea, only coffee, so no petrol (tea) and this almost lost me the record.

Logged: "That I had arrived in settling darkness, had very sore feet after a gruelling experience over very bad roads and great heat." "She's a wonder woman; may God's blessing be with her always."

Next morning, on departure the whole family stood on the verandah to watch me out of sight. Home is how you make it. I was enchanted by these people of Pacific Highway.

The exhilaration of early morning should keep one fit and fresh. I was fit, but not so fresh-looking on the exterior.

A few miles over the same kind of road as I had the previous day, and then took into the mountains. There weren't any habitations, so I didn't expect them, but had to go on just the same.

It wasn't long before I had to bend my back to Mount Kundabung, pounding its rocky surface and, at the same time, training my mind away from the road with pleasant memories of the people who had befriended me. Telling my big boots that they were walking on a continent now—they should be proud. It was clever imitating the Sydney Press. It helped a lot and I felt myself smiling. There were no stimulating experiences that day—and no tea! So

I won't weary you with tales of mountaineering and dim vistas seen from high places.

After Kundabung—a flat stretch of hot, dusty roads, causing me to sit down many times. During one of these spells on a clay bank I had to admit to myself that I was done. A car couldn't run without juice, neither could I. But help was at hand, for at that moment "Nestle's" truck stopped right in front of where I sat. The driver got out and came over to ask how I was. "If only I could have a drink," I said. "Sure you can, that's easy, come over to the truck." Thinking he had a thermos flask, I followed. "Can you drink milk or cream?" he asked. "Where could you get such things out here?" "What do you suppose I'm carting in this tank?" "I thought it was petrol," I answered. "The kind you're in need of at this moment—yes." And to my amazement he climbed a ladder on to the tank, lifted a heavy lid and produced a large dipper of top-milk. I can see his face now as he sat on his haunches watching me take in the creamy beverage. "Don't come down, I'll want more," I gasped; but, like the pelican, I couldn't hold it. That was the last I saw of the "Nestle's" truck—the end of the section where he collected cream. "There is more in the unseen than we wot of" —to quote our immortal Shakespeare. I like to word it "The Unseen Hands." I like to trust in them, too.

Filled with new energy after the milk, I set off to attack the second mountain; though not so steep, it was miles longer, and for good measure was being surfaced with rock and earth quarried from the hillside. A fleet of trucks tore back and forth, up and down the mountain, depositing great heaps on the roadway, which workmen scattered evenly in readiness for the steam-roller. Vapour, with a disagreeable mousey smell, from the mixture of rock and earth, added to the heat waves, left me breathless.

However, half-way up the mountain some workmen had just finished afternoon tea. One of them gave me a bag of home-made cakes and sandwiches —and was I cheered to taste good mugs of tea!

About 5.30 p.m. I passed the quarry near the summit. The men were finished for the day and had parked their trucks. They said another hour would bring me to Telegraph Point and I had all downhill going and tar-sealed roads.

Reading the Motorist's map, it says there is nothing of particular note to the hotel. I began to envy motorists—but then I was only the car. In the cool of evening, 6.30, people sat chatting on their verandahs along the street facing the river, and this slowed me up again till reaching my destination.

I sat in the waiting room of Riversview Hotel while the proprietress brought me some wine. She was the daughter of the lady at Nambucca who sent a message in my log, to look after me when I reached Telegraph Point—so here I was.

After a hot bath a tray was served in my room, and I had a soft bed. I slept soundly all night.

Logged: "That I'd arrived at 6.30 that evening, tired and footsore, mostly on account of the loose, rocky surface of the Kundabung Mountain. We were amazed on looking over her log-book at the wonderful trip to date, and wish her more restful nights when it's completed."

From Telegraph Point I made a detour (a short cut through to Wauchope) and did not call at Port Macquarie. This was a clay road. Memoirs from the margin of the map for that day's walk read: "A dreadful trip in rain and roads. Surely this was the great-grandaddy of all bad roads. A short cut that was a long cut." How I loved to suffer. It was something to remember anyway, but as it so happened I was to meet people who longed to see me, only they never dreamed I'd come their way.

Perhaps for this I was born, if for no other reason. Six miles after leaving Telegraph Point I began the detour. The sun was shining, the clay road for a few miles looked inviting, then it became just a cart track. Bushes and saplings grew profusely, my feet liked the soft going and all was well.

An open space, like a picnic ground, and a dance hall, and, best of all, an attractive looking residence. A lady, carrying a basket, came out of the dance hall to meet me. "I've been expecting you," she said. "Let me make you some tea." Her husband sat in a wheelchair on the verandah. While she went inside to get refreshments I talked with him. Presently she brought out a tea waggon laden with good things. There was to be a turnout at the hall that evening. What interesting ministering angels they were. The name of the place was Pembrooke. Logged: "Mrs. O'Sullivan passed through here on her way to Wauchope, having refreshments to help her on her way—God's speed."

Getting back to my own small affairs, in this out-of-the-way place my pleasure was short lived. Heavy rain set in and soon my boots were covered in yellow clay. A sudden transition into a gloomy, wet world after the sunshine in the morning—alas, for the fickleness of the weather. But this was not all. Parts of the track evidently gouged out by heavy rains were filled with heaps of small boulders, about a hundred yards of this filling in each place. Painfully I picked my way over the slippery mounds of stones, and now the wheel tracks were overgrown with grass and weeds. Not much traffic this way, I thought, and tried to hurry for fear of being left out in the night.

There were no landmarks, the map told nothing. As I kept ahead the bushes thickened and seemed taller on each side. The mosquitoes being disturbed and hungry, rose in clouds, following in my wake.

They even attacked through the veil netting and bored into my skull, through the vents in my helmet. Then the track led downhill for a couple of miles till it reached the river bank. There was no sign to say which turn to take to the ferry. I could see the township of Wauchope across the broad river, and started off down a long hill, over the rough track. When half way I was forced to stand aside while a ramshackle cart loaded with firewood passed. Some youths were on the cart, and as it passed I asked them if it was the right way to the ferry. "No," they shouted, "it's the other turning at the top of the hill."

There wasn't anything to do but retrace my steps up the steep grade. This was like a physical blow. Apparently the rolling hills were everywhere. My body was abnormally strong. The power of the mind is limitless. Why had I taken the wrong turning? I stood there gazing down the hill and waited —for what? I didn't know. It was too wet to sit down. A gentleman on a fine horse approached. When I explained who I was, and where I was going, he looked amazed. "You go down the hill to the ferry," he told me, and looked angry when I told him about the youths on the cart. "Wait till I get them," he said, as he rode off.

Back down the hill again, but relieved to think that I hadn't taken the wrong turning in the first place. I shouldn't have asked the youths on the cart, and would know better next time.

I'm setting down things just as they happened (neither for nor against), as my thoughts drifted through different states of mind.

At the end of the hill I turned right and could see the ferry landing about a quarter of a mile in off the track. A dilapidated old house in a paddock alongside the road made me long for a drink of water, and seeing some boys outside I called them and asked for a drink, and then I discovered that

they were the lads who rode on the load of wood and put me wrong about the ferry. At first they hesitated, and I repeated my request. A man came out of the house with a jug and across to the fence where I waited. Without stopping I emptied the jug and handed it back, saying "Thank you very much." There was no conversation, but on reaching the ferry I turned round to see them standing in a group looking after me. Could such primitive people exist, I wondered, thinking it must be the very back doorstep of Australia. There were no other passengers and nowhere to sit down. The ferry was worked from a winch across the muddy, swollen waters. I was the last one to cross, as next morning the river was in "spate."

The ferryman told me to climb the bank after landing, at the top I'd find a road, and he added that the people at the first house would take me in. Before reaching the bank some patches of grassy swamp were crossed, before climbing to the roadway and through a wire fence.

It had taken all day to reach Wauchope. I had no idea of the distance, but was ready to topple over for want of a "cuppa."

Right opposite was a milking shed, and I hurried across the road to ask for a drink. Almost self deceived after that day's battle, and glad to be back in civilized surroundings once more, I gave no thought about my appearance. I was still wearing the mosquito veil, my raincoat was soaked and muddy, and as for the big boots, they were bad enough before splashing through that grassy swamp.

CHAPTER XII.

The Witch's Spur

Two ladies in floral summer frocks (evidently visitors) stood talking to those who were milking.

The younger one brought me a mug of hot milk which I swallowed at one drink. "Would you care for some more?" she said kindly. I nodded, thinking how sweet she looked. After the second mugful I thanked her and moved off.

Having made up my mind to stay at the hotel that I could see at the top of the road, all I desired was a bath and to bed. Passing the house the ferryman had mentioned, I thought—what a handsome home. The flower garden seemed to shed its perfume all around, and some had even bloomed outside the gate (and this was the home where I stayed). And it calls for a story:

"Wait, wait," cried the young lady who had served me the milk, as she came hurrying after me. "You're not the great-grandmother, are you?" I nodded "Yes." "We never expected you'd come through Wauchope, and mother says you're to come right in and stay the night."

Once inside, she hurried to draw the bath while I shed my boots and bandages. By that time her mother and aunty had arrived. The latter insisted on washing my back, saying as she did so, "Now you can tell people that you've had your back scrubbed." After a perfumed bath they clothed me in fine undies and silk 'jamas, and then into the softest of soft beds in a delightful room. "Now," said the mother, as she stood beside the bed, "tomorrow is Saturday and

you're not getting out of that bed till Sunday—look at those swollen ankles," and she almost shed tears. You would have to be out on those cruel roads day after day to understand what all this kindness meant to me. I believe that after some food I went to sleep and never moved till daylight. Talk about killing the fatted rooster! So much food in one day should have lasted me to Sydney. The horn of plenty was mine. And as I rested in bed, my eyes idly roaming over furnishings and fittings, it seemed like a Shrine of Peace. Then there was the question of clothes. If the mother had had her way she'd have kept me there till she made a frock that would fit me.

Meanwhile, wardrobes and cupboards were turned out and various garments tried on for fit.

Back in bed, I sat darning and patching my old jacket. All that remained of former smartness were eight large, polished bone buttons down the front, which saved it from being mediocre. Then a big tuck round the skirt waist saved it from being a draggle tail. At least it looked tidy, mother admitted with a sniff. She had been a famous horsewoman and now her daughter followed the same calling—and was also famous. She was preparing for the coming local Show. Seated on her thoroughbred mount she looked like our Princess Elizabeth—regal and full of grace. I was intrigued with their collection of medals and ribbons, won at various contests.

The time passed all too quickly in my Shrine of Peace, and Sunday morning found me bandaging my doggies for the road once more.

There remained another 10 miles of the clay detour after passing through Wauchope. The girl used it to exercise her horse over the track, but now it was impassable. There was nothing left for me but to take a wide sweep out on to the Pacific Highway again.

Logged: "The west wind, mad with his witch's spur, plunges and leaps, but he can't throw her." "That I'd arrived Friday night, boots squelching water and very tired after a long, wet day over rough roads. After a hot bath, with back washed, she looked sweet sixteen. She is leaving us this morning, hail and hearty after a good day's rest. We enjoyed her company very much. A safe journey to Martin Place, Sydney, and Good Luck."

Standing at the gate, holding my hands, this wonderful ministering angel lady bade me good-bye. Tears in her eyes. There are tears in my own eyes today as I live that scene over again.

The daughter walked with me through the town, and I headed off over wide metalled thoroughfares and crossed a bridge over a muddy, flood-swollen river, and then had the world to myself for the remainder of the way. This doubling back to the Highway, as well as other obstacles on my path, must have made a total of 700 miles before I reached Sydney.

A place named Burrawan Vale was my only stop for tea. From the road a large section, filled with junk, looked like a graveyard of old cars, bits of planes, trucks and what not. But a cosy wee home nestled by the roadway. A young mother and two babies lived there, and I was logged: "Kitty O'Sullivan called this afternoon for a very-much-needed cup of tea. We enjoyed her short stay. Wishing her all the very best."

And now the broad ribbon of road led through timbered country. A cool breeze stirred the branches of the gum trees. The subtle fragrance of eucalyptus and the soft air upon my skin was like a refreshing draught after a stifling day. In due course I arrived at an opening in the trees. Wheel-tracks led into the bush, a large signboard on a gum-tree advertised watermelons and vegetables for sale.

Particularly fond of melons, my mouth watered, yet hesitant to go forward for fear of I knew not what, I stood leaning against the gumtree.

Finally my thirst compelled me to investigate. The time was late afternoon, and I knew of no habitation till Heron's Creek. The place seemed a long way back as I cautiously ventured forward, stopped, and peered through the bushes.

A house, set in a lawn, with a wire fence shutting it off from the surrounding property, met my gaze. A man was mowing the lawn. The verandah was heaped with huge melons, some split open, and my mouth watered afresh. Then a middle-aged woman came from the back and I reached the gate without further hesitation. I asked for some melon.

This started a long rigmarole about the wet season having spoilt the entire crop. They looked perfect the woman said, but were tasteless. It was a great loss to them. I was welcome to have as much as I liked. I still stood on the outside of the gate, while she went indoors to get a knife to cut the melon.

These good people were strangely ignorant of this jittering old world of ours. In their simplicity lay hidden charm and their own happiness. Not having heard of me before, the news threw them into a mild kind of excitement, and "me standing here and not asking you inside the gate," the woman chided herself. My transition from the gate into the kitchen was so sudden that I can't remember whether I entered at the front door or the back. A delightful story of how a family of four people, father, mother, daughter and son-in-law set up gardening by clearing a tract of bushland for cultivation miles from any settlement or railway. They had built their own house and carted their produce for marketing in a small truck. And this was the home where I spent the night.

There were no coverings on the well-scrubbed floors,; tables and chairs were snow-white. The daughter was busy preparing a hot meal on a wood-burning stove, but left off to make me a much-needed "cuppa." The room off the kitchen was unfurnished, but a stretcher from the shed was produced, and bedding and clean sheets seemed to appear from nowhere. Mother insisted that I sleep in one of her nightgowns. The daughter produced one of her own, and a set of undies for me to take away. I'm sure she had them as a treasure—folded away in lavender—but lavished them on me. After bathing my feet I sat up in bed and enjoyed a tasty tea. Alongside was a small table with half a watermelon, in case I was thirsty during the night.

Logged: "The place was Peckham Rye, N.S.W. (not on the map), that I'd arrived at 5 o'clock after a very hot, sultry day." "We were very pleased to have her company and hear her experiences. My word, she has a heart of gold to take on this long trip. If all great-grandmothers had the same spirit for the good of others. Wishing her God's speed and hoping the 'mossies' let her have a good night's rest."

I thank these ministering angels for their kindness. They rank high amongst the rest of these lovely Australians.

At mid-day I reached Heron's Creek, North Coast, New South Wales, and had some refreshment. The lady was thrilled to think she could help such a wonderful woman. She was very sorry I couldn't stay. "Wishing her every success."

No more stops or tea until I arrived at Kew, North Coast.

Logged: "That I arrived at Royal Hotel, feeling tired after a humid day's walking over very hard roads, and after a hot bath retired early, looking happy and comfortable—Mrs. O'Sullivan, we are so pleased to have made your acquaintance."

Overwhelming kindness was shown me here. Three of the staff asked if they could visit me after my supper, which they brought me. All signed the log, after the proprietress. It was a nice gesture at the end of a hard day, and a good sleep made me ready for the following day.

Rising early—my breakfast was set overnight in the dining room—I was soon on my way. Passing through mostly timbered flat country, my first stop was at John's River. Logged: "Had much-needed tea—we think she is doing a very wonderful thing, and wish her God Speed and Good Luck on her journey."

On and on led the broad, hot, dusty Highway. There were stretches of open country, but mostly timberlands and few habitations, but I kept ahead. I was making up for lost time and felt very fit. Late in the afternoon I stopped long enough to drink some tea at a cottage by the wayside, and learned that a place called Moorland, a short distance in from the Highway, was the only habitation within reach that night.

Cramming as much mileage as possible into each day when on a stretch of good road gave me a thrill to know that I could still turn on speed. Coming to a small bridge over a gurgling stream I decided to rest on its grassy bank. More traffic passed this way than I'd seen for weeks. This reminded me how the days were whirling past, to my detriment for a speed record, and I didn't seem to notice them. Neither was I perturbed. Whatever time I arrived at Sydney would be the setting of a record walk—open to any age.

On the other hand, geography and climate varied in all my other walks. The entries in the log from the people on this highway must bear witness to the frightful condition of the roads.

This is my record, let someone break it.

Spurred by the falling darkness, I gathered myself off the bank and with a spurt of speed set off for Moorland. Soon I reached the turnoff, a long street with shabby houses on one side only. It looked a poor settlement, even in the gathering darkness, as I made my way to the Post Office Store at the further end and knocked on the front door of the residence. While I waited, I noticed beds with mosquito netting at the end of the wide verandah. A boy answered the door, and went to bring his mother. She looked me over and returned inside to bring father. "What do you want," he said sharply. "I'm afraid to go on in the night," I told him, "and won't mind if only you would allow me to sit on the verandah till daylight." Then I explained my mission. Soon my feet were in hot water. The family were having tea, and I ate mine as I sat there with them.

The black gins had been exceedingly troublesome about the store lately—and in the dark these good friends had mistaken me for one. It was a nice home, the maid was away, and I slept in her room. Let the log tell the rest of the story. Bearing the P.O. stamp Moorland: "We feel that we have been particularly fortunate to have had as our guest no less a celebrity than Mrs. O'Sullivan, the walking great-grandmother of New Zealand, of world-wide fame. Little did we think when arguing whether we could put her up—not knowing she was the lady on a recording walk. After seeing and hearing her, we are amazed that no 'tea firms' have capitalised her—she'd be a great advert., as tea to her is as gas to a motor car. She is refreshed, on her way early this morning, and hopes to reach Taree, 20 miles hence. Her log of travelling is most interesting, and we hope that God spares and sustains her, so that she may carry on—God's Speed from the family at Moorland Post Office."

In the bright morning light I had to run the gamut from the Post Office, where the family

grouped on the verandah to watch me out of sight, to the end of the street, where faces peered from behind drab curtains. I turned before passing out of sight, and the Post Office group waved farewell.

Next entry is at Do Dropp Inn Cafe, Coopernook. Log: "That I arrived that morning for refreshment, honoured to have her and think what a wonderful job she's doing—God's Speed and Good Luck."

Leaving the settlement of Coopernook, the Highway runs on to a bridge over the Landsdowne River, and now mostly easy going over good surface to Cundletown. I walked in the centre of the road through a thoroughfare lined with trees and modern bungalows. People sat on verandahs or gossiped along the footpaths. The Post Office was also a kind of lodging place for travellers to spend the night. The lady was away for the evening and I didn't wait.

Further along the street I called at a milk bar and had some much-needed refreshment. It was owned by a young couple who lived on the premises. The lady invited me to stay the night and took me inside. Had a hot bath and sat with her in the kitchen while she helped to patch up my clothing, and she gave me a change of undies. What this meant to me! Such were the varied experiences. We sat talking about many things. I didn't feel so terribly tired now, although there were lots of miles between here and Sydney. A cheery send-off early in the morning will long be remembered.

Logged: "Baker's Shop, Cundletown—that I arrived at 7 o'clock that night, after a very hot day's walking, tired and footsore, but is much refreshed and retired for a well-earned rest. A great performance for a lady of her age. A great pleasure to have had her stay the night—God's Speed and journeying mercies on her trip to Sydney."

Taree—Findlater, Boot Repairer, Manning Street, Taree. "Fixed boots and hope they will see her through—best of luck."—A. J. Findlater.

The Manning Review Newspaper Office was next door to the bootmaker and they asked for an interview. The Editor was a refined, white-haired gentleman. He escorted me across the street to a milk bar and, seating me at a table, told the attendant to serve me whatever I fancied. Just as if I were a small child. Then he shook hands and left me. I have pleasant memories of Taree, on the Manning River. It was here, too, that I put a call through from the Post Office to the Langridge School.

Being mid-day, the line was busy and I had to wait two hours. It was good to have a rest anyway, and I sat on a form outside the office. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed a gentleman move along the seat and sit close beside me.

"You're a Press Reporter, aren't you?" I seemed to smell him out. "Yes," he said in a quiet voice, "I'm from the opposition paper." "Can't you see I'm having a spell, waiting for a distant call, and cannot be worried with you?" He appeared so inoffensive that I was sorry afterwards for being so abrupt. I'm still sorry now, as I write, my only excuse being how the Sydney Press had treated me. I can see his face—so embarrassed.

That lesson had still to be learnt by me—not to be unkind to anyone. Then the call came through. I could hear the lady at the desk at Langridge's shouting, "Oh! we thought you were drowned—why didn't you send word," etc. "Get Mr. Langridge," I told her. Loud shouts of "Get Mr. Langridge" many times repeated, almost burst my eardrums. When he did reach the 'phone my call was almost up. "You needn't worry about me, I'm still a ball of muscle and I've not had to report sick anywhere. I'll

ring when I'm closer," and that was all, after my long wait and paying a long price.

From Taree to Stroud covers two pages of the map and clocks the distance at 77 miles—includes the great Krambach Mountain, and for the entire distance scarcely any habitation. Mostly hills all the way. So folding these two pages, like an Arab his tent, I followed another detour from Taree to Stroud, where I'd pick up Pacific Highway again. This was allowable on any trek. The walk was from Brisbane to Sydney, point to point, not how you walked.

CHAPTER XIII.

Battle of the Hills

Hills, hills, and more hills. There were mountains, too, but not of the kind where one had to struggle for a foothold on a slippery surface.

After my long walk in the morning and hours of delay at Taree, and now several miles on this detour of desolation, I came to a place where a native was engaged tilling a large section on the hillside, not far from the road. Two horses pulled the plough while several children followed in their wake. Afterwards I learned that his wife had died, and he was bringing up the family on his own. Their ethical training left much to be desired, if the language I heard in passing was any criterion. A gloomy, ramshackle house occupied a corner of the property, and I pictured chaos reigned there.

After more miles of hilly travelling with numerous curves, I stopped beside a culvert over a running stream. Green foliage and clumps of sapling made a welcome break in barren country. I noticed a track leading off the road from where I stood, and followed to investigate. A trellised white gate and a white cottage, amid flowers and shrubs, nestled alongside the lazy stream. Both front and back doors stood open, showing through to the yard.

In answer to my knock a frail-looking lady appeared, and on hearing my name she invited me in, saying how pleased she was I'd come that way. Her husband and niece drove into Taree every day to business and would soon be home for tea. They had

been reading about my walks, only never thought of seeing me. "Wait till my niece sees you," she added.

Logged: Koorainghat, via Taree—"Mrs. O'Sullivan called this afternoon and had much-needed cups of tea, glass of milk, bread, jam and cream. I am proud to make her acquaintance and wish her God's Speed. Later, the little lady decided to spend the night with us."

The story: This ministering angel explained that before I arrived she'd been lying down with a frightful headache, but it had vanished in the excitement of seeing me. She didn't enjoy good health and on that account they were moving into Taree. It was too lonely for her at the cottage. She laughed heartily when I said that on first sight of the cottage I'd imagined it a mirage, and now would carry away memories of a "honeymoon hotel." Most of the furniture had already gone to Taree with the exception of her double bed and a stretcher for her niece, and the rest of the things were going next day. When the others arrived from business the pow-wow broke out afresh, and we sat talking long after the tea things were cleared away. Before retiring for the night the niece and I had to decide about the stretcher—the bare stretcher or the mattress, one couldn't have both. It worked out that she had the mattress on the floor and I the stretcher in the bare sitting room. How fortunate that the place was there for me to stay, I thought, as I lay awake, my body far too sore for sleep, because the following day there was only one stop for tea, Faiford, via Taree.

Remarks: "Not good weather, misty rain, best of luck on her long job."

No time wasted here, I pushed on, nothing of note till I arrived at Wang Wauk Post Office.

Logged: "That I'd arrived late and stayed the night, and these good friends were proud to meet me.

Wished me luck on my long journey and 'may God Speed her on the way'."

Next day two entries—both for refreshments, and both remarked that I was looking well (not forgetting God's Speed).

Gooloongolok, via Bulahdelh, was reached next morning, the day being Saturday. There was a general store with a neat little tearoom attached, also they served ice cream, and I was a good customer. At the Store counter I made a few purchases, including some face lotion to soothe my peeled nose.

Then came a long, sandy stretch where many floods frolicked, leaving a wheel track where once a road had been. Then I came to a bridge over a wide creek, with one end propped against the bank with poles and large rocks—literally hanging there on its merits alone.

I was making for a place called Wootton. The gentleman who advised me to take this detour said his mother lived there and would love to meet me. After the sandy stretch came rolling, hilly country. Naturally, I should be accustomed to them now, and feeling fit. Should take them like a bird on the wing. But, alas! they were surfaced with loose gravel and corrugated on the corners. Loose gravel is very disagreeable to walk on and made my feet burning hot, as I ploughed up and down and skirted the rough corners.

Seeing children at play on a high bank I called to them and asked how far to Wootton? Then a lady appeared and told me to come up and have some afternoon tea. An unexpected pleasure in a barren land. The home belonged to a forestry manager. There were visitors as well as their own family, and I was treated to all kinds of good things, besides hearing about the people whom I was to meet. The old people lived in a house two miles over the hills. "You can see it from here," the manager said, "high

up amongst the trees—most of the family live near the logging camp just down the road. In fact, the small settlement belongs to them." These unexpected friends wrote in my log that I was a guest at afternoon tea—"she is feeling quite well. May God bless her to the end of her journey."

How strange all these experiences seemed.

About a dozen houses grouped along one street. I was taken to one, and soon my roasted doggies were released and in a dish of water. Members from the other families crowded in, scarcely able to believe their senses. Their brother had written to say I was on the road. It was an open sesame for me.

Besides a place to rest in the night, it was good to see and speak to people after a long day on the open roads, as well as having my book logged: "There were so many angels here I was bewildered by so much kindness."

I slept in a big double bed and was greatly refreshed and refuelled by all this. I set out in the morning ready to attack any hill. In Australia they sometimes call a mountain a "gap hill." My friends informed me that two miles further on I'd have a steep climb over O'Sullivan's Gap Hill, and during the ascent of that mountain I'm afraid I talked strongly about my in-laws—with the exception of the dear old mother—long since passed away. May God bless her.

Bracken and brambles covered the steep sides, dead leaves and twigs spread over the sharp stones on the roadway. The same disagreeable mousey smell, like Kundabung Mountain, floated on the sultry air. The sun roasted my spine—of all the dirty day's trek, this was it! At the top I stood and spoke aloud (I won't write it down). It was a long descent over the same kind of surface to the narrow valley below.

The home of a forestry manager and his family was the only habitation. Great kindness was shown me by this model family. There were several children, the eldest a handsome boy of 14 years, the youngest about four years. The father explained that their education was taken through a correspondence course. Mother set out a dainty morning tea, while father logged that the place was Wootton Road, Bulahdelah, and that I'd called at their home Sunday morning, after a rough walk. "We are delighted to meet her and provide much-needed refreshment and hear of the kindness of the people she has met. Mrs. O'Sullivan looks the picture of health—may God Speed her to the end of her journey."—V. Sheather.

I'm taking the liberty of giving this gentleman's name. I'm sure he won't mind, as it's important for the sake of the people whom I wish and walk to help that, apart from my feet, my health was perfect.

I might enter here, too, that another responsible person at Sydney wrote at the conclusion of this walk: "That probably I knew much more about suffering feet, caused by the dreadful roads, than any born Australian."

After leaving this nice home, a truly Christian family, I would say my heart felt a strange peacefulness. The children came to the road to see me off. A short distance ahead and I began the ascent of another mountain—or perhaps I should say a succession of mountains until I got back on to the Pacific Highway again.

Mostly the roads were wide and the surface good. Coming to the Settlement of Bulahdelah I entered a long, tar-sealed street with narrow footpaths. Shops and dwellings, all higgledy-piggledy, continued to the Plough Inn Hotel at the end of the town. Here I rested to adjust bandages, have refreshments, and then into the mountains again.

This was one of the largest timber districts I'd seen. As I climbed the long, easy grades to the summit, the roads became narrow, with sharp bends. Huge lorry loads of logs groaned and spat as they climbed steeply to the timber mills at Girvan, on the other side of the mountain. Often I'd step aside to allow them to pass, but had to keep a sharp lookout also for the empty trucks returning for more logs.

At least it was a slight distraction from lonely stretches. Reaching the summit, I beheld the forestry manager's cottage, built on a flat piece of ground, and entered through a double wired gate.

Logged: "That I'd arrived and had late lunch with them." "We were honoured by a call from her. God bless you, Mrs. O'Sullivan, and may you reach your destination safely."

I had a long rest at this home and met a charming lady and her daughter. How they tried to hold on to me. But now that my feet were good I felt I must push ahead, also I was anxious to get back on Pacific Highway next day. In my log the daughter wrote a poem of her own composition, the most beautiful words I've ever read, and written in the finest handwriting, almost like copper plate.

These two lonely ladies accompanied me on a short-cut down the side of the hill, and stood waving until I passed out of sight. The broad, wide sweep on the downward slopes reminded me of the song, "She's coming round the mountain," and I hummed the tune.

On reaching Girvan Post Office I met a man on horseback driving some cattle. He stopped, and pointing to a house higher up the road, told me to go there to his home and I'd be welcome to stay the night, adding, "you've had enough for one day." A young girl from the Post Office came across and offered to accompany me.

Off the hard road and into a most comfortable farm house. The mother was about to serve dinner. Delicious home cooking, browned crust on fruit pies, and roast lamb and what goes with it. After dinner I was allowed to doctor my feet, and sat watching the daughter while she finished off a dainty white blouse for me to take away. The girl at Wauchope, too, had given me a beach skirt, the only thing to fit, and now the blouse. How could a motor car wear such things. But I folded them neatly away in the ruck sack, against the day I'd arrive on the Sydney Bridge, but candidly never put them on, because a lady nearer Sydney gave me a floral frock belonging to her niece, and like Cinderella, it fitted me, and that's how I arrived—in a nice frock and the remnants of a raincoat.

Girvan, via Stroud, logged that "I arrived here and staying the night—the best of luck—Hail and Farewell."

Off to an early start in the morning, feeling grateful and jubilant that after walking five miles I'd be on the Highway again. The road was good for walking and I fairly bowled along. At Booral, via Stroud, the junction for the Pacific Highway, was a quaint tea shop filled with Victorian bric-a-brac. The table was set ready for customers, and I entered and sat down. Was glad to rest, and at the same time looked at the curios, thinking how unique for such an out-of-the-way place. A crystal ball and many crystal pieces made a glittering contrast. Nobody came into the shop and I sounded the gong. Another wait, then a quaintly attired little gentleman appeared. He seemed to blend with the furnishings of the shop. I ordered scones and cakes. When he returned, his wife accompanied him with the tea and made a great fuss.

Logged: "Mrs. O'Sullivan arrived at 10 a.m. and is now having morning tea, which she badly needed.

Both my wife and I wish her every success—a little lady with a big pair of boots and a heart that must be larger, to take on this undertaking." But they were kindly angels.

Getting out on to the Highway again was like greeting old friends, but the loose, sharp metal made me wince. Further on, the settlement of Booral consisted of a few scattered houses and a brick store. Seven tributaries of the Karuah River are passed over on this section of the Highway. The country is moderately hilly and timbered most of the way. It was a long time between drinks. From the "curio" tea shop to Limeburners Creek, at least I had the company of bluegums along the way, and there were some gangs of workmen on the road. And that was all.

Before me are photos of a bee farm and a large family group. Then a white pole with the road sign, "Limeburners Creek," against a background of bush, and a pretty girl in a picture hat stands at the entrance to the farm under a large signboard, reading "Choice honey sold here."

The time was 6 p.m. when I reached the gates of the farm and entered the spacious grounds. In a clearance of the bush was a large apiary, and a man thickly veiled was extracting comb from the hives. About a dozen people, including children of different sizes, stood outside a small dwelling—evidently work was over for the day. Looking at this family of twelve, and the small building, made me wonder where they all slept.

Logged: "Mrs. O'Sullivan arrived at 6 o'clock and is staying the night. We have enjoyed her company and admire her courage and determination."

What these angels did for me! In a large kitchen (usual fireplace) I sat with my feet in a dish of water, and while the family sat at dinner, mine was eaten from a tray on my knees. My appetite was never

large, but honey—how I enjoyed that! Served from a "frig," it tasted delicious, and looked like molten gold. How interesting all this was, but other surprises awaited me, too. Where did this family of twelve sleep, and how could they be so generous to me? I felt like an intruder. A short verandah separated the two front rooms from the kitchen. The family had completely disappeared, as if the ground had opened and swallowed them. It will always remain a mystery to me. The mother took me out on the verandah and showed me a bed where one of her young sons slept. "Get right into his pyjamas and I'll cover you up and tuck you in," she said. They were on the big side even at that—how these people trusted me! In my sleep, I dreamed of pleasant places, sunny rooms with pale mauve walls and white furnishings, bright with flowers. I awoke to find the domestic cat coiled on the foot of the bed and the boy's faithful dog asleep on the mat beside me. It didn't take long to get my feet ready, clean my face with cleansing lotion, and dress.

Father was in the kitchen making toast and tea. Mother wanted me to take a large jar of honey. When I told her it was impossible for me to carry, she insisted on filling a small pot and placing it with a spoon in my pack to eat along the road.

Saying good-bye to Limeburners Creek, the Pacific Highway goes ahead through hilly country to Hexham and Newcastle, and the way is well defined throughout to Raymond Terrace. This was a dreary day, open spaces and few trees. Somehow the gums were company and I missed them. After 12 miles I had some tea at a roadside Post Office, three miles before reaching Raymond Terrace. Here I was overtaken by an old workman in hobnail boots who had missed the truck that carried him to and from work. He decided to walk the three miles, and was proud to meet me and carry my ruck-sack on his

shoulder. "Everybody at Raymond Terrace knew Mr. J. McFadyen," he said, as he acknowledged their salute in passing. I remember clearly as though it were only yesterday that hard macadam surface made from broken stones, as I trudged beside my companion along the Highway. We must have made a striking pair. Something for me to think over in a day of queer happenings.

Day was fading when we reached the town, where he handed me my pack and advised me to call at Mrs. Thomson's Cosmopolitan Hotel. It was here that I again met the girls from the Aboriginal Settlement. They had come to town to attend a cinema.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Hexham Greys

On the advice of Mr. McFadyen I presented myself at the hotel mentioned. I remembered, too, that he said the licensee was a woman. I arrived at 7 p.m. The bar was closed. With confidence I rang the house doorbell. After a long wait a woman opened the door and looked me over with a hard look. With much shaking of the head, as well as the hard look, she informed me that the licensee had no vacancy, and closed the door. They hadn't heard about me at Raymond Terrace, I learned later. Guess she took me for a black gin, but after the way Mr. McFadyen spoke about the popularity of the licensee, it puzzled me greatly.

Once in New Zealand I held the licence of an hotel. It was a far cry from what I was doing today as a great-grandmother, and thinking thus, I moved on.

Coming to a brightly lit cafe, I decided to have some much-needed tea. A gracious young lady served me. Glad to sit down and see a friendly face, I told her about the hotel. "There's another hotel higher up the street," she said, and before leaving I gave her my log to sign.

Painfully making my way along the street to a shabby-looking old building, I found myself knocking on the door. Another long wait, then after much whispering and moving of chairs, shuffling feet came my way and the door opened ever so little. "No room," said a voice, and the door shut. Oh! my poor feet! and back I went to the nice girl at the cafe.

"Would you kindly get me the Police Station on the phone?" I begged her. No more of these set-backs—I was too tired, or I could have laughed at it all. The victim of her clothes. "Yes," then I was speaking to the sergeant, and told him who I was and not able to get accommodation—adding that I was terribly travel worn, and my appearance was not of the best. "No," he said, he hadn't heard of me before but was deeply interested in any exponent of physical culture. "Give me your phone number and I'll ring you back." Soon the answer came: "If you don't mind sleeping in a double bed," he said, "there's one waiting for you now at the Cosmopolitan Hotel, and good luck to you."

Back at the hotel the housekeeper awaited me at the door. The owner said she'd read something about a great walk but never thought of having me as guest for the night. They couldn't do enough for me now. The Licensee was a charming lady—all that Mr. McFadyen said was true.

Some guests at the hotel insisted I have some wine. One little Scotch lady, reading in my log that I'd had my back washed in the bath at Wauchope, rushed upstairs to prepare a bath, and again I was bathed and put to sleep in a soft double bed.

Five entries from that hotel were clocked in the log-book, and after a nice breakfast I set out through the town of Raymond Terrace.

One entry by a guest at the hotel is worthy of note; as well as clocking me for that town: "Tonight I met a woman, Mrs. K. O'Sullivan—what a woman! —courageous, happy and healthy, doing things for the women of the world. May God speed and bless her in her grand trek of thousands of miles. 'You beaut, Kitty'—keep up the good work!" Signed Mrs. A. C. Hennessy, Raymond Terrace.

Moderately hilly timbered country was my portion for the next eight miles, where the Highway

passes through a large area called Hexham Swamp, the northern bank of the Hunter River. This place is notorious for a giant species of mosquito known as the "Hexham Greys." Wait till you meet up with the Hexham Greys! People along the trek had warned me so often, and now having reached their stronghold, naturally I wished to compare their size and activity with those I'd met along the way.

The hour was mid-day. Only the wind stirred reeds in the swamp, and overhead the blistering sun in the brassy sky, and never a mosquito in sight. Strangely enough I felt disappointed, but learned they only hunted blood-donors at night. Here the Hexham ferry was boarded, and on the other side of the stream was a jumble of buildings, bowsers and a mixed-goods store. No tea, only soft drinks and cakes. Hexham is the meeting place of Pacific and New England Highways. From this settlement a long road follows the river bank. An hotel further on, called Travellers Rest Hotel, appealed to me. Seeing a woman hanging clothes in a grassy back-yard, and the gates wide open, I entered. She was the maid, and said her mistress was making jam and baking cakes in the kitchen. "Would I come in?" This charming angel proved another "special," and sitting there in the kitchen I drank my fill of oceans of tea.

Logged: "That I had called for a cuppa, and stayed just long enough to give a lesson of courage and endurance." Her husband was tending the bar and she went in to get a small flask of wine, insisting that I must carry it. "It's a hundred miles to Sydney," she said. "You must keep up strength—you're so near your goal." She saw me off the private entrance and again I followed the Highway south.

Past Iron Bark Creek, a Radio Broadcasting Station, and Newcastle Cemetery (the largest burial

ground in Australia). The lady at the hotel worked out a plan for me to follow, and instead of taking the long hill into the Port of Newcastle, I turned off the Highway at the Abattoirs and followed a track down the hill, past the Mater Hospital, keeping right ahead to Mayfield, where a tram terminus was reached.

Before reaching the turn-off at the Abattoirs, I kept telling myself that if nothing untoward happened a few days would end the "Walk." My heart was singing, and my feet were moving over the ground without effort. I might mention here that, except when passing through towns or settlements where I used the footpath, I always walked on the highway, keeping to my correct side, like other motorists. But cars were few and far between. If people stopped to chat for a while, I would be glad of a few cheery words, and at times a box or bag of sweets.

Nobody ever molested me on any of my record walks. But the untoward did happen right here and not far away from the Hexham Swamps; only a few miles from the hotel where the lady had drawn up the plan for a short-cut. An unhappy encounter brought my happy thoughts to an abrupt end. A dark man in the middle thirties drew up beside me in a low-chassis coupe. Holding the wheel with one hand, he flung the car door open with a jerk, causing a shower of groceries to fall from the ledge behind him. While he fumbled with the groceries, trying to get them back into the car, he almost tumbled out on to the road, then straightening up, he ordered me to hurry and get into the car.

"I've been following you and trying to attract your attention," he said. "Come on, hurry!" he repeated. "I must drive you to the 'Herald Press' Office at Newcastle for an ovation."

"I'm not going to Newcastle," I managed to gasp. Inwardly I was shaking. He was either mad,

or drunk, or both. Scarcely the kind of escort I'd care to be seen with. Perhaps a newspaper reporter —the thought made me shudder.

When I moved away he got mad and followed, trying to stop me by driving the car across my path. "I'm the devil," he shouted, and I agreed with him. Yes, an evil spirit, a contemptible creature.

"You coward to try and upset me when I need every bit of courage and confidence to do this last 100 miles." I moved off again, my knees shaking. Large quantities of stormwater prevented me from getting off the roadway as he manoeuvred the car to prevent me going further. His eyes blazed, his speech was incoherent. He looked as though he meant to run over me. The Unseen Hands had not forsaken me. With each vain attempt to turn the car and catch up with me, I'd gain several hundred yards, and presently came to where some men worked on a building.

"Is that fellow annoying you?" asked one of the men. "Yes! Oh, please come down and chase him away."

"Hi, you with the car, get going. Go jump in the lake," called another as he descended from the house.

Whoever this fiendish creature was, he didn't wait till the men reached hm. With one mad rush he turned his car back towards Hexham, almost overturning into the water by the road, his vile language beyond description.

Afterwards, when I grew calm and felt safe, the thought persisted that Hexham Swamp would live as a nasty reminder of having met "Satan" in person.

After some little time I came to the turn-off, and stood gazing down at Newcastle, feeling grateful for the advice how to cut out a dreary, dirty part of the walk, as I made my way past the Mater Hospital, an immense place set in large grounds.

Upon reaching Mayfield and seeing tram rails, I felt like one coming out of the wilderness into civilization. A hurried fish meal at a shop near the terminus and off again, impatient to tramp out the miles that led to Sydney Bridge. The way was complicated: railways crossed by overbridge; creek and canals crossed and recrossed; the tramlines followed ahead, and again railways by a high level bridge. Many times I had to ask my way before reaching the Sydney Road at Broadmeadows.

The nine-ways junction—roads leading in nine directions. Sydney route belonged to me. However, the hour, 8 o'clock, bade me look for a place to sleep.

Applied at a flash tourist house, the receptionist directed me to a place where the lady catered for "hikers." The lady answered the door and seemed a kindly person, but the place was full of permanent students, including her son. It did seem a long day since I left Raymond Terrace that morning. I leaned on the verandah railing and almost fell asleep. Then thanking the lady, I set off for the resident Sergeant's house. Such a scrumptious place. Alas! the family were absent on a month's holiday—so said the people next door. Back to the hiker's house, and this time the lady's son answered the door. He was an athlete and looked every inch an exponent, wearing his club blazer and badge. He'd been reading about me, never thinking he'd meet me. "Mother," he called, at the same time leading me to the sitting-room, where I almost tumbled on to the soft couch. It was hard work to keep awake. The bed was made up on the couch; I sat there with my feet in water—heavenly relief—and I don't remember anything more till morning. Fresh and fit after a dainty breakfast, I was ready and eager to attack the Sydney Road, "100 miles"—just a flick of fingers—like that! I shall enter the full account of the log—

not in self praise, but from this young man athlete, it means much.

Carl Robertson, 26 Chatham Road, Hamilton, Newcastle, 24/3/49. "A ministering Angel is what this amazing old magnificent woman, Mrs. Kitty O'Sullivan, was looking for when she arrived at the 'nine ways,' Newcastle, on her last lap of the journey to Sydney. This woman has the strength and endurance of a young girl to have made such a trip. We here are impressed and amazed, and are very grateful to have had such an interesting personality, well spoken, high integrity, and blushing full of youth, stay with us overnight. My mother wishes to add a few lines." "It is with much pleasure I wish to add confirmation that Mrs. Kitty O'Sullivan stayed overnight with us."

It is only since travelling over the Highway with my pen, instead of my plodding shoes, that I've realised what the people thought of me, and especially the work I was doing for them.

When on the trek, mostly my feet occupied my mind, and I'd never read thoroughly the entries in the log. Now I can see how important they are, as living witnesses to a test of endurance on that shocking road.

The "Pix" said: "Progress along the Pacific Highway was like a 'little' royal tour for great-grannie O'Sullivan." "That the whole walk was 'inhuman,' and that I never once wrote in my log-book, and that I did walk every step of the way from Brisbane to Sydney—I call God as my witness!"—K.O'S.

Perhaps a process of humility was required of me, and therefore I became the "victim of my clothes." Let me put one question to the women of the world: How would you like to walk through cities, say arriving at Martin Place, Sydney, in your father's big boots?

Today I am full of reminiscences, some grave and some gay. Remindful of odd patches of humour that happened along the way. After leaving Broadmeadows, the Highway follows the tramlines to Adamstown (tram terminus). Looking back, some fine views over Newcastle and surrounding districts are seen. After the hill you can be sure I had my eyes trained for a tea sign.

Before entering Charlestown I came to a grocery store. Telling them who I was, I asked if they could sell me a drink of tea. The man and his wife, very unwillingly and after a lot of persuasion, with the added inducement of asking him to clock my log-book, finally consented, but refused to accept payment.

After the eulogy of praise in the log at Broadmeadows, the next entry is from the grocery store at Charlestown. Logged: "Mrs. O'Sullivan called at my place and had a cup of tea—wishing her every success in her venture."

This entry took quite a while to decipher. It was brief—"one cup of tea" correct. Signed with name having a big "O" in front, that's all I can tell you, but the handwriting looked as if a poker dipped in ink had been shoved this way and that.

Comment: It wouldn't do for us all to be perfect, there would be something wrong with the universe if it were so.

I was making for Swansea, ten miles away. The road at the junction of Charlestown, after a few turns right, then left, continues over moderately hilly country to Belmont. Next entry from a fish restaurant at this settlement.

Logged: "Have had the honour and privilege of entertaining New Zealand's great-grandmother for lunch. Wishing her bon voyage and many happy years to come."—Belmont, N.S.W.

CHAPTER XV.

The Last Lap

Pleasant recollections of Belmont, sitting on a seat at the edge of a park alongside the road. Overhead, densely blue skies, my helmet beside me on the seat, my hair blowing in the breeze, and Swansea township only four miles ahead, where I would rest the night.

The road, too, made easy going, and the shining waters of the lagoon and Lake Macquarrie gave an added thrill. Coming to a swing bridge over the entrance to the lake, I tarried awhile to watch people fishing. Swansea is entered beyond the bridge, the Highway passing directly through the town.

Logged: Swansea Hotel, Swansea, N.S.W. "Mrs. O'Sullivan is spending the night with us. She is indeed a wonderful personality, and I must confirm all previous reports of her. She will leave carrying our sincerest good wishes for yet another triumph." —Ellen Mitchell.

I have nice memories, too, of this pretty little town of Swansea.

Hilly country claimed me for its own as I left Swansea, but the roads were surfaced with good bitumen and concrete, also many wide sweeping curves, devoid of traffic. The day was Saturday. Only one entry for log: "At a bowser called Half Way Garage, Mt. Wyong, New South Wales." It consisted of two large caravans, set at right angles, a good distance apart. One used for meals and the other for office. Each had a bedroom. The owners were a brother and sister, newly arrived from Scot-

land. Their's was a venture in a new country. Heavy canvas stretched on high poles between the caravans made a wide yard for motorists to drive in for petrol. Almost tumbling over for tea, I, too, came into the yard, badly needing refuelling, as they wrote in the log: "The lady who puts a stout heart into a 'steep brae' . . . and refuels with tea."

Out to the Highway again, passing many turn-off roads, the traveller keeps ahead, crosses a bridge over Wallarah Creek and more turn-off roads. I was trying to reach Wyong township, making a 23-mile day, but growing weary with so much swinging round curves, and reaching widely-flung gates leading along a drive to a most inviting looking refreshment kiosk, it seemed a natural instinct to remember that I had a thirst.

Soon they had a solitary customer, and I settled cosily in a corner. The staff being off at the time, the boss attended to my needs. The place Allambee (name of camping grounds), Pacific Highway, Wyong. Log reads:

"Good on you, dear Mrs. O'Sullivan. Take your message to the ones weak in Spirit, as One did about 2,000 years ago. God bless you."—Barry.

These large motor camping grounds were unusual. Instead of tents, separate wooden shelters, equipped with cooking facilities and blankets, were built in a clearance, leaving sufficient gums for shelter. Well-kept paths led to the shelters and a large tank supplied water.

I was invited to stay the night. My kind host seemed more than an angel—he looked like one from a foreign country. He brought a can of hot water for my feet and bade me come to the cookhouse before I departed in the morning. "Don't be afraid," he said on leaving, "other campers sleep here also."

Making my way to the kitchen in the early morning, I found my host busy preparing a breakfast of

toast and boiled eggs. He explained that never before had he lit a fire or boiled an egg. He didn't eat anything himself, but piled my plate to overflowing. He spoke very softly, and his gentle words seemed to sink into one's soul. I can remember them clearly. "Do not cling too closely to the things of earth," he said.

Strangely enough, I hadn't given one thought to my attire, and he never noticed my travel-worn appearance. A bright wood fire burned in a range. A polished black kettle boiled on one side. I must have drunk oceans of tea. Then I rose to depart. Before leaving, he spoke a parable—can't recall the exact words—the gist of the story being about an old man in the East who had once told him always to climb to the summit of the mountain to drink the clear crystal water before it was contaminated by noxious weeds or impure handling through pipes, etc.

He walked with me to the front porch. "No harm shall befall you," he said in farewell, and he stood there till I reached the road and waved him good-bye.

It remained with me for a long time, this strange meeting, and, above all others, seems to stand out as if on a high pinnacle.

The day was Sunday, a lovely sunny day. Passing the Post Office at Wyong, the Highway leads through picturesque bush and citrus orchard country to Ourimbah. Here I am clocked for tea—after a 12-mile walk. Some kind people working in their front garden begged me to come in for tea, and hoped I enjoyed it as much as they did meeting me. Wished me all the best of luck on my long journey.

There were lots of small places now, and I crossed the railway on the level at Lisarow Station, the railway keeping to the left to Gosford.

Another entry reads: Wine Depot, Ourimbah. "An elderly lady graciously allowed me to rest in an

old-fashioned parlour and gave me a glass of wine. The hour was 6.30, and the nearest stop five miles distant, which I reached long after dark."

Perhaps the log will do better here: Durris Farm Road House, Niagara Park, 3½ miles from Gosford. "It is with pleasure I was able to accommodate this remarkable great-grandmother, Mrs. O'Sullivan, with a much-needed dinner and comfortable bed for the night. She now has 56 miles to Sydney, and we all here at Durris Farm wish her God's Speed. I am sure those meeting her will be inspired by her tenacity and spirit, so lacking in these days."—George L. Ingram.

Reading these praises by so many people inspires me to keep on fighting in the good work.

After a nice breakfast, the lady tried to fit a frock on me, but it was more hopeless than ever. I didn't think any more flesh remained on my frame of bones. But I was well.

Anyway, next morning was down hill to Gosford Town. I arrived there as the school trains emptied out hundreds of boys and girls, who crowded the streets on their way to school. Making for a tea shop, I caught sight of my bedraggled form in a large plate-glass window and almost fainted. I still carried the white blouse and beach skirt, in case of accident, but hoped to keep it till Sydney Bridge.

Electric Cafe Shop, Gosford. Monday morning. The shop girl logged: "Kitty O'Sullivan called here for tea and cakes before she takes into the mountains."—Jean McLachlan.

From Gosford's main street I turned at a signboard for Sydney, and soon was climbing into a wilderness of mountains that seemed endless. The Highway was wide, surfaced with good bitumen, and at places commanded an expansive view, with scarcely any traffic, only a few cars and an occasional

load of giant logs. The road rises gradually over Penang Mountain. Near the summit I passed some cars and a group of gipsies standing beside the road. They appeared to be in argument over money and spoke with angry voices. They never even noticed me passing. The morning seemed to have flown. I lost count of time and kept on and on, through Moonee Moonee Valley, over very hilly country, and this continued all day and never a sign of habitation. The country seemed only good for mountain goats or deer, and I sat down many times. Then a steep dip to Moonee Moonee Bridge, over a rushing torrent —the deep gully, purple shadowed, even in clear daylight. Again to higher levels, and while resting on a bank beside the road, beheld a house that appeared to hang on the horizon above oceans of rolling hills. Wondering how it could be reached I marched on, but the dream faded—it was lost to sight and I was so sure I'd seen it.

Then another bridge—and Calga. What looked cloaked in obscurity from Moonee Valley proved to be a Suburb of Heaven. Pacific Highway led right past the door. And it had been waiting there all the time. Snugly it nestled by the wayside against a background of orange groves.

The first thing that met my gaze was an enormous beach umbrella making a portable shelter in the centre of a fruit stall, opening on to the Highway. Baskets, boxes and benches were loaded with Australian golden oranges. What a welcome surprise for thirsty travellers. Several broad wooden steps led to the large vestibule above. The kindest of all the kind ladies I'd met invited me to sit in a chair while she brought an orange drink. Across the road was a small butcher's shop, and these were the buildings I'd mistaken for houses hanging on the skyline.

This ministering angel had two children staying with her so as to get schooling, their own homes

being too far away from bus routes. What fortunate children they were, I thought, as they arrived off the bus and entered this lovely home. I was sitting in the kitchen with feet in the usual water, while my hostess cooked a dinner of lamb, followed with sweets. What it all meant to me; but there are many reasons why I must remember Calga. For it was here that my wardrobe worries ended. After dinner I was introduced to a trunk full of the daintiest silk frocks one could wish to see. "Take what you want," I was told, and the miracle happened—they fitted. The owner was the lady's niece and she had gone away to train for a nurse. How carefully I folded that one special frock to arrive at Sydney. One was sufficient—could I ever repay this lady?

Logged: "That I arrived at her home and stayed the night." "What a remarkable woman—she has taken years off my age to converse with her. My best wishes go with her, and I hope she gets the credit she deserves."

I was leaving before anyone was up, so bade farewell to my good friend overnight. A few miles ahead I knew there would be tea and toast at a wayside stall.

Clocked: Mount White. "That I had tea and wished me success for the rest of the journey."

Timbered mountainous country to Peat's Ferry Bridge. On the last four miles to the river, fine views open out to the left of the Highway overlooking Moonee Creek and portions of the Hawkesbury River.

At the bridge I enquired from the toll-gate keeper, "How far to a tea rooms?" "See that green patch at the further side," he said, "well, there's a tea room, and the only one for miles."

Crossing that huge structure over the Hawkesbury, with my tongue parched and cracking, seemed

like crossing the Atlantic. I stopped to watch large masses of jelly-fish pass under the bridge. The disc-shaped part of the animal like an umbrella, seemed to open and close as if to propel it along. Sharks, too, like to swim in from the sea. These things have always been a source of deep interest to me.

Logged: Kiosk, Kangaroo Point, Peat's Ferry. "Having met Mrs. O'Sullivan this day on her great hike, we wish her and any other woman who thinks she can keep up with her, every success and a safe return—God's Speed."

These kind people treated me so well that I could hardly proceed. God bless them, is my thanks.

From the southern end of the bridge the road starts to rise over an easy grade. Huge rocky cliffs line the way for some distance. The top of the hill is reached near Cowan railway station, after which the road is mostly level to Berowra. The surface is now concrete throughout.

Breaking into the monotony of broken roads came solid concrete slabs. Feet grown accustomed to slithering about in loose metal must get in step with pancake flatness to beat out the miles. I was meeting up with a lot of traffic now, and found long stretches of footpaths that were a nice change. Soon after leaving the great bridge, I stood with my back to an iron trellis fence to watch the traffic. It was so long since I'd seen any.

Herein lies a strange tale: A large motor-driven caravan with windows all round the body and a porch-like compartment for the driver's seat, somewhat resembled the horse-drawn turnout I'd met near Woollgoolga, with the pair on "The Road to Anywhere," but they were mild to what pulled up beside the kerb now.

The interior was full of niggers, young and old, and woolly heads popped out of the windows. The

back of the van had double doors, and I read the Biblical text—"Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life." Accustomed to travelling wayside missions in different countries, I was startled to hear a woman's voice calling out to me, while at the same time the big, coarse head and shoulders of a negress leaned from the front compartment. "Has your ambitions got you down?" At the same time a diminutive white man came round to the back of the van and asked me point blank, "What do you think of Jesus?" He pointed to the text on the doors of the van. The answer was spontaneous. "I know Him so well that He walks and talks with me along the Highway; I'm protected, too, because I'm His humble servant," adding, "Jesus walked the open roads." The little man was amazed as though unable to believe. He went back to the driver's wheel but the car never moved. I was making for Berowra and intended to make it the last night before reaching Sydney.

Passing the stationary van I noticed several small children sitting in front with the big woman and the little driver. The latter made a last appeal—"Wouldn't you care to drive with us the rest of the way to Sydney? Come on!" he coaxed, "get up here in front with the children." I stopped long enough to thank him for his kind offer and explained that I must walk. Falling darkness found me still tapping the concrete—eyes looking ahead for feeble lamplight in some village window.

A bridge spans a deep railway cutting and the Highway turns sharply to the left. Right beside the bridge was an old-fashioned house with a light in the window. In answer to my knock the door was opened by a little old-fashioned lady, in keeping with the house. But the lights were electric. She welcomed me in as though she'd known me all her life. Yes, she had heard about me, only didn't think I

would call to see her, especially in the night, "but I am proud to have you," she said. I explained about the water for my feet and she hurriedly prepared a steaming bucketful.

A small grandson lived with her for company; her husband was a fisherman and seldom came home at night. After late supper I explained about my clothes, and that I had a frock and clean undies to wear next day. At this she brightened considerably. Was she going to be the one to have me sleep at her home for that last night?

She claimed the big buttons off the costume coat as souvenirs. Reverently I folded the costume and what went with it, and together we went to the wash-house and burned the parcel in the copper fire. She fairly sparkled with wit. Gone was the little old-fashioned lady who had answered the door and invited me in. She belonged to a women's club in the district—what a lot she would have to tell them at the next meeting!

"And now to bed," she said, leading the way to the sitting-room. In the centre of the room was a large four-poster bed surrounded with all kinds of furniture, bric-a-brac, old clocks, knick-knacks and stuffed curios. The bed was the largest I had ever seen, except at Hampton Court, England, the castle used by Henry VIII, and now a show place. However, this great bed was soft, and I climbed beneath clean sheets and was soon asleep. My heart overflowed with gratitude to this last little ministering angel.

Resplendent in the silk floral frock under my light raincoat, and with a sense of lightness in my soul after shedding the remains of what was once a fashionable costume, I started away to complete the 22 miles to Sydney Bridge.

CHAPTER XVI.

Proving It Can Be Done

'Tis said "a woman's dress is her second skin." Always fastidious over personal appearance as something important, I now took comfort as I looked down at my frock. It was something to dream about. I wondered, too, that the soles of my plodding shoes did not wear out. Perhaps the lightness of my body put no pressure on them. Anyway, they pattered along the concrete and, not having to guide them over rough places, my thoughts drifted unchecked.

The wonderful people I had met—people of rare charm. To a casual observer my walk may not have appeared worthwhile; on the other hand, my life was greatly enriched in many ways through this experience, and must bring its just reward. Wholeheartedly I can say, "I'm glad I did that walk," although sometimes I think it couldn't have happened to me.

In years to come, perhaps younger generations will remember what a great-grandmother achieved for them. Mothers with young families have more than enough exercise, but when the children are grown and at school, there's a vacuum that mother could fill with this little profitable hobby. (An empty void at the pit of my stomach brought me back to earth.)

Mt. Kuring-gai, Residence, Mac's Rest and Motor Tourist Camp. A pioneer coach waited outside the hotel and soon I was inside. The tourists sat at small tables enjoying morning tea. I entered by another door and waited by the office desk. When

the proprietor learned who I was he took me in to the tourists and I was introduced—like this:

"My friends, meet New Zealand's walking great-grandmother. Perhaps she will be so good as to give you a little talk."

Readily enough I consented, one eye on the tea-pot. I explained the object of these walks, and even gave a few demonstrations of swinging the leg, to train how to walk. They asked numerous questions and poured out "oodles" of praise. "Such a lovely little interlude," one lady said sweetly as they departed to the luxury coach.

It was here that Jim Gervan, the driver, logged: "The most important entry of my Record."—God bless you, Jim.

Now my kind hosts received me like Royalty. Apart from refreshments, they made me rest in their own private parlour. The proprietor put a call through to Tom Langridge.

It didn't seem strange to hear his voice over the phone. He made all the arrangements for my arrival. I was to be officially welcomed to Sydney on the Sydney Harbour Bridge at 10.30 the following morning. Arrangements were made to clock off at North Sydney Police Station, and they would arrange accommodation for the night. I told him that what I had done was nothing in comparison with what the Australian people had done for me, adding that because of the roads "I was lucky to be alive."

Greatly refreshed after the kindness shown me at Mt. Kuring-gai, I pattered off again to Hornsby, five miles distant. From Hornsby to Sydney was a network of turns, left and right, across railway lines, and re-crossing over bridges.

A little further on the Highway swings this way and that, then is well defined through Wahroonga

and Warrowee, to Turramurra, then more crossings over bridges. The way then passes through Pymble to Gordon, Killara, Lindfield, Roseville and Chatswood. At the last named town the way to Sydney keeps ahead, later passing over Mowbray Road, and further on the tramlines are followed to Crows Nest, where you keep ahead, avoiding side streets on the left and right.

Approaching North Sydney, the Post Office is on the right, and the way ahead is kept to the approach of Harbour Bridge. Of course, I had lots of "cuppas" and helpings (large) of ice cream, as I found my way through this maze of twists and turns.

At 9.30 p.m. I reached the North Sydney Police Station. If I said I wasn't tired, that would be untrue—it makes me tired now, as I write about it. How dazzling bright those lights on the Bridge looked to me. The Sergeant clocked me off. The walk was over—except the Official Reception at Martin Place G.P.O. in the morning.

Clocked: "Mrs. Kitty O'Sullivan arrived at North Sydney Police Station at 9.30 p.m. on 30th March, 1949. Was very tired and seeking accommodation, which was arranged."

(Signed) M. P. Clavin,
Sergeant.

Alloa Private Hotel (A. T. Foristal), North Sydney. An officer at the Police Station put me in his sidecar and whisked me away to the above address, close to the Bridge. Here again, Royal Honours were showered upon me. A hot bath, a luxury bed, tray with supper. How glad I was to lay my precious frock across the shining rail in the mirrored wardrobe. And how pleasant to lay my tired head on the soft pillow. The "Plodding Shoes" were taken away to the shoe-black. Was I excited? Hardly! I slept soundly.

Before my eyes opened in the morning the trays were busy. I must breakfast in bed and rest till it was time to dress for the meeting on the Bridge. This was practical advice, but impossible to carry out. Used to early rising, I sat up and bandaged my feet. A good pair of stockings, bought at Maclean and saved for this occasion, were worn with the "plodding shoes," shining so you could see your face in them. Then the priceless frock, raincoat opened down the front, and a tightly buckled belt.

Having returned from adversity, I was glad to plant my "plodding shoes" on the great structure of Sydney Bridge, smiling and light-hearted and all in one piece, though on the slim side; and the Press were there to meet me.

2GB Radio had a car at the foot of the steps leading to the bridge, and I had to descend again to speak over the air. Back up the steps once more, cameras clicked, and I had to walk away from them and back, to get photos at different angles. The cartoonists, too, got busy. There were some good photos, but they used others that were anything but flattering. The Press walked with me across the Bridge, one little reporter keeping close by me, trying to extract a direct acknowledgment. What were my thoughts as I tramped out the miles? I have now written them for the World to judge. To this particular chap I said, "Maybe I was half unconscious" —he jumped at that, and inwardly a great-grandma smiled.

At the G.P.O. steps, Martin Place, Sydney, Mr. Langridge and others welcomed me on behalf of the School.

Photographers swarmed round. Would I walk towards the camera? Could another one have a picture, etc. "Movietone" took many pictures in connection with the Brisbane Official Start. Some sit-

ting in fashionable tea shops with my pack on a chair beside me. All this took a long time. There wasn't enough to make the film, so Tom Langridge had to fit in pictures of my physical culture feats. These were taken at the School gym. the following day. He posed them. After they were taken Tom Langridge and I had a long talk in his private room.

He thought I should have made faster times. "I'm still of opinion the boots were too long," he said. I reminded him that they were my feet, and only for that extra length I'd never walk again. I handed in my map and log-book to the "Pix" Editor. The "Pix" Magazine made my walking days 42. "That would be correct," I agreed, adding that I had created a walk, Brisbane-Sydney, in 42 days, and it was open for any age to try. "You have all the answers," he said. "If you think my age had anything to do with it, you're wrong," I said tersely. "I'm a long way from being laid amongst mothballs." I tried to make him understand how increasingly difficult situations cropped up. Things worsened rapidly as I fought my way south.

"But can't you see, Tom, that I am fit, nothing but my feet suffered? Besides, the roads wouldn't let me walk fast and the people wouldn't let me go. They tried to hold on to me, those lovely people, and after all they were the people I had to meet, to give them my message."

"What message?" He almost shouted the words. "The message of health, of course, by physical culture." He just stared at me, like a man in a trance. I was almost in tears, trying to hold them back and inwardly vowing that I'd never come near the School again, I took my departure. A week passed. Easter was at hand. I knew Tom and his old cobber were going away on Thursday for ten days, the usual tramp through the bush. I hadn't been back to see

him, and felt at a loose end. Teddy, too, was "taboo"; her husband would never forgive me; yet both Teddy and he were always ailing, and my only crime was proving Health. The daily papers were strangely silent about my walk. "Movietone" waited for the acrobatic pictures. My ankles remained swollen and I rested at my apartment. Before leaving to do the walk I gave the landlady my key and two weeks' rent in advance, thinking I'd not be more than three weeks away. So that had mounted up. But before I had time to settle the account things happened so rapidly that it seemed I'd come back to face stark realities. Sydney was crowded with visitors for Easter. Like so many other places, our hotel was short of staff. The receptionist had been very good to me and I was genuinely fond of her. She considered the wealthy owner of the place was mean to charge me up for the weeks I spent on the road—especially for the women of the world. No other Australian would have done so—besides, the owner left the responsibility entirely on the shoulders of the lady at the desk. I offered to help her out. I became the pantry-maid—a thing I had never done before. It wasn't easy, either, but I did it, and started on Good Friday morning, from 7 a.m. to mid-day. My ankles never got any rest, but I managed to hobble around in large sandals; at least it would pay for my apartment, but was not reducing the debt—and Tom must not know.

A wealthy little old lady occupied the flat next to mine, and she knew everybody's business at the hotel. She could relate all the news in any of the numerous papers, especially the Sydney Morning Herald. "No Herald on Good Friday," she moaned —it just left her flat. She was a harmless little body, though at times a bit of a pest. She was over-curious to find out why I didn't appear in the dining-room for breakfast. "Do you go to the gym in the morn-

ings?" How she worried about these things. Saturday morning she had her beloved Herald, such an extra lot of reading. She called to me across the passage as I appeared from below—"Is this your Mr. Langridge?" she said, reading aloud: "A Sportsman's Death—many people in different parts of the world will regret the passing of Tom Langridge." I was stunned for minutes.

He died suddenly on Good Friday. I thought he was away in the bush. I learned that he had had several black-outs, and that the last day we had talked he was full of penicillin. He did seem strange that day—always so kindly and gentle; I never saw him alive again. We know not what a day will bring forth. Little did the Principal of Langridge School think that Good Friday morning when he awoke it was his last day on earth. There was no sentiment between us. No tears that he was gone.

In the crowded Anglican Cathedral I sat with other members of the School and watched the oaken casket carried up the aisle to rest on trestles before the altar. The Archbishop spoke from the pulpit: "Tom Langridge was a personal friend who died in the service of others. He was giving treatment to one of his patients at the man's home and slumped over." I watched the casket in a kind of dumb wonder. Nothing seemed real, and nothing is real in this material old world of ours. The one thing we are certain of is Death.

As the casket was borne down the aisle, bunches of crystal grapes on the oaken sides sparkled in roseate hues cast from the Cathedral windows. Outside in the spacious courtyard of the building groups of people waited to pay their last respects to a great man. The casket was already in the carriage—a car loaded with wreaths waited—members of Tom's large staff took their seats in a long line of

cabs, and the Bishop, in his robes, stood beside the Chaplain's car, waiting to see them depart.

The staff manager hurried me to the last seat in the line of cabs. Just as we reached it the forewoman of the Langridge School, who knew I was to have the seat, beckoned to a friend of hers, and the seat was gone. The cortege had started, and I stood and watched it out of sight. Bitterly I upbraided myself for not going back to see Tom. How was I to know he was so ill? It appeared as if he was angry with me. Poor dear Tom, how dignified he was about everything. The service was just in keeping with the man himself. I bade him God's Speed as I walked slowly back to King Street. I had had an idea that the forewoman didn't like me, now I was sure. The lady in the office and she had been there for fifteen years, and when Tom toured with the various teams they were capable of running the entire business, but none of these things troubled me at all. The final words of the Bishop kept ringing in my ears. Six hundred doctors in Sydney chose Thomas Alfred Langridge for their official masseur.

In an abstract way I entered a bootshop to purchase a comfortable pair of sandals. Still thinking of my feet, you will say. At the moment they demanded some of my attention. It hurt my head trying to think, and I returned to the hotel. The receptionist was my only friend now. "Go up to your room and lie down," she coaxed, "and I'll bring you some tea." My bemused brain seemed to catch on at the mention of tea. I took the lift to my room and soon she arrived with the beverage. This had a soothing effect, and I began to sit up and take notice again.

Nursing a forlorn hope was out of the question. The bottom had fallen out of my visit to America.

It was not to be. The manager of Tom's School asked me to stay and work with them.

The owner of the hotel scolded me, saying, "You naughty girl, going away on that walk instead of having things fixed up for New York." "The best laid schemes o' mice," etc. "Yes, I understand," she agreed. She really liked me and thought I shouldn't be working in the pantry, but it was really a blessing in more ways than one. It occupied my mind, and the exercise was pleasant. The little English Chef was a tonic, also the only waitress that would stay on the job. Only breakfast was supplied at this large establishment, so that at mid-day the staff went to their homes, and apart from my friend at the desk, I was alone.

A strange coincidence happened at Langridge School. About two months prior to Tom's passing, the caretaker, who had been there for many years, also dropped dead. It was difficult to fill his place. The brasswork on the stairs and the mirrored walls at the entrance soon lost their shine. At Tom's passing, the School closed for several days; and when it re-opened, I called to collect my mail. Reaching the entrance, I stood aghast.

Autumn leaves covered the vestibule and stairway, the handrails and brass fittings were black, and the mirrors covered in dust. How soon material things lose their glamour. It looked like the graveyard of all Tom's hopes. How different everything was to that first morning when I had arrived from New Zealand. Now the lady at the desk and the manageress sat in the office, looking the picture of abject misery. Death had dealt them a heavy blow!

I couldn't bear to return to the School again. Before leaving Sydney some weeks later a friend

from New Zealand House, Martin Place, drove me out to the cemetery to see Tom's grave.

That was over two years ago. Many events have happened in my own life during that time. I never commercialized anything. I was not given towards businessmen's profit-making motives and was always ready to pay my way. I never made a penny!

CHAPTER XVII.

"But Tell Us What You Eat"

"Yes, Mr. Chairman, presently, all in proper sequence." Mindful of the day, as speaker at the Sydney Housewives' Association, and the appealing cry of the chairman, when she called upon me to tell them what food I ate.

"World Fetish" for slimming: Most people have the idea that bread is fattening, but science has proved this not to be true.

"Wheat" is the Staff of Life, and bread is made from wheat. Bread is the most important energy producer for the body. Glucose originates from the carbohydrate of the wheat, and is required for all muscular movements.

A bountiful Providence, who created the Earth, provides man with "wheat." He gave man a natural longing for bread. Water and bread are the two most important foods to sustain civilised man. At the beginning of civilisation wheat was soaked in water and eaten that way. Then it was crushed and made into little cakes. And so on down the ages, till we, pampered ones of this age, have the baker deliver nice crusty loaves at our door. For myself, I prefer brown bread. Cultivate a taste for it, and if at times you fancy the white loaf, have it. But you will soon find that a longing for brown bread will return, toasted or plain, preferably a day old. Plenty of butter, and I like good jam as well as butter.

You are taking in fruit, sugar, and all that goes with the wheat.

An invalid for many years, I suffered days of starvation (called diet). The thought makes me shudder. I have a small appetite and eat only when hungry for the things I fancy, or just anything handy. Mostly, I enjoy sweet things. But never think of meat. Sometimes, for politeness sake, I've tried to take ever so little, when dining out.

I have never smoked, so know nothing about the craving for tobacco. A good strong cup of tea—no sugar—cream if possible. But I do not make tea a "fetish." Anyway, we give far too much thought to what we shall eat. Take control of your stomach, instead of allowing the stomach to take control of you.

Jottings: We read of oil on troubled waters, also the oil of gladness. I like to take a teaspoonful of pure olive oil before my morning cup of tea—heating the spoon in the teacup—then fill with oil and wash down with sips of hot tea. It becomes a habit—but not a "fetish"—of taking it every morning. It lubricates the joints and keeps the face looking fresh.

Oil, too, rubbed into sore muscles, or swollen joints, is most soothing. Hot oil over the chest and throat will ease coughing and sore throat.

Beware of making a "fetish" of anything, even in the constant polishing and fussing over material things in the home. Some unsuspecting victim slips on the polished surface—the consequences, a fractured hip or limb.

Now for Gymnastics: Culture of the Physical body stretches back to antiquity, develops the mind, and doing exercises controls the muscles of the stomach. If you don't take kindly to physical culture, then do as much walking as possible. Have an object in your outing. Only do try to get out of doors when you can. Learn to relax—and not always speeding your body in top gear. We are told it is impossible

for people over fifty to see through the eyes of youth. Centuries of this kind of thinking make it so. For the individual who would do his own thinking, nothing is impossible. The astonishing thing is how like sheep most humans are—follow the leader, it is so much easier than using your own mental powers! The choice is with yourself.

"Keep Your Powder Dry." The Sydney "Truth" described me as "a great-grandmother who used lipstick and powdered her nose"—holy mackerel, what a fearful crime! And I am telling the "Women of the World" to take every care of their personal appearance. Use a good skin food on your face and clean off any make-up used during the day. It pays you to consider an "ageing skin." Be kind to it. Pat it gently and do not stretch the skin. Take more interest in your body, instead of growing old with a podgy figure, and chasing that jade "fetish" with the floor polish.

Of course, the stodgy old newspaper man couldn't understand that my mission was a sacred one, to prove Health for others.

However, it is authenticated by the Press and responsible people throughout the world, as well as members of the Royal Family.

Questions asked:—

"What do you thing about the rising generation?" I do not think of them as thoughtless and selfish. There is a great need to encourage them. Remembering our own youth, let us make allowances for them. Anyway, it's the younger generation I have come back to meet.

During my last three weeks in Sydney I had the pleasure of showing my gratitude in some small measure to those dear people from Brisbane to Sydney who helped me on the way, by posting to each

address entered in my log-book by the people themselves, autographed copies of my Autobiography, and a booklet of Poems and Short Stories. Thanking them from my heart, "New Zealand's Great-grandmother."

I have no regrets about not going to America. It turned out for the best, seeing how perplexed the world is today. Again I have so much to be grateful for. Had Tom Langridge died before I arrived back in Sydney, I, too, must have dropped dead on the road. Unconsciously I was heading back to him all the time. He stood for all that Physical Culture meant to me. He would be waiting to welcome me on the Sydney Bridge—"I must not fail."

Sailing away from it all, I departed from Sydney June 10th, 1949, on board the S.S. "Monowai." Logged: "Passenger, Sydney to Wellington—arrived June 14th, 1949."—(Sgd.) G. B. Morgan, Master.

At Parliament House, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the late Hon. W. E. Parry (the father of Parliament), was deputised to lead the House during a fortnight's absence of the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser. The Hon. Bill (a term of endearment) logged: "As having known me for a great many years, and seeing me on my arrival from Sydney, he could honestly say that I had not changed, in physical or mental condition, since he last conversed with me some five years ago."

From an educational point, for physical culture I was the greatest example New Zealand could have.

The Hon. Bill was a very fine man and a great humane statesman. Only last year did he retire from his labours, on account of ill health. . . .

And this clocked me off in New Zealand.

Finally, let me remind you: "Youth is a state of mind, not a time of life."

Be self-critical. Question yourself. Take time to investigate. Indulge in soliloquies. It may sound "silly," but it pays big dividends.

There will always be dark, dreary days. Yet take courage. Doesn't it always clear up? The sun is only hidden by cloud. Remember the ageless message—"Behold yourself healthy and youthful." Keep the picture before your mind, and see how happy you can be.

"All is in Mind."

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