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NEW ZEALAND HOLIDAY

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EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908327-38-6

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908330-34-8

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: New Zealand holiday

Author: Rees, Rosemary

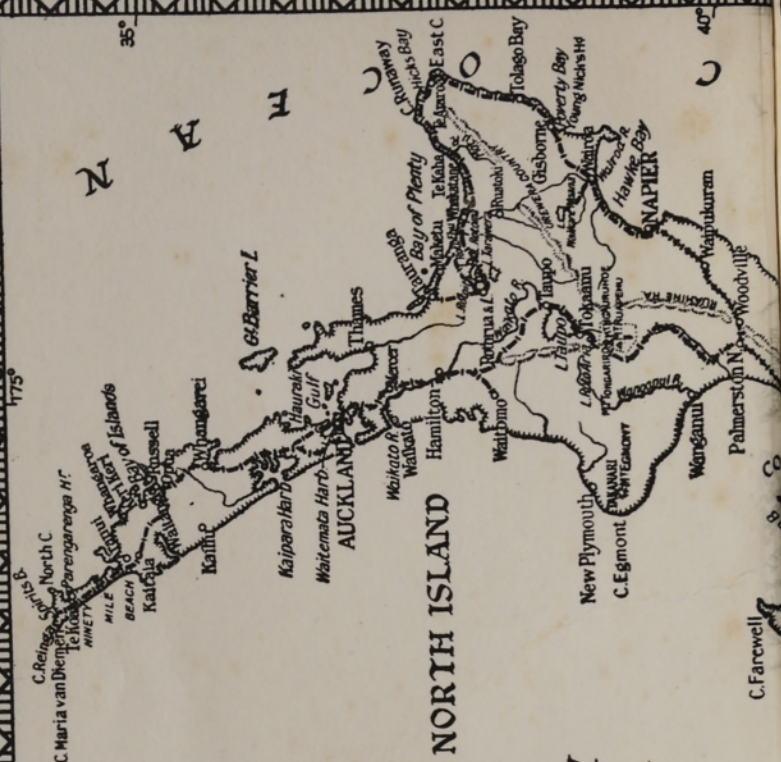
Edition: Cheap ed.

Published: Chapman and Hall, London, 1936

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Reference

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- 9 THE HERMITAGE
- 10 LAKE TASMAN
- 11 THE REMARKABLES



SOUTH ISLAND

Scale of Miles

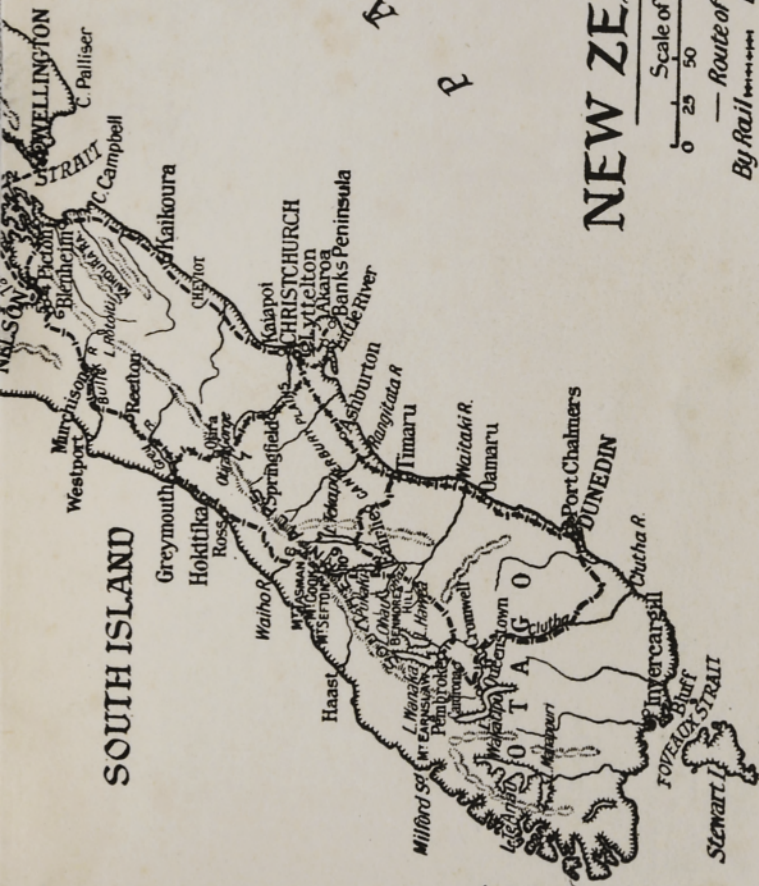
— *Route of Tour* —

By Rail  By Road 

175°

170° East of Greenwich

South C.



NEW ZEALAND HOLIDAY

By the Same
Author

APRIL'S SOWING
HEATHER OF THE SOUTH
LAKE OF ENCHANTMENT
LIFE'S WHAT YOU MAKE IT!
WILD, WILD HEART
DEAR ACQUAINTANCE
SANE JANE
CONCEALED TURNING
LOCAL COLOUR
HOME'S WHERE THE HEART IS
MISS TIVERTON'S SHIPWRECK

~



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

BOWEN FALLS (540 FEET), MILFORD SOUND

(Frontispiece.)

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NEW ZEALAND HOLIDAY

BY
ROSEMARY REES



LONDON

CHAPMAN AND HALL LTD

11 HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.2

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First published, 1933
Cheap Edition, 1936

DEDICATION

I've failed to mention in this book the greatest charm New Zealand holds for me.

It is the welcome I receive from life-long friends on my return.

A list of these friends would fill so many pages that I must content myself with the names of those of you whose homes have sheltered me during the writing of this diary, and whose cars have whirled me round the countryside.

Will each one of you please take this dedication as my bread-and-butter letter which in many cases, I fear, I was too rushed to write?

Edith Reynolds; Nora and Charles Dowding; Rosamond and Will Robson; Maisy and Jack Hughes; Laura Turton; Betty and Alex Macnab; Moira Macnab; Lillie and Con Cradock; Maud and Jack Macleod; Nessie and Alex Ferguson; Ada Carr; Grace de Courcy; Claire and Wattie Lloyd.

18 FEB 1987

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CHAPTER I

HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

So far, my books have always ended in my publishers' office. This began there.

"So you're going to New Zealand," said a member of the firm. "Have you ever written a book about New Zealand?"

What a horrid question! My first five books were stories of New Zealand. A trifle hurt and humbled, I reminded him of this fact.

"Oh, novels!" he answered, dismissing them with a wave of the hand. "I mean a serious book."

"I can't write anything very profound."

"I don't want anything profound. But I'd like a book on New Zealand—written as lightly as you please—yet giving me some real information about the country. Now, suppose as a holiday, I contemplated a visit to one of the British Dominions; or perhaps, that on retirement I felt I'd like to settle overseas. What is there to guide my choice?"

"Lots of High Commissioners—eager to."

"Exactly. They'd all tell me that the particular part of the Empire which they happen to represent is the one and only place for me—for everyone, in fact. They'd be biased in favour of their own corner of the globe."

"I might be biased too. I'm a New Zealander, and I love my country."

One of my friends once remarked to me in a slightly

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puzzled fashion: "You're always raving about the beauty of New Zealand in your novels, but I notice you take jolly good care to live in London."

Well, like the lady who trumped her partner's perfectly good ace, I might reply with as much dignity as she did to his infuriated: "Why?"

"I have my reasons."

Nevertheless, I do sincerely love my country; and on this dull autumn afternoon, with the carts of Covent Garden rattling over the cobble-stones of the Market beyond Henrietta Street, I'd been talking of my joy in the prospect of re-visiting my native land after seven years' absence. This sudden suggestion that I should employ my time by writing a book about my trip was disconcerting and upsetting.

"But I'm going on a *holiday*," I objected.

"Splendid!" said the member of the firm. "Call it 'My New Zealand Holiday.' There! Your book's half written already."

He sat back and beamed at me.

I'm afraid I looked what I felt, cast down and disgruntled, but he took no notice of my glum expression. Perhaps, in the half-light of the book-lined room, he wasn't even aware of it.

"When I was out in the East," he continued, "I found there was a tremendous interest in New Zealand. Men discussed it as a possible settling-ground for themselves and their families. They wanted to know something of the social life there; educational advantages for their children; chances for themselves of outdoor sport: golf, fishing, shooting, sailing and swimming. . . ."

"But all this is dealt with in the pamphlets issued by . . ."

Again he dismissed my objections with a wave of the hand.

"Pamphlets! Who reads pamphlets? Is there any

HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

book on New Zealand—entertaining to the general reader—thoroughly well illustrated with photographs, and really informative?”

I had to admit that I didn't know of one. “But I'm not very good at facts.”

“Nonsense. Anyone can be good at facts. You've only got to dig 'em up.”

“My only talent—if I've got one—is the telling of a story.”

“You'll find stories—plenty of 'em—as you go along, but they'll be true stories. And no country in the world can provide such magnificent photographs of scenic beauty as New Zealand. You'll travel through it from end to end . . .”

“Shall I? How?”

“Ah! I leave that to you. What about hiking on horseback? Or some friend with a small car? You'll manage it somehow. Anyhow, what's the matter with the railways?”

“Nothing, except that they don't carry authors round without a ticket.”

“*Buy* a ticket. Visit the hot springs—the thermal region—tell us something about all those odd geysers and volcanoes and mud-baths, and the Maoris cooking their food in the boiling pools. Catching a trout in a cold running stream on one side of the pathway, I'm told, and popping it into a boiling pool a yard or two away. Then take a trip to the Southern Alps. Write about mountaineering, skiing, and so forth. What about the camps for deep-sea fishing in the north? And, by the way, I believe there's a little colony up there of Britishers from the East, growing citrus fruits. Then there's the trout-fishing, finest in the world, I understand, all through the country. Endless material everywhere. You can write a book like this on your head. Just a diary. Jottings as you go along. I believe

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if you turn the proposition down, I'll go out myself and write the book."

His enthusiasm was beginning to infect me, though I was still a prey to conflicting emotions. Hatred of work (very strongly marked, this) warred with a conceited desire to brag in print about my own country. And I was (and still am) a little doubtful as to the interest the general reader may take in the simple and uneventful record of an ordinary voyager. Though the journey is to the other side of the world, it isn't a very arduous or adventurous undertaking. I'm not doing a solo flight, or swimming, or even navigating a small open boat southwards. I shall eat my breakfast, lunch, and dinner for thirty-eight days in the well-appointed saloon of a liner; sleep for thirty-eight nights in a comfortable state-room; and at the end of that time find myself entering Wellington Harbour. It will be summer in the south. I'll see again the Heads—hot and vivid in the brilliant sunshine—the sapphire sea, the Tararua Ranges stretching their purple peaks far to the north, the sheets of golden gorse and broom on the hills behind the city. Perhaps in the air there'll be the smell of a distant bush fire. Home! The thought of it thrills me. The desire to share my delight in all this beauty with others—make them, if possible, see it with my eyes—works within me.

Before I leave my publishers' office, I have promised to do my best to produce a book, "interesting to the general reader," dealing with my holiday in New Zealand.

CHAPTER II

SOUTHAMPTON TO JAMAICA

"How I envy you missing the cold grey days—getting away to another summer." I had become so used to this sort of remark that I'd grown almost smug in my replies. As though I were the inventor of the Southern Hemisphere, or at least the originator of the idea of running away from London's winter. Consequently, it would perhaps have given me more cause for self-complacency if, on the day of my departure, I had been able, feelingly, to quote Hood's lines:

*"No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member—
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—
November."*

The lugubrious poem, however, wouldn't have been in the least appropriate to this November morning, when I, together with nearly two hundred other passengers, caught the 9 a.m. boat-train, by which we were to travel, to Southampton Docks through an England bathed in the still radiance of a perfect autumn day. Chrysanthemums spread sheets of colour in the cottage gardens; against the green hillsides the turning beeches were splashes of bronze and russet yellow; the silver birches looked as though their delicate branches had lately caught a shower of gold dust; in the woods the pines added their note of dignity and beauty to the

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autumn colour tints; still, reed-fringed ponds reflected the misty blue of the sky; while, here and there, thatched cottages nestled round a grey-spired church.

*"Let me grow lovely growing old!
So many old things do.
Silver and silk and lace and gold,
Need not be new."*

I've read something like that, somewhere. England certainly has grown lovely growing old. Beautiful, serene, dignified, and infinitely kind, she looked to-day—a real Motherland. It seemed almost a pity to be leaving her! But then, there's always the coming back to look forward to—besides, this is to be a book about New Zealand.

"Have your tickets and passports ready, please!"

We were out of the train and formed up in a queue to pass the Customs officials and the ship's agents, before ascending the big canvas covered gangway to the deck of the ship, which for the next five weeks would be our home. "She's old, but a marvellous sea-boat," I heard one of my fellow-passengers remark; and his companion replied: "Steady as a rock. I've travelled in her before. They don't build ships like this nowadays. Put too much top-hamper on 'em. All these fancy winter gardens, and cocktail bars, and so forth—give me comfort at sea before fine fixings."

The Shaw, Savill & Albion are the first of the shipping companies to inaugurate a "Tourist" service direct to New Zealand through the Panama Canal. The *Ionic* and the *Tainui* have both been converted into one-class boats, with fares ranging from thirty-eight to sixty-five pounds. The difference in the passage-money paid merely indicates the difference in cabin accommodation. Deck-room, food, service—all the amenities of

SOUTHAMPTON TO JAMAICA

ship-board life—are identical for every passenger. It is truly amazing to be housed (I suppose one ought to say "shipped") and fed, for something over five weeks, and transported across the world in the greatest comfort, for the sum of thirty-eight pounds. Although we have now been some weeks at sea, I have not yet found a single passenger who is discontented or has a grievance to air; and this is, as anyone who has travelled at all extensively will agree, a most remarkable phenomenon. Either the one hundred and seventy human beings now afloat with me upon the Pacific are singularly angelic in temperament, or they haven't been given many opportunities for finding fault. Of course our contentment *may* be due to our own delightful personalities, and again, it may be owing to the fact that we're pleasantly aware of getting a great deal more than our money's worth. Consciousness of having secured a genuine bargain is always an agreeable sensation.

Our ship may be likened to a really well-run, old-established family hotel. The food is excellent, the staff most willing and attentive, and the whole vessel scrupulously kept. In fact, much as I'm looking forward to arriving in New Zealand after seven years' absence, I shall be quite sad at saying good-bye to this very satisfactory place of residence. Our good *Ionic* has justified my fellow-passengers' encomiums. With the exception of one night when there was a slight movement, during what even the Captain admitted was "a fresh gale," we might have imagined ourselves residents of, a seaside hotel. Now, in the Pacific, with a shoal of flying-fish darting suddenly out of the blue water in a cloud of sparkling spray, and skimming gracefully over the surface of the sea; with the bulk of the bridge, chart-room, and life-boats, dazzlingly white against the blue sky; it is distinctly pleasant to loll in a comfortable deck-chair, beneath a flapping awning, and ramble on with

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a pen in one's hand. Certainly, I'll admit I'm fond of the lazy life at sea, and am inclined to agree with a small boy, who the other day on deck informed me that "the happiest days of his life" were spent at sea. "Pooh! The happiest days of your life!" scoffed a slightly older boy.

"They are," contended the little boy hotly. "No work to do, and the steward standing behind your chair holding the menu, and saying, 'What'll you take?'"

The "what'll you take" occupies a good deal of our time at sea. Early morning tea and fruit in the cabin before one's bath, and a good substantial breakfast, are not considered quite sufficient to sustain life until luncheon; along the line of deck-chairs at eleven comes Green, our deck steward, with beef-tea (or ices when the weather gets warmer); the bugle summons us at one o'clock to luncheon; no one fails to hurry to the saloon at four o'clock for tea, cake, biscuits, bread and butter; while six courses at dinner, with sandwiches at ten-thirty, give us sufficient strength to drag our tottering frames to bed.

If we've played a game of deck-tennis, quoits, or golf (or even had a rubber of bridge) during the morning, we feel we've taken quite enough exercise for the day, and can now enjoy a little well-earned slumber in a deck-chair, lulled by the drowsy wash of the sea along the ship's side.

Life, I find, is much the same for everyone on any liner. Food, sleep, deck games, cards, and reading—but less reading than one would imagine, for it is very hard to concentrate on any subject. Study I should imagine to be almost impossible on board ship. Even the rinsing out of silk stockings, and the pressing of summer frocks, odd jobs which must be performed by all women not numbered amongst the idle rich (query—are there any idle rich extant to-day?) become irksome at sea. The

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facilities provided on the *Ionic* for the performance of these unfortunately necessary tasks are excellent. Yet one postpones as long as possible the most trivial duties. As one of our passengers remarked the other day: "I find exercising my deck-chair pretty well all the exercise I care to take."

A fortnight after leaving London we reached Kingston, Jamaica. Frantic search through the ship a day or two before our arrival for guide-books on Jamaica. "As every schoolboy knows" is an excellent phrase, but every schoolboy seems to know a great deal more than I do—not that that's difficult. At any rate my ideas of Jamaica were vaguely connected with sugarcane, hurricanes, negroes, earthquakes, cotton plantations, buccaneers, and bananas. I hadn't the least idea that:

(a) Christopher Columbus discovered Jamaica in 1494 and that it was then known as Xaymaca (hence Jamaica).

(b) That Columbus returned in 1503 in order to effect repairs upon his worm-eaten, badly holed, and unseaworthy ships; and having beached them, lashed them together, and so converted them into a wooden fortress as a defence against the native Indian tribes.

(c) That for over a year he, then sixty-four, suffering badly from gout, held this position until help reached him from Spanish ships, and he sailed away to die in Spain two years later, in ignorance of the fact that he'd discovered a great new continent before he came upon the small island of Jamaica.

(d) That the Spanish held the island from 1509 till 1655, importing negro slaves from Africa.

(e) That Port Royal—built on a shelving bank of sand (across the harbour from Kingston)—haunt of the pirates and buccaneers of the Spanish main, and said to be the wickedest, most luxurious, and vicious city in the world, was engulfed in a terrific earthquake in 1692,

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and that the remains of the Spanish buildings can be seen to this day (we didn't see them and didn't meet anyone who had) at the bottom of Kingston Harbour.

(f) That the British title to the island was recognized in 1670, and soon after this Jamaica became one of the greatest slave marts in the world.

Those seemed to me enough facts with which to burden my mind (already weakened by the heat of the tropics) before going ashore.

I certainly read a little about Henry Morgan, the son of a Welsh farmer, who, after an atrocious and terrible career as pirate and buccaneer, was surprisingly knighted by Charles II and appointed Governor of Jamaica.

The harbour of Kingston, ringed by mountain ranges, looked beautiful in the hot morning sunshine as we steamed slowly in. Negroes were fishing on the mirror-like surface of the water before the palm-fringed promontory of Port Royal. Nothing remains of the old Spanish town here, but amongst the tall coco-nut palms are a few modern buildings of various kinds, also the coaling station at which our good *Ionic* was to take in a sufficient supply of fuel to carry us on to New Zealand. The last time I travelled this way we coaled at Colon, before entering the canal, but now that the American exchange is so greatly against us it is much more economical to coal in a British port. Thus for our visit to Jamaica we owed our thanks to England's having gone off the gold standard. The town of Kingston lies at the foot of the encircling range of the Blue Mountains, whose highest peak is seven thousand feet. Our ship landed us at the wharf before going back to Port Royal to coal, and in a few minutes we were in the centre of the town.

It was a wonderful experience to step ashore a fort-

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night out from Southampton at a tropical island. At least, it was so to me. Everything was new and interesting: the sun-flooded streets with their clanging trams, and white-helmeted negro policemen directing the traffic; the tall palm-trees planted before the white stone colonnaded buildings of the Supreme Court and the Government offices; the motley crowd of pedestrians, negroes chiefly, but intermingled with Chinese, Hindus and white-faced (very white-faced) Europeans. Many of the negro women balanced trays of apples (imported from Canada these) or baskets of oranges, on their turbaned heads. English, of course, is the only language spoken in the shops and hotels, and it was a comfort to be saved the bother of grappling with any other currency than our own.

As the coaling would proceed all night, we had been given permission to remain on shore at an hotel if we chose, and having experienced in the past the horrors of a tropical coaling—the deafening clatter of winches; every port-hole hermetically sealed; and coal dust blackening everything and everybody—I hadn't the least hesitation in deciding on a shore billet for the night. Although the warmth of the sun in the streets during the morning was intense, the "Doctor" (the south wind) tempered the heat greatly, and driving in the mountains during the afternoon was pleasantly cool.

Our car took us first over the plains to Spanish Town—the old capital. Negro cabins with fiercely protective cactus fences, groves of banana palms, and coco-nut palms, bordered the road. Occasionally we passed a mule-cart with its attendant negroes; a panniered donkey; or a ramshackle motor-car, from which at least ten or twelve shiny black faces looked out at us. At Spanish Town we got out of the car to see the cathedral. Built by the Spaniards as a Roman Catholic Cathedral, it was destroyed (all but the chancel) by a British attack

in 1596. Restored and rebuilt after the British occupation of the island, it is now an English parish church. We entered no dim and misty aisle as we went in out of the hot sunshine. On the contrary, the old church was full of light and colour; for every round arched door was open, and framed a vivid glimpse of flowering hibiscus, palms, and tall, coloured crotons. Our negro guide pointed out the two oldest tombs to us—both of British subjects who were buried there about the middle of the seventeenth century. Into the car again; past the statue of Rodney erected in memory of his victory over the French in 1782; past the big, Spanish-looking, burnt-out shell of the Governor's house; and so away from the town to the mountain road beside the River Rio Cobre, murmuring coolly over its rocky bed.

My memory of that afternoon's drive is a confused vision of a winding lovely road opening up vistas of valley and mountain peak; of tangled bamboo thickets; coco-nut and banana palms; big bread-fruit trees; wild cane and cultivated sugar-cane, both crowned with silvery plumes; cocoa-bean trees (the large pods turning colour—red and orange); logwood, used for dyes; the kapok and silk-cotton tree; orange groves; pineapple plantations; wild yams, with scarlet poinsettias, glowing crotons, and hibiscus. Jamaica truly seems a land, if not flowing with milk and honey, at least flowing with a profusion of most delicious tropical fruits: yams (a sort of sweet potato); and bread-fruit. What an ideal spot for an impoverished vegetarian! He'd simply have to wander out into the forest and pluck his meals from the trees. The bread-fruit is not a native growth. It was introduced into the West Indies from the South Sea Islands. The first expedition sent to Tahiti in 1787 to collect the bread-fruit plants ended in the historic mutiny of the *Bounty*. In a week's time we hope to stop at Pitcairn Island—the settlement founded by the

SOUTHAMPTON TO JAMAICA

mutineers, who remained undiscovered here for over twenty years, and whose descendants still form the only population of the island. However, I'm still at Jamaica, and haven't yet reached Pitcairn.

Dotted along the mountain road, in forest clearings, were open-fronted stores in which the negroes stood, or sat, beside the counters. These, our driver informed us, were "rum shops." Horrified exclamations from a member of our party! "Rum shops" certainly had a somewhat raffish sound, but our driver explained mildly that though Jamaica was a rum-producing country, it was not more intemperate than other parts of the world. Driving back to Kingston down the twisting, turning mountain road, we met an almost continuous procession of negroes returning from the market. Many of the women carried baskets on their brightly turbaned heads, but there were others walking beside panniered donkeys, or riding in mule-carts, and in motor-cars. It was a most picturesque cavalcade.

The market closes at 6 p.m., but I managed to get there before five-thirty and succeeded in purchasing, for next to nothing, some most attractive baskets, and two panama hats. The buying of these was not easy, for directly a prospective purchaser is sighted, at least twenty negro salesmen and saleswomen pounce upon the unfortunate creature. I felt like a dab of marmalade round which the flies had clustered.

"Missis! You want a hat? Very nice this one."

"Missis! Look! Come here! This lovely——"

"No, not his—mine. Better—much better—mine."

"Oh, dear!" said I distractedly.

"No, Missis—not dear—very cheap this one. You get a good thing here."

I was beckoned this way and that.

"Come here, Missis!"

"Just step in here! Lovely, this hat! Feel it. So

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soft! Yes, you try it. You get a good thing there. *Oh! Delicious!*"

I bought the delicious hat. And another not quite so delicious, but still quite tasty, and returned through the clear twilight, past the tall, still palms surrounding Queen Victoria's statue in the square, to our hotel.

If my panama hat could be described as delicious, how much more delicious was our night at that hotel. Dinner served in a loggia dining-room, open on three sides to the flowering garden; sitting in deck-chairs out under the stars (I didn't see the fire-flies in the trees, but others did); then, after a bath, bed beneath the white mosquito net beside the open window. To be cool again after the tropical heat! I'm sure our blissful sensations weren't diminished by contrasting our present happy lot with that of all the foolish passengers who had elected to return to the noisy, sweltering, begrimed atmosphere engendered by coaling. Breakfast at 7.30 in our open dining-room: all the flowers fresh in the morning air, smiling at us; a lizard smiling also—or rather winking blandly, and a few birds (not humming-birds, alas, though others of our party saw them) hopping round our table, searching for crumbs. At 8.30, together with a dozen more of the shore-staying passengers, we were in the launch making our way over the glassy water of the harbour to the *Ionic*, anchored in the stream.

All traces of our vessel's grimy night were washed away. She was her nice clean self once more. And, though the passengers were (I presume) their nice clean selves again also, their haggard faces when they spoke of their sufferings during coaling showed plainly what they'd undergone.

"*Why* didn't we stay ashore too!" they wailed.

Ah, why! We couldn't answer that question, but rather conceitedly—our perspicacity fully established—took our way to our cabins, airy now with open ports.

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A few native boats still surrounded the ship—boys diving for pennies thrown; optimistic merchants holding up large and hideous mounted ox-horns, and enormous lumps of coral for sale; but soon, as the *Ionic's* speed increased, these boats were left behind.

The divers would have to await the coming of another liner to reap their harvest from the sea: the mounted horns and coral must retire into obscurity once more.

CHAPTER III

THE PANAMA CANAL

Two days after leaving Jamaica we reached the Panama Canal—described as one of the seven wonders of the modern world. Work on the canal construction was begun in the Culebra Cut by a French company—working under de Lesseps, the builder of the Suez Canal—in 1882; but was abandoned in 1889. Men died like flies in those days from malaria spread by mosquitoes. A reorganized company resumed operations in 1894; and the property rights were purchased by the United States in 1902, the canal being finally opened for traffic in 1914.

We arrived in Colon Harbour about 11.30 a.m., but beyond slowing down a trifle to take on board the pilot, and the negro crew who work all vessels through the locks, we passed straight on into the canal, leaving behind us the water-front of Colon, chiefly noticeable for the imposing white Moorish façade of the Washington Hotel, framed in tall palm-trees.

We had been allowed to place our chairs right forward on No. 1 hatch, under the awning. This, the fo'c'sle, is the crew's only corner of the deck, forbidden, as a general rule, to passengers. Here we could get a really marvellous view—as from the Royal Box—of our transit from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. It is hard to communicate the thrill one experiences in steaming on a great liner, like a small launch in a little river, so close to the banks that one feels one could almost stretch out one's hand and touch the banana plantations and tangled tropical vegetation on either side. The first, and

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biggest, lock is the Gatun. Here our ship rises eighty-five feet in three different sections of the lock. There is not more than twelve inches difference in height between the Atlantic and the Pacific; but we cross the highlands—the spine of the Western Hemisphere—in the Gaillard Cut (called formerly the Culebra) where the excavated bottom is forty-five feet above sea-level. So the huge bulk of the ship is raised, to steam over a range of hills! So quickly do we rise in Gatun Lock that we have the sensation of ascending in a gigantic lift.

Now we are clear of the lock, and out on Gatun Lake: an artificial lake this, its palm-covered islands the crests of submerged hills, with the skeleton tops of drowned forests showing above the water. We are actually travelling in an ocean liner over what was forest not thirty years ago!

Although we are permitted to have our chairs amongst the crew, we've not displaced them. They, too, are here, and for the time being they are spectators as we are, for the work of getting the ship through the locks is done by the negro crew we took on board at Colon. These men, with steel hawsers from the ship attached to "the mules" (small electric railed cars on either side of the lock), haul the vessel through.

The presence of the crew somehow emphasizes the feeling of strangeness in the day. They have a gramophone going; the sadness of Paul Robeson's marvellous voice in negro spirituals seems queerly appropriate to this setting of tropical jungle; and yet the music, too, heard like this above snatches of conversation—the hailing of a big white liner steaming over the submerged forest, and passing close beside us along the track we've come—adds another note to the curious excitement of the day.

In Gamboa Reach begins the actual passage of the Continental Divide. Here the keel of our ship passes

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over the site of the village of Santa Cruz where our old friend, Sir Henry Morgan, at the head of his ruffianly buccaneers in 1671, halted on his way to Panama—the city which, sacked and plundered, passed out of existence at the attack of this small but desperate band. Back to their ships they went, with one hundred and seventy-six mule-loads of gold and silver: the treasures from Peru (worth millions) which had been awaiting in Panama its transfer to Spain.

Dead slow now for the eight-mile passage of the Gaillard Cut. Here, afloat in a great ship, we steam through an opening blasted in the rocky hills! We see a crocodile's horny snout below the cliff on which is set the memorial to the first French excavators of the cut. In the Narrow Cut we meet an American transport. Slowly, slowly, we pass each other; so close, of necessity, do we draw near to one another, that we feel we could almost shake hands with those on board.

Once clear of the precipitous rock faces of the cut, the country opens out into a region of cone-shaped hills, and the valley broadens to the Pacific. Now we must step down our eighty-five feet again, in two more locks.

There has been rain during the day; the lights are beginning to shine from the mosquito-screened houses, through wet banana leaves and palms, as we reach Miraflores, the last lock through which we must pass. Below Miraflores the lighted buildings of the American Army post of Fort Clayton are clear-cut against the sunset sky. In the twilight the dark bamboos and stately palms stand quiet as sentinels.

Eight hours is the usual time of transit through the canal. We've done it in perhaps a little less. So easily, so quietly, has our passage been accomplished that we must be forgiven if we fail to realize the gigantic marvel of American engineering genius responsible for the

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construction, and the efficient working, of this water pathway between two oceans.

Darkness has fallen now, and under the starry sky the lights of Balboa and Panama City twinkle at us as we steam out of Panama Bay. Old Panama lies seven miles beyond.

The bugle's warning sounds. Strange as it may appear, we'd almost forgotten the "What'll you take" to-day. We had eaten our breakfast in the Atlantic, eastward of America. Now, in the Pacific with the Western Hemisphere behind us, we make our way down to the saloon for dinner.

CHAPTER IV

JOYS OF IDLENESS

PITCAIRN ISLAND to-night! Rather a blow this, as we shan't see much of it by moonlight. Not that we should have gone ashore even if we'd reached the island in the daytime, for no one ever does. It is a rough, surf-boat landing, and the liners stay for an hour or two only to pick up the mail-bag, send ashore a few odd stores, and purchase oranges; but the islanders—descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers—come out in their whale-boats with fruit, baskets, and souvenirs, and provide some excitement for us.

During the twelve days since leaving the canal, we have steamed southwards through a Pacific Ocean true to its name. One showery morning only have we had—for the rest, a level sapphire sea, and brilliant sunshine. This morning is typical of all the others. I've placed my chair beneath the bridge deck as near as possible to the board marked "No passengers allowed forward of this notice"; and from my isolated corner here—turning my back upon the rest of the ship—I look forward to the foc's'cle, along the planking of the well-scrubbed deck. Against the brilliant blue of the sea, and the milder blue of the sky, the dazzlingly white deck rail swings gently up and down as we move upon the almost imperceptible swell. The crew have evidently been having a washing-day. Some blue dungaree trousers and a shirt or two dance in the breeze. White-painted

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ventilators, and black winches, together with a few A.B.s sunning themselves, form the furniture of the deck; while the lines of black rigging, and yellow-painted booms, are outlined against the sky. And here, to my retreat, comes our kind and ever faithful deck steward, Green, with the eleven o'clock beef-tea.

Our sports committee, as is the way of ship-board sports committees, have kept us busy playing off heats of deck-quoits, deck-tennis, deck-golf, and bull-board; the swimming-bath, slung over No. 2 hatch, has been full of energetic bathers most of the day; and at night we've had a cinema on deck, dancing, or horse-racing. The screen for the projection of the films is stretched above No. 4 hatch aft; and the audience sit in their chairs on B deck (the stalls) and also on the island boat-deck (dress circle). The pictures themselves are quite well displayed, but the frame of the picture, and the circumstances of its showing, are more interesting than the film itself. Beyond the white sheet one sees the tall shaft of the mast uprising towards the starry sky; the outline of the life-boats; the wide sweep of ocean, empty to the horizon. Nearer at hand the little ship community: strangers thrown together for a few weeks to share the same experiences and make a small world of their own—and all of them—to a greater or less extent—lost in the illusion of the screen. One night a sudden tropical rain-storm swept down upon us in the middle of the performance, but the audience, sheltered under awnings, sat on. We were in the rose-garden of a millionaire, watching a pair of lovers beside the lily-pool. And yet about us was the suddenly darkened sky, the rush of the wind in the rigging, and the confusion of the sea. We disregarded all that. Our ship—our little world—bore us on, and we were amused and entertained. That's all we asked. The mystery of sea and sky—of the universe—didn't distract us from our toys. It never

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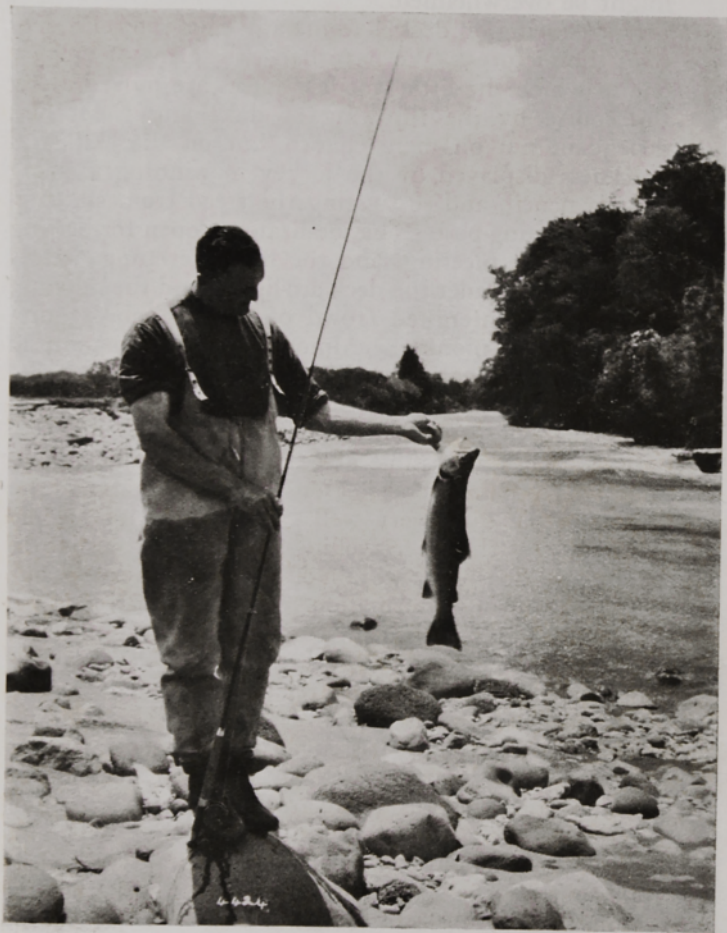
does; which perhaps is just as well, for otherwise we might be overwhelmed.

Horse-racing on deck is to me a livelier entertainment than the pictures. We have had two forms of racing: one in which the little wooden horses are moved along the course by the throwing of dice; and the other, dependent not on mere chance, but on the skill and quickness displayed by the jockey in winding a string upon a pencil, and so tugging the steed from starting-gate to winning-post. The totalizator is open for betting at either race meeting; and the bright evening dresses of the women under the deck arc-lights, and the moving, amused, and interested crowd of backers, make quite an attractive picture. Almost every night—music provided by a panatrope—there is dancing; and this, too, provides entertainment both for the onlookers and the more energetic participants.

It is almost impossible at sea not to speculate as to one's fellow-passengers' reasons for undertaking the voyage. One can't very well go round asking people outright why they're travelling, and yet, in a slightly camouflaged fashion, we all of us spend most of our time in acquiring information regarding the rest of us. We humans may in the course of ages have lost our tails, and our prehensile toes, but we haven't yet lost the inquisitiveness of our distant relatives who never fail to amuse us on our visits to the Zoo.

Most of the *Ionic's* passengers are New Zealanders or Australians returning after a visit—on business or pleasure—to England. There are a few people travelling for reasons of health, and some also going, as I am, merely for a holiday. One of these, Captain Wilson, is going out for the sixth time since 1926 for the fishing season.

"The best trout-fishing in the world," said he. But he bound me to secrecy as to the spot chosen by himself



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

"THE BEST TROUT FISHING IN THE WORLD"
(DREADNOUGHT POOL, TONGARIRO, NORTH ISLAND)

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and his brother-in-law. No one else shall invade their paradise if they can help it. Apparently fishermen aren't eager to share their joys! On the shores of one of the many lovely lakes near Rotorua—like Thoreau at Walden—they inhabit each a one-roomed shack. But, unlike Thoreau, their shacks are in the grounds of a comfortable farm-house, and at the farm-house they have their comfortable meals, only making use of the shacks for the storage of their belongings, and for sleeping quarters. And they can run into Rotorua in their car in something over an hour, or up to Auckland in eight hours.

"But what made you think of going to New Zealand in the first place?" I asked.

"In 1926, while I was fishing at Les Bouillouses in the Pyrenees, I came across an article in the *Field* on New Zealand trout-fishing. Suddenly I thought to myself, 'Why not travel out to New Zealand and find out for myself if all these fish stories are true—the ten to fifteen pound rainbow trout caught on the fly? Doesn't cost so very much more than pottering about here, and one misses the Northern winter.' My brother-in-law was just on the eve of retirement from the Indian Army, and I cabled to him, 'What about New Zealand for the fishing?' He cabled back, 'Can do,' and my ship, the *P. & O. Narkunda*, picked him up at Bombay."

"And you found the ten to fifteen pound trout?"

"I never found those myself—oh, yes, they're undoubtedly there—but seven or eight pounders—rainbow trout—we often got. Not so good for eating though, these big fellows, but great fighting fish. The three and four pounders are best for the table."

"What about the salmon-fishing in the South Island?"

"There's the quinnat salmon in the Rangitata River near Geraldine, but he's a sluggish fighter. Hasn't the gallant dash of the trout. He bores against the

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current like a log. I landed one twenty-five pounds, and another of ten, and one of them raced away with every inch of my line—the trace and the spoon. How big he was I don't know; but I prefer the North Island fishing. There's the Atlantic salmon in Lake Te Anau in the south. That's a beautiful table fish, but they don't grow to much over ten to twelve pounds. For some reason they never go out to sea. In Scotland and the North of England salmon get fat on the Atlantic herrings before they return to the rivers. There's no herring about the New Zealand coasts, and that may be one of the reasons why the salmon in Te Anau don't develop to the same extent as they do at home."

"Didn't the Duke and Duchess of York fish at Taupo when they were in New Zealand?"

"Yes, I believe they had a camp at Tokaanu. Good trout-fishing there, but I'm faithful to . . . No! I'm not going to have that printed in any book. Don't want hordes of fishermen wading round in my preserves. Say in the vicinity of Rotorua. That's near enough; there are hundreds of lovely lakes and streams about there to choose from."

"And you haven't been disappointed in New Zealand?"

"Should I have taken the journey six times in the last six years if I had been? I think not. And I may tell you that on the *Narkunda* a fellow-passenger of mine was making his twenty-seventh consecutive visit to New Zealand for the fishing. The Rotorua season lasts from November to the end of May—that's practically the whole of the summer in New Zealand."

"You go back to England in May?"

"Not every year. I stayed in Rotorua one winter, that is, from May to November—managed to put in a very happy six months there—played a lot of golf. One of the most beautifully kept and sporting courses I've

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ever played on—Rotorua. No less than three craters to drive over! Then don't forget there's the shooting for six weeks sometime in May or June. A movable date this season is; decided on, and fixed by, the Acclimatization Society from year to year."

"What sort of shooting near Rotorua?"

"Pheasant, Californian quail, hare, and wild duck. Beautiful little birds the wild duck on our lake, but wily. One can't go after them in an outboard motor. They're off in a second at the sound of the engine, miles away. Oh! and there's deer-stalking now if you want it, and no close season for deer. You can go out and bag a twelve-pointer whenever you feel inclined—and if he comes near enough. Plenty of sport to occupy one in New Zealand, and it costs as little (in fact less) to go out and take advantage of it, as to stay in England and shiver through an English winter."

So now we know Captain Wilson's reasons for travelling to New Zealand!

In these twelve days since leaving the canal we've spoken to one ship only, but this was an event to us, for the ship in question was the *Tainui*, the other Shaw, Savill & Albion Company's "Tourist" vessel. We were told that we should pass one another about 5 p.m., but we were none of us, I think, quite prepared for the thrill we experienced in meeting in this fashion. Of course it was intentional that we should draw so near, and yet that did not diminish the excitement of it.

Out of the thousand league empty waste of waters, to come upon our sister-ship; to shout to the New Zealand passengers lining the deck rail; to hear their answering voices across the water, to see the fluttering pennants signalling "A pleasant voyage"; their "Thank you," in flags, to our similar greeting and our identical reply; to hear the two saluting rockets bang from either ship; and then to watch the name *Tainui* upon her stern gradually

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become more hazy, and less easy to decipher, as she passed on the afternoon sunlight along the track we'd come.

It was indeed "Hail and Farewell," but as exciting a moment to them, I think, as it was to us.

CHAPTER V

PITCAIRN ISLAND

WE had all been bemoaning the fact that we shouldn't see Pitcairn, the tiny island two miles long and one mile broad, in the day-time. Well, you can't have your cake and eat it too, and obviously, if we'd arrived during the afternoon we shouldn't have seen the island by moonlight, and thus would have missed one of the most impressive moments of our whole trip. It's true that when we slowed down off the island at 10.30 p.m. to await the coming of the boats, we weren't able to discern the red-coloured cliffs, and the huts amongst the palm-trees; but we saw the loom of hills against the wide, starry sky; and the moon's pathway of silver upon the dreaming waters of the immense Pacific seemed to emphasize, and to bring home to all of us, the isolation and unutterable loneliness of this small settlement.

Yet the hundred and seventy-five inhabitants of Pitcairn—the descendants of the *Bounty* mutineers—would probably stare at you in bewilderment if you expressed pity for them. As one of the crew of this ship remarked to me feelingly: "A jolly good life seems to me they 'ave there. No police, no army, no navy, no rates and taxes, no nothing!"

I suppose "every schoolboy knows" the story of the "Mutiny of the *Bounty*." However, in order to refresh the memories of readers other than these well-informed young men, I'll recapitulate a few facts here. In 1789 the crew of H.M.S. *Bounty*, then on a mission to convey bread-fruit plants from Tahiti to the West Indies,

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mutinied. As far as we in the present day can judge, there was a great deal to be said on behalf of the mutineers. Captain Bligh had undoubtedly treated his men with savage severity; and the cry of Fletcher Christian—the ringleader of the mutineers—as he cast adrift his commander and eighteen men on that bright tropical morning off Tofua, “All I know, Captain Bligh, is that for this last week I have been in hell—in hell!” seems to give one the impression, not of callous brutality, but of a spirit tortured beyond the limits of human endurance. And Christian—the master’s mate—was not abandoning his comrades in mid-ocean. Tofua was within easy reach of those cast adrift from the *Bounty*, and the launch was adequately provisioned for a short voyage. That the natives of Tofua should prove unfriendly, and that Captain Bligh and the eighteen men with him in an open boat, only twenty-three feet long, should sail for three thousand miles to Timor in the Dutch West Indies—enduring almost incredible hardship and suffering during that dreadful forty-eight days—was not foreseen by Christian. But at the moment when he was swept on to mutiny by the passionate resentment burning within him, Fletcher Christian probably cared little what became of the man who had made his life a hell.

Rid of her Commander and those who stood by him, the *Bounty* bore away for Tahiti. Seventeen members of the twenty-six men now on board remained on this island, but Fletcher Christian, fearful of the discovery of his crime upon the high seas and its consequent punishment by death, sailed away to find, if possible, a hiding-place and sanctuary. Tahitian wives for all nine Englishmen, and six native men (three of them with wives), were now on board the *Bounty*. Christian also saw to it that the ship carried live goats, poultry, pigs, and such provisions as he could obtain.

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Twenty years passed. The story of the *Bounty* and the mutineers had been almost forgotten when surprising news reached England. The American ship *Topaz*, cruising in the South Seas, had called at the supposedly uninhabited island of Pitcairn, and there, to the Captain's astonishment, he found a well-ordered community of close on fifty souls.

Of the original mutineers, only Adams remained, but descendants of his messmates—of Christian, Young, and many more, there were in plenty. And this new generation could by no means be described as "Wanting Salvation!" They'd received it in very good measure. Amongst other things saved from the *Bounty* before its destruction by fire on the wild, surf-beaten beach at Pitcairn—a destruction ordered by Christian for fear of discovery—were a Bible and a Prayer Book. With the aid of these, Adams taught the young people to read, and instilled into their minds the principles of the Christian religion. The original Bible is now in the New York Public Library.

So much for the facts of the drama played out nearly a hundred and fifty years ago. Now we were waiting on the brightly lighted deck of the *Ionic* for the advent of the islanders, who, since early in the nineteenth century, when Pitcairn was annexed by Britain, have been British subjects and are now under the jurisdiction of the Government of New Zealand. In three large whale-boats they came—nearly a hundred men and women—more than half the total population of the island. They were dressed in shabby European clothes; the women in old summer frocks, and battered hats, collected at various times from passengers of visiting liners. Why on a tropical night they should have bothered about any sort of headgear it is difficult to imagine. (They have never worn boots or shoes.)

Laden with their baskets of curios, yet agile as

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monkeys, they swarmed up the swinging rope-ladders at the ship's side. The splendid physique noted by the Commander of the *Topaz* has deteriorated since civilization has reached the island, though perhaps this deterioration is due in part to in-breeding in the small community. At any rate, the beautiful white teeth the American sailor spoke of aren't much in evidence now; but the Pitcairners are gentle and charming in manner, with soft voices, speaking good English, and only the slightly swarthy skin—no darker than an Italian's—to show as an inheritance from their Tahitian great-great-grandmothers.

Christian (the direct descendant of Fletcher Christian) alone among those who visited us could lay any claim to physical power. He is a giant of a man and towers head and shoulders above the others. They were not importunate vendors of their wares. They gently proffered for our inspection baskets, coco-nut wood walking-sticks, beads, puzzle boxes, plumage from the Bo's'un bird, little bunches of wilted flowers—all rather pathetic merchandise—until a blast from our siren warned them that the time had come for their departure, and that we must be on our way once more. Down the rope-ladders with their baskets, back to the boats again, they scrambled. They cast off from the ship; then, resting on their oars, began to sing. I don't think any of us who heard those voices so beautifully and wonderfully harmonized, chanting the simple old hymn:

*" We shall meet beyond the river by and by,
And the darkness shall be over by and by,
With the toilsome journey done,
And the glorious battle won,
We shall shine forth as the sun, by and by,"*

are ever likely to forget the scene.

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The strong arc-lights from the ship lit up the glassy green water on which the big white boats moved gently. Behind the singers loomed the island against the stars, and the moon made a long path of silver across the sea. But it was the pathos and beauty of those gentle voices, and the simplicity of the hymn they sang, as they bade us farewell, that gave to the moment a queer, emotional quality. One of the kindest, and most charming, women on board afterwards remarked: "I'd bargained with one of them over a basket, and when they sang I felt somehow ashamed, and wished I'd paid the price she asked."

The few shillings that the islanders collect in this way are shared in common. They send the money to New Zealand or Australia for the purchase of goods for the community.

"We shall meet beyond the river by and by"—perhaps on "the everlasting shore" they sang of, but for most of us, never in this life.

Under the stars, over the path of silver from the crescent moon, we steamed away. In ten days' time we should be entering the harbour of an up-to-date city of a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. The last we saw of the Pitcairn islanders, they were hoisting the sails in their big white boats, making their way back to their pathetically lonely island home.

CHAPTER VI

NEW ZEALAND

A LITTLE wind was stirring (when doesn't the wind stir in Wellington?) on the bright summer's morning when we passed Pencarrow Head. There before us (or rather around us, for Wellington is built on innumerable hill-sides with only a comparatively small belt of level ground at the water's edge) lay the city of a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. But the gorse and broom weren't yet painting the hills with gold as Kipling must have seen them when he wrote:

*"Broom behind the windy town; pollen o' the pine;
Bell-bird in the leafy deep where the ratas twine."*

Still, in spite of this, the mountains encircling the blue waters of the harbour were lovely with the lights and shadows of passing clouds, and the sunshine was glorious.

We had arrived early, and lay out in the stream, waiting for the doctor to pass us all. This waiting, mustered up on deck, in anticipation of the arrival of port officials, always seems interminable when one is anxious to reach one's journey's end. Someone might have filled up the time by giving a bright little lecture on New Zealand. But bright little lectures aren't much appreciated, as a rule. However, for those who are anxious to know a few facts and figures of this Britain of the South ("More British than Britain," the Prince of Wales called New Zealand), I'll proceed to give them now. My audience can't walk away and leave me still brightly lecturing. And if they skip the facts and



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

CITY OF WELLINGTON, NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND

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figures in my book I shan't be any the wiser. First of all New Zealand was discovered by Abel Tasman in 1642, but no landing was made by him. Captain Cook in 1769 rediscovered the islands (which in extent are a seventh larger than Great Britain) and made a landing. This was on the east coast of the North Island, and as the Maoris were unfriendly—refusing food and water to the strange white men, the first they had ever seen—Cook sailed away after deciding that in future the district should be known as “Poverty Bay.”

Most of my childhood was spent in Gisborne, Poverty Bay's chief town, and I can remember an Irish cook we had who would not put the full address on her letters home. “Sure, what would they be after thinkin' of me in Ireland if they knew I'd come all these miles across the world for nothing better than to find myself in Poverty Bay?” She needn't have been ashamed of it, for Poverty Bay is one of the richest and most fertile districts in this most fertile land; and the percentage of motor-car owners to population is the highest in the world. In fact, in New Zealand itself, it is often spoken of as “Wealthy Poverty Bay”; and the residents are proud of the fact that Captain Cook himself christened their district. True it is that Maori speakers at a function of welcome to His Excellency, Lord Bledisloe, at Gisborne in 1931, deplored the name bestowed by Captain Cook. “This was the first part of New Zealand where a white man landed,” they said. “We did not know who Captain Cook was, nor anything about him, and we did not give him water or kumaras, so he sailed away—which our ancestors thought was good—and he wrote in a book that the name of the place would be Poverty Bay—and *that* we know was a bad thing. Since then we have gone without many things we wanted. To-day we have not got a railway. Pakeha and Maori have had their differences but to-day we are one. We

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all want the same thing. We all want a railway. If King George knew about it he would like us to have a railway, and he would take away the bad name of Poverty Bay."

(N.B.—For the benefit of those readers who haven't lived in New Zealand, I may say that kumaras are the Maori sweet potatoes, and pakehas (strictly translated "strangers") are members of the white race. Don't mix them up if you come to settle here, and order two pounds of pakehas from the greengrocer.)

In very early times when "Pakeha and Maori had their differences" I fear a pound or two of Pakeha might have formed part of the Maori menu. For one must regretfully admit that the Maoris did occasionally eat a small portion of their enemies. It was part of their ancient belief that with the eaten flesh they became possessed of the bravery and all good qualities of the eaten chief. Then, too, the poor things had no animals to kill. In their natural state the islands of New Zealand possessed no land mammals. It is believed that about the time Richard III was amiably engaged in having his small nephews smothered in the Tower (or even perhaps a hundred years or so before that) the Maoris left a Polynesian island (possibly Raratonga, two thousand miles from New Zealand) in seven large war canoes, each holding a hundred souls—warriors, women, and priests: together with stone idols and sacred weapons, as well as native plants, dogs, and rats. In these canoes, helped by the trade wind, they eventually reached New Zealand (of which their traditions say a chief of theirs had spoken) and took up their abode upon the islands. Whether they brought the rats inadvertently or not, I'm not prepared to say. But apparently dog and rat (with an occasional small portion of enemy) for many centuries were the only roasts upon their bill of fare. Fish and birds they had in plenty, fern roots, and



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)
A MAORI OF THE OLD SCHOOL, SHOWING MAT AND CARVING

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kumaras. Yet even if they did sometimes supplement their diet with one of the members of a rival tribe, they were (and are) a magnificent race: fine fighters, hospitable, generous, loyal to their friends, and punctilious in their dealings. It is said that during the troubles between the natives and the British in the early days, when a Maori force had invested a position on one of the rivers, and could easily have starved out the British troops, that they dispatched two canoe-loads of food to their adversaries with the message: "Starving men cannot fight." This was quite literally declining to hit below the belt. For the Sixty-Fifth Regiment the Maoris had an especial regard. Consequently, in making an attack on the British, before firing they would yell: "Lie down, 'Hickety-Fiff'!" in order to make sure that no bullets would strike their particular friends.

I seem to have forgotten that I began with the discovery of New Zealand—Poverty Bay and the Maoris (pronounced Mowrees) have led me astray in my bright little lecture. After Captain Cook's visit, and up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, very few Pakehas, with the exception of whalers, sealers, and trading schooners in search of timber and flax, had visited or landed in New Zealand.

It was not until 1840—less than one hundred years ago—that the first colonizing ships arrived in New Zealand from England, and in that year, by the Treaty of Waitangi, the native race acknowledged the sovereignty of Great Britain, though thirty years were to elapse before all native troubles were at an end.

New Zealand is mainly a farming country; the population at the beginning of 1932 was 1,522,000, including 69,000 Maoris. It is acknowledged to be the healthiest country in the world, having the lowest death-rate recorded; the death-rate of infants under one year of

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age—32·15 per thousand births—is also the lowest in the world.

Here's the doctor! Lecture postponed.

We are marshalled alphabetically forward in the sunshine along the promenade-deck. With the doctor, reporters and photographers have come on board. They ask me my opinion of conditions in England; industrially, theatrically, editorially; when I believe these conditions are likely to improve; all sorts of other conundrums at which I endeavour to look wise, and not by word of mouth give them the least idea of my abysmal ignorance. The photographers get busy.

"You're not to publish that if it's too awful," say I.

"Ah! you can rely on this chap," says one reporter confidently. "He does fine work!"

In the evening paper I saw one picture and shuddered, but worse was yet to come. The production of that second photograph evokes loud shrieks of delight from family and friends. I feel I have indeed been butchered to make a Roman (or rather New Zealand) holiday.

I'm again reminded of one of our maids, and a story she once told us. Her grandmother, at the age of eighty, had her photograph taken for the first time. "What do you think of it, granny?" they asked her eagerly.

The old woman gazed at the picture in silence for some time. At length she shook her head sadly.

"Eh! It's a humblin' sight!" she said.

Well, so was mine. But judging from the laughter which it evokes, I feel I've at least added to the gaiety of nations.

Down the gangway and into the Customs shed. Back in my native land! Oh! it's good to be home again!

Even amongst the Customs officials I find a friend. "Now don't hurry me," he says, gazing through his spectacles at the written list of my baggage. "I'm not as young as I was. Rees! Was your father W. G. Rees?"

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The one that Rees Valley in the south's named after? "

"No, that was a cousin of my father's."

"One of the finest men I ever knew, W. G. Rees was. Here, young feller, drop that hat-box; I'm attending to this lady. W. G. Rees, eh? Cricket! My goodness! Wasn't he a cricketer, eh? Oh! if I had the time I could talk for hours about those old days, and W. G. Rees."

He didn't talk for hours—he had too much to do—but he'd cleared my trunks and suit-cases for me, and given me, too, the feeling (far more than the reporters interviewing me) that I was back where I belonged. I wanted to send some telegrams, call at the shipping office, and change my money, so I dispatched my luggage by lorry to an hotel. I would walk. At least I thought I would, but I hadn't reckoned with the lorry driver. He overtook me and stopped. "Jump in and have a ride," he said.

"I'm only going as far as the Shaw, Savill office," I returned feebly.

"Never mind. Save your legs," he answered. "Better have a ride. I pass there. Hop in."

If I refused, the good-natured young man would think me too proud to ride beside him. I hopped in. And so made my triumphant entry into Wellington on the front seat of a carrier's lorry. I believe people in New Zealand are really far more conventional than English people. My friends would have looked upon my present mode of conveyance as decidedly queer. I was small-minded enough to be glad I didn't meet any of them. But that was certainly the moment when the photographers should have snapped me.

CHAPTER VII

BY TRAIN TO NAPIER

To most bookishly minded people, Wellington is chiefly famous as being the birthplace of Katherine Mansfield. Her father, Sir Harold Beauchamp (who for many years was Chairman of Directors of the Bank of New Zealand), still lives there in a beautiful house overlooking the harbour. On the day of my arrival the newspapers chronicled the fact that he had given £500 to erect a shelter at one of the tram termini, in memory of his daughter.

I thought a good deal of Katherine Mansfield during my somewhat hectic day in Wellington. Had she lived, we might have been given the great New Zealand novel which yet remains unwritten. Perhaps, however, her genius was not for sustained narrative. We shall never know; but let us be thankful that she left us "At the Bay"; "Prelude"; "The Little Lamp"; "An Ideal Family," and other sketches, having her own country for their background.

Amongst the letters I had received on board the *Ionic* that morning was one from the Right Hon. J. G. Coates, Minister of Public Works, who on a former occasion—when Premier of New Zealand—had kindly given me advice and assistance in connection with my work. I was to ring up his office as soon as I arrived.

I did so, but discovered that the Cabinet was meeting that morning at Government House. It is not usual to hold a Cabinet meeting at the residence of their Excellencies, but on this occasion there was a special reason

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for doing so. Our present Governor-General and his wife, Lord and Lady Bledisloe, have most generously bought and presented to the Dominion, the old Busby homestead in the Bay of Islands where the historic Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840. And they have purchased, not only the homestead, but a considerable portion of the surrounding country, to be converted into a National Park. For the administration of this gift to the Dominion "The Waitangi Trust" has been formed; and it was to discuss the terms of the Trust that the members of the Cabinet were meeting this morning at Government House.

After luncheon a telephone message summoned me to Parliament House. Set on the rising ground—with wide, ornamental gardens before it, and backed by the grass-grown hills—Parliament House (though not yet fully completed in marble from Nelson Province) is a really imposing building. I was ushered along wide, scarlet-carpeted corridors flooded with sunshine; and from the open windows of Mr. Coates' large and lofty room, saw the water of the harbour lying like a patch of brilliant blue enamel between the roof tops of the city and the encircling mauve and sapphire of the distant hills. What would the harassed members of our English Cabinet give to have such a lovely room in which to transact their business? Still, I dare say even a vast and airy apartment and a marvellously beautiful view wouldn't really help them to solve the problem of unemployment, though it might bring some solace to their souls. And perhaps a "room with a view" doesn't give much help to the members of the New Zealand Government in their present troubles; there is unemployment here too.

While I waited in the ante-room of the Hon. Adam Hamilton (another member of the Cabinet) his secretary was busy making appointments for the leaders of

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deputations representing the unemployed. I don't pretend to knowledge of industrial problems in any part of the world, but it seems odd to listen to the stories of "hardship" endured by the unemployed in New Zealand when one contrasts conditions here with those in England. One complaint actually was that men in a Government labour camp were not given a sufficiently varied menu. They were expected to eat mutton three times a day—fried chops for breakfast, stew for lunch, and roast meat for dinner. Though there may be a few cases of genuine poverty, it is practically certain that no New Zealanders are without the necessities of life.

Mr. Hamilton, when I saw him, put the matter in a nutshell. "The truth is that New Zealand had gone far ahead of any other country in the world in her standard of living. Now, when the people are asked to take a step back, they can't do it. I'd never have believed it would have been so hard for them to face up to facts and altered circumstances."

Personally, I feel that I have come to a happy, comfortable country in spite of the knowledge that the sheep-farmers have been terribly hard hit by the drop in the price of wool and mutton; and notwithstanding the outcry from the Labour Party about the bitterly hard lot of the unemployed.

I had only a day and a night in Wellington, and by 9.30 next morning was in the train *en route* to Napier.

Though the green of the grass in New Zealand is not as vivid as one sees it in England (on the hills in mid-summer here it has seeded to a fawny hue), the sky is a deeper and more glowing blue, and the atmosphere so bright and light that the contours—the ridges and gullies—of even distant mountains are distinct and clear, and the summits seem to stand forward, clean-cut against a gentian background. The sun was hot on the fennel, ti-tree, and sweet briar beside the track as the

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train wound its tortuous way along the cuttings in the hills; and then before the guard strode through the long saloon coaches shouting: "Six minutes for refreshments at the next stop!" we had come out once more on to the sea-coast, with crested waves dashing amongst the black rocks and the seaweed, and the gulls swooping low in the brilliant sunshine, over the beach.

The guard really shouted: "Six minutes for refreshments at Paekakariki!" but I was afraid that might frighten you. After you've been in New Zealand a short time you become quite used to the Maori words, and take them in your stride, however formidable they may look in print. After all, Maori is always pronounced as it is spelt, with no stress on any syllable. So it isn't really difficult. For "a" say "ah"; for "e" say "eh"; for "i" say "ee"; for "o" say "o"; for "u" say "oo"; and there is no mute "e." This stopping for refreshments all along the line strikes visitors as a somewhat eccentric proceeding; but in a country where time seems no object (New Zealanders will hotly deny this, but I haven't yet met many of them who have much notion of keeping an appointment to the minute) it is far cheaper to bring the train to a halt, and allow passengers to alight and get their cups of "morning tea" at a buffet, than to provide a restaurant-car. I was going to say it wasn't a question of roses, roses, roses, all the way, but tea, tea, tea. That wouldn't have been quite accurate, however, for all the gardens of the cottages in the scattered suburbs of Wellington, and the smaller towns through which we passed, were ablaze with roses. So it was both—roses and tea. This at Paekakariki was morning tea at 10.30 (and excellent sandwiches, cakes, and buttered scones), and we were to halt again at Palmerston North, at Woodville, and at Waipukurau, for further refreshments before reaching Napier at 5 p.m. The New Zealand Government (who run all rail-

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ways in the country) are determined not to let their patrons starve!

All New Zealand trains are exceedingly comfortable, and are arranged in long coaches with seats on either side of a central aisle. Level with me, and on a double seat (alone as I was) sat a pretty, blonde, beret-over-one-ear girl whom I had noticed, and immediately placed as a smart American tourist, when checking my luggage. Opening a copy of one of our illustrated weeklies, I found myself looking at her photograph: "Miss Patricia Nelson, home from Paris via New York and Hollywood. New Zealand girl's success in Continental talkies." So she wasn't an American at all, but a homing New Zealander like myself. I'd only just finished reading all about her, when she leant across the aisle, and remarked: "Haven't I seen you at the Arts Theatre Club in London?"

I admitted that she might have done so, and finding that she apparently knew who I was (as I now knew who she was) we began to talk of various mutual stage friends in London.

It seemed queer to me to be talking theatrical "shop," gossip of London, New York, and Hollywood, as our train steamed on, past the wooden homesteads of farmers, set on cabbage-tree dotted hillsides; over sparkling blue rivers fringed with silver-plumed toi-toi, flax, and waving tree-ferns; or through patches of virgin forest. "The bush," we call it, yet that to strangers never gives the idea of immense century-old trees, and the thick, massed fern-growth of our uncleared countryside.

"Oh! but this is a most beautiful country!" my newly made acquaintance exclaimed, with sudden fervour. "It's four years since I was home last, but it's marvellous to see it again. And they talk about depression. Depression! They don't know what hard times



(P. S. Nash, Auckland, photo.)

ARUM LILIES GROWING WILD IN A FIELD NEAR WELLINGTON

BY TRAIN TO NAPIER

are! If they could see New York or Hollywood. It's awful there. Hundreds of lovely girls—a real beauty chorus standing every day in the bread line. Maybe here they can't go to the movies as often as they'd like; that's about all they've got to complain of in New Zealand. The amount of meals they have! They amaze me."

When the train had negotiated the tunnels, twists, and cuttings of the track high above a swirling torrent in lovely Manawatu Gorge, and had come to a standstill at Woodville (more refreshments) we said good-bye. Woodville was her "home town" where she was to spend eight weeks with her parents before returning to an engagement in Amsterdam. There were her father and mother with the car awaiting her; and the last I saw of her was as she dashed back to the carriage (her arms full of tall pink roses and huge blue and purple delphiniums) to shake hands with me, and tell me that we must meet again at some future date in London.

After Woodville the train runs through fertile level plains, with the Ruahine Ranges—snow-topped in winter, but now glowing deep blue and purple in the afternoon sunlight—to the west. These marvellous mountains of New Zealand! The colour that they hold in their bushed gullies! and the lovely outline of their summits! I had not remembered half their beauty.

We shall have one more stop for refreshments (afternoon tea at Waipukurau); and before reaching Napier at five o'clock, I am destined to interview still another member of the Cabinet. This is the Hon. Sir Apirana Ngata, M.A., LL.B., who, besides being Minister of Native Affairs is also a Barrister of the Supreme Court of New Zealand. He is travelling up to Gisborne (via Napier) and so on to his home on the east coast. He takes the seat vacated by Miss Nelson, and talks to me. Here is a highly educated man of great intelligence and

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culture—the only Maori who has occupied the position of acting-Premier of New Zealand, though this office was also once held by a half-caste Maori, the late Sir James Carroll. Sir Apirana has the soft musical voice possessed by all his race. It has been said that every Maori is a born poet and orator. Sir Apirana is a fine example of the truth of this statement. He has made a collection of the poems and traditions of his people. The Maoris had no written literature before the advent of the white man, but part of a Maori youth's training was declamation of the tribal legends—handed down from one generation to another.

Sir Apirana tells me something of the work which at the present time is nearest to his heart: getting the Maori people back to the land; teaching them to farm intelligently the large estates still held by different tribes; encouraging the young to revive the arts and crafts of their ancestors; the wonderful carving, reed-panelling, and intricate weaving of the dyed flax and feather mats. He promises that later I shall be taken up the east coast, and shown something of the work already done.

After Sir Apirana has returned to his carriage I can't help thinking of the rather dramatic contrast in personalities of my two fellow-travellers. Both have been extremely interesting, and have made me forget the passage of time.

We are nearing Napier, and I must gather together my belongings, stumbling as I do so, over a perfect army of empty cups, mute witnesses of the different "stops for refreshment" along the line.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTMAS IN NEW ZEALAND

Most people, if examined by a psycho-analyst in word-association, would immediately reply "Earthquake," in response to "Napier"; for the havoc caused by the earthquake of February, 1931, was set before the world in such large newspaper headlines that no one is likely to have forgotten the disaster. I was to see a Napier risen Phoenix-like from the burning ashes. The business area is now almost entirely rebuilt in earthquake-proof materials, and in a few weeks a carnival is to be held there in honour of the town's rehabilitation. Many friends said to me before I left England: "How brave you are to be going to the earthquake zone." Pleased as I should have been to lay claim to an intrepid spirit, I couldn't honestly agree with them. Naturally, the horror of that day, when over two hundred lives were lost, still lives in the memory of the Napier residents; and *they* were undoubtedly brave to face things as they did. Out of a total population of nearly nineteen thousand, perhaps a few dozen highly nervous, or infirm, people left Napier in consequence of the earthquake—the rest remained. Why shouldn't they? If one had to avoid every spot on earth where Nature has destroyed humanity by upheaval, avalanche, lightning, hurricane, flood, or tidal wave, one would be somewhat hard put to it to find a corner which guarantees complete immunity from disaster. "England is safe," I can hear you murmur complacently. Is it? Look up the statistics of loss of life on the high roads, and you'll find

that there is more chance of death from traffic in Great Britain than from earth tremors in New Zealand. Again, just before we called at Jamaica there had been a severe hurricane with loss of life, and the tidal wave resulting from the tornado drowned fifteen hundred souls in one town alone in Cuba. The earthquake itself in Napier would have killed no one had it not been for the collapse of shoddily erected buildings, and subsequent fire. From both these dangers Napier in the future will be free. One of the most eminent seismologists in the Southern Hemisphere is at present visiting New Zealand. "There is not the slightest need for people living in earthquake areas to be frightened," he says; "all that is necessary is to erect buildings that will stand the strain. And research has made that possible."

In Napier wooden buildings, and those of reinforced concrete, well withstood the jolt, which, by raising the whole town, has added greatly to its value and its beauty. In fact had there been no loss of life, the earthquake might have been regarded as a benefactor, endowing the town with seven thousand acres of fertile land (the result of raising the bed of the shallow inner harbour and so draining it) and enhancing very greatly the beauty of the sea-front. Here, now that the shore has been raised, are extensive grassy lawns edged with brilliant herbaceous borders—the colours of the flowers glowing and lovely against the blue of the sea. Napier was always a pretty little town—its wide esplanade planted at regular intervals with tall Norfolk Island pines. Now that these lawns and flower gardens have been added to it, it is perhaps the most charming sea-front in the Dominion. And the rebuilt town, with its widened streets, modern, well-appointed shops and buildings, will before long be the handsomest of the secondary cities in New Zealand.

After spending a week in Napier we left on December



TWO VIEWS OF NAPIER, REBUILT SINCE EARTHQUAKE, 1931

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24th, by car, for the station (perhaps it would be more correct to say "farm," for "station" is generally used to denote a big sheep-run, and this was only a place of three thousand acres) beyond Wairoa, where we were to spend Christmas and Boxing Day. The little town of Wairoa is on the direct road from Napier to Gisborne, and very nearly midway between the two places. As you will remember, the Poverty Bay Maoris who greeted Lord Bledisloe informed His Excellency that they were sure King George would like them to have a railway. The Government Public Works Department (without, I believe, writing to His Majesty on the subject) have for the past ten years had gangs of men working on the track; but cutting a railway-line for close on a hundred and fifty miles through difficult mountainous country entails an enormous expenditure of public funds. Now, owing to bad times, all work on the line has been stopped, and unless King George decides to take the matter in hand, I'm afraid we won't get the railway for some years to come. In the meantime, there are excellent tar-sealed roads; and lorries for goods and luggage, and service cars, carrying passengers, go backwards and forwards between Gisborne and Napier, once or twice a day.

Service cars also go from Gisborne, a hundred and ninety-four miles north to Rotorua, where travellers can join the railway once more.

Though, as I've said, the surface of the roads is excellent, I shouldn't advise unskilled or nervous motorists to attempt them. There are many corkscrew and hair-pin bends to be negotiated, for the track is cut out of the hillsides with somewhat alarmingly precipitous drops on the outer edge, and except in the neighbourhood of Wairoa, and the last few miles along the flats of Poverty Bay, nowhere is it level.

About five years ago an enterprising showman brought

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a menagerie by road from Napier to Gisborne, and on, later, to Rotorua. The showman himself wrote no account of his experiences, but sundry paragraphs appeared in various papers. An innocent announcement that a certain bridge was broken led to an admission that it had given way under a lorry carrying a rather heavier load than usual, i.e. two elephants weighing together over three tons. A casual reference was to the strength of some trees a hundred feet below the roadway, which had fortunately prevented a cage of lions from falling a further eight hundred feet into the valley below. (N.B.—The long-suffering elephants had to heave the lions up again!) Travellers told of elephants' trunks exploring the interiors of their cars, halted at the extreme edge to let the menagerie pass; of the occupants of other cars hastily tumbling out and scrambling up the hill face; and of the horrified, incredulous amazement of swaggers "humping their blueys" to see a huge grey mass heave in sight round a bend. If any of these men in the past had suffered from the effects of over-indulgence in alcohol, they must have wondered what appalling horrors they were seeing now!

I'm glad to say that on our drive we met nothing more savage than a mob of two thousand sheep, driven by two mounted shepherds, each with four or five dogs at his horse's heels. These mobs are annoying enough to meet on a narrow mountain road, but I definitely prefer them to lions and elephants.

After leaving Wairoa, where we crossed the river by means of the railway bridge (the traffic bridge having been put out of action by the earthquake), our road led us upwards along a lovely valley. Between the dimpled hills our car followed the twists and turns of a swiftly rushing river—the Waikaretahiki. Thirty miles down from Waikaremoana—the lake which lies high above,

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cupped in the mountain ranges—comes this sparkling, tumbling stream; and along its banks, amongst the tangle of tree-fern, flax, and silver-feathered toi-toi, are weeping willows and tall whispering aspens. Most of these trees were planted by British troops camped here seventy years ago at the close of those differences “between the Maori and Pakeha” alluded to in the Gisborne natives’ greeting to Lord Bledisloe.

Our Christmas gathering was a family one, and of more interest to ourselves than to anyone else. As it was an extremely hot summer’s day we didn’t have the traditional Christmas dinner of roast turkey and plum pudding (though most New Zealanders religiously cling to the fetish of this menu, even with the thermometer at ninety degrees in the shade), but partook instead of cold roast lamb and duck, with fruit salad and other summer sweets to follow. During the morning we swam in the clear, willow-fringed river below the homestead (not the Waikaretahiki, foaming down from the lake; that is impossible for bathing), and after our swim set off in the car for twelve miles along a good road amongst the hills, in order that the two men with us might secure another car for our picnic up to the lake next day. After some years in England it seemed queer to think that this was really Christmas Day. A warm wind stirred the flowering ti-tree and the feathery toi-toi beside the track. There were sweet-briars and convolvulus in bloom, larks singing madly in the deep blue sky, and the sound of the sheep on the hills. No sign of human habitation anywhere until we reached the unbridged river which separated us from the sheep-station where the promised car was to be procured. Here, the men scrambled down the bank and pulled themselves across in a cage slung overhead on a wire. When they were safely on the other side, and making their way up to the homestead, we turned and drove back the way

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we'd come. The men couldn't return this way with the car. (Unfortunately one can't suspend cars on a wire above a wide river and pull them across, so they must go round by road.)

Their drive of seventeen miles into Wairoa, and sixteen miles up the valley again, made them a trifle late for lunch; but no one minded that, for the extra car they had procured would enable the whole of our party to visit Lake Waikaremoana next day and see the "Regatta." Waikaremoana (pronounce it as it is spelt, Wy-ka-ray-mo-arna, and see how soft and flowing the Maori language is with its wealth of vowel sounds) translated means "the sea of rippling waters." This is one of the loveliest lakes in New Zealand, for it is high in the mountains (two thousand feet above sea-level), a star-shaped sheet of water immensely deep, and stretching its blue arms far into the densely wooded hills which rise at times in peaks of close on a thousand feet sheer from the margin of the lake.

Boxing Day was as warm and clear as every other day had been since my arrival in New Zealand, ten days previously. I've been long enough away from New Zealand to find the sunshine of each new, brightly dawning day a cause in itself for joy and happiness. The sunshine New Zealanders accept as a matter of course. They never pause to think of it, or to congratulate themselves on their good fortune in living in a country with such a genial climate. Mild in winter, and with no excessive warmth in summer, there is practically no cessation in the growth of vegetation. The weeping willow (introduced by settlers in early days) has now become almost an evergreen (all New Zealand's native trees are evergreen), and English roses bloom most of the year round. Of course, as New Zealand stretches for a thousand miles north and south, there is a certain variation in the climate. The South Island being so

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much nearer to the South Pole, has occasional falls of snow in winter; but as no part of either island is anywhere more than seventy-five miles distant from the sea, the surrounding ocean takes the sting out of winter, and tempers the heat of summer.

Driving up to Lake Waikaremoana on Boxing Day, we followed again the winding valley of the swirling stream. We were mounting all the time amongst the tumbled hills, and above us—blue, purple, mauve—were the distant peaks of the Urewera country. This is a densely bushed and little settled part of the North Island, which has only just been opened up by a road cut through the towering forest growth from Waikaremoana to Rotorua, and so to Auckland. I have not travelled along this motor road yet, but hope to later, as the scenery, and the unspoilt primeval forest, is said to be wonderfully beautiful.

We pass the Power Station a few miles before reaching Waikaremoana. Quite a little township—with even a hall for talkies—has sprung up now round the Hydro-Electric works, opened here ten years ago. The Power Station was merely in its babyhood at the initial opening. It is getting quite a big child now, supplying Gisborne and all the Poverty Bay district, and it is capable of far greater growth in days to come. With the exception of Switzerland, no country in the world has such a vast amount of water-power as New Zealand. The difficulty has been to find money enough to develop all the latent wealth of the Dominion. New Zealand's fairy god-mother must have been in a good temper when she endowed this country with so fine a climate, so fertile a soil, and so much natural power waiting only to be harnessed to do the bidding of man. Now, on practically all the dairy farms, the milking is done by electrically run machines; the cream separated as the milk comes from the cow by an electrically run separ-

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ator. Electrically heated water is laid on at the milking-shed for the washing of pails and tins, and the cleaning of cow-bails. On the farm on which we were staying, not only was the light and cooking-stove electrically run, but the power for the milking-machines was also supplied by kindly Lake Waikaremoana—the immense body of water apparently specially placed by our fairy godmother two thousand feet above sea-level for the express purpose of supplying the Northern Hemisphere (when the lack of sun-ripened fodder for the cows in winter robs the milk of vitamins) with butter rich in these very necessary constituents.

There are three main hydro-electric stations in the North Island: one on the Waikato River, near Auckland; one near Wellington; and this one at Waikaremoana. These three, which are designed to link up if necessary (so that if for any reason one is put out of action, the current need never fail), are ample to supply the needs of the whole island, even allowing for an immense increase in population. We aren't thinking much of butter-fat, or such prosaic things, as our car mounts upwards to the lake. In fact our host has decreed that the word "cow" must never be mentioned. This seems sheer ingratitude to the kindly animals, which, now that the price of wool and mutton has dropped so greatly, are saving the situation for many farmers. But "milking" entails much more drudgery and actual hard work than the old comparatively easy-going life on a sheep-station—the days when our host and his wife were able to dash off by car for "show week" in Gisborne, or up to Auckland to see their own horse win the "Cup." The regular monthly cheque from the dairy factory is, however, in these hard times, a consolation; and there is always the hope that world conditions will improve in the not too distant future.

Having turned our noses up and our backs upon the



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

BUSH TRACK AT LAKE WAIKAREMOANA

(To face p. 53.)

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cows—haughtily refusing even to recognize their existence—we were prepared to enjoy our day. Other cars were on the road, bearing campers with their tents, or visitors to the regatta. Up and up we went, with the locusts (yes, I know they're really cicadas, but in my youth I always called them locusts, and I prefer to let them remain locusts) rasping away in the hot sunshine beside the tree-fern bordered track. A lovely view we get of the valley far below as we mount: small shining lakes are cupped in the hollows of the hills; the sun blazes down on the shining sword-leaved flax, the cabbage trees, and the silvery feathers of the toi-toi. At the end of the climb it is a most surprising and entrancing moment to come suddenly upon the lake. Two seconds before the wide, blue, sparkling vista opens out, a stranger would have had no reason to suspect the near proximity of any lake at all—much less the vast expanse of such a "sea of rippling waters." If the road continued straight on, he (the unsuspecting stranger) would be in the lake before he could say Jack Robinson! The road, however, swings abruptly to the right, and we didn't find ourselves up to our necks in the clear blue water, but driving along the densely bushed shores of the lake.

For six miles, through a fairyland of tree-ferns, towering native trees, nikau palms and a jungle-like tangle of clinging vines and fern growth we passed, with every here and there a gap in the forest showing a glimpse of shining water and distant mountain peaks, until we reached Lake House—the comfortable Government hostel erected for the convenience of tourists, travellers, and holiday-makers.

If one began to recount the Maori legends connected with the lake, one would never come to an end. I've narrated some of them before in "Lake of Enchantment," and used, too, in that book, the incident of the

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two little Maori boys digging up the "Tapu" money. This happened while I was staying near Waikaremoana nine years ago. The "Tapu" money consisted of florins, half-crowns, and sixpences collected from the tribe by the Tohunga (Maori priest), and after being burnt by him, together with the leaves of some sacred shrub, buried in old pickle-bottles and jam-jars near mountain streams. This has been done for many years near Waikaremoana (I don't know if it is merely a local superstition or whether it is done by Maoris in other localities) in order to placate the evil spirits which Maoris are convinced haunt running water; and to touch this "Tapu" money was naturally an unholy and unheard-of thing. The two small Maori boys, however, nine years ago, evidently hadn't the same fear of evil spirits as their elders. Having found some of the money—nearly twelve pounds in old odd silver coins—they proceeded, gaily and gladly, to spend it at the local post office and store. I had occasion to make a purchase at the store soon afterwards. As the postmistress handed me my change, she said: "It's funny and black, but it's quite all right. Noah and another boy bought some football jerseys with it. Quite a lot of it they had. I don't know where they got it."

It wasn't long before we found out where they'd "got it"; and, as I hadn't spent my "Tapu" money, I kept it as a souvenir. So far it hasn't brought me bad luck!

There was, of course, a terrific row up at the Pa—the Maori settlement—and the boys were soundly whipped; but this chastisement didn't diminish their activities. I happened to get a little inside information on the matter from a couple of other Maori lads whom I met and talked with on the road a few days later.

"Noah, he going to be a big prophet some day," said one of these boys earnestly. "An angel come to him in a dream and show him where to find that money. He

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go and dig where the angel show him in the dream, and he find it. He find plenty more soon. Then he go to Wairoa and be a prophet same as Rua." (Rua is a Maori chief who years ago set himself up as the head of a new religion.)

I was staying then with Mr. and Mrs. Orford, the master and mistress of the Maori school, and when I repeated the conversation I'd heard (much of it was most amusing) Mr. Orford remarked dryly: "I shall have had a dream when Noah comes to school to-morrow."

Months afterwards I heard the sequel to these dreams. When the native children had gathered at the school-house next morning, Mr. Orford solemnly addressed Noah. "I dreamt last night, Noah, that I saw you digging for 'Tapu' money. That, you all know, is very wrong. The money is not yours. I saw you, Noah, dig and dig. You came upon some and gathered it up in your hands, and took it with you, and set out for Wairoa. You would be a prophet, so you thought. On Wairoa bridge I saw you walking, but someone else was walking there as well. It was Constable Swan. He took you by the arm. No prophet were you, but a thief taken to the lock-up. That was my dream."

All the little brown faces were mostly big brown eyes as they goggled up at their schoolmaster. Noah, especially, seemed much impressed. He probably was at the moment, but alas, the greed of gold—or rather of old, burnt and battered silver coins—now had him firmly enslaved.

Next day, two little Maori boys, trudging along the Wairoa road, hailed a passing motorist. Would he give them a lift in to Wairoa? Good-naturedly, he told them to jump in. They jumped; and after jumping their tongues began to wag. They couldn't keep to themselves the story of their prowess and their cleverness.

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They bragged. Across the lake they'd gone that morning—borrowing without permission one of the three rowing-boats moored in Rosy Bay—and to the old deserted whare of a Maori had they made their way. The Maori's wife had died here lately, and the money that she left was "Tapu." Her husband would not spend it, and it was buried underneath the whare. The gossip of the Pa had given Noah all the information he required. No need for any angel to bother about it this time. Noah knew where to find the money without being shown in a dream.

He and his companion had dug quite successfully; and now he was off to Wairoa—taking with him his small disciple—to be a prophet.

"Ah!" said the motorist, who had just been up to the lake and seen that his boat had been tampered with. "So you're the boys who took the *Nancy Lee*, are you?"

The "Tapu" money was no concern of his—it was an affair for the Maoris to settle amongst themselves; but tampering with the *Nancy Lee* was quite another matter.

"That's my boat—off you come to Constable Swan. He'll take you to the lock-up, quick and lively."

There on Wairoa bridge was Constable Swan. Noah and his companion were handed over. The motorist, aside to the constable, told him to have the boys sent back to the Pa. He knew that being so dramatically threatened with the "lock-up" would be quite enough lesson for them.

It was only later that Mr. Orford and the motorist compared notes. Noah, little realizing that the whole episode was pure coincidence, must have decided in his own mind that the angels of Mr. Orford's dream were more to be relied upon than his own. It was his schoolmaster, after all, who was the prophet—not he.

All this was nine years ago. It is quite time that I returned to our Boxing Day excursion! We'd just

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reached Lake House when I was side-tracked by Noah and the "Tapu" money. From Lake House we were driven beyond it to the sheltered cove where the regatta was being held.

The level grassy stretch at the water's edge was quite gay with the coloured frocks of the women moving about amongst the line of parked cars and the tents of campers dotted here and there beneath the trees of the foreshore. Behind the line of cars, on the steeply sloping hillside, rose the impenetrable tangle of the primeval bush—towering forest giants laced about with clinging vines, tree-ferns, and below them a wealth of other ferns draping the crumbling trunks of trees which fell perhaps before Wren built St. Paul's. From far up in the crested tops of the trees came the sweet liquid note of the tui—described as "one of the world's most soul-moving singers"; the locusts droned on in the sun; near the little improvised jetty, on the deck of the Lake House launch, a Maori band, complete with saxophone, were very hot and busy playing the latest (well, no, perhaps not quite the latest!) jazz. It was a strange scene. The little groups of pleasure-seekers—not more than two or three hundred all told—Maori and European gathered together on the lonely bushed shores of this lake, lost in the mountains.

Seven or eight inboard and outboard motor-boats, and half a dozen ordinary rowing-boats, were the sole competitors in the different events of the regatta. Nearly all the boats had been brought up from Wairoa—or from farther afield—by motor-lorries or trailers. In fact one speed-boat, the champion, loaded on a trailer, had been hauled behind the owner's car for nearly four hundred miles across the North Island from New Plymouth.

The boat, however, on which the greatest interest was centred had been locally made. Having been designed

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and put together by one of the engineers at the hydro-electric station, and fitted with the engine from a Chrysler car, it won a thrilling race amid great enthusiasm.

The races weren't perhaps the main attraction of the day. The regatta merely provided an excuse for a picnic; for a trip across the lake in the Government launch to see the lovely Aniwaniwa (Maori for Rainbow) Falls, and enabled settlers from far and near to greet one another.

After greeting several old friends, I was suddenly hailed by one whose acquaintance I'd made on the voyage. I'd seen her last on the deck of the *Ionic*. I knew she was somewhere in the neighbourhood—that is, within fifty miles or so—paying her first visit to New Zealand in order to stay with a brother whom she hadn't seen for twelve years, and to make the acquaintance of his wife and his two small sons. Of course I asked her the usual question.

"How do you like New Zealand?"

"I can't get over the marvellous sunshine," she said, "and I can't believe that this is really Christmas time. It seems so strange to have Christmas in the summer. We're going to bathe."

I warned her that the lake, being so deep and so high above the sea, was cold even on the hottest day; but she replied that she must try it for herself.

"I want to say I've bathed in Waikaremoana at Christmas time."

She introduced me to her brother, his wife, and the two little boys; and the last I saw of them they were making their way round the point, past the campers' tents, to find a suitable spot for their swim.

She hadn't really answered my question, and I put it to her again about three weeks later, when I met her on the Wairoa Showground. The Gisborne friends

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with whom I was staying had motored me through for the show. Their nephews and nieces were showing horses—so were mine. It was a sort of family gathering. Very gay to me: greeting old friends; sharing luncheon and tea beside the cars in the shade of the willows; watching the young things taking their horses gallantly over the big formidable fences in the country show-ring.

"Well, and how do you like New Zealand *now*?" I asked her.

She had been sitting in her brother's car, and came to walk with me, and meet my small nephew, whom I proudly introduced as the winner of "Best boy rider under fourteen."

"It's not quite what I expected," she returned a trifle reluctantly. "I didn't realize the isolation of it, and the distances one must travel. You will have covered nearly a hundred and fifty miles when you get back to Gisborne to-night, won't you?"

I admitted that was so, but contended that the drive—the road swinging up and over the lovely hills—was a joy in itself.

"Oh, yes, it's lovely—the scenery—and it's marvellous the way the hills stand out so clearly in the bright light. But I've only lived in cities—in London and in Edinburgh. This is all so strange to me—the country is so much bigger than I expected, and so much more lonely. It's different for you with all your old friends round you."

Yes, I had to admit that, but I told her that I knew if she were here longer than for a short visit, she'd learn to love it as well as—well, almost as well as—I do. And I'll guarantee her brother wouldn't return to live in England for all the tea in China.

I think, too, that when she gets back home again she'll take some pleasure in remembering that bright, hot day at the hill-encircled Wairoa showground: the phalanx

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of parked cars along the rails; the well-turned-out young riders in the ring; the shining horses. And she'll see again in retrospect the blue waters of Waikaremoana dreaming in the sunshine, with the outlines of the far forest-clad shores faintly hazed by the smoke of some new settler's "burn." Lonely, yes, but lovely. And I hope she'll remember nothing but the loveliness.

CHAPTER IX

A WORD OR TWO ABOUT MY "HOME TOWN"

I HAD determined that I would have a few weeks, at least, in Gisborne with my family and old friends before starting up the east coast to see something of Sir Apirana Ngata's work in native land development. Because most of my childhood was spent in Gisborne, and I am invariably welcomed by warm-hearted, loyal, and generous friends, I have a very soft spot in my heart for the little town. Not so very little now, with over sixteen thousand inhabitants, and twenty thousand more in the back country amongst the hills where the big sheep-stations are, or perhaps I should say have been, for many now are divided up for closer settlement.

Poverty Bay in the past has shipped to the Mother Country vast quantities of wool and frozen mutton (or rather, fat lambs), and the sheep-farming interest was—and still is—predominant here. But on the rich flats there is much maize and grass-seed grown, and dairying is a greatly growing industry. The exports from Gisborne in 1915 were valued at £1,900,000. To-day the sheep-farmers are having a somewhat hard struggle (lamb can be bought at the freezing works for sixpence a pound if one chooses to call for it), but probably before this book is in print the primary products will have risen, and the sheep-farmers will be feeling more cheerful in consequence. Not that I've noticed much lack of cheer during my month in Gisborne. I've been motored here, there, and everywhere to luncheon-parties, tennis-parties (where the assemblage of fifteen to twenty handsome

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cars doesn't exactly give one the impression of utter poverty!), tea-parties and picnics (no snakes in New Zealand, so that one can picnic in the bush in perfect safety), and bridge-parties ("Contract," of course—very keen followers of Mr. Culbertson we are here!). The big comfortable homes and gardens are delightful. Many of the houses are set on rising ground, so that one gets a view across the blue waters of the bay to the white cliffs—"Young Nick's Head"—which was the first land sighted by Nicholas Young, a cabin-boy on Captain Cook's good ship *Endeavour* in 1769.

The gardens, growing masses of roses, delphiniums, hydrangeas—of all shades from rose to deepest blue—have the advantage of being backed by tall tree-ferns, cabbage trees, nikau palms, and sometimes Australian red gums, now a glory of crimson blossom; and the line of hills encircling the plain—which stretches for many miles inland from the bay—are a never-failing source of delight. Between sunrise and sunset the colour of their spurs and gullies changes continually, and always it is lovely. Gisborne possesses two safe beaches for bathing. On one, backing the town, the line of surf rolls for twenty miles along the curve of the bay towards Young Nick's Head; and the other—where townspeople have summer shacks—is on the east coast road, a few miles farther off. Gisborne, too, can boast of a good golf club, a polo club, and a hunt club. (You jump wire if you hunt in Poverty Bay—if you hunt anywhere in New Zealand in fact—and you hunt hares, for there are no foxes in the country.)

When I leave in a day or two for my motoring tour round the East Cape, I sadly fear my figure will be a trifle bulkier than when I arrived some weeks ago. After a succession of morning tea-parties (the table spread at eleven o'clock with hot buttered scones, sandwiches, cheese-straws, and cakes of many kinds), after-

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noon tea-parties (to the "morning tea" menu add half a dozen more varieties of home-made cakes, meringues, savoury biscuits, and oyster patties)—what can one expect? Though I'll admit, frankly, I've been very busy gormandizing, and have eaten far too much at these functions, I've still had time to realize the beauty of the sun-flooded and song-flooded gardens seen through widely opened windows; the brilliant flower-beds, and the well-kept tennis lawns, with always beyond a view of river, sea, or distant hills.

When I return from my trip "up the coast," and on to Rotorua, I shall have another week in Gisborne before setting off on a more extensive journey. My publishers airily suggested that I should see New Zealand from end to end. I think they believed this could be done in a few days! I shall probably spend two months on my travels, and then shan't see one-tenth of what I should like to see. But before setting off on this Dominion tour, I'm determined to have another week in Gisborne. It isn't so much that I'm hankering after a further succession of morning and afternoon teas: I don't wish my departure to be chronicled by one of our more flippant local papers as was the departure of a much fêted friend some time ago: "Mrs. B—— has now left Gisborne for England, being unable to hold another crumb." No, I merely wish to return in order to be present at the two days' racing in February. The race meetings in New Zealand—very gay and sociable with a good band playing on the flower-planted lawn, and picnic luncheons beside the cars under the willow trees at the back of the stand—give one an opportunity of seeing country friends who come into town for "Race Week," and whom one might otherwise miss.

If we are isolated in Gisborne—shut off, by our lack of a railway and a good harbour, from the rest of New Zealand—we are at least very friendly, happy, and

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peaceful. Not always was Gisborne quite so peaceful, however. Te Kooti's massacre still lives in the memory of one or two of the oldest settlers. In 1865 a fanatical new religion amongst the Maoris threatened violence to the Pakeha settlers. These Hau-Haus and their leader, Te Kooti, were captured and transported to the Chatham Islands. I can't go into the rights and wrongs of Te Kooti's case. Perhaps, like Fletcher Christian of the *Bounty*, he nursed a burning sense of injury and injustice. It is certainly true that when the term of the Hau-Haus' imprisonment expired, no arrangements were made for their return to New Zealand. Te Kooti therefore took matters into his own hands; seized the Government schooner, *Rifleman*, and compelled the crew to navigate the ship back to New Zealand. Reaching the east coast, and evading the troops posted to prevent their advance, the Hau-Haus came by an unguarded hill track to Poverty Bay; and on November 10th, 1868, murdered about forty settlers—men, women, and children—and burned the homesteads. A monument in the Gisborne cemetery records the names of those who were slaughtered in the Poverty Bay massacre. Now, however, these things are remembered only as matters of history. The Maoris welcoming Lord Bledisloe spoke the truth when they said: "To-day Maori and Pakeha are one"—that is to say, one in friendship and in mutual respect. Gisborne is proud to possess the largest Runanga or Maori meeting-house in New Zealand. The Runanga house is the central feature of every Maori settlement or Pa. From time immemorial all matters of importance connected with the tribe have been thrashed out in the meeting-house.

There is no great Maori settlement in Gisborne itself; but this new meeting-house, Poho-O-Rawiri, was erected a year or two ago to take the place of an old Runanga which had been destroyed. If part of an old Runanga

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house can be incorporated in a new one, the meeting-house is considered by the Maoris—true worshippers of hereditary traditions—to be identical with its predecessor. This has been done in Gisborne. Some ancient carved beams and wooden figures of "ancestors," which stood in the old Poho-O-Rawiri, adorn the new building; but much more has been added; now the great hall presents to visitors a replica of all old Maori patterns in panelling and carving. Though modern materials have of necessity been used, the work has been done by many hundreds of unpaid, skilled Maori workers, and as a result the building is one of great beauty and interest. A magnificent Runanga house of which the east coast natives are justly proud.

It is rather a curious coincidence that this, the largest Maori meeting-house in New Zealand, should stand within a few hundred yards of the obelisk which marks the spot where Captain James Cook first set foot on New Zealand soil, on October 8th, 1769.

CHAPTER X

THE HON. SIR APIRANA NGATA'S WORK

I'm taking very literally the suggestion made to me by my publishers that I should write this book in the form of a diary. It is being done in bits and pieces, as it were. Having now completed the tour which Sir Apirana Ngata was good enough to map out for me, I will try and give some account of what I've seen, and what I've heard during my seven hundred mile motor journey.

I set out from Gisborne six days ago in a car driven by Captain Pitt, who, besides being one of the first New Zealand contingent to sail for South Africa during the Boer War, was a member of the Maori contingent at Gallipoli, and is now Welfare Officer of the Native Department.

In the car with me travelled one of Sir Apirana Ngata's daughters, Mrs. Te Kani, a very gentle and very charming little lady. Unfortunately we were to be travelling companions for the first few hours only. I wish she could have come on with me, but she was merely going up the coast for a short visit to her father's homestead. We parted at Ruatoria, seventy-six miles from Gisborne.

Like the majority of my fellow (Pakeha) countrymen and women, I've grown up to accept the Maoris as part of New Zealand, and haven't really thought, or heard, very much about them. I've no doubt there are thousands of Britishers in the Dominion to-day who are as ignorant of the Maoris, their way of life and their history as I am. This made the prospect of my journey more exciting; quite an adventure, in fact.

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It was a brilliant day, and our car bowled gaily along the lovely coast road, with the blue sea sparkling on our right, and only the gentlest fringe of foam creaming into the long, empty beaches from the wide stretch of the Pacific. As far as the eye could reach were the tumbled mass of high, jutting headlands, mauve and blue; while inland, larks sang gaily over the green hills and bushed gullies. Occasionally we would meet a car, pass through a mob of cattle with an attendant drover and his dogs, or overtake a lorry; but sometimes for miles and miles we had the road entirely to ourselves.

To make clear to my readers the *raison d'être* of my journey, I'm afraid I'll have to be a trifle prosy, and explain the position of the Maori landowners at the present time. By the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 the British Government agreed to respect the customs and usages of the Maori in regard to the ownership of his land. But the difficulty was that this land was communal. A whole tribe (tracing descent from a common ancestor) would hold a block of thousands of acres—but not in equal shares. Each marriage of members of the tribe, and the birth of children, complicated matters still further. The result has been that for the past fifty or sixty years vast sums of money have been expended by the Government in determining titles, and endeavouring to unravel complicated issues. And during this time enormous blocks of land have lain idle and unproductive, whilst the Maoris lived from hand to mouth in their settlements, unable to derive benefit from their estates. A certain amount of land would be sold; some portions leased to Pakeha sheep-farmers; but for the most part members of the different tribes derived their sole income from spasmodic employment, odd jobs such as bush-felling, or scrub-cutting, shearing performed for the Pakeha settlers.

For a great number of years the Maori was looked

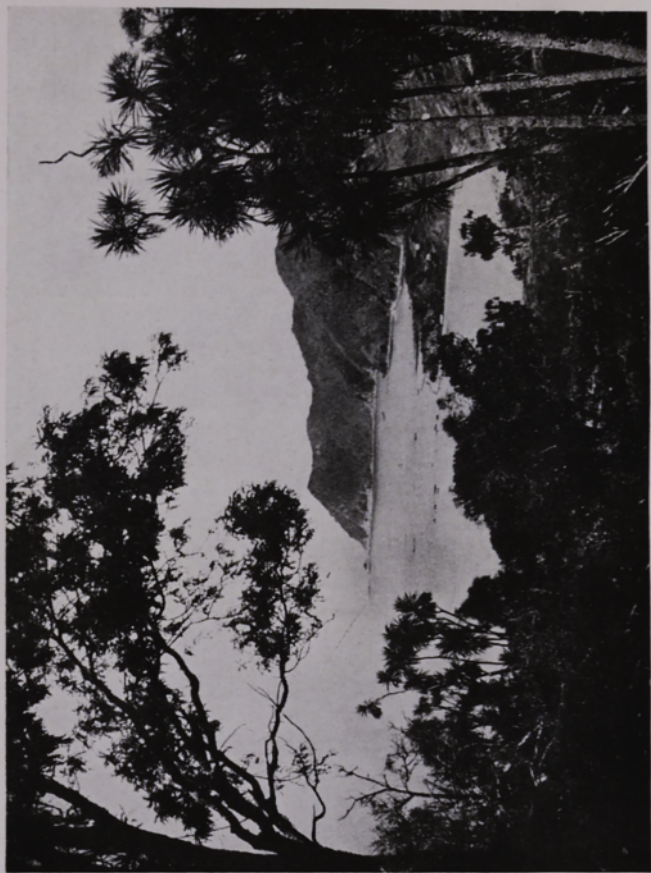
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upon as a vanishing race; and probably the British settler—very busy consolidating his own position in a new country—had no time to waste in considering the position and future of this dwindling people. The Maori was not treated unfairly by the Britisher. On the contrary he was always respected and looked upon as a “good fellow.” His intelligence, his bravery, his sense of humour, and his generosity were never questioned. But there the matter ended. If New Zealanders to-day would pause for a moment to ask themselves how much the pioneers of the Dominion owed to the Maori people in the bitterly hard work of settling this marvellously fertile but densely wooded mountainous country, their sense of fair play would lead them, not to adverse criticism of Sir Apirana Ngata’s work, but to actual co-operation in it.

For Sir Apirana—a Maori chief of great ideals—realizing that his race is no longer diminishing, but now sturdily and healthily increasing, has faced the problem of providing an outlet for the energy of the young, and a provision for the old. In short, he is encouraging, by expert advice and financial grants, his people to return to the land—their own land—and to bring these vast tracts of tribal, and at present useless, country into productive cultivation.

It is the first time in the history of New Zealand that such an experiment has been tried. The catch phrase of Europeans for many years has been “The Maori won’t work.” Oh, yes, they admit readily enough that Maoris are excellent shearers, bush-whackers, road-makers. But they contend that for any concentrated and sustained effort the Maori is temperamentally unfitted. Well, time will show who is right—Sir Apirana or the doubting Pakeha.

For my part, after having seen what I have during the past week—the energy and enthusiasm of the



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workers within the new Development Scheme, and the marvellous things they've already done—I'll put my money on Sir Apirana.

After all, the Maori people have never before been helped and encouraged to work as owners. And they love their land, and are physically strong—a vigorous outdoor people.

Crossing by bridge the wide and shining river at Tolaga Bay, we ran into the township and halted for "morning tea." A post office, a "pub," a couple of stores, a school, a bank, a church, a garage, a tea-room (a very good tea-room where we had an excellent "morning tea")—that's Tolago Bay! Away to the right of the township lies "Cook's Cove." The great navigator landed here for a few hours for water; and one may still drink from "Cook's Well," though the spring is badly shrunken now. I don't quite know how anyone can be sure this is Cook's Well—perhaps the natives marked the spot. About thirty miles past Tolaga we halted at Te Puia Springs. Mrs. Johnston, the energetic proprietress of the Accommodation House, showed me the baths: one roofed in and tiled immediately behind the building; the others in bath-houses on the hillside, with an open swimming-pool in a hollow a hundred yards or so away. These baths possess the most marvellous curative powers for rheumatism and other ills. In fact, according to the Government analyst, they are even superior to the Rotorua thermal springs, which are now world-famous. The strength of these thermal waters has its small disadvantages however. Mrs. Johnston explained to me that since they had built the tiled bath so near the house, and piped the water there, all metal door-handles, and ironwork generally, in her hotel were beginning to corrode.

"See these locks? It chews them up," she remarked. "That'll show you how strong it is."

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High up on the hillside is a natural gas-vent which picnickers light in order to boil their "billies" for tea; and within the house itself, I saw this same natural gas (laid on by pipes from the hill) used in an ordinary gas-stove for cooking purposes.

It was nearly two o'clock when we reached Ruatoria. Here I was to be "taken over" by Mr. Athol Kemp, supervisor for the Development Scheme for this district.

I'd imagined—as this was all native work—that Mr. Kemp wouldn't be one of *the* Kemps, but a Maori. Not at all. Mr. Kemp was very much a Pakeha. The fourth generation of the well-known Kemp family, whose great-grandfather and great-grandmother, coming to New Zealand with Samuel Marsden in 1819, built their home at Keri Keri in the Bay of Islands—a good-sized dwelling of hand-sawn native timber, with windows of blown glass brought with them from the Motherland. I hope to see this house—the oldest house in New Zealand, and as good to-day as the day it was built—when I go north; and I'm looking forward to making the acquaintance of the present residents therein, the two Miss Kemps, aunts of *the* Kemps of the coast.

Although Mr. Athol Kemp can't even speak the Maori language, no one could be more keenly interested in the natives, and more anxious for their welfare, than he. I had ample opportunity of hearing his views during the rest of the afternoon, as he drove me farther on up the coast to Te Araroa, and on next morning past Cape Runaway, towards Te Kaha. But I'm really going too fast. Before I was allowed to get into Mr. Kemp's car I was seized upon by a reporter (*without* a camera I'm glad to say!). I don't know if I succeeded in giving him as much interesting information as he gave me—I doubt it.

"You should have been here last night," he said.

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"We had a concert in aid of the X-ray fund for the hospital at Te Puia Springs. I think this town was about as good an illustration of one of Bret Harte's yarns of the old Wild West as you'd find anywhere. There must have been at least four hundred saddled horses tethered—and loose too—in this one main street, as well as cars and buggies. Of course, the hall wasn't nearly big enough for the audience. And the heat! They had to pull away a lot of the boards under the roof at last for ventilation. But it was a top-hole concert. We had a Maori 'finale' arranged by Sir Apirana Ngata. 'Scenes from the Past,' it was called—and they danced hakas and poi dances. Cleared over sixty pounds, I believe."

The "haka" is the Maori war dance; and I think a real good haka is probably the most exciting performance anyone could possibly witness. The perfect timing of the stamping feet, the chanting warriors' chorus, and gradual crescendo of the voices, have an extraordinary effect upon the emotions. I remember years ago seeing one performed by a Maori troupe at one of the big London halls. The English audience went mad! They stamped and cheered and shouted, and demanded encore after encore, until the poor natives were exhausted.

The "poi" dance is very much more graceful and less strenuous, and is danced by the women.

Having finished with my reporter, Mr. Kemp took me over to see the Ruatoria Butter Factory. "This was started eight years ago," he said. "All my friends told me I was mad to invest money in a concern that was almost entirely run by the natives. 'The Maoris won't keep it going,' they said. 'It'll fizzle out after a few months.' Well, it didn't fizzle out. The output has increased steadily year by year. We had only sixty-one tons of butter for the first season, and last year we sent

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down to Gisborne about four hundred and sixty tons. The natives—we're eighty per cent. Maoris as to suppliers, you know—are our keenest and best farmers."

I was shown over the factory. All the eight workers in this are Maoris, but the very capable manager, Mr. Littlejohn, is a Pakeha. He showed me through the different departments.

"The cream comes in here, and before it goes into the pasteurizer it is tested for the amount of butter-fat it contains. We only pay on the amount of butter-fat. After pasteurizing, it is cooled in those vats, and then run into these churns. If you had come earlier I could have shown you the actual churning. We're washing down now."

They were—hose-pipes going in all directions—every trace and spot of cream and butter-fat having been scrubbed away with soap and water before hosing. I saw the cream being tested in the laboratory, and the butter boxes being made in the carpentering department.

I've seen these boxes, with the familiar fern-leaf brand, being opened up in our local provision merchant's shop in London. I was glad to see them in the making here. The boxes are made of kahikatea, the giant white pine of the New Zealand "Bush."

Mr. Kemp's long suit is lucerne. He can't speak too highly of the good results they've had at Ruatoria from lucerne growing. He helps the native owners to plant their lucerne, advises them as to the growing of the crop, and the making of ensilage.

On along the coast we went, until at Tikitiki we halted to see the native Church of England.

Within the little white-painted wooden building, set high on a hill overlooking the river and the sea, was the same Maori carving and panelling as at Poho-O-Rawiri in Gisborne. Again, a labour of love done by the

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Maoris. The same geometrical patterns in the wall panelling, handed down through the generations, for which the English equivalents to the native words are: "the shark's tooth"; "in the crook of the arm-pit"; "the flat fish"; and the more poetical "milky way" and "the dropping tear." Each pew is carved with heads—the glistening pawa shell for eyes—and the pulpit is supported by half a dozen squat Maori figures complete with tattooed faces. All very interesting; yet what touched me most was the Roll of Honour—a memorial to the members of the local tribes killed in the Great War, 1914-1918. Nearly a hundred names here; all Maoris who had volunteered for service, and had died for England.

Heading the Roll of Honour were the words *Horouta, Takitimu*. These were the names of the two canoes, two of the seven which came from across the sea six hundred years ago, bringing the Maori warriors to this coast.

It was in very different ships—armed transports—that they left these shores to lay down their lives as Anzacs in Gallipoli, and with the British troops in France. Don't we Pakehas owe something to our loyal friends, the Maoris? Many more of these memorials was I to see during the next six days. At Whakatane, on the great rock standing in the centre of the town—the sacred "Tapu" rock of old Maori tradition, where ceremonies were held hundreds of years ago for the placation of the gods—in the crevice where the Tohungas washed their hands after their handling of the dead is set another memorial of the Great World War. And the Maori legend above the Roll of Honour, being translated, reads: "In memory of those who trod the wide road of Tane." Tane was their forest god, and the warriors going out to battle made their way through the tangle of the forest.

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Alas! the road these fallen warriors trod was up the arid hillsides of Gallipoli, and through the Flanders mud.

We went inland from Tikitiki, across the ranges for another hour or so, until in the sunset light we came out upon the coast again, and pulled up at the comfortable hotel at Te Araroa. We'd cut off the corner of the East Cape by our deviation over the ranges, and now faced the northern ocean.

"I'm going to try for a fish in the river after dinner," said Mr. Kemp. "I've had one or two good ones here before now."

When he'd got out his rod, I walked across the rough sandhills beside him for a few hundred yards up the valley, where between high-bushed bluffs a brawling river flowed. The hills here are a forest reserve and game sanctuary.

"Plenty of pheasants, pigeons, hare, and quail there," said Mr. Kemp.

But there evidently weren't plenty of trout in the stream, or if there were they'd gone to bed, for no fish rose to his fly, and we returned to the hotel empty-handed. He was disappointed, but I'm afraid I wasn't. I'd enjoyed sitting on the shingle in the twilight looking up the misty valley. With a herd of black cattle moving down to the stream to drink, it might have been a scene in the Highlands.

As we walked home he told me that at the river mouth here, he often fished with a rod for kahawai—a sea fish which is as gallant a fighter and as good sport as the trout.

"Comes up to the mouth of the river to feed. I've got them up to ten and twelve pounds, and they're fine table fish."

It was a stormy looking evening, and Mr. Kemp was a trifle anxious as to the weather. If rain came on we

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shouldn't be able to get along the unmetalled, slippery road beyond, or through the unbridged rivers.

But our luck held. It was a hot, bright day when we started off next morning, and the swirling rivers through which we drove were quite negotiable. Certainly, Mr. Kemp took the precaution of getting down each time we had to cross a particularly formidable-looking creek, to hang a sack over the radiator, so that the water should not get into the fan and so be whirled into the "innards" of the engine; but, except on one occasion, the water never penetrated to the flooring of the car. He pointed out to me the winch and hawser erected on the bank of the first big river, to be used if necessary, for hauling out cars stuck in mid-stream.

The view from the first high headland was indescribably beautiful. We looked back in the sunshine across the long sweep of the Te Araroa beach to the bushed hills of the East Cape, and forward over the great blue cup of Hicks Bay.

"Isn't that beautiful now?" asked Mr. Kemp, pulling up the car so that I should have a better opportunity of feasting my eyes on the panorama spread before me. "A marvellous harbour this. The only really safe one for miles along the coast. In stormy weather, quite often, you can see three or four big steamers sheltering here."

There were no steamers here to-day—the bay and the ocean to the horizon were empty. The Hicks Bay freezing works are closed. Since the "slump" started there have been no ocean-going steamers loading at the jetty as there were in days gone by. But let us hope there will be many in the future.

The township of Hicks Bay is merely a handful of wooden houses; and we did not stop, but went on inland again, now making our way along a gorgeous bush road—sometimes through an avenue of toi-toi, waving

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its pampas-grass feathers high above the roof of the car, and sometimes under the arched fronds of tree-ferns twenty and thirty feet in height. We were making for Mr. Ernest Kemp's station at Cape Runaway; here we were given a warm welcome, and an excellent lunch.

Amongst other things we had lobster (or rather cray-fish) salad; on the rocks round Cape Runaway they can be caught in dozens. According to the Kemp family, the sea off the Cape is positively thick with fish. In fact, it is a common thing for a three-hooked line to be drawn up with a big fish of eight to ten pounds on every hook—schnapper, kahawai and hapuka—all splendid table fish. (The driver of our service car coming back from Rotorua, five days later, confirmed these stories. He told us of one fishing expedition where a line fisherman did the hat trick. Caught three fish on three successive baitings of his line; nine in all!)

There was much discussion during luncheon as to the time of the tide on the beaches which we must traverse, and the state of the road farther on. Should we be able to get through the Raukokere River without the aid of a bullock team to pull us out? "Better have the bullocks there in case they're needed," said our host; and promptly got through on the telephone to somewhere about thirty miles along the coast, and arranged the matter. Still another younger Kemp brother accompanied us when we took the road again after lunch. The beach beyond Cape Runaway formed our highway, and the sand-hills are not too easy for a car to negotiate. We got down to the hard sand, however, without mishap; and off the beach again to drive another few miles inland. It was on the second stretch of beach that we met our Waterloo! On attempting to get up the slope from the water's edge we stuck. Impossible to move forward or back. The engine raced; the wheels "dug

in " to the soft sand farther and farther, until the rubber of the tyres was scorched and smoking. Mr. Kemp, junior, and I were out and pushing. No good! We attempted to scrape away the sand in which the wheels were embedded; to coax our machine with dry seaweed (not by way of fodder, but as a pathway for the tyres to grip), but our efforts were unavailing. Half an hour passed. Suddenly Mr. Athol Kemp gave a triumphant cry: "Here is our deliverance! "

Along the inland track a lumbering cart drawn by a pair of bullocks hove in sight. Like ship-wrecked mariners we hailed the approaching craft!

The Maori driver backed his team down towards the sand-hills; a chain connected the two vehicles; the bullocks pulled and strained, and in a few minutes we were high and dry once more.

"Great things, bullocks," remarked Mr. Athol Kemp as we got into the car once more. "They're not to be sneezed at on these occasions."

I didn't want to sneeze at them on any occasion; but I did wish I'd brought a camera with me to "snap" the scene. Yet no photograph could fix the colour and the beauty of the background to the picture. The wide and lonely ocean beach, with the waves tossing high on to the log-strewn sand-hills; the sunlight falling on the blue sea and more misty blue of the far headland of Cape Runaway; behind us the mountain ranges clothed with the varied green of towering forest giants, and the lace-like fronds of tall tree-ferns; and against the horizon, far out at sea, the hazy outline of White Island with its plume of smoke from the active volcano curling lazily up to the blue of the heavens.

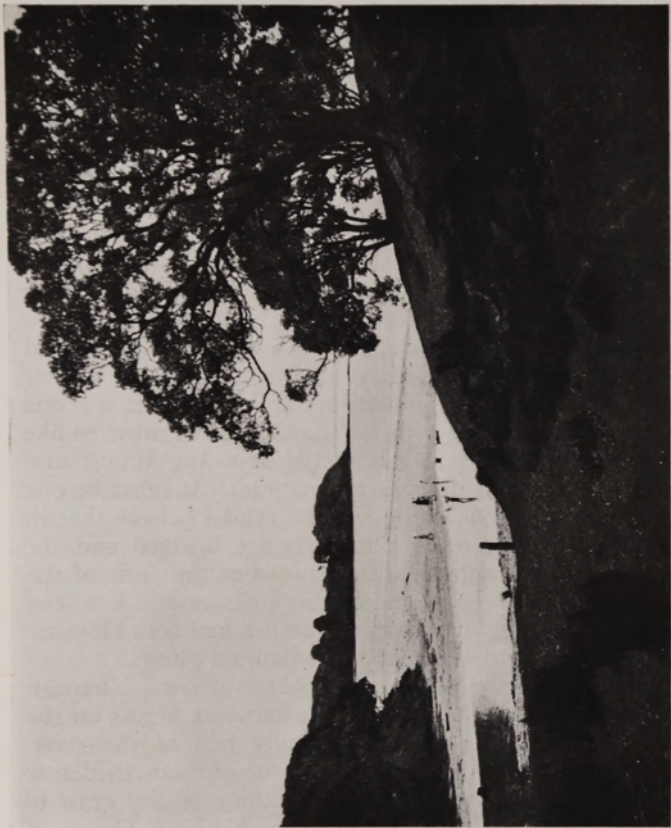
White Island is one of the places I shall *not* visit. No one lives there. A camp was established on the island some years ago, I believe, gathering sulphur; but I understand that enterprise is now abandoned.

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No more beaches to be tackled! Only the Raukokere River and some rather rough patches of road remained as obstacles between us and Te Kaha, where it was arranged that the Kemps should hand me over to another supervisor—Mr. Rangi Royal.

The drive on now, along the coast, was much too beautiful to be described—lovely bay after lovely bay! Back from the bays the country rises in gentle terraces, like English park land grassed and fenced, to the foot of the bushed ranges. Here are prosperous Maori dairy farms (all aided by the Development Scheme), and it is difficult to believe that our car can travel for sixty or seventy miles without seeing one holding owned by a Pakeha settler. The cliffs along each bay are fringed with pohutukawa. This is known as the "Christmas tree," because during November and December it is one mass of crimson blossom. What this coast must be like then with the flowering branches drooping almost into the blue water, is difficult to imagine! It must be one of the finest sights in the world. And I believe that in the near future, when the rivers are bridged and the road metalled, tourists will come from the ends of the earth to see it. I am one of the lucky ones. I've seen it first. But not, alas, with the pohutukawas in blossom. Some day I must see it in all its painted glory.

We reached the famous Raukokere at last. There in the mellow sunlight of the late afternoon, across on the opposite bank of the wide shingly bed of the river, waited our patient bullock team. One of them, evidently sleepy, had laid himself down on the tussocky grass to rest. It was not necessary to disturb him. The team weren't needed. We got the water in over the floor of the car as we drove through the swiftly running stream, but only our back wheels stuck as we emerged from the torrent; and with all hands pushing, we managed to get clear. Our troubles were over, and a few miles farther



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)
TYPICAL NORTH ISLAND BEACH, SHOWING POHUTUKAWA TREES

(To face p. 78.)

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on Mr. Rangi Royal, in another car, met us. I was very glad to see him, for, much as I had enjoyed my drive with Mr. Kemp, I knew that he and his brother were anxious to get back to Cape Runaway that night. The delay occasioned by our "sticking" on the sand-hills meant that they would be cut off by the rising tide on the beaches, and would have to wait until next day if they took me farther.

We said farewell by the roadside, and as they turned their car homewards, I stepped up into Mr. Royal's car. He had another passenger—a Pakeha like myself, Judge Acheson of the Native Land Court—with him. He had, also, a quantity of fresh strawberries, sugar, and a jar of cream. He thought, after my journey, I might be feeling in need of a little refreshment! As I'd been feasting on ripe nectarines (provided by Mr. Kemp) ever since I left Ruatoria, we saved the strawberries for dinner at Te Kaha.

I think both Mr. Royal and Judge Acheson were feeling rather nervous at the thought of being forced to entertain a totally unknown female—and a writing female into the bargain. However, an hour or so later, when we reached the hotel at Te Kaha, we were all very friendly. Not quite friendly enough perhaps for what awaited us. The Te Kaha Hotel is owned by a Maori family, who also run the store and post office adjoining. Hotel sounds a trifle grand for the small, one-storied wooden "pub" set on a cliff above the glorious coastline; but like little Jim's residence, if the outside was old and mean, everything within that cot was wondrous neat and clean. A white woman greeted us. I thought she must be the manageress, but she explained that she was merely a friend of one of the family, a visitor like ourselves. She ushered us through a little sitting-room, gay with bowls of flowers, and down a long passage. Throwing open the door of a fair-sized bedroom, she

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said: "This will be the room for the lady and gentleman."

No, we weren't really quite as friendly as all that!

Poor Mr. Royal seemed a great deal more agitated and embarrassed than the "lady and gentleman." "I told you that I wanted a room for Judge Acheson, and another for Miss Rees," he exclaimed hastily. "Two rooms, of course."

"Oh, I see," said our guide, "I didn't understand. Well, there's another room along here."

Judge Acheson was led farther on, and I was left in possession of the "best bedroom."

As the greater part of our prospective dinner was still in the sea, there was time before the meal for me to disport myself therein also. Slipping on my bathing-suit, down the cliff path went I. It was still very warm, and the coast-line, with its quiet bays lying open to the level rays of the western sun, was peaceful and beautiful. So was the sheltered blue water of the little cove below the pub. A seagull and I had it all to ourselves.

Half an hour later, seated on the verandah, I congratulated myself on having managed to swim and change before the gong summoned us to the dining-room. I didn't mind how soon the gong *did* summon us! Alas, our dinner was later getting out of the sea than I was. Judge Acheson pointed to a Maori mounting the cliff path with four or five enormous fish dangling from either hand.

"There's our dinner," he said. "We'll have to wait till that's cooked."

We did. But it was a remarkably good dinner when at last we got it: soup, fish, roast lamb, vegetables, fruit salad and great jugs of cream. Tea, of course, served with it. New Zealanders, both Pakehas and Maoris, drink tea at every meal.

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After dinner, when we were chatting on the verandah, looking up at the wide starry sky and away to the loom of the bushed ranges inland, I discovered that Judge Acheson was not only the author of a Maori novel, but a high authority on all matters relating to native poetry and legend.

Though the origin of this brave and highly intelligent race, which came in the seven canoes to New Zealand nearly six hundred years ago, is still a question of pure guesswork, some of the guesses of scientists are extremely interesting. Judge Acheson told me of one. It is that the Maori, thousands of years ago—a Caucasian race—after admixture with Egyptian blood in Ur—Ur of the Chaldees—migrated to India. Here, for some centuries, they were a ruling dynasty over a great portion of the country. Further migrations through the centuries brought them to Java, from thence, north of Australia, to Polynesia, and so at last south from Rarotonga to New Zealand. How much evidence there is for this theory I don't know. It is contended that the Maori was not originally a dark-skinned race. Judge Acheson told me of the Urukehu, amongst whom, all through the centre of the North Island, are to be found children with fair skins and light hair.

Behind us, through the open french windows of the little sitting-room, came the sound of music. A Maori boy was seated at the piano. It is said that the Arabs and the Maoris can recognize a note in music inaudible to the ears of other peoples. Certainly it is a fact that nearly every Maori is intensely musical. This boy who played to us to-night was no exception. Outside, beyond the verandah step, in the warm night, the Maori mongrel dogs moved to and fro; on the verandah itself there was a murmur of Maori voices; from the post office within the store came the sharp tinkle of the telephone bell. Then a call: "Bob, you're wanted on the

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'phone! " Against the rocks of the beach below was the soft lapping of the incoming tide; and over the lonely hills shone the Southern Cross. It was the right environment—the right atmosphere—for discussion and conjecture concerning the Maori. But it wasn't so much the question of their origin, but the hidden story of their years—the five hundred years before the advent of the Pakeha—spent here in New Zealand, that stirred my imagination to-night.

Scattered amongst the ranges of this Bay of Plenty territory are flat-topped spurs and ridges—not natural plateaux, but levelled by the labour of the tribe—on which once stood the palisaded fighting Pas. Tribe must have waged bitter warfare against tribe, all through the centuries, fighting for the possession of this lovely coast: the sea so rich in fish; the ground—lying open to the sun all day and sheltered by the inland ranges from the cold southerly winds—so favourable for the growing of the kumara and taro.

Much history was made here, but it was Maori history, and we shall never know it fully. Judge Acheson, I found, knew a good deal of it, from stories passed down by father to son; the poems and waiatas committed to memory to perpetuate the great deeds of the dead; and the intricate family trees, which the older chiefs could recite without faltering for hours on end. In the Native Land Court the judge must, of necessity, hear patiently these genealogic tables of descent—the Whakapapas—through over twenty generations, often from "the Canoes," for purposes of apportioning the titles to blocks of tribal land. The more canoes one can link up in the record of one's ancestors, the greater one's claim to the position of Rangatira (great chief). To the Maoris apparently the seven canoes take the place of the *Mayflower* to the Americans. Knowing the natives so well, and having learnt to respect so greatly their good

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qualities, Judge Acheson is keenly interested in Sir Apirana Ngata's Development Scheme.

"It has put new heart into the race," he said. "And already one can see the results in the improved health of the Maori children who are being brought up on the dairy farms. What the opponents of the native Minister's work seem unable to realize is that money spent in order to give the Maori a chance to help himself, will, in the future, mean a decrease in taxation for medical services, pensions, and all social welfare work throughout New Zealand."

Though we started from the Te Kaha Hotel directly after breakfast next morning, we halted for a few minutes at the Cottage Hospital, where the capable and very charming native nurses gave us more strawberries and cream, and a large water-melon to take with us in the car, so that we shouldn't be without refreshment on our drive to Opotiki. On along the coast we drove, with views from the high headlands—densely massed with tree-ferns and native bush—of dairy herds far below us, grazing contentedly on the terraced and cultivated pastures stretching back from the sea to the ranges. All Maori farmers here, and helped by the Development Scheme under the "unit" system; that is, by assistance to the individual.

At Ruatoki that afternoon we were to see a perfect little "community" settlement. In this fertile valley eight hundred Maoris are now happily settled on their own land, and working with tremendous energy and enthusiasm. Mrs. Royal entertained us at afternoon tea before we set out to motor for twenty-seven miles over different roads (made by the Maoris themselves) through their property. We saw the cheese factory, the butter factory, the two native schools, the tennis-courts and the golf-links. The Maori Church of England parson is a supplier to the butter factory. "And you'll

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see him every morning driving off from the first tee up by the golf house," said Mr. Royal, "and carrying his cream can with his bag of clubs down to the factory."

Mr. Royal, as supervisor, explained that the Maoris themselves had metalled seven miles of roughly ploughed roadway in a week; and were busily engaged on another stretch of the road leading into the virgin hill-country, which was being fenced and ploughed and brought into cultivation. "The men with the large families exchange their holdings of a few acres on the flat for over a hundred acres of country farther back. Oh, they grumble a bit at first, and say: 'You're driving us out into the fern,' but they're glad enough of the bigger farm later on. Why, those kids we saw crossing the river in that old buggy had just been taking cream cans to the factory, and their farm was all fern just over a year ago."

The tractors, mowers, and all costly machinery is bought by the supervisor, and is let out by the day for a small sum to individuals. The supervisor's word is law, but under him, on every block is a head-man, a Maori himself, who understands his own people and can get the best work out of them. The Maori, though sturdily independent, is intensely loyal to those he has learned to respect; and the form of government they have always believed in most is autocratic rather than democratic. The head-man at Ruatoki informed me in speaking of Sir Apirana:

"Too many boss, he no good. I say to the Minister 'This an army. You general. You say do. We do.'"

And they certainly do "do" at Ruatoki!

Mr. and Mrs. Rangi Royal were as good as their name. They entertained us royally. In the dining-room beside the fireplace, hangs Rangi's sword; for he was an officer with the native contingent in the Great War.

After dinner he got out his Whakapapa, or family



(T. W. Collins, photo.)

SHEEP ON THE ROAD

tree—a written one this—to show Judge Acheson. The names of his ancestors covered sheets and sheets of thick white paper, neatly gummed together, and the dining-room table was scarcely large enough to carry the unrolled document. All I saw was that he traced back six hundred years to two canoes, so I knew that I was being entertained by a Rangatira. The four children danced a “haka” for us, but Rangi told them they weren’t putting enough “pep” into it, and proceeded to do a solo “haka,” which certainly wasn’t lacking in “pep”—though pep seems rather a mild word to apply to his blood-curdling cries and terrifying grimaces.

Next day, on to the Ohope Development work near Whakatane. This block of four thousand acres is only just being brought in, i.e. fenced, ploughed, and sown with grass seed. The advantage of this particular block to the natives is the immense stretch of sea-front from which hundreds of the adjacent tribes will draw the greater part of their food supply in fish and pipis (small shell-fish).

Judge Acheson was very anxious to visit the Maori meeting-house near Ohope where Te Kooti, after being pardoned by the Government, spent the last years of his life. Accordingly, we bumped over a rough, unmetalled track along a valley, until we came to the spot. An old man—Te Kooti’s nephew—and his wife still live here; and the Maori woman, after gravely shaking hands with me, went into the meeting-house and brought out a chair which she placed upon the grass beside me, so that I should not be tired by standing for a few moments. I sat down. She squatted before the old, weather-beaten meeting-house; but as she had very little English, and I no Maori, we merely smiled at one another. Rangi and Judge Acheson talked with the grey-haired Maori man.

Before us was the patch of cultivation—kumaras, potatoes, maize, tobacco—from which the old people

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(who both, by the way, draw the old age pension) derive most of the necessities of life. Up on the hillside stood the little hut, now "tapu," where Te Kooti lived. His saddle, his few personal belongings are there. His followers (for he founded a church which still has hundreds of adherents amongst the Maoris) bury offerings of money round the hut. Had we wished to do so, I don't think the natives would have allowed us to climb up through the manuka and fern to that little shrine above us. Te Kooti—the dreaded raider of Poverty Bay in 1868—was always a revered and sacred personage in the eyes of the Hau-Haus. I think the members of his church no longer call themselves Hau-Haus, but the canonization of Te Kooti (who died in 1891) is now apparently complete.

From the meeting-house we drove out of the valley back to the haunts of the Pakeha. Here on the Ohope beach is the Whakatane seaside resort: summer shacks; a good-looking hotel (where a girl in shorts was playing a fierce single on the tennis-court against her male opponent); a reserve for campers beneath the trees. These reserves are not confined to ocean beaches. They are a great feature of all New Zealand towns (Gisborne has two such reserves). Motor tourists who have a tent rolled up on the luggage-carrier of their car can follow the sign "To the camp site," and find there water, often a shed, with gas-ring for cooking, and other conveniences. All they have to do is to pitch their tent under the greenwood tree, and enjoy a holiday at the cost of their petrol and an extra shilling or two for the camp amenities.

We lunched at Whakatane (a large tree-fern on the golf-course here struck me as slightly incongruous, but I suppose it isn't, for golf-courses seem to be almost as ubiquitous as tree-ferns in this country), and after looking at the sea-front and, in the centre of the town, the

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tall "Tapu" rock Pohaturua—which, if it could speak, would tell of ancient Maori rites concerning birth and death and the placation of the gods—we were off again in the car to Rotorua.

Mount Edgecumbe, rising somewhat abruptly from the plain, was swathed in misty rain. This is an extinct volcano, and somewhere near its summit there is said to be a great Maori burial-cave. "There are Maoris alive to-day who've seen it," remarked Mr. Royal, "and they'll tell you of a chief's body being carried up there in the night by naked bearers, all clothing discarded before they begin the climb."

The rain continued as we drove through the fern and scrub-covered country, then up into the forest reserve of the hills bordering the chain of lakes adjacent to Rotorua—Rotoma, Rotoiti, Roto-e-hu (Roto is Maori for lake). This bush scenery is some of the most beautiful in New Zealand: tree-ferns in tropical luxuriance and dense fern-growth under the great native trees. On the shores of one of these lakes our car stopped at . . .

(I was on the point of disclosing the exact locality of Captain Wilson's retreat.)

Inquiring at the house, I learnt that he was down at his shack by the lake side, and I was conducted through the tangle of wet shrubs to his own particular sanctum. I'm quite sure he was enjoying a pleasant afternoon's snooze, but he assured me that I hadn't disturbed him, and appeared to be pleased to show me his "boudoir." The fish weren't behaving properly. They'd been difficult and shy during the hot weather, but he was apparently accepting their contrariness quite philosophically, and still managing to enjoy himself—playing golf at Rotorua—until such time as the trout elected to behave in a reasonable fashion.

On again, by the beautiful bush road known as Hongi's Track (Hongi was a Maori chief, dead now

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nearly a hundred years, who, making war upon another native tribe, had his canoes carried secretly through the bush from lake to lake); on past lovely Rotoiti, where some years ago I camped with friends, and wrote one of my novels; and so in the misty rain to Rotorua. Here Judge Acheson caught the afternoon train to Auckland, and I, saying good-bye to Mr. Royal, was deposited at one of the hotels.

For the next two days, before my return to Gisborne, I should be conducted over more of the Development work by Mr. Scott, another supervisor—this time a Pakeha.

Rotorua is, of course, world famous as a tourist and health resort; and anyone who has read anything of New Zealand is familiar with the story of its marvellous curative baths, its geysers and blow-holes, its boiling lakes and huge mud cauldrons. But what many people who know Rotorua by hearsay only don't realize is the beauty of the little town. Perhaps nowhere in the world are there such lovely gardens as those surrounding the big bath-houses on the border of the lake. Here is a gigantic Chelsea flower-show set out amongst native shrubs, tree-ferns, palms, and shady English trees; with fringed lily-ponds, and bubbling hot-springs, to catch the sunshine, or reflect the blue of the sky, amongst the smooth green lawns. The warmth of the ground grows everything as in a green-house. Lilies, roses, delphiniums, stocks, gladioli, dahlias, hollyhocks, lupins, phlox, petunias—masses of purple, rose, and orange, of mauve and blue.

The elaborate memorial, carved and erected by the Arawa Maoris in honour of members of the tribe who volunteered for service in the Great War, and who gave their lives for England, stands here amongst the flowers and the trees. The Duke of York, on his visit to New Zealand, unveiled the memorial and paid his tribute to

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these gallant warriors. And beyond the gardens shines the lake, with Mokoia Island softly outlined against the deeper colour of the bushed ranges on the far shore. It was to Mokoia Island, the sacred isle of the Arawa tribe, that Hinemoa swam to join her lover Tutanekai. Alfred Domett has used this beautiful old Maori legend as the basis of his poem "Ranolf and Amohia." Domett was, of course, the Waring of Browning's verse:

*"What's become of Waring
Since he gave us all the slip,
Chose land-travel or seafaring,
Boots and chest or staff and scrip,
Rather than pace up and down
Any longer London town?"*

Well, what had become of Waring was that he was living in New Zealand, and finding time during the intervals of writing poems to become in 1862 Prime Minister of the Colony.

I was too tired that first evening to do more than visit the wonderful new bath-houses and treat myself to a radium bath.

Very grand these new bath-houses are, with high, polished walls, marble statues in the large outer vestibule, and fountains playing within. I suppose the statues and the fountains and the deep-tiled baths are to give us the impression of being early Romans. At any rate they're very sumptuous, and a great improvement on the baths as I knew them seven years ago. The radium bath—so strongly tonic that one is not allowed to remain in it for more than fifteen minutes, and in which one must not swim for fear of exhaustion—was the only one of the baths I sampled. I had one each evening for the three nights I remained in Rotorua.

There are many other baths to be had. The Government balneologist, if consulted, gives expert advice to

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invalids, and prescribes the right bath in each case, whether for rheumatism, lumbago, neuralgia, skin trouble or nerves; and in the grounds there is a large open-air swimming-bath of the warm Rachel waters for mixed bathing. The Rachel Springs are so called from their beautifying properties. What a good thing for mixed bathers!

Invalids from all parts of the world come to Rotorua for healing; but Rotorua isn't by any means merely a health resort. It is a wonderland for tourists, and a very gay spot for holiday-makers. I understand last New Year's Eve celebration was extremely hilarious; quite a carnival atmosphere, in fact!

I suppose I'd boasted a little too much of our continual sunshine, for after my arrival in Rotorua we had a most terrific downfall of rain, and a heavy gale. However, the violence of the storm abated after some hours, and we had fine intervals during the next day for our drive to Tauranga. Here, alas, on the hillsides about the delightful little sea-coast town, we saw evidences of the damage done overnight. Mr. Scott had motored me up to a small block of Maori land, seven hundred and twenty acres in extent. This country, less than fifteen months ago, was thick with impenetrable gorse, ragwort (a curse to the dairy farmer), scrub, and fern. The natives, after joining up with the Development Scheme, had cleared, fenced, and planted it. We saw four hundred acres of fine maize (which, though blown by the wind, would still give splendid results), seventy acres of turnips, and ten acres of oats.

This first year's crop will more than pay the cost of bringing in the country for cultivation, and will give the Maori owners a good return for their labour. Near at hand was another block of eighteen hundred acres belonging to one of the New Zealand banks, and this country was in the same state of neglect as the native

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land had been before work was started under the Development Scheme fourteen months ago. I should like some of the opponents of the native Minister's plans to see the object lesson here!

The head-man, a good-looking Maori lad, came with us in the car, down from the hills, to act as guide to Tauranga. I was anxious to see something of the town, where lemon-growing is well established, and tobacco cultivation started. These industries have, of course, no connection with the Maori work; but as they are important new activities for British settlers, I thought I'd like to have a look at them.

Tauranga, with its glorious climate, its fine sea beach, wide inner harbour, and lovely scenery, has already been discovered as an ideal place of residence for retired officers from "the Services" in England. It is connected by train with Auckland, but I fancy all who settle here can find quite enough amusement and entertainment in their own small town without visiting one of the larger centres. They can indulge in practically any outdoor sport they choose: shooting, riding, swimming, yachting, deep-sea fishing; golf, tennis, and bowling needn't be mentioned—as golf-courses, tennis-courts and bowling-greens are to be found throughout the Dominion, even in the very smallest towns. There are also extremely few settlements without their "picture theatres"; and visitors from other countries are always rather astonished to discover that new and important talkies (particularly the American productions) are often shown in New Zealand before their general release in Great Britain.

In Tauranga we visited the factory started four years ago by growers of citrus fruits. This is a co-operative affair where lemons are washed, graded, cured, and packed for shipping. Already the first debentures for the establishment of the factory have been repaid, and

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the concern seems to be flourishing. We visited a lemon-grower, who very kindly showed us over his orchard. He has eighteen acres in all, but only four and a half planted in lemon trees. On the rest he has his house, garage, garden, and pasture for a few cows. He volunteered the information that in one year (he admitted that it was a good year), by the combined efforts of himself and his son (no outside labour employed), he took £1,200 off the place. Not a bad return for eighteen acres! And practically all the money was brought in by the four and a half acres of lemon trees!

Later we paid a visit to a tobacco plantation and factory for "flueing" the leaf. It was explained to us that so far the tobacco growing in Tauranga was in rather an experimental stage. Apparently the best leaf must be fine but with some body in it. In Nelson and North of Auckland excellent results have been obtained from the tobacco plantations, and as some big American tobacco firms are making inquiries with reference to land round Tauranga, it appears likely that tobacco-growing in this district will be more widely developed later. The actual figures for this year, with reference to the tobacco industry throughout the Dominion, are: 700 growers with 2,500 acres producing £180,000 worth of tobacco.

Before returning to Rotorua we motored on to Maketu—one of the largest blocks in the Native Land Development Scheme—where dairy-farming is in full swing. On the estate here is a very big experimental plantation of South Island flax. It is believed that this, if successful, may be of immense value later in the manufacture of artificial silk.

Maketu—the Maori settlement at the mouth of the Kaituna River—is an historic spot. It is the traditional landing-place of the Arawa canoe; and the Arawa tribe

SIR APIRANA NGATA'S WORK

who are to be found all round Rotorua and the surrounding district are the descendants of these first voyagers.

Rain again next morning made it impossible for us to obtain more than a glimpse of the Horo-Horo estate—another big block of Maori land now cleared, ploughed, sown, fenced, and subdivided into small dairy-farms by the Development Scheme, for the use of the native owners. Here, a vast tract of fern-covered pumice land, which until a few years ago was considered valueless, has, by the use of fertilizers, been turned into rich cow pasture.

I should like to have met Princess Te Puea (the sister of the present Maori king), who is an enthusiastic fellow-worker with Sir Apirana Ngata for the good of her people. She travels from place to place with her gang of thirty or forty young and willing workers, lending a hand in clearing and fencing new country. Unfortunately she had left Rotorua for a few days and gone back to her home in the Waikato, and I was unable to meet her.

Having the afternoon free, I set off by myself to have another look at Whakarewarewa. This is the renowned geyser valley, two miles from Rotorua. Here I tramped round in the misty rain, with a few other visitors and a Maori woman guide.

It is a weird, uncanny place, and I don't really know how the Maoris in the native settlement can sleep comfortably at night with the boiling springs and steaming earth literally at their doorsteps.

Our guide made the usual remarks about their never fearing a coal strike, and showed us the evening meal cooking in the steam-holes: flax kits of potatoes, "billies" of corned beef and cabbage. Anything and everything that can be steamed is prepared in the simplest manner possible. A wooden box, with a board

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or two knocked out of the bottom to admit the steam, is sunk in the ground. The kits and cans are placed therein, and covered with an old sack. An hour or two later the food is ready for consumption. Our guide told us many gruesome stories of the bottomless boiling pools within the Maori enclosure. Only a month or two ago a man venturing out from one of the huts at night had missed his footing, and stumbled into a boiling pool a yard or two away. At another of these seething cauldrons a woman tourist, venturing too near the edge, had fallen in. She was walking without a guide, and her remains were not discovered until next day.

It is hard to give in words any idea of this vast steaming, rumbling, boiling tract of country. It is too uncanny and weird to be described. All one's previous certainties as to the stability of the globe we inhabit seem upset here. One views with a sort of fascinated terror the bubbling, heaving crust of the earth; the thick, treacly cauldrons, where innumerable gushes of boiling mud shoot up in the queerest and most fantastic shapes, only to fall again with a horrid glug-glug—like the noise of a vast army of frogs—to form another pattern on the tortured grey surface of the cavern. Most of these mud-holes have their own names: the flower-pot, where the falling mud spreads out in the form of roses and lilies; the porridge pot; the Devil's Reception, where the mud is like a regiment of imps jumping three or four feet in the air.

Then there are the boiling fountains of clear, sparkling water and the geysers. Pohutu was not playing, but I have seen this famous geyser in former years sending its cloud of boiling water and spray high up towards the blue sky.

To-day for miles over the manuka-clad valley were clouds of rising steam, and the light rain seemed to be exciting the bubbling, seething earth to greater activity.

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"This is where Captain Cook's pig fell into a hole," said our guide, halting before a fern-fringed mud-pool. "There's nothing left of him now but his grunt." Certainly if one shut one's eyes one could believe that a large pig was grunting underground. Above another creek we stood: boiling water babbled over the stones. Knock, knock, knock went the invisible power beneath the shaking ground on which we stood.

"This is our motor-car," said the guide. "It's running well to-day! And here"—she stepped a little farther off to a stone below the bridged creek—"you can catch your trout in that cold stream and swing him, still on the line, into the boiling pool in front of you, and take him out all ready to be eaten."

I don't know if anyone has ever performed this conjuring trick, but it certainly is a marvellous feature of this valley, to see normal streams and ordinary ferns and manuka growing in such close proximity to the boiling springs in the thin, shaking crust of the barren, sulphur-encrusted earth.

Whakarewarewa is not the only wonder spot of Rotorua. There are at least a dozen others. Twenty miles away lies Lake Rotomahana. Though for the most part the lake is cold there are boiling springs on one side. Here launch-parties actually pass over the seething cauldrons of subaqueous geysers; hear the subdued thud of the fury beneath their vessel's keels; and see on the steaming cliffs, where ferns and mosses cling beside the boiling cascades, a wonderful wealth of colour in the strata of the rock.

Then there is Tikitere, twelve miles from Rotorua, described as a "valley of horrors." The smell of Tikitere within a radius of about two miles is sufficient advertisement of its horror!

But there is much beauty, too, in the surrounding country. Returning to Gisborne next day, the shores

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of the lakes Rotoiti, Rotoehu and Rotoma, were a dream of loveliness. It was a perfect summer's morning after the rain. Nothing could have been more beautiful than the clear, translucent blue of the water, with tree-ferns trailing their lacy fronds down from the cliffs, the boats drawn up on the silvery beaches, and the variegated greens of the bushed mountain ranges.

We passed once more through the sylvan depths of Hongi's Track and out into the sunshine along the shores of Rotoma; the chorus of locusts went with us; tuis sang in the high tree-tops of the fern-tangled bush. We had left Rotorua after lunch, and had a two hundred and twenty mile motor run to accomplish before reaching Gisborne. But every mile of the drive was worth doing. I knew most of the route, but not the Waioeka road, from Opotiki onwards. This has been made in the last seven years. No one had talked of it as though it possessed any special interest. I think it has much beauty. It winds along the banks of the Waioeka River between bushed ranges; and waterfalls dash down from the cliffs on either side between groves of nikau palms and tall tree-ferns. But like almost all New Zealand roads it is not over wide, and every here and there are evidences of slips from the hillside, which keep the roadman busy. "Suppose we suddenly came on a big slip blocking the road, what could we do?" I asked the driver.

"Go back to Opotiki and come through by the Motu," he returned imperturbably, as though adding sixty or seventy miles to our journey wasn't a matter of much importance. As it turned out, we were lucky. We found no obstacle to delay us; but a few hours after we had passed the slip came down, and the road was blocked for two days—all traffic diverted to the Motu route. This, I may state, is a very unusual occurrence;

and I only mention it as it is queer that it should have happened so soon after I had talked of slips.

We reached Gisborne soon after 9 p.m. In the darkness, as we bowled along the Poverty Bay flats, I had time to think of what I'd seen amongst the Maoris. Although I'm sadly ignorant of Maori history and native customs, very few people in New Zealand know much more than I do; and fewer still have any knowledge of Sir Apirana Ngata's work. I think they imagine that any money which is spent to help the natives will be unproductive. I believe they are wrong; the expenditure, I am sure, is likely to bring in a big return eventually. And even if the return to the Pakeha isn't so very large, don't we owe something to the Maori? Years ago a white woman who knew the Maoris well told me something of them. She lived near a Maori settlement. "Up at the Pa," she said, "they set aside all their best and largest potatoes for winter storage. The small scrubby ones they use up first. But if I were in need of potatoes, do you think they'd offer me the wretched little ones they were eating themselves? Certainly not! They'd give me the large ones they were storing. What they considered good enough for themselves wouldn't be good enough for me—for any friend, in fact." Is there a moral to my story? Perhaps there is.

CHAPTER XI

ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN

(Including a service-car driver, a soldier, a Governor-General, a Parliamentary Under-Secretary, a Professor, and a few gold-diggers)

ON my journey down from Gisborne to Napier by service car, I was, of course, merely retravelling the route by which I'd come. The car, however, stopped for morning tea at the Morere Hot Springs Hotel (which we had passed on the way up without a halt). I was able to see the alterations which have been made to the building since I stayed there years ago. It is now a large and comfortable hotel, capable of entertaining over eighty guests. The baths are at some little distance, and I had no time to visit them, though I was told that they had been much improved, and that the reserve of native bush, with its wonderful grove of nikau palms—perhaps the finest in New Zealand—is still as beautiful as ever. The only change here, apparently, is that the walk up to the baths through the bush is now lit by electric light instead of the natural gas lamps of days gone by. I used to think that one of Morere's greatest attractions: the incandescent burners (alight both night and day) strung along the tree-trunks, and illuminating the lovely palms and tree-ferns at no cost but that of a pipe-line from the natural gas outlet in the hillside. On this return journey our car crossed the Wairoa River on the punt, instead of going round by the railway bridge. The punt has been in action ever since the Napier earthquake, when the old bridge was destroyed. The new bridge, however, will soon be built, and the engineering

CHAPTER VI

THE HISTORY OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE

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N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.

APPLE ORCHARD IN BLOOM NEAR NAPIER

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experts declare that it will take an immense upheaval to shift the deep-driven piles. The driver of the car I travelled by had left Napier with passengers at 8.30 a.m. on the day of the earthquake. His stories of their difficulties on the road, with slips and broken bridges, interested me. But his story wasn't without its pathetic side. His wife and children were in Napier. He had no means of finding out whether they were alive or dead. He had to carry on with his job and hope for the best. I'm glad to say it was the best. Though his house was destroyed in the fire, his wife and family escaped all injury.

After a night in Napier, I had the same day's journey down by train to Wellington: the same "stops for refreshment" along the line as I'd had travelling north, on my arrival in New Zealand.

I stayed in Wellington with very kind and hospitable friends—Colonel and Mrs. Hughes. I mention them by name because "Jacky" Hughes, who won his D.S.O. in South Africa, and afterwards fought gallantly at Gallipoli, is so well known throughout New Zealand, and also by many hundreds of visitors to the Dominion, that all who have met him will be glad to hear that he still retains his generous, cheerful spirit in spite of the suffering and injury sustained during his last campaign. It is rather interesting to note that "Jacky" Hughes' decoration was the first D.S.O. ever awarded to a New Zealander.

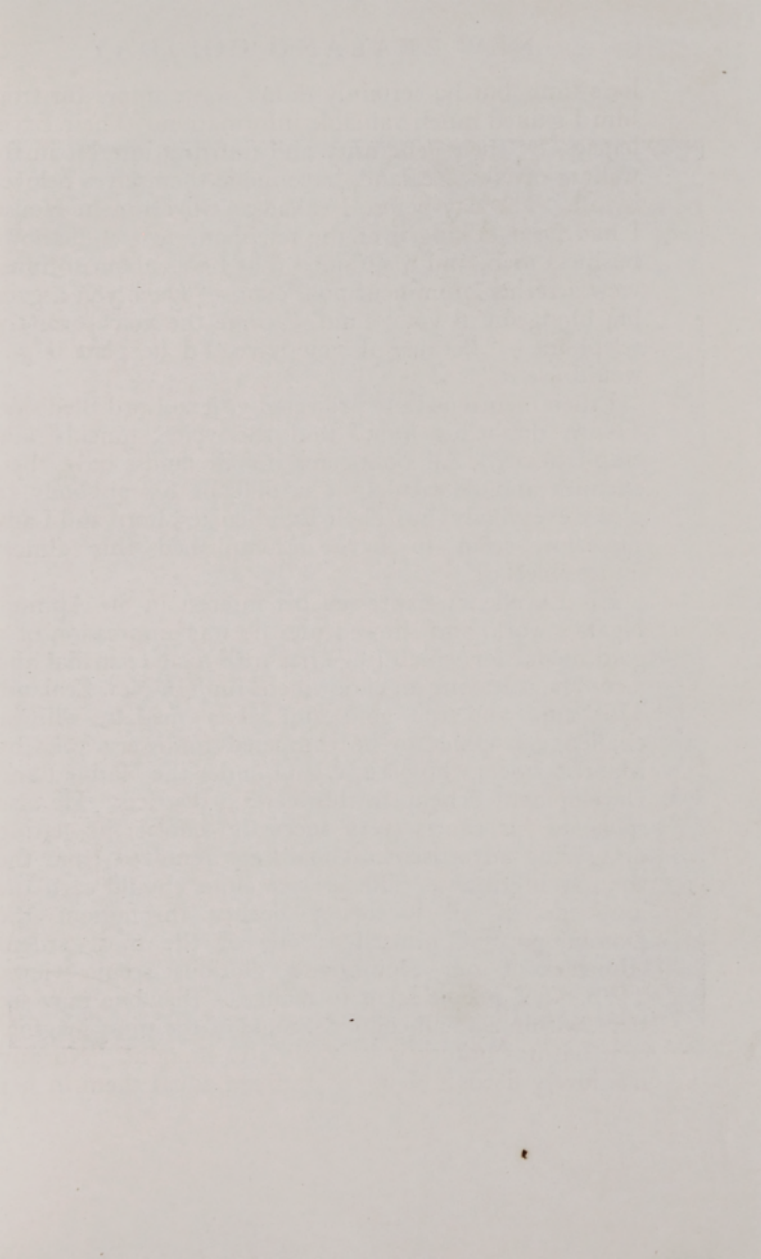
His Excellency, Lord Bledisloe, was good enough to make an appointment for me to call at Government House, though he rather naturally asked: "And how can the Governor-General assist you?" I replied that I didn't know, but that having been informed by our High Commissioner in London—Sir Thomas Wilford—that I should endeavour to see His Excellency, I was only doing what I was told. I may have wasted Lord Bledis-

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loe's time, but he certainly didn't waste mine; for from him I gained much valuable information. Their Excellencies, by their generosity and untiring interest in the welfare of New Zealand, have made themselves beloved by all. The day before I called at Government House, I had been talking over the telephone to a well-known business man, and mentioned that I was about to interview a rather prominent politician. "Have you a good big bludgeon in your hand?" came the voice over the telephone. "Because if you have, I'd be glad if you would use it."

I then mentioned my projected visit to Lord Bledisloe. "Now, don't hit *him*," said the voice, quickly and emphatically. All politicians, in all lands, have their enemies and detractors; it is difficult for anybody to please everybody; but Their Excellencies, Lord and Lady Bledisloe, seem to have accomplished this almost impossible task.

His Excellency expressed his interest in Sir Apirana Ngata's work, and showed me the wax impression of a gold medal for which (together with a silver medal and a cup) he is leaving an endowment fund in New Zealand. This cup, and the gold and silver medals, will be challenge trophies to be competed for every year by Maori farmers who occupy land under the Native Land Development Scheme within certain districts. He also spoke of his efforts (very successful efforts) in getting disfiguring advertisement hoardings removed from the country highways. This service alone should earn the gratitude of all lovers of beauty throughout the Dominion. He himself is one of the most ardent admirers of our Dominion's glorious scenic views. "What few people seem to realize is that one may see here, within a small compass, some of the most magnificent natural beauty it is possible to imagine. Norway has lovely fiords: New Zealand can equal them in her





(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

PEMBROKE PEAK AND THE LION, MILFORD SOUND

(To face p. 101.)

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glorious sounds—Milford and so on. Switzerland's Alps have their rivals here; in fact Franz Josef on the west coast is undoubtedly the finest glacier to be seen anywhere in the world. Yellowstone Park is the only thermal region approaching Rotorua in interest; and Fujiyama in Japan or Mayon in the Philippines the only mountains that challenge Egmont for wonder and beauty. In addition to this, New Zealand possesses some of the most marvellous lakes; and the forests—the tropical fern growth of the bush is, perhaps, unsurpassed."

High praise this! But Lord Bledisloe is a traveller, and speaks with authority.

Before leaving Wellington the Under-Secretary for Mines, Mr. Kimbell, sent for me.

"If you're writing a book on New Zealand," he said, "you've got to see something of the gold-mining activities."

I replied that there was nothing—except finding some gold myself—that I was more anxious to do. But I warned him that what I was engaged upon wasn't by any means an important, authoritative, book on the Dominion, but merely a simple record of an ordinary holiday. (After visiting the Maud Creek to see a miners' camp, and wading the "Maud" in gum-boots at least thirty times, I began to wonder whether it *was* a very ordinary holiday! However, I'm anticipating things as usual.)

I hope I shan't offend all the kind friends I have in the capital city when I confess that Wellington is the town I like least in New Zealand. On a still, sunshiny day it can look lovely. Unfortunately still days are the exception and not the rule. It is said that if in any part of the world you see a man ram his hat on more securely before turning a corner, you may be quite safe in assuming that he is a Wellingtonian.

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Nelson, when I reached the wharf on a lovely calm morning after the night's crossing of Cook Strait (yes, I must admit it was a perfectly smooth crossing), seemed a haven of rest. And it is a haven of rest. It has been known for years as "Sleepy Hollow," but where in the world would you find a more delightful hollow in which to sleep? Or in which to keep awake, for the matter of that? It is also known as "Sunny Nelson," and that perhaps is a better description than "Sleepy Hollow." I don't wonder that the Duchess of York on her Dominion tour decided, when she reached Nelson, that she needed a rest cure and must remain there for a week or so. I think I shall follow Her Royal Highness's example, and have some days in Nelson when I return. In fact I'd willingly take up my abode for ever in that dear little house belonging to the relative who entertained me there!

We had breakfast on an open porch overlooking the garden, where beyond a bronze-bright brook the willows screened us from the world. There was a high bank of sunflowers, like a streak of gold, bordering the brook (being in New Zealand I ought to call it a "creek," for every running stream that isn't a river is a creek). Masses of roses—red, pink, and yellow—on the terrace, with phlox, larkspurs, and lilies; and an enormous pink and purple fuchsia shaking its bells at us over the balustrade of the porch. The murmur of the little creek, the song of the birds, and the rasping chorus of the locusts gave us music for our meal.

After breakfast a friend with a car, and a hamper containing morning tea, within the car (I'm sorry in this diary of my tour to talk so much about food, but the "what'll you take" seems to bulk as largely in New Zealand as it did on board ship!), and off we went for a drive into the country. Past the cathedral set on a palm-planted hill—a hill which was once the site of a

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fortification built in 1843, and named Fort Arthur after Captain Arthur Wakefield, afterwards killed at Wairau—past the big buildings of Nelson College, where Lord Rutherford of Nelson—now one of the world's most famous scientists, and the most skilful experimenter living, but then merely the clever son of a poor Nelson settler—received his education; on past the beach and the golf-links, to the Waimea plains set in the circle of the dimpled, velvet-green hills. On the slopes of these hills early peas are grown for the Wellington market; on the flats are lovely apple orchards—the apples graded, packed, and shipped to Covent Garden. Hops and tobacco, too, are grown in Nelson; and on the wide and fertile stretch of country enclosed by the hills, and the farther tumbled mountains—snow-capped in winter—are set pleasant little villages. Wakefield, Brightwater, Richmond, Hope, Spring Grove—I love their names! Almost each village has its old-fashioned church, its modern open-air school, and sometimes a gabled cob-house set in a tree-shaded garden. Truly a land flowing with milk and honey—Nelson; though perhaps for milk one should read apples, and for honey, hops.

Through the town—which has never been disfigured with tram-lines—runs the lovely little tree-bordered Maitai River; and the Queen's Gardens, with tree-ferns leaning over the ponds to look at their own reflections, and the rose-gardens alight with blossom nearly all the year round, are a haven of quiet beauty. To the croquet club in the afternoon; on to the tennis-lawns, where some of the girls, declaring it was too hot to play, were off in their cars with bathing-suits to the beach. Bridge in the evening. What more does anyone want?

A morning tea-party under the trees in the garden next day. A learned Professor from the Cawthron Institute and his brilliant son (perhaps another Lord

Rutherford, who knows?) wandering up the creek, and coming to anchor in deck-chairs under the trees in our garden for a few minutes during the afternoon.

The Cawthron Institute is much too highly scientific for me to attempt to describe. I can't even venture on an opinion as to what it is! I understand that it is an endowed institute directing its main attention to research as it affects work on the land. That it exists for specialized research on such subjects as treatment of soil for agriculture, orchard pests, fungus growths, and it deals in most alarming words that I've never heard of before, and certainly couldn't spell if I had. At any rate it is quite famous, not only in Nelson, but throughout the world.

The Professor wasn't at all alarming. A kindly twinkle in his eyes proclaimed his sense of humour and his dry Yorkshire wit. He told us stories of his doctor daughter, who, stationed at a back-block hospital, was once roused in the dead of night by a horseman riding to her door.

"Doctor, my wife is very ill. We're fifteen miles out, and it's a bad road. There are two rivers to ford. Do you think you could manage to come and see her in the morning?"

"If your horse can carry us, I'll get up behind you and come now," replied the doctor.

There was another story, but though he told me it wasn't for publication, I'm venturing to repeat it. One day a cow wandered into the hospital grounds, and soon afterwards there was not only the cow, but a small new calf. The nurses rushed out with screens; then rushed back to the hospital. "Doctor, doctor, please, come quickly. There's a new patient here who's heard of your skill, and who has arrived to consult you. She's waiting outside." He didn't tell us what his daughter said to the nurses!

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We had to arise very early next day for our visit to the "gold-diggings." Our destination was the Maud Creek—eighty miles from Nelson—one of the small mining areas which the Under-Secretary of Mines, Mr. Kimbell, had advised me to see. Not very big diggings these, but all over New Zealand now the Government have set their unemployed to search for gold. As everyone knows, during the past seventy years immense quantities of gold have been exported from the Dominion. The approximate figures, I believe, are ninety-five million pounds worth: exported during 1859 to 1931.

The big gold rushes of the sixties and seventies throughout Central Otago and the west coast resulted in nearly thirty million pounds worth of gold being won. All this was alluvial gold—dug up by the miners with picks and shovels, or brought from the beds of the rivers by dredges. And although so much has already been taken out, geologists estimate that the gold deposits of the country have scarcely, so far, been scratched. Yet to win these big deposits from the hearts of the mountains, or the rocky beds of a hundred foaming rivers, might entail the spending of more money than the gold itself is worth. There are, however, many old areas, abandoned when gold fetched only three pounds, eleven shillings an ounce, which can now be worked productively with gold at nearly double the price. In addition to this, there is always the chance of another big gold strike in the Dominion. Within the past year two lads—Messrs. Bell and Kilgour, of Cromwell, Central Otago—both registered as unemployed, and drawing their fifteen shillings a week subsidy, have chanced on a lead which has already brought them in a great deal of money, and is likely to make them very rich men in the future.

We had a lovely day for our visit to the "Maud";

and our car bowled along the level roads, through orchards, hop-fields, raspberry gardens, and tobacco plantations, to the hills. From all the villages children were making their way to the open-air schools—the buildings designed so that they can be closed in winter—and again I was struck by the splendid physique and good looks of the rising generation. I've never before found occasion to brag about our beauty of face and form in the Dominion. An old dresser at the Theatre Royal, Bradford, once informed me when I was fishing for compliments—rather fancying myself in my make-up, and a stage frock designed by a famous London dressmaker: "Eh! You have a pleasant face. 'Tis better to be pleasant, nor pretty."

And that's perhaps what many of my generation in New Zealand have been!

But if the children all through New Zealand now fulfil the promise of their youth, they'll be both pleasant *and* pretty. More than pretty—splendidly handsome. There were girls too, in a car we passed, going apple-picking, and they looked as fresh and rosy as the apples they were about to gather and pack for the London market.

Our road led us up into the hills; not very interesting country this, for the native bush has been burnt off, and bare hillsides and blackened stumps are left. At Lake Rotoiti (not to be confused with lovely Lake Rotoiti near Rotorua in the North Island) we halted for our picnic lunch. Lake Rotoiti is much thought of as a camper's resort. I'll admit the air is fine and bracing, and the reflections of the surrounding mountain peaks upon the still water that morning were quite beautiful, but I didn't like the place. It is too shut in by the surrounding hills, and the dense forest of black birch surrounding it is depressing and sombre—at least it seemed so to me. Besides this, there are a number of hideous galvanized

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iron shacks built upon the shore; and the large flies which buzzed around us as we had our lunch were very obnoxious. Good-bye, Rotoiti! I know I've offended all your admirers, but as I'm not one of them I shan't worry if I never see you again.

The Buller River flows out of the lake. "Tons of gold" in this and in the Howard near by, so the supervisor of the "Maud" diggings informed us when we picked him up about ten miles farther on along the road; but he rather disappointingly added that no one would ever see that gold. Apparently the depth and power of these rushing torrents will guard it successfully for ever. An experienced miner, both in this region and round Hokitika on the west coast, he has a store of practical knowledge which is of immense value to these unemployed amateur gold-diggers—men who have followed all sorts of different callings, but now, during the depression, find themselves unable to make a livelihood at their own trade or professions.

Each gold-mining area allotted to the unemployed has a practical miner as supervisor. The men (if they are quite destitute) are provided with their tools—pick, shovel, pan, etc., and a tent—to be shared with a fellow-digger; given a claim and fifteen shillings a week for food; and set to work. If they find gold they repay the department for their equipment; and they must pay a tax on all gold won. When their weekly takings average over a certain sum they go off the Government pay-roll. Quite a number of them—all over the country—are now finding sufficient gold to keep themselves; and a still greater number are finding enough of the precious metal to add a few shillings a week to their subsidy.

We started on our walk up the "Maud" fortified by our good lunch at Rotoiti. We certainly needed fortification! The track led us first over rough paddocks; then to the bush at the edge of the stream; then through

the stream. Not once, but fifteen times at least had we to don gum-boots and wade knee-deep across the brawling, muddy creek. Balancing ourselves precariously on fallen tree-trunks, clambering over boulders, and pushing our way through ferns and undergrowth we went. Not exactly an easy stroll! At last I got tired of changing into gum-boots, and decided to walk through the water, shoes and stockings and all. A very unwise decision was this, I found! For on the opposite bank my shoes—neither very young nor very stalwart—showed signs of disintegration. I wondered how I was to get back the three miles to the car, along this rough bush track, if my footwear dropped to pieces. At the next ford I was not so proud. I meekly changed into the despised gum-boots.

The first claim we came upon was not altogether exciting or encouraging. To be quite candid, it was even a trifle disheartening. Here three men worked in a deep pit, up to their knees in water, uprooting great rocks and shovelling gravel and mud, while another man above was pumping hard, in an effort to keep the water in the shaft from gaining on them. These men had not reached "bottom." Until that is reached—the bottom to which the heavy gold has sunk—there is no chance of finding "colour." The depth of the bottom varies enormously. In some cases it is quite near the surface; in others, owing to the accumulation of silt and drift—"overlay" I think is the correct expression—it is most difficult to get at. Fifty feet of overlay is common enough in some cases, and this, of course, necessitates a deep, built-in shaft, and the expenditure of much capital. Then, of course, there is no certainty of obtaining gold even when you've reached bottom. So we couldn't help feeling a good deal of sympathy for these unfortunate workers who were toiling so strenuously at what might ultimately prove a fruitless task.

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Higher up the creek, however, our spirits rose. Here the men were not only "on bottom," but "on gold" as well. They showed it to us—the small nuggets and the fine gold—in old match-boxes, small bottles, and tins which had once contained tobacco. None of them gave us any hint as to the amount they were obtaining. That is information which the wise miner doesn't divulge. The Mines Department knows, of course; and our supervisor informed us that one claim had been averaging nearly £100 a week, and another of the claims we visited about £25 a week.

"But this is just Chinaman's digging," he remarked pityingly. "If I had to work like that to get the gold, I'd never go after another pennyweight."

Not having seen any other method of gold-mining save this, where the men shovelled all the gold-bearing wash—above "bottom"—into a long inclined trough flowing with water, we asked what other methods there might be. Apparently sluicing the wash, i.e. playing a strong-pressured stream of water on to the gold-bearing dirt and so getting rid of the debris, instead of shovelling debris and all into the tail-race, lightens the labour enormously. At the bottom of the wooden tail-race are set small slats of wood. These are the "ripples" which catch the gold, while the lighter stones and dirt and shingle flow off with the running water.

"Chinaman's" method or not, I don't pity any of those men who are "on gold" up the Maud Creek. It may be a hard life, but it's a man's life; and they're a splendid set of men. Quite a number of them have built themselves huts for the winter—the timber, axe-hewn from the big birch trees they've felled—and we were shown the interior of some of these shacks. Perhaps these were the picked ones we were shown; but at any rate they were marvellously clean and neat: the bunks at one end, the home-made table—legs of birch

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branches—and chairs at the other, near the fireplace. A real backwoodsman's camp!

I'll never forget that camp! Amongst the thick-growing birch trees and red, rough-timbered huts, one could see the blue smoke rising from camp-fires; smell the smoke and the fragrance of the newly cut red timber mingled; hear the ring of an axe on a tree-trunk across the creek, and the song of birds.

A few of the miners accompanied us down the creek for a mile or so, as we made our way back to the car. One of them—quite young, but looking the typical miner of the screen by reason of his beard—was very interested in the idea of my book, and offered, when I began to pull on my gum-boots, to save me the trouble.

"I'll carry you across," said he.

He was a hefty young man, but as I'm by way of being hefty also, I wasn't unkind enough to take him at his word. I said I thought I could manage to step across on the stones, but then discovered that one of them was under water. My friend—his name was Andy—wading beside me, stretched out his gum-booted foot and placed it on the submerged stone.

"Step on my foot," said he. I did so, and crossed dry shod. Queen Elizabeth with Sir Walter Raleigh wasn't in it!

"This must go in the book," said I (rather conceitedly I fear, but then one doesn't challenge comparison with Queen Elizabeth every day).

And someone immediately remarked: "If you can't have a finger in the pie, Andy, you'll anyway have a foot in the book."

Good luck to you, Andy, and to all your mates!

It was nearly midnight when we got back to Nelson. We were really appallingly tired, but rather pleased with ourselves for having accomplished the walk, with its thirty wadings of the "Maud," so successfully.

CHAPTER XII

SIGHT-SEEING BY LAND, BY WATER, AND BY AIR

FROM Nelson to Blenheim by service car, is a drive of about three and a half hours. Some parts of the road—over bushed ranges and through fertile valleys—are beautiful; and some—like other parts of almost all New Zealand roads—are depressing, and make one both angry and sad. The sight of the useless destruction of the native bush is always painful.

In the first settlement of such a densely wooded country as New Zealand, it was, of course, necessary to clear the forests, and so make the land available for the grazing of sheep and cattle. Felling the smaller trees and higher undergrowth; letting them dry through the hot summer; setting fire to the whole; and afterwards sowing the newly burnt hillsides with grass-seed, is the approved method of "bringing in" bushed country. But once the New Zealander got started with axe and torch, he apparently didn't know where to stop. He chopped and burnt wherever he could, quite regardless of the fact that a great deal of the land which he was denuding of its timber (and incidentally its beauty) would never be of use for anything else. Too steep and barren even for sheep country is much of the forest-land that has been burnt; and to-day there are hundreds of noble peaks lifting their bare heads high to the blue sky, while tumbled, blackened logs are strewn like a torn mantle from their shoulders to their feet. I wonder if these great decrowned monarchs are ever conscious

of a grim joy in taking their revenge? When fierce storms come and beat upon their naked sides, down in every muddy, swirling torrent come tumbling logs to the swollen river below. Higher and higher rises the water; and perhaps the monarchs laugh as the big tree-trunks hit the bridges, built by those same men who fired the hills, and sweep both piles and decking out to sea, like so much matchwood.

Anyhow, if the hills do smile triumphantly, I don't blame them! Though I'm rather glad that the bridges now are being built more solidly, and that in the future the mountains will have to try some other dodge for their removal.

It's no use crying over spilt milk! Far too much of our bush has been destroyed. Let us do our best to keep what we have left. Certainly a good deal is being accomplished now in reafforestation. Thirty miles of *pinus insignis* at Rotorua alone have been planted by the Government; private enterprise in Perpetual Forests Limited has planted nearly a hundred and fifty thousand acres of soft wood timber. But these trees, though of course useful commercially, and useful, too, in preventing the streaming water from pouring unchecked down the bare hillsides, will never take the place of all the lovely native forests that have been so wantonly destroyed.

There is one lovely scenic reserve along this Nelson-Blenheim road—the one by the bridge over Pelorus River.

Blenheim, situated on the richly fertile Marlborough Plains, is quite a pleasant little town; but Picton, some few miles away, chose the ideal spot for settling herself down. Here she is amongst the hills and purple peaks, with the blue waters of Queen Charlotte's Sound spread out at her feet.

I had a quiet, restful time in Blenheim staying with

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friends, and one lovely afternoon in a launch on Queen Charlotte's Sound. This, of course, was named by Captain Cook, who anchored here in 1770 in what is now known as Ship Cove.

Adjoining Queen Charlotte Sound is Pelorus Sound; and the inner sheltered shore-line of the two sounds extends in bays and estuaries for more than five hundred miles.

It is said that all the ships of the British Navy could safely anchor in the Marlborough Sounds, and each one remain ignorant of the presence of others.

The road from Blenheim to Picton passing close to the scene of the Wairau fight, where Te Rangihaeata and Rauparaha, leading their Maori followers, killed Captain Wakefield (a brother of Edward Gibbon Wakefield) in 1843. The graves of Captain Wakefield and his comrades who were slaughtered here (the engagement is sometimes alluded to as the "Wairau Massacre") are on the hillside overlooking the Picton road.

I am not very anxious to fill my book with accounts of massacres and the Maori troubles of the early days, for in almost all cases there were faults on both sides. I mention this fight, however, as a legend grew up concerning a Maori survivor of the encounter, and a famous fish; the only fish in the world which was protected by Act of Parliament—Pelorus Jack. Pelorus Jack wasn't a legend, he was real enough, though his story is perhaps the best "fish" story ever related. For nearly fifty years he—a large grey dolphin, about sixteen feet in length—was known to European settlers; and he had been known to the Maoris for a very long time before that. His remarkable habit it was to meet, each day, the steamers entering the French Pass from Pelorus Sound on the voyage from Picton to Nelson; to swim alongside the vessel's bows, plunging and gambolling from port to starboard, then, at a given point, to drop to deep water

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and disappear. I saw him myself years ago; as I was young and privileged in those days, I was invited up to the Captain's bridge to get a good view of our visitor's approach.

"We ought to sight him within the next two minutes," said the Captain; and almost as he spoke, the blur of a distant splash became visible in the blue sea about a mile ahead. The passengers—a great many armed with cameras—gathered in the bow of the vessel as Pelorus Jack came leaping through the water to meet us. It was a peculiarity of his that though he could be seen rolling and splashing through the water to meet the oncoming steamer, when he left it, he disappeared completely. One theory was that the fish had sense enough to keep clear of the propeller, and so dropped to deep water directly he reached the spot where he always abandoned the ship. He was the only one of his species ever known in these waters, and the Order in Council protecting him was made by the New Zealand Government after attempts had been made by enterprising tourists to shoot him and secure his carcass for exhibition. I understand that he passed away during the war. At any rate, he was never seen afterwards.

In early days the Maoris believed him to be the incarnation—if not the identical "ika," or fish itself—of the legendary dolphin called "Tuhirangi," which, according to tradition, led Kupe (the explorer) to the shores of New Zealand before the advent of the seven canoes. Many stories concerning him were told by the Maoris. The one I mentioned is connected with a slave—Irai, an old man of sixty—whom Rauparaha had in his canoe after the Wairau fight. A fierce storm swept down upon the Maoris as they left the mainland, and Rauparaha, deciding that the canoe must be lightened, ordered the slave Irai to be cast into the sea. In the

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picturesque language of the Maoris the incident is thus described:

“Irai, borne away from the war-canoe by the long heaving billows, betook him to his prayers. He called upon the god of the winds, god of the ocean, but most of all he called upon his ancestral sea-god Tuhirangi—he who piloted Kupe of old—to aid him in his exceeding peril. And the gods hearkened, for behold! a wondrous thing now befell. As the old man, so lonely in that great howling sea, with much labour swam slowly on, something touched his body from behind. He turned his head, and there swam Tuhirangi, the long greyish ‘ika’ with the powerful shark-like tail, the sea-god of which he had so often heard but which he had never seen. The creature gently sank, and rising beneath Irai it caught him upon its back; it bore him safely up and with ease, and it swam along with him towards the far-off shore. And when Irai felt dry land once more beneath his salt-sore feet, he murmured a ‘karakia’ of thanksgiving, for was it not the gods that had snatched him from the open jaws of the great deep?”

Whether Pelorus Jack is indeed to be credited with this humane action is a point that may be left to the individual judgment of the reader; but the Maoris were not alone in their respect for Pelorus Jack. He was regarded with great affection by all New Zealanders throughout the Dominion.

We left Blenheim in the pouring rain that morning, optimistically hoping that we might be favoured with fine weather later, and so get out in the launch. Our optimism was rewarded. The afternoon was one of brilliant sunshine, and Queen Charlotte’s Sound looked its loveliest. The deep blue water of the sound is sheltered from the wind by the bushed hills and farther

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ranges; the peaks and ridges of this broken terrain rising at times to an altitude of four thousand feet. This gives an infinite charm and variety to the scenery, and makes the situation of the fern-tree and bush-embowered holiday cottages, each set in its own bay above a golden bathing beach, much more picturesque. Our launch swung in close to the shore of these bays, with their little landing-jetties, their bright flower gardens, and the backing of bush. We were so near that we could hear the locusts rasping away in the thick tangle of the tree-ferns, and hear the sweetness of the tui's echoing note. The reflections, too, of the bushed hills on some of the quiet, sheltered, and mirror-like inlets were wonderful. I can't think why these sounds aren't overrun with tourists; or why Wellington people don't visit them more often. Both Queen Charlotte's Sound and Pelorus Sound are things of beauty.

There were two Australian girls with their mother on our launch. "I shall never stop talking about this!" exclaimed one girl; and her mother added: "I saw these sounds years ago, and I was determined that the girls would see them too!"

Lucky little Picton, nestling there so quietly amongst the hills, with always the blue water of the land-locked, lovely sound, the islands, and the distant peaks, before her!

As there is as yet no "Main Trunk" railway through the South Island of New Zealand, one must travel by service car south from Nelson or Blenheim. I was making my way to Christchurch, and so travelled along the east coast road, usually referred to as "the Kaikoura route." Of course if I hadn't been anxious to visit friends in Nelson and in Blenheim, "the ferry" from Wellington would have been a much simpler and more expeditious method of reaching Christchurch. Large and comfortable steamers ply each night between the

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two cities, the voyage being accomplished in exactly eleven hours.

I'd heard so much about the great beauty of the drive from Blenheim southwards that I must admit I was a trifle disappointed in it at first. The country through which we drove after leaving Blenheim is said to be fine pastoral land; but it was much parched by the dry summer, and appeared to me rather uninteresting. When, however, we reached the coast I understood why so many people had told me I ought to do this two hundred and twenty miles by car.

We had left Blenheim in misty rain. Before we came out beside the sea the clouds had broken; there was blue sky overhead, and sunshine round us. The surface, as well as the grading of the whole road from Blenheim to Christchurch, is excellent; and certainly the seascapes along the Kaikoura coast would be hard to beat. We were lucky in having this clear, bright morning on which to see them. The sunshine sparkled on the blue sea, and the waves foaming up on to the clean, sandy beaches; shone on the wet black rocks of the jutting headlands where the fringe of glistening brown kelp swung with the tides; was reflected from the green, glossy-leaved karaka trees—now decorated with clumps of orange-coloured berries—that overhung our road, and under which campers had pitched their tents; it (I'm still talking about the sunshine) had even thrown a long ray through the wide-flung door of a small brown school-house. The school-house was open, but empty! Where were the pupils?

The question was soon answered. In a small bay a little farther along the road, beside some flax bushes, and under the shade of a clump of ngaio trees, was "teacher's" car; and teacher herself was in the sea, teaching her ten or twelve small pupils to swim! Who wouldn't be a pupil in a little Government school "out-

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back " in New Zealand? Or who wouldn't be " teacher " in a case like this?

They all looked as though they were having a glorious time splashing about in the surf. I wished that I could have got out of the car and joined them.

There isn't a yard of this coast road which isn't beautiful; and it must be still more lovely when the great ramparts of the Kaikoura Range are topped with snow. The Kaikouras are a very rugged chain of mountains reaching an altitude of nearly ten thousand feet in the highest peak, the Maori name of which, being translated, means " Footsteps of the Rainbow."

This range shelters the little town upon the beach, and the many farms situated upon the terraces and grassy flats of the Peninsula—farms which are famous for cocksfoot grass-seed, wool, and cheese.

We stopped for lunch at one of the very excellent hotels in Kaikoura, where two of the passengers of our car had their luggage removed from the carrier. They were doing the journey south by easy stages, and would go on to Christchurch next day. They sat opposite to me at lunch, and I learned that they were comparatively recent arrivals in New Zealand, and had made their home in Tauranga.

" Have you been there? " they asked.

I replied that I had, but only for a few hours.

" But you ought to have stayed longer! " they exclaimed reproachfully; then, both together, they proceeded to expatiate on the charms of the little town.

" We travelled all over New Zealand before we decided to settle there."

Apparently they had found in Tauranga the ideal spot for the making of a new home. I understand that a great many people share their opinion, and Britishers, both from the East and from the Homeland, are arriving in rapidly increasing numbers to settle down and

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live out the rest of their lives in the vicinity of this delightfully situated little town.

Nelson is one of Tauranga's rivals in popularity with retired Civil Servants and Army officers. The young wife of an Indian Army officer told me in Nelson that they'd chosen that locality simply from one of our Government's leaflets.

"'Sunny Nelson' it was called," she said, "so we took a chance, and decided to come here."

Naturally I asked how they liked it.

"We simply love it!" she replied enthusiastically. "There are so many people of our own sort here. And we can get everything. First-class golf, sea-bathing, fishing—and then the climate's wonderful for the children, and we couldn't have found better schools for them anywhere. But then, of course, boys and girls come from all parts of New Zealand to the Nelson colleges, don't they?"

Apparently both Tauranga and Nelson settlers are satisfied that they have discovered for themselves *the* choicest spot in the whole Dominion in which to make a home. I have yet to visit the Bay of Islands. That district, I believe, is regarded by some of the newly-arriveds as *the* most desirable place of residence obtainable in any of the overseas Dominions!

After lunch at Kaikoura we continued our journey. For twelve miles the coast road runs within a few yards of the rocky, winding shore with its little half-moon beaches, and the black rocks of the headlands awash, and the brown kelp swinging. Our car passed under groves of ngaio and karaka trees; brushed by flax and toi-toi. On our left the wide, blue ocean—to our right the bushed ranges. A lovely drive! But when we struck inland again it was not so lovely. First the rolling hill country of sheep-stations, and later the wheat-growing plains. Before we stopped at Cheviot township

for afternoon tea our chief entertainment had been provided by the skill of our driver in collecting the empty mail-bags of station-owners, hung on posts (the mail-bags, not the station-owners) by the roadside. Our driver merely slowed down a trifle, leant out from the car, and snatched away the canvas mail-bag from its hook. Quite a good gymkhana exhibition! Very skilful he was at this mail-bag catching, and told us he seldom missed one, and always took them when travelling at a good pace. On his journey back in the morning his return of the filled bag is easier. He merely pitches each one out of the window at its owner's gate.

The Cheviot Estate was one of the first big sheep-stations purchased by the Government over thirty-three years ago, and divided up into small farms for closer settlement. These farms have apparently brought a good share of prosperity to their owners, but the country didn't offer much in the way of picturesque scenery. The wheaten straw, having been threshed, lay in heaps in the paddocks, ready to be burnt, for there is no way in which farmers can make use of it.

Nearing Kaiapoi—world-famous now for its wool rugs, blankets, and tweeds, but once the scene of bitter Maori tribal fighting—we passed scores and scores of men and girls from the Kaiapoi woollen mills, riding their bicycles homewards. I should think there are more bicycles per head in Christchurch and its environs than in any other district in the world!

We reached the Cathedral City about 5.30, and I was driven to Warwick House, one of the best known and most comfortable private hotels in New Zealand. The house is delightfully situated too, for it looks out over the trees and sward of Cranmer Square. It is said that in Christchurch English visitors might well believe themselves to be in one of their own "Cathedral Towns."

That was what the first settlers—the Canterbury

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Pilgrims, who came in 1850—intended, for they were staunch and selected Anglicans; men of good birth and education. They came with their families—nearly eight hundred of them altogether—in four ships, and landed at the port, now called Lyttelton. When they first viewed the new country from the hills that skirt the sea-board, they saw before them a bare expanse of plains—broken only by a few patches of timber—stretching from thirty to sixty miles to the foot of the dividing ranges. There was no sign of civilization save the solitary homestead of the Messrs. Deans, who had settled there some years before. In 1851 the Pilgrims set to work to build their city.

They named their streets, radiating from the cathedral, after Anglican bishoprics, and the squares after the English martyr bishops; they planted these squares, and Hagley Park, with English oaks; the borders of the Avon with limes and sycamores and silver birch—trees which might remind them of their Motherland. Round the grey stone halls of Christ's College and other buildings the growing ivy gives an air of age and dignity; but these first city fathers couldn't have been responsible for this, nor for the hundreds of willows trailing their leafy branches above the Avon—that sparkling, shining stream which meanders gently through the city streets. It is said that all these willows came from two parent trees at Akaroa, and these parent trees from slips of the willows bordering Napoleon's tomb at St. Helena.

If, however, those first sturdy, but dignified, colonists of eighty odd years ago could look down upon their city now, I think they might well feel proud of what it has become. I had an opportunity of looking down upon it on the morning after my arrival. Travelling in the service car with me on my journey south from Blenheim was Squadron Leader N. E. Chandler. We discovered

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that on one occasion at least, in the past, we had shared a war experience—the first big daylight London air-raid—though my share of it was merely that of a useless spectator, and his that of a very active participator. I happened then to be in a London omnibus journeying towards Marble Arch. A woman sitting opposite to me remarked cheerfully to the little girl beside her: “Look at all the aeroplanes.” We *all* looked at all the aeroplanes. We were quite pleased and interested. The idea that they were German aircraft, and not our own, never entered our heads. In another second, however, we knew. The guns began.

Well, Squadron Leader N. E. Chandler was up there at that moment above us attacking the enemy. Now, as Pilot Instructor to the Blenheim Aero Club, he was travelling to Christchurch to take delivery of a new machine. He talked of having met Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith a few weeks previously at New Plymouth, when the famous airman landed after his second great flight across the Tasman; and he was able to tell me also of the twenty aero clubs already in existence in different parts of New Zealand; of the Government subsidy given to each club for every pilot trained; and something in general concerning flying throughout the Dominion.

Next morning when I was taken out to the Wigram Aerodrome—the Air Force base for the South Island—I endeavoured to learn a little more. Here I was shown the British fighting machines; the Tom Tits for training, and the Puss-Moth for photographing, which is used now for Government aerial surveys; then Squadron Leader J. L. Findlay—son of the late Sir John Findlay—took me “up.”

From the air Christchurch looks more than ever like an English town, and the surrounding level plains more like the English countryside. But would an English

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Cathedral City have so fine a race-course as Riccarton? Perhaps it wouldn't! I saw the farms; the neatly gathered harvest stooks in ordered rows; Hagley Park, with its wealth of trees; the cathedral spire; and all the network of city streets, with only the shining streak of the tree-bordered Avon to break the regularity of the town's plan. Yet, much as I enjoyed my bird's-eye view of this city of one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants, it is better to see it from the earth. From the air one can't distinguish any of its real beauties: the stately arch of the War Memorial Bridge, the "Bridge of Remembrance," across the Avon; the stream itself with banks and islands where tree-ferns, flax, and cabbage trees, are set amongst oaks and limes and willows; the lovely homes whose gardens, rich in roses and all other English flowers, profusely blooming, run down to the margin of the shining water; and Scott's statue, which to me is the most impressive sight of all. This statue, designed by Lady Scott, shows the great explorer in his Arctic dress; and at night a great light floods it, so that the pure white figure is bathed in radiance. It was from Christchurch—or rather Lyttelton, the port of Christchurch—that the *Terra Nova* steamed away to the South Pole; and it was to Lyttelton that the ship returned with flags at half-mast two days after the tragic news of the death of Scott and his most gallant comrades had been made known to the world by cable from Oamaru.

In speaking of New Zealand cities—there are four main centres: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin—I must take it for granted that everyone is aware that they all have trams and telephones; railways and motor buses; electric light and power; water supply and so on as well as handsome libraries, art galleries, and public buildings. They are in all these respects like any other English cities. In fact I think perhaps the smaller towns in New Zealand are ahead of English

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towns of the same size in many ways. I'll venture to state that the telephone service throughout New Zealand is far more efficient, and used more extensively than English service! And in a good many other directions England might well learn a lesson from one of her youngest daughters.

(I warned you that I meant to brag! But I'm not really quite as conceited as I sound. At any rate I wasn't the New Zealander who, when first shown Westminster Abbey, remarked: "Is *that* Westminster Abbey? You should see our church at Eketahuna!")

Back from the aerodrome to lunch at Warwick House; a newspaper man to interview me; a frantic packing of my baggage after half a dozen different telephone calls from friends; into a taxi, and down to the railway station. I have to catch the four o'clock train to Little River on the Banks Peninsula. But I found the Peninsula so intensely interesting that I must give it a chapter all to itself!

CHAPTER XIII

BANKS PENINSULA AND THE FRENCH SETTLEMENT AT AKAROA

I HAD imagined in my ignorance that there wouldn't be much to see from Little River. I was merely going there to visit friends, and thought that during a quiet week-end I should get my diary written up to date. I'm always struggling to achieve this, and so far have always failed. I failed again at Little River. Though I did manage to get through a certain amount of writing, there was so much to see and do that I felt, at the end of my visit, I had collected far more material than I could ever make use of. A whole book could be written about the Peninsula; and that is rather a foolish thing to say, for a whole book has already been written. It is called "Tales of Banks Peninsula," by H. C. Jacobson, and is, to me, intensely interesting.

The history of the Peninsula begins very early in the nineteenth century. I don't know if Akaroa had been discovered, as a safe and splendid harbour for whalers, before Samuel Marsden landed from the brig *Active* to deliver the first sermon ever heard in New Zealand, on the beach at the Bay of Islands; or even before 1819 when he returned from New South Wales with his friends, the Kemps, and others, to establish a missionary station, and preach the Gospel to the heathen. But as there were traders and whalers (a good many of them more heathenish than the heathen) at this time visiting the Bay of Islands, and as the first sealing gang in New Zealand waters had been landed on Resolution Island in

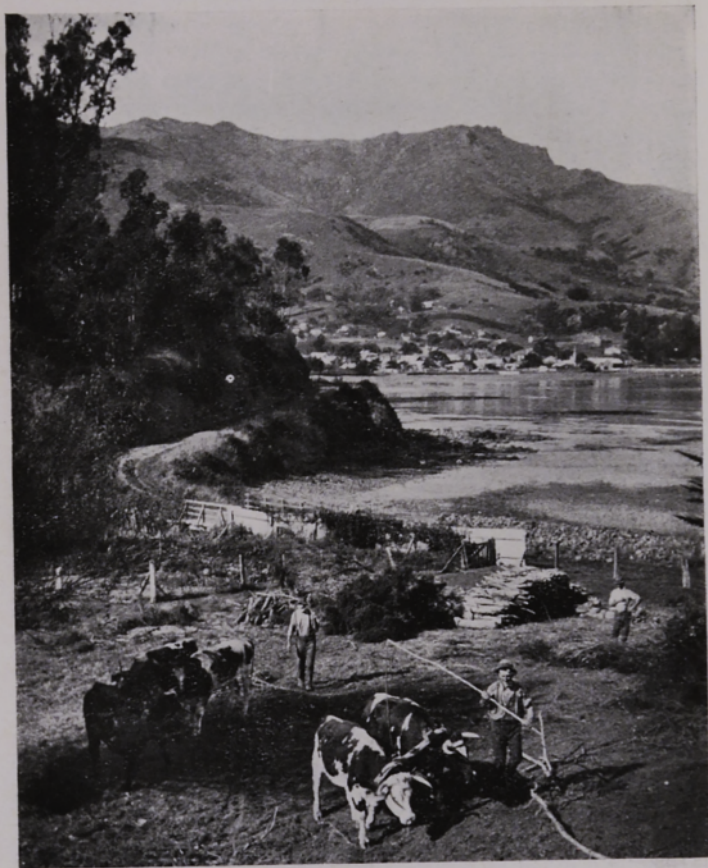
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Dusky Sound during the year 1792, I expect someone knew of Akaroa, where the Maoris had been settled for four hundred years.

At any rate, a certain George Hempleman, a German whaling captain—in his brig, the *Bee*—visited Akaroa in 1835, and announced that he had bought the Peninsula from the natives. A year or two later, however, another gentleman, this time a Frenchman, Captain L'Anglois, announced that *he* had purchased the Peninsula—or the greater part of it—from the Maoris; and he returned forthwith to France to form a company and bring out French emigrants to settle here. This company—the Nanto-Bordelaise Company—was duly formed, and eighty-two French pioneers set sail for the new French colony in the good ship *Comte de Paris*.

In the meantime, of course, the Treaty of Waitangi had been signed at the Bay of Islands, and British sovereignty proclaimed by Captain Hobson. In July, 1840, there were rumours that Commodore Lavaud of the French corvette *L'Aube* was about to proceed to Akaroa to hoist the French flag; and Governor Hobson, in an urgent letter to Captain Stanley of H.M.S. *Britomart*, instructed him to proceed forthwith to Akaroa and protect British interests. Or, as he put it in his letter: "To defeat the movements of any foreign ship of war that may be engaged in establishing a settlement in any part of the coast of New Zealand."

Whether there was a race down the coast between the two vessels is a disputed point. But as Governor Hobson in his letter goes on to say, "I have earnestly to request that you will at once depart with the utmost expedition," there seems little doubt that the *Britomart*, at any rate, was racing! With such expedition did Captain Stanley sail that he beat *L'Aube* by three days. And when the *Comte de Paris* entered the harbour with her emigrants, the English flag had been flying for exactly



(J. L. Buckland, Akaroa, photo

"AKAROA . . . TUCKED AWAY IN A FOLD OF THE HILLS"

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five days. The new arrivals were naturally rather surprised and disturbed at this, but they were told it meant nothing; that it was merely a piece of vainglory on the part of two or three Englishmen who happened to be whaling in the vicinity.

The French colonists came ashore; took up their five acres of land; planted the seeds and the vines which they had brought with them; and lived, for the first few months at any rate, under French laws administered by Commodore Lavaud. It is said they were quite unaware that they had, in reality, settled in an English colony. However, it didn't much matter to them, as the British Government, later, made good the titles to their grants of land, and they lost nothing. On the contrary, according to a son of one of them, they gained much. He was very emphatic on the subject; insisting that Fate had indeed been kind to the emigrants in planting them in a British colony instead of under French rule. He told me this as we sat on the verandah of his charming old house, gazing beyond the lawn and the flowers and tree-ferns of his garden to the blue waters of Akaroa Harbour, sparkling in the sun.

We had motored over the twenty miles from Little River to "morning tea" with Mr. Le Lievre and his daughters. I fell in love with darling little Akaroa at first sight. The town lies tucked away in a fold of the hills close to the shore; and one looks down a thousand feet from the Summit Road to see it amongst its orchards and its gardens far below. The day I saw it, the hills around it were sun-dried to a fawny hue; and the long arm of water stretching far inland from between two rocky headlands was of a jade-blue colour.

"You ought to see it in spring-time!" said my friends. "It's beautiful then."

I thought it beautiful now, and unlike any other New Zealand town that I have, so far, visited. It has atmo-

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sphere. Its narrow streets: Jolie Street, Lavaud Street (where a duel was once fought), Balguerie Street; its hawthorn hedges; the honeysuckle and roses of its winding lanes; its old-fashioned houses with their lawns and gardens stretching to the water's edge; its bays and beaches; the ancient gun of the *Britomart*, and the rusty iron try-pot used by some long-dead whaler, which one sees in the flower-bordered square beside the jetty; all give it an aura of romance.

Although it is within fifty-six miles of Christchurch, it is off the usual tourist route; and in spite of the fact that its inhabitants (little more than seven hundred) have the advantages of telephones, electric light, good municipal water supply, drainage, and public baths—all the necessities of civilized life in fact—no modern seaside bungalows, or ugly bathing shacks have yet appeared to mar the beauty of the little town. It seems to possess a life and individuality all its own. Did the couple I've mentioned, who chose to settle down in Tauranga, visit Akaroa first, I wonder? I don't think they could have done so, or they would have gone on farther.

I considered myself very lucky in being taken to call upon Mr. Le Lievre. He is probably the greatest authority now living on "old days" in Akaroa; for his father, Monsieur François Le Lievre, who died only thirty-one years ago at the age of ninety-four, was the oldest settler on the Peninsula. A personal friend of Victor Hugo's, he was associated with this famous man in the Parisian revolution of 1830. After a few years of seafaring adventure, Monsieur Le Lievre came on a French whaling ship to Akaroa; and he was with Captain L'Anglois when that gentleman purchased this part of the Peninsula. It was he (Monsieur Le Lievre) who brought the three slips of willows from Napoleon's grave at St. Helena. He watered and tended them carefully on the voyage out, and planted them at Akaroa.

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The stump of one of these trees I saw. It fell in 1910 after a lengthy life.

The present Mr. Le Lievre is, I believe, nearer eighty years of age than seventy. But so alert is he—both mentally and physically—that he might easily pass for a man in the late fifties. Born of a French father and mother (Monsieur François Le Lievre married the daughter of one of the *Comte de Paris's* settlers) he is in manner and appearance a Frenchman to his finger-tips. Vivacious, interesting, cultured, gallant, with a slight roll of the “r” in his speech, he might only, the week before, have arrived from Paris. Yet it was he who told me, as we drank our “morning tea” together, what a blessing it was for all concerned that the *Britomart* hoisted the British flag in Akaroa before *L'Aube* arrived.

“Is there a finer colonizing nation than the British?” he asked. (And, of course, I modestly replied that I didn't know of one.)

“Our people were infinitely better off under the British than they would have been if this had been a French colony. No nation in the world has such a sense of impartial justice—of toleration—as the British.”

He went on to speak of early days; of things his father had told him. “My father has often described to us the scene he witnessed when the purchase was made. The sum agreed upon with the Maoris was five hundred pounds. About ten pounds in cash was paid, and two whale-boats, with their bottoms knocked out, some old muskets, and a few French uniforms, satisfied the natives. To see some of the Maori women dancing about in military tunics and old shakos was very amusing, so my father said. He returned to France in 1838, but came out again on the *Comte de Paris* in 1840, and it was on the first section of five acres which he was then granted that he died in 1902.”

But when he died Monsieur François Le Lievre owned

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a great deal more property than this. He left to his one hundred and five descendants a fine estate. Not only was he the first of the original French settlers, he was the last also; and when he died the late Mr. H. C. Jacobson wrote:

“He was an excellent neighbour and a kind friend, and passed away beloved and respected by all who had the privilege of knowing him.”

His son, the present Mr. Le Lievre, has carried on the family tradition, and has done a very great deal for the country in which he was born. It was he who first introduced trotting horses into New Zealand from America; and to him is due the great improvement in light-harness horse breeding throughout the Dominion. I believe it was only a few months ago that he told one of his stable-boys to hand over an unruly horse to him. He didn't consider the horse a safe mount for the boy, so he rode the animal himself! I'm glad we can claim the present Mr. Le Lievre as a Britisher!

From the very pleasant “morning tea” party, we drove off round the shore to view the obelisk set up on Green Point in commemoration of the hoisting of the British flag in 1840.

The lettering on the stone is as follows:

“On this spot Captain Stanley, R.N., of H.M.S. *Britomart*, hoisted the British Flag and the Sovereignty of Great Britain was formally proclaimed. August 11th, 1840.”

Many years ago an old identity—Jimmy Robinson—gave a good description of the scene. He was about twenty-two years old at the time, and had left his whaling ship to marry a Maori girl on the Peninsula, where there was then only one other white man living.

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Jimmy Robinson, called upon by Captain Stanley to act as interpreter to the natives, writes as follows:

"I was given a bell and a small ensign to roll them up . . . and next morning there was a great muster on the sandy beach. Three or four of the ship's boats were ashore, and a party of them were sent with me to get a flag-staff. We had not far to look, as we soon found and cut down a kahikatea as straight as a die and forty feet long. A block and halyards were soon rigged on and a hole dug, and it was very soon up. After all the natives were squatted down, and the chiefs set out by themselves on an old ensign, the Captain commenced to read his errand here to the natives, all of which I had to interpret. . . . It all ended up with 'God Save the Queen,' after which the British Standard was run up and a discharge of musketry fired by the marines. A salute was also fired with the big guns on board, over which the natives got into a great state of excitement."

We could only endeavour to visualize the scene as we looked over the empty blue waters of the harbour that sunny morning. On the rocks at our feet, amongst the seaweed, the gulls cried, and the scent of the pine plantation on the hillside behind us was resinous and sweet. There was the smell of a wood-fire, too, from farther round the point where a large party had boiled their "billy" for luncheon. They were picnicking, and the children bathing. They knew my friends, and asked us to join them; but we'd brought our own lunch, and had it up in the domain, beside the block-house. This relic of those early days of settlement fascinated me. It is built of thick, axe-hewn timber with loop-holes for the muskets; but though erected as a protection for the pioneers in case of attack by Maoris, I understand it was never actually used. For the Maoris on Banks Penin-

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sula were always perfectly friendly to the whites; and they were most eager to adopt the Pakeha customs. So much so, in fact, that in 1850, when Archdeacons Paul and Mathias paid a visit to Akaroa for wholesale Maori marriage and christening, it is said:

“Some of the ladies left long strings of their children outside the building whilst they went in to be married.”

We had time to see the little French cemetery up on the hillside. This is no longer used, for though such names as French Farm, Le Bon's Bay, Duvauchelle's, persist in Akaroa, the descendants of those first French settlers are good New Zealanders now, and so, of course, good Britishers.

To most New Zealanders of to-day, the pioneering age is merely history—which some of us have read, and some have not. Yet there are times in up-country regions, even now, when conditions akin to those the early settlers knew, must be faced. Rivers rise, bridges are washed away. A doctor is needed in a hurry. During my stay in Akaroa I learnt of one such case. We'd picnicked at Le Bon's Bay earlier in the day, and—the men having gone off to look at some sheep—we two females decided to have tea in the shade of a grove of old walnut trees close by the creeper-draped ruined water-wheel of one of the first saw-mills ever erected in New Zealand. We wanted boiling water to make our tea. There was a house near by.

“I don't know who lives there,” said my friend. “But no one ever minds being asked for boiling water.”

She went in, and I waited in the shade until she returned with the steaming tea-pot. Then, as we were drinking our tea, out from the house came a pretty girl of fourteen, who wanted autographs, and who stayed to talk to us. She confessed, rather shyly, that she wished

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to be a writer. Admitted, still more shyly, that she'd won a prize at school for verse; and, urged on by me, ran back to the house to fetch her poem. She had already told us her name, and that she and her sister were staying here with an aunt. During her absence my friend remarked: "It's quite interesting to me—meeting that child. I know who she is now. Her mother's dead—died some years after the little girl was born—though she might have died then if it hadn't been for . . ." (she mentioned her husband's name).

Of course I asked for the story, and got it before the child came back. Fourteen years ago they'd had an exceptionally bad winter on the Peninsula; steady rain for a fortnight, and some snow. Lake Forsyth, along which runs the road and the railway-line to Christchurch, had risen, and no trains could get through. The road, too, was under water, and unsafe. Then about two o'clock on a wild and bitter morning, my friend and her husband were roused from sleep. A horseman riding down from one of the hill farms had come to seek help for a woman. "Her husband's away. She hasn't got a nurse. It's serious. I've left a neighbour with her, but can you lend me a horse for the doctor? I'm off to fetch him." The only doctor then available lived beyond Lake Forsyth. But my friend's husband didn't lend the horse. A motor would be quicker. So he got out his car instead, and went along for the doctor 'across the dangerous, flooded road. It was just touch and go that they got through safely, but they did; and up to the farm in time to save the mother and her baby girl.

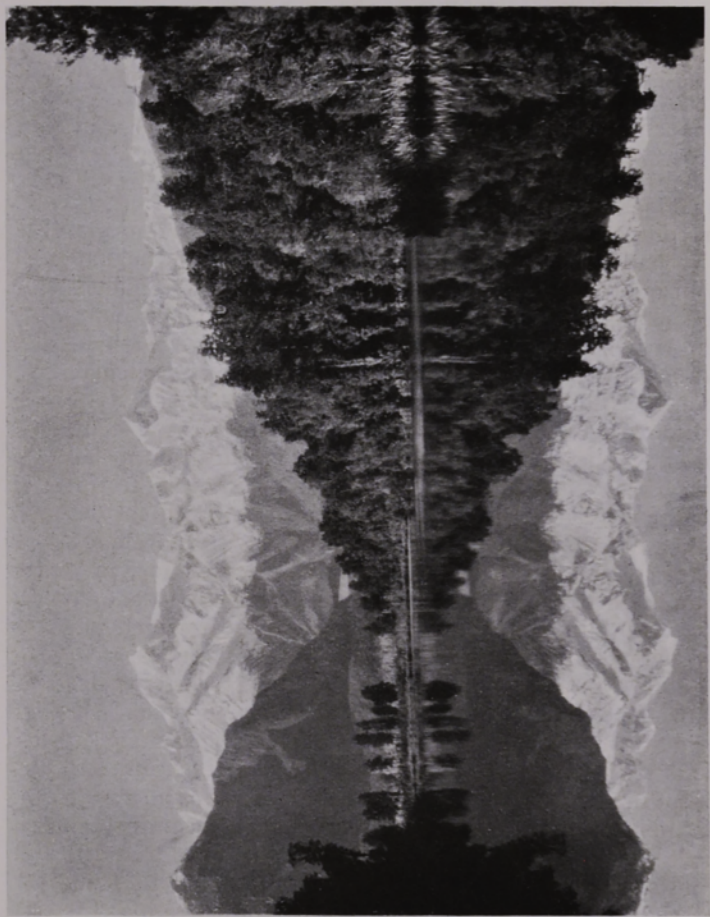
It was like a tale of the old pioneering days as my friend told it: the race through the flooded waters in the darkness, and the blinding rain; the doctor's remark when safely through that he wished at "Guy's," they could see him now; the horrid skidding drive up the

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steep road to the farm. And as my friend's recital ended, the baby girl—now fourteen years old—advanced towards us looking extremely diffident and self-conscious as she extended a written sheet for my inspection.

I can't claim to be any judge of verse, but I thought her little prize-winning poem showed great promise. Is she to be one of New Zealand's future poets? Perhaps she is. I hope so, for she seemed a charming, unspoilt child, and the story of her entrance on to this world's stage had invested her, to me, with some romance.

When I left the Peninsula I didn't say "good-bye"; I felt that the least I could do was to pay Akaroa the compliment of speaking in French. Some day I hope to see again both my old friends and my new ones on the Peninsula; so I trust it isn't a last farewell I bid you, Akaroa—dear little town—but only "*Au Revoir.*"



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.

MOUNT COOK AND MOUNT TASMAN FROM THE WEST COAST

(To face p. 135,

CHAPTER XIV

SUMMER IN THE SOUTHERN ALPS

I'M writing this actually up on the Tasman Glacier (or at least on one of its tributaries, the Ball Glacier), and in spite of the snow lying above, below, and around me, I've had to move my chair into the shade of the Ball Hut in order to keep cool. It is a perfect day. A cloudless sky, and the crest of Mount Cook behind us dazzlingly white against the blue. Across the Tasman Valley are craggy peaks, precipitous, grey, and rugged, but it is higher up that Mount De La Beche, the Minarets, Tasman, and the Silver Horn, form a chain of snowy peaks almost unbelievably beautiful on a day like this. Near at hand, a bluff to the right is restful to the eyes, for it is covered thickly with green shrubs, and grass, and alpine plants. Complete with snow-boots, goggles, and alpenstock, I'm trying to pretend I'm a mountaineer. The only mountaineering I've done so far is to climb up to the hut from the car which has brought us here, fourteen miles from the Hermitage.

After lunch we shall set off for the Hochstetter Ice Falls—the falls which help to feed the Tasman, the largest glacier of temperate zones outside the Himalayas. This river of ice is twenty miles long; a thousand feet deep; in some parts nearly two miles wide; and it travels at the rate of eight inches a day. This morning there isn't a breath of wind, and there is no sound save the constant murmur of the river running from the foot of the glacier, a fly buzzing by in the sunshine, the occasional scream of a flying kea, and the voices behind me in the hut.

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The kea is the Alpine parrot, and I was taught in my infancy that a kea's chief occupation was sitting on a sheep's back, pecking through the wool and hide, and eventually making a good meal from the unfortunate animal's kidneys. To-day I'm told that the kea is not always engaged in this unpleasant fashion. He has his merrier moments. An enterprising kea, I believe, endeavoured to run away with the Hon. L. C. M. S. Amery's boots during his visit to the Southern Alps. This was, of course, one way of showing the dislike of the whole species to tourists: Members of the British Cabinet not excepted. Another ruse adopted by the birds is to collect stones and rattle them down the tin roof of Ball Hut, when there are many tired tourists endeavouring to sleep after hard climbing or winter sports. My informant goes on to tell me that the kea is a much-maligned bird, and though mischievous, is not by any means the bad character he is believed to be.

Our New Zealand meteorological experts—or perhaps it was the Alps themselves—must have decided that as I'm writing a book on the Dominion I must be specially considered in the matter of sunshine. For the past month it has rained almost incessantly, and blown incessantly too, up here at the Hermitage; yet, though I left Christchurch yesterday at 8.30 in a drizzling misty rain, it cleared as we passed over the well-farmed and cultivated Canterbury Plains, and before we reached Ashburton the sky was blue and cloudless. It was in the country west and south of Ashburton—on the upper reaches of the wild Alpine river, the Rangitata—that Samuel Butler wrote "Erewhon." The sheep country there was named "Mesopotamia" by Butler, who in "Erewhon" described the rugged grandeur of the Alps. I understand that Butler's original old cob-built home-
stead has only lately been destroyed.

At Timaru, a hundred miles south of Christchurch,

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I was to leave the train, and, after an hour for lunch, take the service car for the further hundred and thirty-two mile run up to the Hermitage Hotel, Mount Cook.

Timaru is a charming coastal town with a wide sweep of sunlit beach, where, from the train, we could see bathers enjoying themselves in the surf. A kind friend met me at the railway station, whisked me off in her car for lunch at her own home, and then motored me into town again to the office of the Mount Cook Tourist Co., from which I was due to start at 12.30. There were ten other passengers in the service car besides myself. One couldn't help speculating as to who and what they might be. That's less than twenty-four hours ago. Most of them are classified and pigeon-holed now: an Australian husband and wife touring New Zealand; a pretty little waitress from the Hermitage returning after a month's holiday (and lucky to have missed the atrocious weather here); two or three English tourists, male and female, and an intrepid English woman mountaineer, who with a man friend (also a well-known member of the English Alpine club) and a guide, was on the way back to the Hermitage to make a second attempt to climb Mount Tasman.

The first attempt of this party—started from Franz Josef on the west coast a fortnight ago—very nearly ended in disaster. They were marooned in one of the mountain huts—caught in a dreadful blizzard—for eight days. Tasman has only been scaled five times. The party are at the Hermitage now, preparing for a renewed offensive against the mountain. From the hut behind me at this moment I hear someone say: "They're just coming down off Graham's Saddle now. You can pick them up with the glasses."

The speaker is referring to another famous member of the English Ladies' Alpine Club, who, with her party, is descending the Grand Saddle leading over from Franz

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Josef on the west coast. These women climbers apparently spend their lives in different parts of the world—in Switzerland, Canada, New Zealand—scaling mountains. I think our five-mile walk this afternoon up the glacier will be about as much mountaineering as I shall do in my lifetime!

Lunch will be ready very soon, and I haven't yet finished with our six-hour drive up yesterday. Though the train runs for forty miles from Timaru out to the railhead at Fairlie, it is easier and simpler to traverse the whole distance by car. The road follows the railway-line through the plains, and one might almost believe—if it weren't for the wire fences in place of hedges, and the wooden-built verandahed homesteads of the farms—that this is the English countryside, with its haystacks, neatly stooked wheat, herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, and shady clumps of trees. But after Fairlie one isn't reminded of England, or of any other country, again. This is New Zealand, and, to me, uniquely beautiful. The road winds gently upwards into the grassed hills, with streams as bright and clear as crystal dancing down over the brown rocks. Then comes Burke's Pass, with a stone inscribed in memory of "Michael John Burke, a graduate of Dublin University," who first "entered this Pass" in 1855.

It was to this wide, but then unknown, hinterland that MacKenzie—a noted sheep-stealer—brought his stolen flocks. In 1855 he was pursued by the manager of "The Levels" station, and caught with a thousand stolen sheep in his possession. How many mobs he had taken by this secret passage in the hills, before being apprehended, no one knows.

Beyond Burke's Pass we run into wide stretches of the bronze-green tussock country, with the horizon bounded by a chain of distant mountains—blue, snow-capped. Suddenly a turn in the road reveals Lake Tekapo.

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I don't think I've ever seen anything more beautiful than the colour of Lake Tekapo in the still warm sunshine of this glorious day. We halted at the hotel for afternoon tea, and I carried my cup with me beyond the verandah to the garden. Standing by the stone wall, topped by blossoming pink roses, I looked out over a small shrubbed promontory; beyond a willow, showing the faint yellow of the turning leaf, and two poplars; across the still water—neither blue nor green but a soft, tender shade impossible to describe—to the pale fuchsia colour of the farther shore. The high hills backing those slopes had garlanded themselves with a little scarf of cloud as white and soft as swansdown; and down the lake, miles and miles away were the far peaks of the mountains purely outlined and serenely blue under their canopy of snow. We couldn't stay here longer than the allotted fifteen minutes for afternoon tea, but that fifteen minutes had given me more than refreshment for the body. I shall never forget my first glimpse of Lake Tekapo.

On again over the tufted tussock-grassed uplands, with the sunlight bathing in radiance the grey rocks of the roadside and the wide, sheep-dotted paddocks; past scattered farms in plantations of fir and laurel trees; the driver halting at each gate to hand out to a solitary waiting figure a mail-bag, paper, or parcel from town; up through Simon's Pass. Another wide-opened panorama here that almost takes one's breath away—the sudden view of the distant mountains that the low foothills have hidden from us.

"You'll see Mount Cook in a minute now," says the woman Alpinist; and suddenly I see the peak. We had just passed through a mob of sheep with three drovers and their dogs, when in a gap between two gently swelling uplands, bronzed with the tussock grass, appeared the white gabled summits—Cook and Tasman—calmly

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and magnificently outlined against the blue of the sky. In another few moments we get a full view of the Alpine Chain as we swing round and come upon Lake Pukaki, with Cook dominating the valley at the head of the lake.

In the clear atmosphere it seems as though we might reach the foot of the mountain in ten minutes or so, but we have yet to travel over twenty miles round the lake. And this drive in the evening light is beautiful! No opal ever held such softly shaded colours as Pukaki now. Looking back, one sees the whole of the surrounding shores reflected clearly in the still water—the fore-shore bronze, the farther range behind us a pure mauve—and nearer to the Hermitage, where the lake ends in the wide marshy stretch through which the Tasman River from the glacier flows; amongst the bright green raupo reeds are scattered sheets of water, like fragments of a broken mirror, reflecting clearly, mountain peaks—the snow, rose-tinted in the sunset—blue sky, bushed gullies, and grey, bare crags.

Far away now we see the red-roofed Hermitage. I feel almost as though I were the victim of enchantment, or deluded by some mirage. In the wilderness of this lost, lonely valley, to come upon a full-grown and exceedingly comfortable hotel seems somehow rather incredible.

The doors of the dancing lounge, brightly lighted with many electric lamps, thrown open to welcome us—the neatly liveried porters waiting to receive our baggage—they can't be real! They are. So are the excellent cocktails which the management insists upon our accepting (if we care for cocktails—I do!) before the excellent dinner. But real, too, are the mountains. From my bedroom window I look out on the left to the heights of snow-covered Sefton, with the Stocking Glacier, and the Huddleston, the mountain's two ice rivers slowly moving down their deep ravines; and

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straight ahead, Mount Cook rises sheer for eight thousand feet above me from the Hooker Valley. There is no moon on this first night, but under the brilliantly starlit sky I can see the white loom of the peaks.

I see them again at sunrise—flushed to a pale rose. There is no sound in all the valley save the far, sad call of the weka. Then, like distant thunder, or the boom of giant artillery, comes the sound of the avalanche. On Sefton, a wall of ice four hundred feet high has pushed over its precipice and crashed down far below.

Being as incurable an egoist as Mr. Pepys—but alas, without his gift as a diarist—I like people to know precisely what is happening at the exact moment when I write. That being so, I must confess that not all of what I've just written was penned outside the Ball Hut. I began it there, but lunch interrupted me. Directly after lunch we started on our walk. There were only two of us, with a guide—ice-axe over his shoulder—leading the way.

Before getting on to the ice of the Hochstetter, we had to traverse the moraine of the Ball Glacier. From a little distance the moraine looks like particularly dusty slabs of gargantuan and broken chocolate cream. The streaked ice face shows wherever a crevasse has formed by the movement of the whole moraine, which travels downwards at the rate of eighteen inches a day.

Walking over the moraine is very hard going, for it is a succession of precipitous slopes and valleys made up of large and smaller broken rock. The ice, too, is only an inch or so below the rock surface; and this renders the loose rubble very slippery. Owing to the movement of the moraine, and the formation of crevasses, the track must be continually changed. Our guide used his axe on more than one occasion to cut steps in the solid ice below the shifting stones. It was terribly hot, both in

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the depths of the moraine and climbing the steep hillsides, but once we were out on the ice of the Hochstetter Glacier, walking was perfectly easy. We were obliged now to don our coloured glasses, for on a day of brilliant sunshine such as this, the glare of the glistening ice, and the snowy peaks towering above us, would soon induce snow-blindness. Our guide, however, allowed us to lift our glasses occasionally to see the wonderful colouring of the crevasses in the billowing ice-waves, where, far below, the clear water was plunging from side to side, cutting a path through the glacier downwards to the river and the lake. We were able, too, to step inside some lovely grottoes—all shades of blue and green—and rest for a moment out of the heat of the sun.

On a big rock, from which we could plainly see the pinnacles and spires of the Hochstetter Ice Falls, we rested before turning back to the hut. The air is so clear that one is quite unable to judge distances. I thought the falls were about a quarter of a mile away, and that they would probably be about a hundred yards across. I was amazed when I was told that they were still a mile and a half distant; that the ice cascade was a mile in width; and that the pinnacles were two hundred feet high! No one may venture on the falls themselves, for the great spires of ice are continually breaking off and crashing down, and death to the venturer upon this frozen Niagara would be almost a certainty. The colours held within these frozen stalagmites are very beautiful. But the whole scene—the dazzling whiteness of the peaks where the snow seems smoothed off as with a gigantic palette knife—standing out from a stainless blue sky, cannot be described. The only sound in all this frozen world of pure and lovely whiteness under the arch of sky was the rumble of a distant avalanche.

Before we left the Hermitage we had a little taste of

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what bad weather there can be. It was a wild and stormy night; and a wild and stormy morning when we got into the car at 7.30 a.m. for our eight-hour drive to Pembroke. The rain beat on the windscreen as we splashed through the water-courses along the Tasman Valley road; the nearer tussock-covered hills were like drenched velvet; while high on the mountain peaks, heavy snow was falling. It wouldn't be quite so pleasant up at the Ball Hut to-day! However, by the time we left Lake Pukaki behind us—Pukaki to-day, with storm-driven waves foaming up on the shore—the rain had ceased, the sun shone, and big fair-weather clouds sailed overhead across the blue sky. There was a strong wind certainly, but in the closed car we didn't feel it. Across the plains—the Ohau River suddenly showing under Benmore Hill, like a streak of brilliant blue enamel, an almost startling blue—and up into the Lindis Pass. Here there is little variety of scenery. The road rises gradually between treeless tussock hills until, over the saddle of the range, the steep descent shows us how high we've climbed.

On, following the course of the Lindis River into the Gorge. Now the rocky crags are bare; even the tussock grass can find no foothold here on the grim, desert-like mica-schist. But beside the stream, willows and poplars grow, and under a willow tree near a tunnel in the river bank, tents are pitched. Picks and shovels lie beside the tunnel. Again the search for gold! Our driver has a letter and a paper to deliver to the camp. He hails a man, who crosses to us, his wading gum-boots wet and shining in the sun as the clear water flows away from knee and thigh.

Passing out of the gorge, we come to a halt at what looks like a tiny whitewashed, stone farm-house. I am rather surprised to learn that this is where we lunch.

"And they want you to get it as quickly as you can,

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because they've got the English Public School boys—about forty of them—coming through from Queens-town shortly," remarked the driver of a car drawn up outside the small, one-storied building.

These Dominion tours of boys drawn from the different Public Schools of England have been organized by Colonel Charteris. Well-known residents throughout New Zealand offer the lads hospitality, and thus the expense of travel is greatly minimized.

In the low-ceilinged front room—bare but clean—we sat down to lunch. A very good lunch, well cooked and served; but we hadn't progressed very far with our meal when the first car-loads of "boys" arrived. Some of them were forced to stoop as they entered the doorway, and this advance guard of the party almost filled the room. I had already met two of these boys in Wellington at one of the loveliest homes in the Dominion, where they had been entertained by a hostess as charming and attractive as her home. I wondered how the contrasts of New Zealand struck them!

"Getting tired of it yet?" I asked one of my acquaintances.

"Rather not," he answered emphatically. But the boy who sat next to me at the table appeared to be a trifle bored.

"What's the scenery like farther on?" asked an Australian tourist travelling in our car. "Is it all bare hills like this?"

(He hadn't yet, apparently, found anything in New Zealand to beat Australia.)

"Just about the same," answered the young man languidly.

"That's nice!" said the Australian, laughing sardonically.

"Oh, lovely!" replied the other.

"But surely it's better before we get to Pembroke?"



NO PHOTOGRAPH CAN DO JUSTICE TO LOVELY WANAKA

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"Oh, yes, it's rather pretty round Lake Wanaka, and in Queenstown."

Rather pretty! What a phrase to use for scenery unrivalled in magnificence and beauty. Yes, unrivalled. I don't care who hears me say that. If anyone can mention other beauty spots on this terrestrial globe which in their grandeur and loveliness surpass these places, I'd be delighted to hear about them, and still more delighted to see them; but I don't think I shall. I'm told that the lakes of Te Anau and Manapouri are still more wonderful. It is hard to believe that. His Excellency, Lord Bledisloe, hasn't yet visited this region. I believe when he does so, he won't say that New Zealand possesses "some of the most marvellous lakes in the world," but "*the*" most marvellous lakes.

I warned my readers that I should brag about my country. Now, I'm doing it with a vengeance! But, after all, I didn't make the lakes—lovely Wanaka and Hawea; wonderful Wakatipu. The great glaciers, millions of years ago, coming down from the Alps, formed these basins of brilliant, *brilliant*, blue water; and the rushing torrents of the jade-green rivers; the warm sunshine brought to life the shining flax, with its high black seed-pods; the black birch forest; the tufted cabbage trees and the feathery toi-toi; and for the two hundred square miles of the valley round Wanaka and Hawea, I'm glad to say the hand of man, with torch and axe, hasn't desecrated the natural beauty.

Sometimes when travelling in New Zealand I've felt like quoting the lines of a well-known hymn:

*"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."*

I shouldn't be at all surprised if some of the women of the early days didn't lend a hand with the chopping and burning. Poor dears, they had a pretty hard time

of it, and it isn't the pioneers of the country—the brave and valiant ones, both men and women—I'm abusing now, but those who came after, and who wantonly destroyed and disfigured the landscape. But man hasn't been vile at Wanaka. Far from it. The tall spires of planted poplars, the hawthorn hedges, the golden fields of grain, don't destroy—they enhance the beauty. I shall never forget my first view of the Clutha Valley.

Our car had left the Lindis River and had ascended a low range of hills, when all at once, at a turn in the road, we looked forward over a series of plateaux—all shades of bronze and fuchsia red—along the winding river-bed, to the distant semi-circle of the snow-capped Alps. Poplars lifted their green spires against the pure blue of the mountains; two great humped rocks—like crouching lions—crowned the highest plateau of the river. The straight lines of the plateaux—formed by gigantic torrents thousands of years ago—the poplar spires rising at right-angles, and the blue Alps, serene, snow-capped, behind them, gave me suddenly a sensation of peace. I can't describe the feeling—which I suppose is the satisfaction of one's sense of form—in any other fashion.

Against the intense blue of the lake, the cropped stubble of a barley field glowed a deep orange, and the Clutha between its high white banks was tumbling, liquid jade. Colour—almost dazzling in its intensity—and beauty of contour. You have them both at Wanaka. And over all, the radiance of the clear, bright atmosphere. But in these mountains and the nearer hills, the lights and shades are always changing. From blue to a pale mauve, and then again to a deeper amethyst. I don't think anyone could describe Wanaka and Hawea. An artist might take up his abode at that excellent hotel by the lake-side, and spend his life in painting, yet never have one picture like the other. There are a million aspects from which Wanaka and Hawea may be viewed.

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They spread royal blue carpets, broidered with wooded islands, and laced with bays, for miles and miles, to the feet of the great Alps.

Cathedral domed "Aspiring" looks down ten thousand feet to mirror her snows and glaciers in the still waters of Wanaka. The great white ice-field of "Avalanche's" summit is mirrored there as well.

My bedroom at Wanaka Hotel opened out on to a balcony facing the lake. I woke at dawn. Across the road below, beyond a patch of brambles and of grass, between three poplars and some willow trees, I saw the water and the mountains. The sun had touched the peaks; the snow was like the petals of a rose; but all the fissured sides—the spurs and ridges—were bathed, too, in a soft amethyst glow.

Pembroke is only a village—that is its charm. But one hasn't to put up with the inconvenience of the "village inn" here. A very up-to-date hotel is the "Wanaka," with electric light, telephone, hot-water service, and situated in an absolutely perfect spot beside the lake. Deer-stalkers and fishermen know it well. Lord and Lady Latymer, with their daughter, and a guide, accompanied by the necessary pack-horses and camp equipment, set off that morning I was there, for a two months' deer-stalking expedition which would probably take them through the Haast Pass to the west coast. With the exception of the Otira Gorge, a hundred and fifty miles farther north, this is the one negotiable route for horsemen through the Alps. It takes about four days from Wanaka to the coast; but when the motor road over the Haast Pass is completed (as it must be at some future date) the journey will be reckoned in hours instead of days. For four hundred years the Maoris from Banks Peninsula used this track on their pilgrimages to obtain the coveted greenstone—used both for battle-axes, for wood-carving tools, and for

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personal adornment. Greenstone is the hardest of all known stones, and can be sharpened to a fine edge. It is a species of jade, and found only in New Zealand; and in New Zealand, only on a small portion of the west coast.

At Wanaka there used to be a Maori Pa, which in days gone by was the stopping-place of the tribe before the trek across the mountains. It is a hundred years since Maoris used this track: white men brought them more effective tools than greenstone axes with which to slaughter one another!

The site of the old Pa is situated in a very fertile valley on the lake-side, past Glendhu Bay; and often, even now, old greenstone tools and mere-meres (battle-axes) are turned up here by the plough. I don't know what the actual coast-line of Wanaka is, but the body of the lake is thirty-five miles long. And in this valley some of the best barley in the country is grown. A pedigree seed farm has been established also in the vicinity, and there are orchards—we visited one where they were grading and packing the apples for shipment to London—and farms set in groves of English trees: sycamore, lime, chestnut, and silver birch.

In speaking of these southern lakes it has become customary to refer to them as "The Cold Lakes." This was, I believe, in the first instance, a means of differentiating them from "The Hot Lakes" of the thermal district in the north. But to talk of this lovely region of warm, bright sunshine—a marvellous climate here for any chest complaint—as "cold," is to give a totally wrong impression. Certainly these lakes aren't boiling, like Rotomahana; but though in the winter there is often a sharp frost at night, I am told that the warmth of the sun during the day, and the brilliance of the atmosphere, makes the Wanaka and Wakatipu territory an ideal winter resort.

CHAPTER XV

GOLD!

I COULDN'T discover many historical facts during my short stay at Pembroke. The only "old identity" I met, talked a little of the days when the Wanaka sheep-station consisted of three hundred and fifty thousand acres round the lake, and of the gold diggings along the Cardrona River. I was to hear more of the big gold rushes of the sixties when I arrived at Queenstown next day; and to learn there also that I had passed, beside Lake Hawea, close to the grave of one of my father's relatives—W. G. Rees's brother-in-law—drowned while swimming with sheep across the Clutha River in 1861.

Though talking so much about myself in this diary of my tour, I had meant to keep the name of "Rees" out of my book. At Queenstown I found this quite impossible. It would have been easier for Mr. Dick to keep King Charles's head out of his memorial than for me to keep the name of my father's cousin, William Gilbert Rees, out of my diary. All the history of the Queenstown district begins with "Rees's" taking up land for sheep-farming at Lake Wakatipu. Even the road we followed mounting up into the hills along the twists of the Cardrona River, from Pembroke to Queenstown, was formed, for the greater part of the way, by the little feet of those first sheep he drove into the heart of this practically unexplored country, in 1861.

Along the banks of the Cardrona now are desolate heaps of stones and silt; piled rocks and tailings left by the gold-miners of '62 and '63. Where Cardrona town

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once stood, is one small store, which serves for post office as well. But seventy years ago there were hotels and banks, huts and tents, and thousands of miners along the lonely valley.

There are those who believe the valley will not for long be lonely. Prospectors to-day are out on Criffel Ridge hunting for the reef from which the alluvial gold, won in the valley, was washed down. Up the Cardrona valley the road climbs to the top of the pass over the Crown Range, and here, from a height of more than four thousand feet, we looked down what seemed to be the sheer face of the mountain, to see cars, like ants, passing along the rugged valley of the Kawarau River on the Cromwell road; and farther on across the fertile flats, over the Shotover River—whose banks were once lined thickly with the camps of gold-diggers—to Queenstown, eighteen miles away on the shores of Wakatipu.

Halting on the top of the Crown Range Pass, one is behind "The Remarkables." Our driver told us that we shouldn't see them properly until we faced them on the lake shore.

"They've had snow on them for some days, but it's gone now. There was snow on some of the others, too," he said. Then to make things clearer he added: "There are a lot of ranges running about here now."

Well, all I can say is, that if the Remarkables ever took to running, there is precious little that would stop them! They rise, gaunt and grand, sheer from the unfathomable depths of the lake, for nearly eight thousand feet to the sky; and the blue of the sky and the blue of the mountains and the blue of the lake, must be seen to be believed.

I saw these several blues from the Queenstown gardens next morning—a morning of hot sunshine; the air still, but clear and bright as crystal. These gardens occupy the whole of a narrow peninsula jutting out from the



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

THE REMARKABLES

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lake shore, and they have been planted with oaks and elms and plane trees, rowans, silver birch and limes. Mixed with these are many native trees; and climbing roses garland the enclosure of the tennis-courts and bowling-green. Bright flower-beds surround the big water-lily pond where a fountain plays, and towards the point of the peninsula is a great rock which geologists say came from Mount Earnslaw, over forty miles to the north, thousands and thousands—perhaps millions—of years ago, when all the lake was glacier. Set in this rock is a tablet in memory of Scott and those who died with him in the snows of the Antarctic. The last passages from the explorer's diary are graven here on this enduring stone, and I can't think of any finer memorial to the dead, or inspiration to the living, than Scott's own words.

It was through the branches of the trees I saw the lake on either side, and through a tracery of leaves, the sheer rugged wall of the Remarkables. They shut in the prospect across the arm of the lake before me, gathering in their sharply riven gullies a deeper blue, as a curtain gathers a deeper colour in its folds.

In the quiet and peace of these lovely gardens my mind was chiefly occupied with what I had just been reading: the story of the gold rush here in 1862, when Queenstown—now a neat, white-painted, red-roofed town of a thousand inhabitants, with electric light, telephones, water; all the amenities of civilization, in fact—was a canvas town and had a population of close on twelve thousand souls. Before this canvas town came into being only a few intrepid spirits had ever penetrated as far as Wakatipu. In those early times—seventy-three years ago—W. G. Rees, the "pioneer pastoralist," applied to the Government for permission to take up land for sheep-farming at the lake. He and a friend had previously explored this practically unknown terri-

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tory, and they tossed up for the choice of homestead sites. "W.G." won, and chose to build his station homestead and his wool-shed near to the spot where the "Gates of Remembrance"—Queenstown's War Memorial—open to the gardens. He brought up sheep and cattle, swimming with them across the Clutha, near Lake Hawea. It was then that his brother-in-law was drowned. The rushing Clutha is a dangerous river.

He bought a whale-boat at the Bluff; had it hauled by bullocks through the bush for over a hundred miles to the foot of the lake. Then, the bullocks having brought it so far, they stepped on board; and the boat returned the compliment and brought the bullocks. This was the first boat on the fifty-mile stretch of Lake Wakatipu. There are many fine Government steamers now, launches and yachts.

But after a year of hard, unceasing toil for the station owner, a Maori shepherd one day came into the Rees homestead with some yellow metal he'd found in the Cardrona. He didn't know what it could be, but W. G. Rees knew well enough. Gold had been already discovered in Central Otago, and there were thousands of diggers on that field. Within a very short time there were thousands at Cardrona. Then one of the shepherds at the Wakatipu station found gold in the Shotover, within a mile or two of the wool-shed. He was a man called Arthur, and at Arthur's Point on the river he washed out two hundred ounces in eight days. A week or so later two Maoris swimming out in the river farther up, to rescue a drowning dog, brought him to shore with lumps of gold sticking to his coat. Before nightfall they had secured what was to them a little fortune. Soon the banks of the Shotover, and of the Arrow, and the Cardrona swarmed with diggers. At the peak of the rush there were nearly forty thousand men working in the district. W. G. Rees had to hold the gold at his

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homestead; ship it down the lake in his boat; do the best he could to bring up supplies, and to provide meat from his station stock for the diggers. The Government took over part of his land for the site of a town—Queenstown—paying him compensation for his removal to Kawarau Falls, five miles away. He was probably now a rich man, but I believe, before he died, W. G. Rees had lost practically all the money acquired by strenuous effort during those two hectic years of the gold rush. He and his fellow-settlers, by opening up the country, had made the way clear for the discovery of gold, and then the swarming rabbits ruined him, as they ruined many other wealthy sheep-farmers in Australia and New Zealand.

From Otago nearly fifteen millions worth of gold were taken out in six years. But the rush was already waning in 1863 when a great flood ("Old Man Flood," it is still called) drowned one hundred men on the banks of the Shotover and the Arrow; the rivers rising suddenly in the night, and washing away tents and men and all their gold and their equipment; and some time after this the diggers began to drift off to the new goldfields just discovered on the west coast near Hokitika.

They were a wonderful set of men, those diggers, so tradition says. And some of the old folk whom I saw next day remembered them. One old lady, as a child, had lived at Skippers, a mining camp over twenty miles up in the hills from Queenstown. "It was a grand life," she said. "The happiest life one could have. I married there. We had hardships, yes, but nobody minded those, and the diggers were kind to one another. Oh, there's lots of gold left there still. Why, Mr. Smith, sluicing is getting out plenty to-day. They say he's got enough in the last year or two to keep him and his family for the rest of their lives!"

"Did you ever find any gold yourself?"

"Of course I did. I'd go out sometimes with a pan,

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and the fire-shovel, and get some before dinner; and if my leg wasn't so bad I'd be out after it to-day."

I liked "the fire-shovel." It seemed to make of gold-digging quite a homely, domestic occupation.

There was another old lady—no, it seems wrong to call her old, for the years had dealt kindly with her, though her calm, sweet face, and gentle voice, grew sad as she talked of the long ago. "Ah! those were the days!" she said. "I was only a child, but I remember them well, those men. So generous-hearted. Of course they drank a lot, but they were so kind to their mates, and they'd always help anyone in trouble. Queenstown was gay in those days. We had a good theatre then, and a young man—a clerk in the bank here—he acted splendidly. He was with Sir Henry Irving afterwards in London."

(This was Walter Bentley, a well-known Shakespearean actor.)

I asked her if she remembered Anthony Trollope, and his visit to Queenstown.

"Yes, but he was a great bear!" she said. "He didn't like conditions out here—grumbled at the accommodation."

I couldn't get her to talk much of the goldfields. All she said was: "I wish I could remember more. But they were great days. And we'll never see men—all young, fine, splendid men—pouring into the country like that again."

I hope she's wrong. I hope we shall see them, and when I reached Cromwell next day I began to think we might. That is to say if a gold rush will bring them: for Cromwell at the present moment is preparing for a very great development of alluvial mining; and the finding of gold in large quantities would be of enormous value to New Zealand at the present time. One immensely rich lead has been located by two lads—Messrs.



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo,

DART VALLEY, LAKE WAKATIPU

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Bell and Kilgour—and it is hoped that further equally good strides will be made in the same locality.

The journey from Queenstown to Cromwell is accomplished in just under two hours by service car; and the road follows the windings of the swiftly rushing Kawarau River through precipitous rocky gorges. The Kawarau River is the main outlet for Lake Wakatipu, and at Cromwell it joins with the Clutha to form the Molyneux—one of the six great rivers of the world, discharging into the sea as great a volume of water as the Nile. Both the Kawarau and the Clutha are immensely deep, and tremendously rapid. Some years ago a company was formed to dam the Kawarau near Lake Wakatipu and so lay bare the bed of the river in which it is believed enormous quantities of gold lie hidden. The dam was duly built, but, even when the gates were closed, the river, fed by so many other mountain torrents, was never sufficiently reduced in volume to lay bare the bed of the stream. It is proposed now to build other dams farther down; but, though the level of the river may be lowered, few people believe it would be possible to hold back completely these millions of tons of rushing water.

At Cromwell, however, the gold-mining does not depend on the dams.

Geologists have discovered that the Kawarau—I wouldn't like to say how many thousands of years ago—flowed in another direction; and that consequently the whole of the Cromwell flats were once the river-bed. It is in these flats that the rich lead has been discovered. Messrs. Bell and Kilgour, tunnelling in from the river bank, have been getting out "wash" (the rubble and black sand in which the gold is found) giving almost incredibly rich returns. It must be remembered that this is the region—Central Otago—where the "rushes" of 1859 took place. Gold to the value of nearly thirty-

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seven million pounds sterling has already been won in this territory and the Queenstown district.

At Cromwell I was met by the Mayor of the town, who informed me that a civic reception was being held for me at half-past nine!

It was now about nine o'clock; and as I'd had to rise before six, to breakfast, pack, and travel, I wasn't feeling at my brightest and best. However, I managed to pull something out of suit-case in which I should feel more suitably clad for the reception; swallowed a cup of coffee and was over at the Council Chambers in good time.

I'm not given civic receptions every day!

There were speeches, there were flowers—beautiful specimens of gladioli grown in the district—there was even *gold*! I was presented with some fine gold in a little tube and told that this was the result of a few handfuls of "wash" from the Bell and Kilgour mine; "wash" which had been "panned out" in a man's hat!

As soon as the reception was over—another quick change: thick shoes and stockings, and an old coat, for I was being driven out to inspect the mine.

We left the car up on the flats, and scrambled down the river bank. Into gum-boots, and then, armed with a lantern, into the tunnel. Ten men are working on the claim now—merely doing the preliminary work of digging out, and shoring up with timber the main tunnel and the side drives. A good deal of "wash" has already been put through the boxes, and the returns indicate that the yield from this claim will probably be prodigious. After my walk through the tunnel, and inspection of the not half completed side drives, a little of the "wash" was thrown into a tin dish for me to pan out. We stood beside the rushing river, and I was instructed how to first "puddle" the clay and rubble in the dish, and then

to swirl the water and the wash round and round and drain off the gravel and dirt. It was most exciting to see the black sand, and the gold, in the bottom of the dish as the water cleared and the stones and gravel were drained off. But I was terrified I'd lose it in dipping the tin in the river for more water, so I handed over the precious dish to one of the party who knew better than I how to handle it. About two pounds ten worth of gold, they estimated, was the yield of that dish! And they presented me with the largest piece—a very pretty little nugget. Two pounds ten for less than five minutes' work! I feel I must return to Cromwell and go gold-digging!

It is not only from the river bank that prospectors are tunnelling into those rich Cromwell flats; but they are sinking shafts from above as well. This may be a somewhat expensive business, as the gold "wash" is probably from fifty to sixty feet down, and they may not strike the lead just where they sink the shaft. However, before this book is in print the world in general may have heard more of Cromwell and its gold.

A great many of the unemployed are at Government camps in the surrounding hills, working claims. Even though these men are only getting gold in small quantities (and some, of course, are getting no gold at all), the increased return of gold export from New Zealand shows what an excellent scheme this is. Hundreds of the unemployed have now registered for the subsidy and work in connection with the scheme; and the Government are drafting them out to the gold-mining areas—to prospect new country as well as to work old claims—as quickly as possible.

After lunch we visited one of the largest orchards in Cromwell. The owner—a widow, who, with the aid of her sons and other help, does the work of the place—apologized for not being able to show us round. "We've

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just boxed the apples for export, and we have the Government fruit inspector here. We're busy packing tomatoes. Perhaps you'd like to see them?"

We walked into the packing-shed; saw the tomato grader at work, and the lads packing them neatly in the cases. Afterwards we wandered round the orchard, browsing on nectarines and late peaches. The preserving peaches were ripening. Some of them weighed fourteen ounces!

Trees in every orchard are cut away in the centre so that the branches take the form of a great cup, and thus all the fruit receives an equal share of sunshine.

In spite of her great rushing rivers, Central Otago was looked upon by early settlers as barren country. It is a queer, rugged region, with vast tracts of rocky hillsides and gorges. But with the initiation of irrigation works it has been found that this is one of the finest fruit-growing districts in the world. There are orchards everywhere; acres of tomatoes; dairy farms (lucerne does marvelously well here), and as side-lines to the fruit and dairy farms, bees, pigs, and poultry.

On again from the orchard to another gold-mining camp. To reach this our car had to cross the Clutha on a punt. The swift current of the river supplied the motive power for our transit. The punt runs between steel hawsers stretched from bank to bank, and is first steered slightly up-stream, and then swung by the force of the water to the opposite bank. Only one steersman is required to work the flat-bottomed vessel.

We drove up to the miners' tents pitched under the willows by a little creek; but the men were at the claim down by the river. So down we went to join them. All "unemployed" on Government subsidy here, but hampered in their search for gold by lack of water. That seemed strange with the rushing Clutha beside them; but it would cost too much for pumping machinery to

raise the water high enough to get pressure for sluicing. There was some thick mud at the bottom of their "boxes." They grubbed up a few handfuls, and washed it in a dish in the river. The gold was there all right, but it was very fine and not in any great quantity. However, it was drained out of the dish with some of the water into an old medicine bottle, and put away. Even that small amount meant a few shillings extra for the men. But this camp is merely one of the training camps for miners. The unemployed men in these camps learn from the mining expert in charge how to set about their digging, and much practical knowledge with reference to prospecting.

These "mining experts" are all themselves old gold-diggers. They've almost all of them found gold in fairly large quantities in the past. The one in charge of these men talked of a find he'd made some years ago on the west coast.

"Took nearly thirteen hundred pounds' worth of gold out of that creek," he said.

Yet of that thirteen hundred pounds I don't suppose much was put aside. I think it is spent by these "old hands" as soon as it is found. Well, I suppose he had some fun out of it while it lasted—and I hope he did; for there was something touching in his odd, unshaven face, and in the eager, wistful look of his blue eyes. I'd already been told that there was very little of him left; that he was "shot to pieces" at Messines.

We sat looking over the white shingle and the blue-jade torrent of the Clutha, to the willows on the opposite bank. They were outlined—green, with a few pale yellow leaves of autumn—against the distant purple hills. He asked me if I knew certain of the sisters who had nursed him in the New Zealand hospitals in London. "Out here they never realized the war," he said. "Perhaps it's just as well. I had enough; I don't

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want any more. But I'd like to go back some day to see all those places where we were."

I don't know his name; but I hope he has some good fortune in the future to make up for all he's suffered in the past.

I left Cromwell for Dunedin early next morning, but I hope to return. I doubt if there is anywhere a town of seven hundred inhabitants that boasts of a more comfortable hotel than the "Commercial" in Cromwell! Yet if I contemplated going gold-digging in Central Otago I'm afraid I should have to live in a tent, and not at an hotel which boasts of electric light, hot baths, comfortable lounges, and excellent food served by smiling, white-capped waitresses. I fear that gold-digging is not for me! It's pleasant to picture oneself putting up cheerfully with all sorts of hardships, and revelling in the simple life. In reality it might not be quite so easy.

I think I'll stick to the hotel.

CHAPTER XVI

ACROSS THE ALPS TO THE WEST COAST

DUNEDIN, capital of the Otago province, is, as I suppose most people know, the Scottish settlement of New Zealand. The city was founded by Presbyterians from the Clyde in 1848; and it is related that the night before these pioneers took their departure for the unknown, unsettled land in which they were to seek their fortunes, they gathered together for some hours of earnest prayer.

The farewell of the Church of England settlers—the Canterbury Pilgrims—who sailed for the new country about the same time, took the form of a great public dinner!

I don't know who fared best: those who prayed or those who dined!. But perhaps the Scots had an adequate meal before their service, and the Anglicans prayed in secret.

At any rate it seems that the majority of these early emigrants prospered; for they had the advantage of finding a rich and fertile country and were, themselves—both Presbyterian and Anglican—of splendid stock. That is where New Zealand scored in the beginning over a great many other colonies. Her first settlers were all picked men: men of character, determination, high ideals, and quick to seize their opportunities. When one hears the chorus of lamentation over hard times at present echoing from shore to shore of the Dominion, and not perhaps so much from those who really are in want, one is inclined to wonder what has become of the old spirit of those pioneers. Of course the majority

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of the present generation have been brought up under different conditions. But let's hope, when put to the test, it won't be found that we've less backbone than our progenitors.

I don't believe the ninety thousand inhabitants of Dunedin are shrieking as loudly over their woes as some of their fellow-countrymen farther north. Being Scotsmen (and women) they believe in tackling a difficult situation instead of wasting their energy in bemoaning their lot in being forced to face it.

Since I began this diary of my tour, I've been reading Anthony Trollope's book, "Australia and New Zealand." If it was true that he grumbled at accommodation in New Zealand and was a "great bear," he was a bear with a remarkable mentality; and his shrewd comments on New Zealand in general, and Otago in particular, might have been written to-day. He says:

"There can hardly be a doubt, I think, that New Zealand is over-governed, over-legislated for, over-provided with officials, and over-burdened with national debt. That it will have strength to struggle through with all the weight imposed upon it is not improbable. It has a magnificent climate, rich mineral gifts, good soil, and amongst its people a resolution to succeed which is in itself equal to half a battle won. . . . The Scotch have always been among the best, or perhaps the very best, colonizers that the world has produced. . . . So that life in the province (Otago) may be said to be a happy life, and one in which men and women may and do have food to eat, and clothes to wear, books to read, and education to enable them to read the books. . . . Dunedin is a remarkably handsome town. . . . The houses are well built, and public buildings, banks, and churches are large, commodious, and ornamental. . . .

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“Leaving Dunedin, we rose up a long, wooded hill, with a view to our right over the land-locked arm of the sea down to Port Chalmers, which is the port for Dunedin. It was a most lovely drive. The scenery of the whole country round Dunedin is beautiful, and this is the most beautiful scene of all.”

I don't think I need add much to that description of Dunedin, written sixty years ago, except to say that the beauties Trollope speaks of have been preserved, and that architectural beauties in the city's churches and public buildings have been added, besides a few things (necessary evils perhaps) not quite so beautiful—factories, trams, and so forth. Although Dunedin has the smallest population of the four “centres” of the Dominion, it is by no means less important than the others. The University of Otago (which is more correctly a college, for in the four principal cities of the Dominion the University colleges are merely branches of the New Zealand University) specializes in the training of medical, dental, and mining students.

The Free Library, for many years under the distinguished supervision of the late Mr. W. B. McEwan, supplies Dunedinites with a beautifully cared for and wonderfully comprehensive supply of literature; while the Hocken Library—the gift of the late Dr. T. M. Hocken—is unique in some respects, housing as it does documents and pictures relating to the early history and pioneering days of New Zealand. The only rival to the Hocken Library is the Turnbull Library in Wellington. I understand that in the Turnbull Library—particularly in the manuscript room where letters of Browning, of Robert Louis Stephenson, of Domett, of Samuel Butler, and other famous men, have been preserved—there are treasures which the British Museum would give much to possess.

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Dunedin has been fortunate in being able to retain a circle of native bush, tree-ferns and all, around the city. This is called "The Town Belt," through which one may motor on Queen's drive.

The city has another claim to fame. It is here that Sir Truby King first started his Karitane hospital for babies reared under the Plunket system. Karitane (pronounced karry-tarney, for the final Maori "e" is always sounded like the French "é") is a word that is now synonymous with infant welfare throughout the world. There is a Karitane training centre now in London; and when I was in New York and was asked to speak on the radio about New Zealand, I was requested to mention particularly the Plunket Society and Sir Truby King's Karitane work.

I really wanted to see New Zealand from end to end, as my publishers so airily suggested, but I wasn't able to go farther south than Dunedin.

In former days, however, I've spent some time in Invercargill, a large town situated on the rich pastoral plains of Southland; and I've also visited the Bluff, and stood beneath the most southern lamp-post in the world. (I didn't find anything else much of interest at the Bluff in those days. Perhaps there is more now!) But I'd never been across Foveaux Strait to Stewart Island, and that is a place I've always longed to visit.

While I won't go quite as far as a naval officer who travelled out in the *Ionic* with me and remarked: "The oysters alone in New Zealand would make the voyage worth while," I'll still admit to a certain interest in the large, succulent, and inexpensive oysters of Stewart Island. But that wasn't *altogether* my reason for wishing to visit the southernmost portion of the Dominion. The bush scenery of Stewart Island is said to be particularly beautiful; and as it was a Maori-owned island and an old whaling and sealing station before the rest of

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New Zealand was settled, there are, undoubtedly, stories of interest to be gathered there. Surely such names as this must have some history: Port Adventure; Sealer's Bay; Pearl Island; Glory Cove; Small Craft Retreat; Chew Tobacco Bay!

Yes, on some future occasion I shall certainly visit Chew Tobacco Bay!

On this tour of mine I had to return northwards after a very short stay in Dunedin. I wasn't even able to visit the Sounds—those magnificent fiords which for extent and the wild grandeur of their scenery are unique and unrivalled. Nor was I able to travel over the route from Lake Te Anau to Milford Sound—the track which has been described as “the finest walk in the world.” Though this walk is one of thirty-three miles, it is done in easy ten-mile stages, and has been accomplished by many men and women tourists who would hesitate to describe themselves as first-class pedestrians. One would have to devote many months to a tour which would embrace all the beauty spots in New Zealand; and the journey I had mapped out for myself was far from completed. I had still to see the Franz Josef Glacier on the west coast of the Southern Alps, and then visit a few places of interest in the North Island—places of which I'm ashamed to say I was entirely ignorant.

If my publishers have done nothing else, they've certainly been the means of improving my own knowledge of my country! To reach the Franz Josef I had to return by train from Dunedin to Christchurch, spend a night in the Cathedral City, and then go on by train across the island, travelling through the Alps by a tunnel, cut for five and a quarter miles—one of the great engineering feats of the world—from Arthur's Pass to Otira. Another night must be spent at Hokitika before going on by car to the Glacier Hotel at Waiho.

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I believe the journey to Waiho has been made in one day from Christchurch by arranging for the Christchurch-Greymouth train to leave earlier, and for cars to meet the train at Otira. If this could always be done it would greatly simplify the journey, and induce more tourists to visit the west coast.

Many people regard the night spent at Hokitika as so much waste time, though I, personally, was glad to have it, as I managed to find an "old identity" whose stories of the past I found most entertaining.

The railway from Dunedin north follows, I suppose, the same route as the coach road described by Anthony Trollope. As the train left Dunedin on a perfect summer morning, the tree-ferns and native bush about the track, and the views of the still reaches of the inner harbour amongst the hills, were very beautiful. So was the coast-line along which the train travels for the first eighty miles to Oamaru. I think we'd already stopped for refreshments before we reached Oamaru, but I'm getting so used now to these "stops for refreshment" that they no longer strike me as somewhat odd. In fact, when I return to England I'm sure I shall bitterly resent the fact that the guard doesn't announce every two hours or so: "Stop for refreshment next station," and so enable me to spring to the platform and race along to the buffet for my fifth or sixth cup of tea!

Oamaru is a town which makes me think of a nice healthy schoolboy who has just scrubbed his face well with soap and water, and brushed his hair. The town has wide streets, and its buildings are for the most part composed of bright white limestone quarried in the neighbourhood. The public gardens, too, with tree-ferns and ornamental flower-beds, always look as though they'd been newly watered and the lawns just mown.

At a little distance a fresh blue sea races up in foaming breakers to a clean, sandy beach, and overlooking the

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harbour is a memorial tree and tablet. This is to commemorate the fact that along this street at three o'clock on the morning of February 10, 1913, Doctor Atkinson and Lieutenant Pennell, who had just landed from the *Terra Nova*, walked to the harbour-master's house. Their sad mission it was to bring news which shocked the world—the news that Scott and his companions had been found dead in the Antarctic after reaching the South Pole.

Fourteen miles farther on, the railway track crosses the Waitaki River, the boundary between Otago and Canterbury—sometimes spoken of as the New Zealand Tweed, as it divides the Scottish settlement from the English.

The Waitaki and the Rangitata are, of course, snow-fed rivers coming down from the Alps; and as well as being good trout-fishing streams, are noted for quinnat salmon (which Captain Wilson doesn't believe gives an angler as much sport as the rainbow trout in the north; probably other fishermen will disagree with him).

After Timaru (another stop for refreshment) I was merely travelling over the same ground—the wide Canterbury Plains—which I'd crossed on my journey to Mount Cook.

Though in days gone by I've crossed to the west coast, I've never before been through the Otira tunnel. This—the longest tunnel in the British Empire—was only opened for traffic towards the end of 1923.

After crossing the plains and leaving Springfield, the ascent up into the Alps begins. It was a bright, blue, blowy day; and over the bridged gorges we passed out on to tussock-covered table-lands, with toi-toi tossing its plumed head in the wind, manuka and berried briar waving. There were patches of birch bush; and the cloud-capped peaks of the nearer mountains hid from view the higher peaks beyond, though every here and

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there, in these high valleys, where sheep were grazing on the tussock country, we could get a glimpse of distant mountain-sides, mauve and blue; and sometimes saw snow lying in the gullies.

But it is after the train is electrically hauled through the tunnel that the best of the scenery begins. Once on the western side of the Alps the vegetation of the native bush is very dense and very beautiful. The massed tree-ferns, the stately rimus (red pines), and kahikateas (white pines) all grow to an enormous size; and the undergrowth is marvellously prolific. All along the west coast this is so; and the bewildering loveliness of the subtropical vegetation is accounted for by the fact that the enormous height of the Great Divide, so close to the sea, striking down at right-angles to the prevailing winds, produces a tremendous rainfall.

By rivers and lakes and bush, the railway-line descends from Otira to Greymouth on the coast. The country really looked lovely—though lost and lonely—in the afternoon sunshine, as we travelled on. There were saw-mills; little farm clearings in the bush; a coal-mining township (with a tree-fern bordered lake beside it); and railway workers' huts scattered at intervals along the line. But if the wild countryside gave one the impression of a vast loneliness, the railway station at Greymouth certainly did not. There appeared to be at least a thousand hilarious, shouting children, with a few hundred almost equally hilarious parents, surging backwards and forwards on the platform. Apparently one of the numerous "school picnics" had just returned by train from Hokitika or Ross, farther down the coast.

Our train, having reached Greymouth, seemed to have lost its dash. We meandered on slowly towards Hokitika, taking an hour and a half to do the twenty-four miles! Although no "stops for refreshment" were announced by the guard, I noticed that a few of the

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male passengers descended at one wayside station. Scraps of conversation from two men sitting behind me reached my ears.

"Oh, yes, it used to be the general rule, but it's gone out of fashion now—it's not done!"

I wondered idly what it was that was now *démodé*, as my eyes followed those who had climbed out of the train, crossing the line and making their way towards a bush "pub" about fifty yards away. They entered the bar, and the two men behind me caught sight of them. "There's a few still keeping up the tradition," they said; and I presumed that this was the old custom, to wander off across the road to seek some refreshment stronger than the time-honoured tea, while the obliging train waited. After a time the guard shouted, and they returned, evidently fortified by their "refreshment" for the effort of the further journey.

Again we meandered on along the seashore. The sun was sinking in the west; the smooth, silvery blue sea was merely lapping on the shingle. Beside us on our left, tree-ferns drooped their lacy fronds over still brown pools, which reflected the colours of the sunset sky and the farther bushed hills as clearly as a mirror.

We seemed to have reached a region utterly remote, utterly peaceful, but also sad and lonely. I think, perhaps, this feeling is due, in part, to the knowledge that once this coast was the scene of great activity: exciting days and gaudy nights, when gold-diggers played skittles with bottles of champagne—bought at a fabulous price—and, as the bottles broke, poured the foaming wine into buckets and drank them off; when one man had his horse shod with gold, and another lit his pipe with five-pound notes; when every second house in Hokitika was a dance-hall or a drinking shanty. For those were the days of the sixties, when gold to the value of over two million pounds was found in one year, and

in twelve years totalled nearly fourteen millions. Since then the total value of the gold won on the west coast has reached the sum of twenty-seven million pounds.

Though prospecting all over the country, and dredging in the rivers, is still going on, Hokitika struck me as a sad and desolate little town. The surroundings are beautiful enough, and I once saw in Hokitika one of the most lovely sunsets it is possible to imagine. It was the close of a brilliant winter's day, and at some distance from the town, along the river bank, the gorse was a flaming mass of gold. I shall never forget the colour of that evening. The blue river, below the gold of the gorse; the purple shadows of the forest trees in the bush on the farther bank; far away the snowy Alps flushed to a deep rose by the setting sun, and the glory of the western sky.

The sun had set before our leisurely train reached Hokitika from Greymouth, and dinner was awaiting us at our hotel when we arrived.

At about eight o'clock I set out—walking away from the few shops of the main street, past the small enclosure of the Public Gardens—quiet and deserted in the moonlight—to find my “old identity.” He was indeed an old identity—ninety-five years of age—but his memory was good, and he didn't mind talking of days gone by.

“Sixty-six—that was the year I came. There was no town here till sixty-four when the gold was found and the rush started, you understand. And we drove over from Christchurch—my mate and me—in a coach with four horses, by Arthur's Pass and the Otira Gorge. We were the third coach through, for the road had only just been made. You've come in one day, sitting comfortably in a train, haven't you? Well, how long do you think it took us? Just two weeks and four days. There were accommodation houses along the way, but the prices! My word! Oats were one pound the bushel.

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And we got snowed up in Arthur's Pass. That was called after Sir Arthur Dobson. He discovered it; and he's alive and well in Christchurch still, I hear. About the same age as myself, I suppose. It was his brother who was killed by the bush-rangers—the Sullivan, Kelly, and Burgess gang in 1866. It was the gold escort they were after, those chaps. Escaped convicts from Australia, so I've always heard. Where was I? Oh, yes, snowed up in Arthur's Pass. Not so bad, though, for us as it was for one of the other coaches. There was fifty feet of snow in Starvation Gully, and two hundred men shovelling the snow at two shillings an hour. Yes, I well remember leading my horses, by the light of a candle in a broken bottle, down one of the gorges there, and when we reached Hokitika, how much money do you think we'd got between us? Just eighteen pence, and we'd left Christchurch with seventy-five pounds. Well, here we were with four hungry horses and no money—for you couldn't call eighteen pence money, could you? I got the horses out and tethered, and went across to a store to see what I could do for food for them.

“‘How much is your chaff, master?’ said I.

“‘Twenty pounds the ton,’ said he. ‘And I don't sell less than a hundredweight.’

“Now, that was a bit of a staggerer, but I had to feed my hungry horses; and he let me have a hundredweight, and I said I'd fix up with him in the morning. Then me and my mate climbed into the coach, and got to sleep. Next morning up we got—and we'd had nothing to eat ourselves for twenty-four hours, mind you—and we walked round the town. Mostly canvas it was, you understand. And we came to a halt before a shop with two meat pies in the window marked one shilling each. ‘How much have you got?’ said my mate. ‘Eighteen pence,’ said I. ‘See if he'll take eighteen pence for the two,’ said my mate. So in I went and

made the offer, and got the pies. And, my word, I tell you those pies tasted good! But a cup of tea or coffee to wash them down was what we wanted, so down the street we walked looking for a good Samaritan; and suddenly I heard my name called. It was a man I'd known in Christchurch.

" 'Why, Bill,' he said, 'how's things with you? '

" 'Pretty bad,' said I.

" 'What's wrong?' said he.

" 'I'm broke,' said I.

" 'Is that all the trouble?' said he. 'Do you remember lending me a fiver when I was off to the Nelson diggings? Well, here's the fiver, and another one to go with it.'

" And out of his pocket he pulled a ten-pound note! So, you see, we found our good Samaritan all right."

Of course the story ought to have ended with a rich find of gold for the two adventurers, but, alas, it didn't. He confessed that the claims he had pegged out were "duffers"; and the only gold he ever found, and that only a little dust, was in the right of way at the back of the hotel where I was staying. But he and his mate managed to knock out a comfortable living with their coach and horses; and he had reared a family, and apparently lived happily.

"And it was me that nominated Dick Seddon when he stood for Parliament, and I said to them then, 'If you send this candidate to Parliament you're sending the future Prime Minister.' Those were my words. As true as you sit there, I said that."

But I wanted to hear more of the early days.

"Oh, lively times they were, with nearly fifty thousand diggers on the coast, and every day ships coming in—or trying to come in, for the river bar was a terror, and as often as not the ships' boats would be upset by the blind rollers, and men drowned—from Australia and

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other parts. And the pubs! You wouldn't believe! Why! that first Sunday my mate and me were in the town we'd nothing to do—so we set to work and counted them—the pubs. We hadn't fit clothes to go to church, you understand, so we just walked up Revell Street; my mate took one side of the road, and I took the other, and how many do you think there were? Just one hundred and one, there were. So we walked into the last and called for some beer. And I said, 'Do you know, master, why we've come to you? Because you're the odd man.' He looked at us for a minute as though he wouldn't serve us, and said, 'What do you mean, the odd man?' But when we told him he was the one over the hundred in that street we got our beer all right."

As the car for the Glacier Hotel was due to leave Hokitika at ten o'clock next morning, I had no opportunity of visiting the big Rimu gold-dredge a few miles from the town. This dredge is owned by an American company, and is responsible for the recovery of very large quantities of gold. But if there was no time to inspect the dredge, there was ample time after breakfast to stroll out on to the ocean beach which is only a minute's walk from the centre of the town.

A lonely stretch of sand-hills, and a lonely beach stretching north as far as the eye could see, with breakers curling up to the big logs embedded in the sand. To the south, distant about one hundred miles, over the river, over the stretch of bushed plain, over the foot-hills of the Alps, was the imperial tented peak of Cook, outlined, purely white, against the clear blue of the sky.

It was strange to think that when I reached the Glacier Hotel that afternoon, I should be within about twenty-four miles of the Ball Hut, which can be reached over Graham's Saddle by mountaineers; and yet it had been necessary for me, not being a mountaineer, to travel

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many hundreds of miles to cross the great barrier of the Alpine chain.

I had the wide stretch of the beach to myself. The morning sunshine lay warmly over the shining sea and sand, and yet there seemed to be something of menace in the twisting roll of the breakers. Twelve hundred miles of tossing ocean lie between Australia and this coast-line, and the Tasman Sea has claimed many victims. It is said that at one time there were twenty-nine wrecks piled up together on this shore. Probably most of them were small sailing craft, but all of them had come in answer to the call of "Gold." Somehow, at this moment, the search for gold didn't appear in quite as attractive a light as it had done a week ago! My spirits perceptibly lowered, I went back to the hotel, and took my place in the service car.

The road on to Waiho from Hokitika passes at first through burnt and destroyed bush country.

"This land isn't much good for anything but trees," said our driver easily. "So they're trying to replant it."

A few *pinus insignis* reared their young heads above the blackened stumps of what were once the noble rimu and the kahikatea. If it weren't so tragic, it might be comic to think of men destroying all the wealth and beauty of the native bush; and then replanting the disfigured landscape with common trees. It is just as though one pulled down a grand old Tudor mansion, and finding that, after all, a house was needed, set up in its stead a suburban villa. However, the beauty of the unspoilt bush has been preserved along the greater part of this road, so I suppose one mustn't grumble. And it certainly is beautiful. I don't suppose finer bush than this is to be seen anywhere in New Zealand. At any rate not such a long stretch of country so uniformly beautiful. But uniformly must be read only as applying to its standard of beauty, not its sameness of aspect.



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

ON THE ROAD TO FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER, WEST COAST

(To face p. 175.)

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For every turn in the road reveals a different loveliness. The bridged snow-rivers are a misty blue; the bridged bush creeks often a clear brown or amber, and both rivers and creeks are bordered with tree-ferns and undergrowth to the very edge. In Ferguson's Avenue the rimu and kahikatea, which line the road at almost regular intervals, are eighty and a hundred feet high, the trunks rising straight as a mast without a branch for forty or fifty feet.

But on the west coast some of the great forest trees evince a certain modesty. They seem to object to the display of naked trunks, and so have clothed themselves with masses of kie-kie—the big grass-like growth resembling the tufted heads of cabbage trees—with climbing rata, and with many other forest vines. Some of the rata had decked itself with crimson blossom, but there was not a great deal to be seen; for apparently this is not a "good year" for rata.

On all the steep cliff faces of the cuttings were cascades of water-fern; while the cinnamon-coloured bole of the native fuchsia tree—the konini; the rimus, which, while in their infancy are rather like larches; the totara trees; the matai (black pine); and the kahikatea; all showed amongst the tree-ferns and the undergrowth. Lovely, too, were the glimpses of the lakes we passed, bushed to the water's edge, and reflecting like mirrors the tall pines and fern-trees of the surrounding hills.

When we halted for lunch at the wayside hotel which caters for the tourist traffic to the glaciers—Franz Josef and the Fox—the occupants of two other cars followed us into the dining-room. I noticed one man limping in on crutches. After we'd resumed our journey, the pretty Karitane nurse—returning to Waiho after a holiday—told me his story.

"He's one of the Glacier Hotel guides coming back from the Hokitika Hospital," said she. "He was out

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with a Miss ——" (she mentioned a name I'd heard ten days before, when at the Ball Hut someone remarked, "They're just coming down off Graham's Saddle now"). "She's a very famous English climber, and must be a wonderful woman, too, for she brought him safely in after he'd broken his leg up on the ice. They were about seventeen hours getting back to the hut, and then all the men from the hotel had to go up and carry him the rest of the way. They say if it hadn't been for her, he might have died up there—they might both have died, because she probably wouldn't have been able to get back alone."

Of course I wanted to hear the story in detail. It appears that Miss C. (I'm not going to mention her name for I understand she's rather sick of the story, and the publicity she received in consequence of it) had jumped first over a crevasse. She thought there was a loose stone, and warned the guide behind her. He jumped at a different place, but as he landed he fell. Evidently there was a loose stone here as well. For a moment she laughed at his tumble. Then he remarked: "I'm afraid I've broken my leg." There wasn't much to laugh at then! They'd neglected to tell anyone which way they were going. No search-party would find them.

They had with them pitons, the pegs used for crossing schrunds (the overhanging crevasses). With the pitons, and his puttees, she put splints on his broken leg; two ice-axes served him as crutches. He told her what to do as she went before and cut steps in the ice, and helped by her he began a shambling descent. It was then about midday. Their difficult progress over broken glaciers and ice-fields lasted for seventeen hours, and when they reached the hut, they'd been out for thirty-six hours.

Well, he looked in very good spirits when I saw him limp into that hotel dining-room, and my friend, the

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nurse, said that the doctors at Hokitika had been quite pleased with the way he'd recovered from his injury; and he would soon now be able to resume his duties as guide.

We had only a short run on to Waiho after luncheon. The bush scenery was as beautiful and varied as before; and Lake Mapourika—only a few miles from the hotel—a lovely picture. We were drawing closer to the mountains; and our driver pulled up before crossing a bridged river, where the valley opened to show us a marvellous view of snowy peaks sharply outlined against the blue sky, and the ice-river winding its way down between the thickly wooded slopes of the mighty gorge.

"The whole of those mountains are red with rata in a good year," said our driver. "And it's a great sight then—white and scarlet and green—and the big ice-stream looking as though it disappeared into the bush."

He didn't tell us why rata should blossom profusely in some years and not in others, and he didn't give us any information as to the difference between the rata trees of thirty to sixty feet high, and those ratas usually referred to as climbers. In reality these are not climbers at all, but are trees seeded in the forks of other forest giants, sending down long roots, like vine stems, to the ground.

It is the close proximity of subtropical forest that makes the Franz Josef and the Fox Glacier (seventeen miles farther south) so extraordinary and so interesting. No other glaciers (outside the Arctic regions) descend to within seven hundred feet of sea-level, as do these two; and no other glaciers in the world are so completely framed in glorious subtropical forest growth.

Our car crossed the bridge; ran on for a few minutes through a lovely avenue of tree-ferns and native bush; turned a corner; and to our complete amazement pulled up before the big two-storied building of the Glacier

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Hotel. There was a flax-bordered lawn to our right; and masses of pink and purple flowers in close proximity to the tree-ferns and native shrubs shutting in the garden. Just as the Hermitage Hotel appeared to have been conjured from the wilderness by the waving of a magic wand, so did the Glacier Hotel. And coming upon it in this wholly unexpected and dramatic fashion heightened our feeling of surprise. Nor was the surprise diminished when we passed over the verandah, where some of the guests were seated in deck-chairs, and entered the big hall. A marvellously comfortable hotel this, run by the brothers Graham, those famous mountaineers who have given their name to the pass, Graham's Saddle, across the Great Divide.

When I was shown by the porter up the wide staircase to my bedroom, I wished that I were to spend a few weeks here instead of only two or three days; for the view from my most comfortably furnished room was delightful.

The hotel has turned its back upon the mountains and the glacier, and I looked out from my sunny casement windows across the garden and the lawn; and to the left of the tree-ferns hiding the drive, saw a wide stretch of grassed country beside the shingly river-bed. Beyond this lay the gently rising slopes of bushed hills.

Nothing in this shining summer landscape suggested Alpine heights. Could it be possible that we were only four miles from the ice? It really seemed incredible!

"Afternoon tea will be served in the lounge in five minutes," said the porter; and down I went prepared to explore as soon as this "stop for refreshments" was over.

The first place to be explored was the small Anglican chapel embowered in tree-ferns immediately behind the hotel. This is, I suppose, the only church in the world

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whose east window looks out upon a glacier. No stained glass, however lovely, could match the beauty of this superb view. Alone, in the small blue-cushioned chapel I discovered that only on one's knees could one see the summit of the mountains; and I wondered if the builders of this little church had meant by this to teach a lesson. To be humble—one of the hardest lessons for most of us to learn—is probably the surest way to a realization of grandeur and of beauty.

It is rather sad to have to confess after the foregoing grandiloquent observation that I left the chapel; selected a rock that was shaded from the sun by a tall tree-fern; opened the English mail which I'd found awaiting me at the hotel; and proceeded to examine all the Press cuttings which made reference to my latest book, devoutly hoping that these reviews wouldn't prove too humbling to my pride.

The perusal of my mail left me little time for more than a short stroll down to the bridge which spans the swirling, milky-blue water of the Waiho River. Wai-au was the original Maori name for this stream; and being translated, Wai-au means swirling water. All these glacial rivers on the west coast will rise with alarming rapidity on warm summer days. As the ice of the glacier about them melts, the wide river-bed is suddenly filled with a roaring, dangerous torrent.

From the bridge I looked up the valley, beyond the bush, to the glacier and the snow-covered Alpine peaks. The small bushed cone of a hill in the foreground shut out my view of the whole sweep of the mountain chain, but on either side of this I saw the distant ice-bound heights. A few motorists had camped on the opposite bank of the Waiho, beside the grassed paddock of a farm-house; and a little boy was driving in the cows for the evening milking.

It was a most lovely scene, but quite unlike the rugged

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grandeur of the mountains round the Hermitage. Here one felt that the Franz Josef was a nice domesticated glacier—in spite of its nine thousand feet drop in eight and a half miles—the sort of glacier you keep in the back garden and make a pet of.

I left my exploration of the track up to the Franz Josef until next morning, hoping that the weather would continue fine.

It did. Franz Josef, evidently, was determined that it wasn't to be outdone, in the matter of weather, by Mount Cook; and when I woke soon after sunrise on the following morning, I saw through my opened casement the low rays of the sun painting with rose the slopes of the bushed hill beyond the tussock-covered river plain. In the tree-ferns and the rimus across the lawn, tuis were singing.

Of course I ought to have sprung up, had my bath, and gone forth to hail the sun. I did nothing of the sort, but lay lazily awaiting my early morning tea. I think that's one of the nicest features of these comfortable New Zealand hotels. Early morning tea, and afternoon tea, coffee after dinner, are all served free of charge, and there is no annoying "extra" for baths. The only complaint I heard against the hotels was made by a tall Englishman at Mount Cook. "They never give one sheets or blankets on the beds that are long enough," he said; and after he'd made the remark, I found I had to agree with him. Perhaps the managements believe that as a race tourists are of medium size. But at least my tall tourist friend admitted that he thought the hotels on the whole marvellously comfortable, and very reasonable in their charges. He hadn't visited the Glacier Hotel. If he had, he wouldn't have discovered cause for complaint on any grounds.

As I had no intention of going on the ice of the glacier, there was no need for me to don heavy boots



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)

ON THE TRACK LEADING UP TO THE FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER

(To face p. 181.)

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and coloured glasses. I merely wandered off by myself after breakfast, wearing a light summer frock and shady straw hat, to walk up the bush track in the direction of the Franz Josef. I'm mentioning my apparel, as it really seems absurd to be visiting a glacier dressed (the visitor, not the glacier) in the sort of costume one wears on a south coast beach during a good English summer. But everything at the Franz Josef seems absurd. No glacier ought to tear its rugged way, with cliffs of solid ice a hundred feet high, through jungly forest. It isn't done.

This bush track is really one of the most lovely things in the world. The fern and forest growth on either side is almost tropical in its luxuriance. One is sheltered from the hot sun by the arching tree-ferns and the moss-draped branches of the rimus and koninis: but flecks of sunlight fall over the murmuring creeks and upon the masses of the crepe-ferns, stag-horn ferns, and Prince of Wales feathers. The variety and growth of the mosses and ferns are really wonderful.

Tuis sang in the bush; wood pigeons cooed; and always in my ears was the murmur of the Waiho River, winding its way down from the terminal face of the glacier. Every now and then, as the track wound gently upward, a break in the forest would reveal a glimpse of the river. The higher one gets, the more opaque and milky is the snow water. This morning the stones and shingle of the river-bed shone in the sunshine. I thought of burnished silver; but it wasn't quite that. It was like a river of pure aluminium.

Apparently I had the track, the river, and the mountains to myself; for the party of ice-climbers had left the hotel earlier, in order to spend their day on the glacier. Just before reaching the ice, one may take the track leading along to the river. Here the bush is not so dense. There is ti-tree scrub (manuka), and there

are low-growing native shrubs; and, by the brown, reed-fringed waters of Peter's Pool, waving toi-toi. One gets a marvellous view here of the glacier and the whole chain of the mountains. To be perfectly accurate, one gets two marvellous views. For the still waters of Peter's Pool act as a mirror, reflecting in every lovely detail, the bush, the glacier, the snowy mountains, and the blue sky.

Keeping on along the track one crosses the wide gorge of the river by a suspension bridge. A notice placed above it says: "It is dangerous for more than two people to be on this bridge at the same time." As I reached mid-stream, and felt the structure swing over the tearing torrent far below, I wondered, rather nervously, if it might not be dangerous for one!

Another lovely view here, looking up the gorge to the glacier and the bush-clad mountains. It must be marvellous when the rata flowers well, and all this dense green forest on either side of the great ice-flow is splashed with crimson!

The track down on the farther side of the Waiho is quite different in character to the path by which I had ascended. It is rougher, with many creeks—bridged or made easy for crossing by logs and stones—tumbling down in waterfalls from the thickly bushed mountain-sides. Here I was nearer to the lovely aluminium river; and emerging from the track I sat down on a boulder to watch the sunlight on the tumbling waters. The feathery toi-toi, ti-tree, red-berried briar, and tussock grass were growing amongst the rocks and shingle of the river-bed; and though the whole effect, of water and of strand, was silvery white, there were some flattish, oblong pieces of brown rock to be seen. I'd noticed these on the path through the bush as I came up. In Cromwell a mining expert had said to me: "Wherever you see these pieces of rock, you can be sure that you're

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in gold-bearing country." If that were true, there was gold somewhere in these lovely mountains. I hoped no one but myself would ever suspect its presence, for if a gold rush started here, how much of beauty would be left to the Waiho River, the glacier, and the fern-grown bush? Not all the twenty-seven million pounds' worth of gold taken in past years from the creeks and valleys of the west coast would compensate for the loss of this great loveliness.

I needn't have worried in such a simple-minded fashion over the problem! Nearer to the hotel, after I'd crossed the bridge which spans the wild grandeur of the Callery Gorge—where the Callery River, rising in the glaciers on Mount Elie de Beaumont, roars out from its cavernous bed into the Waiho—I found a miner's tail-race. An old rusted shovel was beside it; but there was also a pan, and a perfectly new "cradle" for gold-washing, in close proximity. Someone else, then, knew of the presence of gold!

A trifle dashed by this indisputable evidence that my discovery was no discovery at all, I pursued my homeward way; and hadn't to go far before coming upon the Bath House.

Another marvel! Here a hot mineral spring has been tapped, and any weary climber may refresh himself, after a strenuous day on the ice-fields, by a bath in the healing waters.

I heard more of the gold from Mr. Peter Graham when I got back to lunch at the hotel. Apparently all this country has been well prospected in days gone by. The old tail-race used by the miners now fulfils another mission. From it is raised the power which supplies the Glacier Hotel with electricity. But there is still gold to be picked up in the neighbourhood. Mr. Graham showed me two big nuggets which he found himself; and the manager of the store behind the hotel took off

a signet ring from his little finger and gave it to me to look at.

"That was made from scraps I've got myself from the tailings near the Callery. Some of us go up there and fossick about when we've nothing else to do."

That explained the brand new "Cradle!" In spite of my moralizings on the subject of the sacrifice of beauty to the greed of gold, I felt if I'd been staying longer, I'd have gone out myself with the fire-shovel! But, alas, my stay at Franz Josef was all too short. I wanted to go farther south to see the Fox Glacier, but a wet day—the first really wet day I'd experienced in five weeks—interfered with my plans. Though people tell me the Fox is even more wonderful than the Franz Josef, I can hardly believe it. At any rate the Fox could never give one the thrill which one experiences in looking out from the chapel window, towards the snowy heights.

My first view of the glacier from that window showed the white peaks of the Alps outlined in the afternoon sunshine against an azure background. My last view was of the distant ice-fields shining, serene and pure, under the calm radiance of a full moon and a starry sky. I don't know which of the two pictures was the more beautiful.

The service car returned us to Hokitika in time to catch the leisurely train to Greymouth. And here I had to spend the night, before journeying on by train and car next day to Nelson. Greymouth possesses a workable harbour, and is the largest town on the west coast. It is a great coal port; and a tremendous amount of timber milled from the west coast forests (oh, how I wish they would cease to mill it!) is shipped from here, and also sent by train across the island to Christchurch. Of course, like Hokitika, Greymouth knew the excitement of the big gold rushes of the sixties; and as I journeyed

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on by train and car next day to Nelson, I saw evidences of new prospecting in creeks, and gullies, and the wild bushed hills.

I'd had to rise very early to make my connection with the Nelson car at Reefton—mostly coal-mining at Reefton—but at seven o'clock on a bright summer's morning this railway journey beside the shingly reaches of the Grey River was very beautiful. I suppose the land is owned and used for sheep or cattle country by someone; but there were few homesteads to be seen: only views of blue bushed ranges in the distance, and nearer the reflections of sky and cloud, of cabbage trees, in the still, brown, marshy pools.

The more one travels in New Zealand, the more absurd it seems to consider that here, in a country capable of supporting at least twelve million people, we have a population of less than a million and a half—and these, for the most part, at present, bemoaning their hard lot. I'm convinced—in spite of world-wide depression—that anyone with only a very small amount of capital, coming to New Zealand to-day, willing to work at some form of intensive farming can make good, and have a happy and enjoyable life into the bargain.

There was only one other passenger besides myself in the long saloon carriage, all the way from Greymouth to Reefton. Evidently summing me up as a "tourist," he proceeded to give me information—pointing out the different localities where gold had been discovered in the past, and where prospectors' tents showed that a renewed search was now being made by "unemployed."

"I do this trip every morning," said he. "So I know the country pretty well. See that curl of smoke away there in the gully? That's the Blackwater Consolidated—a big company that—been working for years. It's quartz-mining there—crushing the gold out of the reef. But there's lots of gold still to be found about the creeks

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in the hills here. There's an old chap—p'r'aps we'll pick him up to-day—lives away in the bush here. Has his hut and his vegetable garden, his orchard and his radio, and spends his time out looking for gold. About once a week he boards this train for Reefton, to take in his gold to the bank and bring back his stores. He's at an old mining camp—'Antonio's' it was called in the early days, after an Italian digger."

The guard came through our carriage at this moment.

"Are we stopping for Bill this morning?" asked my friend.

The guard shook his head.

I felt annoyed with Bill. He ought to have been waiting there at the wayside station. We'd have obligingly stopped for him if he had been; but the platform was deserted, and we steamed through without a halt.

I've described the train from Greymouth to Hokitika as leisurely. I don't quite know how to describe this one from Greymouth to Reefton. It took us nearly three hours to do the distance—not much more than forty miles.

The Nelson service car was waiting at the Reefton Station for the west coast mails, and incidentally for me, as I was the only passenger. This was a drive I thoroughly enjoyed. Not so much on account of its great beauty—for the scenery of the upper part of the Buller Gorge, through which we passed, is not as fine as the lower end—but because one seemed here to be so truly in the wilds, and so far from the life of cities. Old timber mills, small back-block townships, bushed ranges, a wide brown river sparkling in the sunshine—a river which the driver told me was famous for its trout—it was all, to me, very New Zealandy. I can't express what I mean in any other fashion. I suppose I mean the New Zealand of my childhood. At one little wayside post office at which we stopped, an elderly woman,

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with a sheep-dog at her heels, came out with the canvas mail-bag. She gossiped for a moment with the driver.

"I think she'd have been glad if you'd stopped longer," said I, as we drove on.

"I'm sorry for her," said the driver. "She and her husband came out here from the old country years ago. They've had hard luck, and she won't ever let any of her relations—they're high up people, I believe, at Home—know how things have gone with them. Just live from hand to mouth, that's all they do here, and yet they say she's come from some grand place at Home. And she's highly educated and cultured. Sad for people like that to be living as they do. And it isn't their fault. They've worked hard enough. Just lost everything."

That little story didn't seem to bear out my contention, that anyone with a small amount of capital and the will to work might make good in New Zealand. Yet I feel sure that I'm right; though perhaps added to the will to work, one must have initiative, and common sense, and must not be called upon to suffer more than one's due share of "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."

Although, as I've said, the Upper Buller Gorge is not as magnificent, from a scenic point of view, as the lower portion, it is really very fine. The road swings round big bluffs heavily timbered, and fringed with tree-ferns; with the cloudy-jade streak of the Buller River far below.

On my excursion to the Maud Creek to visit the gold-miners' camp, I'd seen the point where the Buller River leaves Lake Rotoiti in a foaming swirl of waters. Here, along a rocky cavernous bed, it flows with even greater depth and power. The gigantic rocks about its channel are in places coloured to a lovely, pale rose shade. It was at one of these spots, my driver informed me, that a new mining company intended to use divers to try and obtain gold. I remembered what our guide on the

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Maud Creek had told us. "The Buller and the Howard are full of gold."

"The divers were going to start work to-day," said my driver. "But they found there was too much equipment to bring up, so they've had to delay things a bit."

Evidently this wasn't my lucky day. First Bill had disappointed me, and now I'd missed seeing the divers at work.

"There's a big dredge being brought up to Murchison too, but that's not commencing operations for a week or so."

Murchison is a small town on a wide, river-threaded and hill-enclosed plain. We stopped here for luncheon, and then went on again; climbing over the Hope Saddle to come down upon the Waimea Plains; and so, by smiling apple-orchards, hop-fields, and farms, through the little villages whose names I love—Hope, Brightwater, Spring Grove—to "Sunny Nelson" once again.

It is since I wrote of Nelson in this diary of my tour that I have been reading Anthony Trollope on the same subject; and as he seems to have felt, sixty years ago, exactly what I felt when I wrote about the town, I can't resist quoting him. Perhaps it was from Trollope's comments on the town that Nelson acquired the title "Sleepy Hollow." He says:

"There was certainly a sleepiness about the place when regarded with commercial eyes. But, though sleepy, it seemed to be happy. I was there about the beginning of September—a winter month—and nothing could be sweeter or more pleasant than the air. The summer heats are not great, and all English fruits, and grass, and shrubs grow at Nelson with more than English profusion. Every house was neat and pretty. The site is, I think, as lovely as that of



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.

NELSON : AUSTRALIAN BLUE-GUMS FRAME A PICTURE OF ONE PORTION OF THE TOWN

(To face p. 189,

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any town I ever saw. Merely to breathe there, and to dream, and to look around was a delight."

Well, that's exactly what I've said—perhaps not in quite such well-chosen words—already. I was glad to be back in dear little Nelson for a few golden days. Do they always have this quiet, perfect weather? No, I must be truthful. We had one showery afternoon, and another showery morning. But it cleared afterwards, and we motored out through Apple Land—by miles of orchards sloping to the sea—to have our picnic tea at Ruby Bay. The country, with the red apples in the orchards, and the first powdering of gold amongst the willows and the poplars, looked lovely. Lovely, too, did the town appear next morning, when a friend drove me round the surrounding hills to view it. It was a perfect day. We stopped on Britannia Heights to look far to the right over the beach and the blue waters of the bay to the sheltering mountains. "When the snow's on them in winter, the colour is too marvellous," said my friend. The great trunks of tall Australian blue-gums framed a picture of one portion of the town, below us to the left.

There are palm-planted streets in Nelson; and a lovely walk, close to the town, along the banks of the Maitai River—winding into the green hills—to the bathing-pool.

When I left Nelson for my night journey by sea to Wellington, there was an ocean-going steamer loading apples at the wharf. Cases and cases and cases of apples! If only they could speak—those Jonathans, and Sturmers, and Delicious, what tales they might tell in a thousand British homes of the sunshine and blue skies, the soft green hills and the shining bays, of Sleepy Hollow! Perhaps it's just as well they're dumb, those apples. If hordes of energetic settlers arrive, Nelson may lose its tranquil charm.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BEAUTIFUL, THE WEIRD, AND THE WONDERFUL, SEEN BETWEEN WELLINGTON AND AUCKLAND

WELLINGTON is very like the little girl, who, when she was good, was very, very good, and when she was bad she was *horrid*! On the day of my arrival Wellington was decidedly horrid. The wind blew, and the rain rained. Wellington at her worst!

Yet on the following day the weather was glorious. Wellington at her best and loveliest!

My intention it was to leave Wellington by the 2 p.m. train in order to spend a few days at Château Tongariro in National Park. Alas for the schemes of mice and men; to say nothing of the projects of a somewhat travel-battered woman, struggling, with an almost pathetic, Casabianca-like fidelity, to carry out her publishers' injunctions, and to "see New Zealand from end to end." The morning newspaper in Wellington announced the fact that there had been a cloud-burst over Mount Ruapehu—upon whose slopes is built that amazingly christened caravansarai, Château Tongariro—and in consequence of this a bridge had been washed away, and the Château was isolated.

How then was poor Casabianca to remain standing on the burning deck, or rather, to reach the destined goal? Doing a lightning change from the "proud though childlike form" of Casabianca, to that of the youth who bore "'mid snow and ice a banner with the strange device, Excelsior," I determined to go forward.

At the Tourist Department I was informed that



LOVELY EGMONT, THAT SOLITARY ALP

(N.Z. Government Publicity, Photo)

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even if passenger traffic to the Château were not possible, I could get accommodation that night at a country boarding-house, seven miles from the big hotel, and await there the mending of the ruined bridge. I really hadn't been very anxious to visit the Château until all these difficulties arose. Now I was consumed by a burning desire to reach the place.

In travelling directly north on the Main Trunk, Wellington-Auckland line, I was missing out Taranaki entirely; seeing nothing of the old historic battle-grounds of the Maori wars of 1860-69—the battle-fields which are now transformed into peaceful dairy farms; catching no glimpse of lovely Egmont—that solitary Alp rising in a sweeping curve of beauty from the plain—and paying no visit to the seaside town of New Plymouth (founded in 1842 by settlers from Devon) one of the most picturesque and charming of the bigger provincial towns.

I wasn't even doing the famous tourist trip down the Wanganui River. Seeing New Zealand "from end to end" seemed to be my fixed idea, with very little turning to the right or to the left. The flourishing town of Wanganui was to remain unvisited also. To many parents and young men throughout the Dominion, "Wanganui" merely stands for the college—one of the chief secondary schools of New Zealand. I feel I must apologize to Wanganui and to the whole Taranaki Province for my neglect, but I've seen—and admired—all these places in the past; so I dare say Taranakians and Wanganuians (if they ever give the matter a thought) will forgive me for my sins of omission.

In the ordinary course of events, I should have reached National Park railway station shortly after 11 p.m. and the Château half an hour later. It was midnight, however, before the train came to a halt at National Park, and I collected my luggage and took my seat in

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one of the waiting cars. There were other tourists, who had to thank the cloud-burst for a disorganization of their plans, rushing distractedly about this small wayside station in search of baggage; but at last the three cars conveying us all to the "private hotel," set off along a deserted country road, lit only by our headlights, and the stars sparkling brilliantly in a clear frosty sky. There is no township at National Park. One store, a few railway workers' huts, a small school, and this boarding-house, comprise the entire settlement.

It really was rather like a scene out of a play when we arrived at the one-storied wooden building (which, I see, has since been burned down) where we were destined to spend the night. There were a couple of French travellers, half a dozen English tourists, and myself. Our bewildered landlady kept asking: "But did you send a wire reserving rooms?" as we poured into the little dimly lit hall, from the frosty darkness of the verandah. Eventually, however, she managed to find accommodation for us all, and each provided with a lighted candle, we made our way to bed.

I hadn't realized that here we were on the highest portion of the North Island, some thousands of feet above sea-level; but I did realize that the night was decidedly cold. I'd asked if I might get my hot-water bottle filled, but was told there wasn't any hot water, and that the kitchen fire was out. The whole place was beautifully clean, and we were indeed lucky to find shelter here; for in spite of the somewhat chilly night I passed, a bed was infinitely preferable to a seat in the train.

We were in ignorance of the fact that the cloud-burst was a good deal more serious than was at first supposed, and that the whole traffic of the Main Trunk line was disorganized. Farther north than National Park there was a big "wash-out" on the line, and the poor railway

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passengers—travelling both to, and from, Auckland—were marooned.

The occupants of the train we had left were told they must wait in their carriages till 3 a.m., when they would be picked up by a relief train coming from the north. Later we heard that they had obediently waited (they certainly hadn't any choice in the matter); had changed into the relief train; proceeded on their journey; and then, after about an hour, come to a standstill until 11 a.m. next morning. To make matters worse, the spot at which they halted was completely in the wilds, so that they had no chance of obtaining even a sandwich or a cup of tea. No "stop for refreshments" this!

In the meantime we were comfortably lodged, with good food, and a kind, though rather harassed landlady.

In the brilliant sunshine of next morning I had my first view of the wide stretch of empty, tussock-covered country, with the volcanic peaks of Ruapehu, Tongariro, and Ngauruhoe, rising majestically from the plain. Not a breath of wind stirred the golden tussock and the flax; about the ridged lava-ridden cone of Ruapehu lay the snow. The mountain was a lovely sight on this bright morning. For Ruapehu's sides are painted with great masses of coloured rock—a fox-glove pink—and in the scarred and riven gullies, above the lower belt of green birch forest, are shadows, mauve and blue. Although there are many warm lakes, steam blow-holes, and boiling mineral springs scattered about amongst the time-worn craters, and upon the slopes of these ancient volcanoes, Ngauruhoe is the only one of the three peaks which to-day may be considered active. And even the fires far down below the great funnel-like vent of Ngauruhoe are slowly dying. Yet this morning, when I saw it first, a faint haze of fawny smoke rose from the mountain's peak up into the pure blue of the sky.

These mountains—sacred and tapu to the Maoris—

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were originally the property of a great Maori chief, Te Heu Heu, and were by him presented as a gift to the Government of New Zealand in 1887. As Mr. James Cowan says:

“No grander public gift was ever made than this bestowal of so magnificent a region on the people, safe for all time from private exploitation. None but Te Heu Heu and his tribe, indeed, were able to exercise so grand a right of endowment; for it was his priestly ancestor Ngatoto-i-Rangi who first ascended and named the sacred mountain of Tongariro, six centuries ago. . . . Te Heu Heu's original gift was an area of six thousand five hundred acres comprising the upper parts of the three mountains; since then the area of the park has been extended very largely, until it now covers a hundred and forty-five thousand acres, including some beautiful forest.”

It is strange to think that Te Heu Heu's father—one of the greatest of the Maori chiefs—was bitterly opposed to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, and by his power over the Arawa tribe prevented them from signing also. He spoke as follows to the Arawa tribe assembled at Rotorua to discuss the treaty: “I will never consent to the Mana (sovereignty) of a woman resting upon these islands. I myself will be a chief of these isles. Therefore begone! Heed this, O Arawa. Here is your line of action, the line for the Arawa canoe. Do not consent, or we shall become slaves for this woman, Queen Victoria.” Yet his son, forty-seven years later, gives as a free gift this great portion of his inheritance! I wonder if any other colonizing nation in the whole history of the world has had a greater tribute paid to them than this!

My morning was spent wandering about in the neighbourhood of the one-storied wooden hotel; basking in

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the sunshine; and admiring the view. All the tourists, with the exception of one man and myself, had departed, in service and private cars, directly after breakfast. Some had given up the idea of visiting the Château and had gone on to Lake Taupo; others were making their way to the Wanganui River. I simply hung about the hostelry, waiting, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up.

Something did turn up. After luncheon, having strolled along the tussock-bordered road to the railway station, I found that the Auckland train, delayed for about eighteen hours, was turning up. One passenger for the Château alighted. And then, strange to say, the service car for the Château turned up also. I think it was on its way back from the House-boat on the Wanganui River. At any rate the driver brought news that the river had risen twenty-five feet; and that the tourists staying on the House-boat had watched the ruins of three bridges sweep down the swollen torrent. Two of these bridges came from the Whakapapanui River separating us from the Château; but we knew that men were busy repairing the damage; and the driver of the Château car, after some conversation over the station-master's telephone, announced that he could take us on. The bridge wasn't entirely rebuilt; no cars could cross it yet. It would be necessary for us to walk across the unplanked foundations, and join a waiting car on the farther bank.

In the mellow afternoon sunshine the young man who had alighted from the Auckland train—a particularly attractive New Zealand lad, most of whose relatives and friends I found I knew—and I, bowled along across the flax and tussock-covered plain towards the mountains. Our road, after about five miles, turned to the right through a rising avenue of birch forest, and our car pulled up beside the ruined bridge.

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A gang of men were working busily; some of them were of the Public Works Department, but most of them prisoners from the Waikune Prison Camp, and from the Hautu Prison Farm. One of the prisoners gallantly held my hand to steady my progress as I tottered somewhat fearfully—though of course there wasn't the slightest danger—along the horizontal trunk of a great kahikatea laid from bank to bank above the roaring torrent.

These prison camps and farms were instituted for first offenders and for men who would benefit by an open-air life, some years ago; and the results have been astonishingly good. The men are on parole on what is known as "the Honour System." Often the prisoners work out on the farm, and in the forests felling trees for fencing "posts," and so on, without a warder. The men are put on their honour to get out a certain number of posts per day, and usually the number is exceeded. Very few attempts have been made at escape, and no prisoner has ever succeeded in getting clear away. It is said that nearly ninety-nine per cent. of the men who are discharged from the farm make good afterwards. The Hautu Prison Farm is of swamp and tussock country, and consists of thirty to fifty thousand acres, extending from the south-west end of Lake Taupo to near the foot of Mount Tongariro. The vegetables grown on this fertilized pumice country are remarkably fine; and I understand that the flower gardens are of great beauty. Dairying is done; sheep and cattle bred and fattened; and "new country" is being continually brought into cultivation.

This seems to be one of the experiments in prison reform which might well be imitated by other countries.

Here at the Whakapapanui bridge the prisoners had worked with a will from dawn till dark; and a few hours

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after we crossed, car traffic was possible to and from the Château.

There were two cars drawn up on the opposite bank of the stream when we arrived: one waiting for us, and the other owned by the manager of the Château, Mr. Cobbe—a son of the present Minister of Justice—who had come down with his wife to watch the progress being made with the new bridge.

“Do you know that you’re actually the first person for three days to reach us here,” exclaimed Mrs. Cobbe as she greeted me. “The river has been up fifteen feet. Right over the banks. It was too high for anyone to get across even in a cage on a wire. I wish we’d brought a camera down with us to snap you.”

It was indeed a good subject for a snap. Certainly not my craven crossing, but the scene itself: the men working on the almost completed bridge; the lovely background of mountain birch, toi-toi, and flax; the stream dashing over the rocks, and great uprooted trees—debris of the flood—below. But I learnt afterwards that we couldn’t have taken a picture which included the men working. All prisoners are ordered into the bush if it is necessary, or desirable, to take photographs. It wouldn’t be fair to them, in after life, to have a record made of their imprisonment in this way.

Into the waiting car we stepped; and up to the Château—along a road, bounded on one side by the forest-fringed banks of the Whakapapanui, and opening on the other to the rising slopes of the emerald green golf-course—we drove. Above the shattered craters of Tongariro was the lovely upward sweep of Ngauruhoe’s tent-like form, outlined against the sky.

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh mine aid,” said my young friend suddenly. “I always think of that—it’s a marvellous line, somehow—when I get amongst the mountains.” And he went on

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to tell me that at his station homestead his chief hobby was planting trees. "I love trees," he explained. (I'm bound to admit that I found later he loved many other things—including pretty girls, cocktails, and cabaret parties—but I liked him enormously for his frank confession of a love of beauty, and of his native land.)

The Château, built here on the slopes of Ruapehu, in the heart of a vast wilderness, and only seven miles from a (more or less) active volcano, seems almost as absurd as its name. Not from the point of view of its super-excellence as an hotel, but perhaps *for* that very reason. Here is a great five-storied building, fitted up and run as beautifully as a first-class New York hotel. It seems at least twenty years ahead of its time. But perhaps it isn't. Perhaps tourists will come in hordes to visit it—to revel in the marvellous ski-ing in winter, or to be entranced, as I was, by its summer beauty. This was a place I'd decided wasn't worth visiting! And when I reached it, I knew that I should hate to leave it.

The porter who took my luggage apologized for the lift being out of order. The lift! How incongruous that sounded, here in the heart of a huge, unpeopled solitude. No more incongruous, however, than my bedroom, with its deep-rose shaded carpet, big satin covered bed, white-tiled private bathroom, telephone, writing-table, easy chairs, silk-shaded reading-lamps, and beautifully finished, inlaid furniture. I've heard friends say, "The Château is absolutely ridiculous. People would far rather have a place that is less luxurious—more of a camp—for winter sports."

My friends may be right; but though I realize that the extraordinary juxtaposition of the ultra-civilized with these primeval solitudes produces a certain sense of amazement, I didn't personally object to it. To be

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quite candid, I revelled in the luxury of the Château. The great windows of the lounge, and the big dining-room, frame pictures the beauty of which almost takes one's breath away: on one side Ngauruhoe; on the other the birch-bushed hills; behind, the snowdrifts amongst the forest and the coloured rocks of Ruapehu; and in front that glorious wide sweep over the golf-links to the far, far, rolling hills. This is the highest altitude—nearly four thousand feet above sea-level—at which grass has been grown in New Zealand; and Mr. Cobbe told me that he was laughed at when he first attempted to establish turf, suitable for golf-links, there. The grassed fairways and greens are well established now, and not all the heavy-lying snow in winter will destroy the sward.

Stepping out on to the balcony beyond my room that evening, I longed for words to paint the beauty that I saw, and knew that my poor pen could never find them. It is abominably tantalizing to be conscious of a sense of beauty and at the same time conscious of an extremely limited vocabulary. The only thing I can do is to set down in a sort of photographic fashion what my eyes beheld. The sun had sunk behind the dark, bushed ridge to my left—a ridge which flanks the tennis-courts; and against the level golden clouds the tops of the birches were etched in black. Forward, across the wide emerald sweep of turf in front of the hotel—beyond the emerald, sloping fairways of the golf-course, and the fawny ridges of "the rough"—lay line upon line of blue hills. They were like waves of a wind-swept ocean stretching out to the horizon, but waves that had suddenly been held rigid at the moment when they rose to break in foam.

A nearer, greener hillside shut out part of this tossing sea; then came a still more vivid line of blue—the level outline of a distant range. And full to the east, rising

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above a gentle slope of sun-dried tussock; above a belt of darker bush; above the tumbled mass of Tongariro's broken craters—calm and serene, the cone of Ngauruhoe catching the last fire of the setting sun, and bathed in a radiance of purple rose.

Yet, even as I watched, the colour changed. The mountain lost its glow, but the sky behind it gained in bright effulgence. Soon all the base of Ngauruhoe, and the outlines of the lesser, shattered mounts about her, were a dull, soft green against a vivid, lovely pink; while higher, the cone rose to a blue sky.

Some minutes later, and all the vividness of colour was in the west. The clouds above the black crests of the birch trees had turned from gold to fuchsia-red, and Ngauruhoe's lovely outline, rising so strongly and clearly up to heaven, was grey-green against a steel-blue sky—a sky in which one silver star was gleaming. It was all so still. The only sound was the rush of the hidden river, and the bleating of a sheep far down on a green fairway.

I suppose it is the great height, four thousand feet above sea-level, and the wide panorama, that produce the sense of peace one feels at National Park. Here is the place for a rest cure if ever there was one!

But it is not always so restful! At holiday time—particularly in the winter—I understand that peace is the last thing the guests are looking for.

Miss Cobbe was my guide up the bush road to the skiing ground next day. We had to clamber over logs across the stream, high up in the birch forest; for here another bridge was washed away, and men were busy building a new one.

It was a glorious afternoon; and through a frame of green birch forest we saw the outcrops of pinky-mauve rock between the snowdrifts on Ruapehu's shoulders, and the whole mountain standing out boldly against the

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blue sky. Very lovely it was. Very lovely, too, looking back through a gap in the forest at Ngauruhoe.

"Coming home from ski-ing on a clear winter evening we always try to get to this spot just after sunset," said Miss Cobbe. "Of course Ngauruhoe's entirely snow-covered all through the winter, and it looks absolutely beautiful when the sun sets. Seeing it, rose-red against the sky, through the green trees, is wonderful."

She went on to tell me of the English Public School boys' visit to the Château; of the trout they'd caught in this badly behaved stream, which had so lately washed away its bridges; told me, too, of the marvellous hot springs on Tongariro, twenty miles away. "They say the waters there are better than any others in New Zealand, but of course there's no road up yet—you've got to walk over three miles after you leave your car—and there's no accommodation except an empty iron hut. The Ketetahi hot river comes down the valley from the mineral springs, and for years the Maoris have known of its curative powers. It's rather black and nasty looking, but they don't mind that. A little while ago they carried one of the tribe—an old Maori woman—up there. She couldn't move hand or foot. All her joints were rigid with rheumatism, but she was able to walk down the mountain in three weeks' time."

We passed within six miles of this thermal region in the Taupo service car, a few days later. Behind me in the car two Englishwomen discussed the possibility—or rather the extreme probability—of a great spa being established here in the future. I've heard since, a description of the place from two Americans who visited it. They hadn't bargained for so hard a walk when they set out up the mountain-side. It took them over five hours to accomplish the journey, the climb and the descent to where they'd left their car. "But it was well worth it," they said. "There's nothing at Rotorua to

touch the marvels there on Tongariro. Geysers, and boiling mud-holes, and huge steam vents. You can hear the roar of them for miles."

It is a very lovely drive from the Château to Taupo. And I had a lovely day on which to see it. It seems almost unnecessary to mention the sunshine. In my whole tour of nine weeks I had no more than three really wet days. A few showers at night, and in the morning, but only for three days was the sun completely obscured.

On the morning when we left the Château for Taupo, though the sun was warm, the air was as sparkling and as exhilarating as champagne. (Well, perhaps, not *quite* so exhilarating!) The road runs at first over the tussock plains, with clumps of flax catching the sunlight on the glistening surface of their sword-like leaves, and etching against blue distances their big branched seed-pods. Heather has been planted amongst the golden tussock, and is spreading rapidly. Its pinky-purple blossom certainly adds to the beauty of the landscape, but one can't help wondering if it will eventually follow the example of the gorse, the blackberry, the fox-glove, and the briar, all of which since their introduction, have cost New Zealanders thousands and thousands of pounds, and are likely to cost more like millions before—if ever—they are eradicated.

Along by Lake Roto-aira (a lake reserved for fishing to the Tongariro Maoris) we came upon a few gangs of men working on the roads. Most of these were from the prison farms, but the men on these farms never wear convict dress, and so would appear to the occupants of passing cars as labourers belonging to the Public Works Department. Lake Roto-aira, bounded by bushed hills, sparkled bluely in the sunshine; while some miles away to the eastward lay the Kaimanawa Ranges. We had already seen a few of the wild horses which roam about the Tongariro Plains; but our driver informed us that

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there were many great mobs of them, as well as thousands of deer, wild pigs, and goats, in the Kaimanawas. He pointed out to us also, a little brown creek amongst the raupo reeds, which he assured us was the Wanganui River!

It seemed hard to believe that here, in this baby stream, we looked upon the starting-point of the river which for length of navigable waters (one hundred and forty miles) and for wild beauty holds supremacy over all other rivers in New Zealand. At a small wayside hotel close to Tokaanu, before we crossed the sparkling waters of the Tongariro River, dashing over its shingly bed into Lake Taupo, our car pulled up.

"Any of you ladies like morning tea?" asked the driver.

I murmured that I didn't want any. The two English tourists in the back of the car refused quickly, and with an unmistakable note of scorn in their voices.

"Well, if you don't mind, I'll have some," remarked the driver; and descended from the car.

"Now, if we'd been Australians or New Zealanders we'd have sprung out without pausing for a second," remarked one of the Englishwomen; "but English people are so different."

Evidently they took me for an English visitor, like themselves; but I really couldn't sell my birthright like that for a cup of tea, or rather the lack of it, so I immediately changed my mind. "I think I'll have some, after all," I remarked. And entering the hotel I ordered tea, which I didn't want, and drank it, feeling that at least I hadn't gone back on my fellow country-women. I'd hoisted the morning tea ensign as a symbol of my nationality. No one who is proud of their own flag wants to sail under false colours.

Crossing the bridge which spans the sparkling Tongariro, where anglers say the finest trout-fishing in the

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world is to be found, and passing the spot where the Duke and Duchess of York had their fishing camp, we ran along the margin of Lake Taupo for thirty miles. Far out the wide waters of the lake, the largest in New Zealand, were a sheen of pale blue and silver. On Jellicoe Point the tall spires of the poplars were reflected in the green, mirror-like water near the shores. Round the beaches of clear white sand, in every bay, grow the tall and lacy kowhai trees. In the spring these trees are a mass of golden blossom—something like laburnum, but of a deeper shade—and the trees are, of course, of much greater stature than the laburnum shrubs. Seeing these hundreds of kowhai trees leaning over the blue lake, one realizes more fully the beauty of Kipling's verse, which, in "The Flowers," deals with New Zealand.

"Buy my English posies!

Here's your choice unsold!

Buy a blood-red myrtle-bloom!

Buy the kowhai's gold

Flung for gift on Taupo's face,

Sign that spring is come!

Buy my clinging myrtle

And I'll give you back your home!

Broom behind the windy town; pollen o' the pine;

Bell-bird in the leafy deep where the rats twine;

Fern above the saddle-bow, flax upon the plain;

*Take the flower and turn the hour, and kiss your love
again!"*

Under the shade of some of these kowhai trees, and under willows, are fishing camps. We stopped at one or two to deliver letters and stores; and the service-car driver took orders from the anglers for the butcher and the baker, though not, I think, for the candlestick-maker. The camps looked perfectly delightful. We

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could see the chairs and tables through the open canvas of the tents. There were swinging hammocks under the trees, and an outdoor table, fishing-rods and waders; a safe hanging near the fire-place of the cooking tent. Green trees above you—blue lake before you—and sunshine everywhere—who couldn't be happy spending a holiday here?

The most glorious view of the lake we had was from the Waihahanui beach. From here we looked back. Close beside us between the road and the lake was a yard-wide creek coloured to a deep crimson with some water-weed from which grew tall, brown-headed raupo reeds; above this was the high bank of silver sand, crowned with red-berried briars, toi-toi, and flax; then the deep blue water of the lake; and more than forty miles away, the mauve and purple mass of Ruapehu, with its snowy peak clear-cut against the sky. The varied colours, the wide sweep of the water, and the far mountains, made up a picture to be held in memory for ever.

There was another view of Taupo that I loved. One that I saw from the balcony outside my bedroom window at the comfortable Terraces Hotel. One looks here across manuka-covered country, and the tops of young green pines, over the blue water, to Ruapehu, fifty miles away. Taupo is really very beautiful; and I am told that when the broom that grows beside the shores is out in blossom, the brilliance of the yellow seen against the blue water is magnificent.

It is only six miles on from Taupo to Wairakei—the wonder valley. On the road there our car stopped at the Huka Falls, and we got out and walked along the gorge. The Huka Falls are only forty feet in height, but the great volume of water of the Waikato River—Taupo's main outlet—pouring through a narrow, rocky cleft in the hills, 'gives an impression of enormous

power. The speed of the water as it comes through the fern-hung gorge is very great; and the colour, as the torrent churns and foams down over the falls, and boils into the pool below, is of lovely greens and blues. From these falls is taken the power which serves with electricity the Wairakei Geyser House Hotel a few miles farther on.

Driving into the big, tree-planted grounds of this hotel, I found it difficult to believe that I was within a mile of one of the most marvellous thermal valleys in the world. There are tennis-courts amongst the pines and poplars and cabbage trees; a tree-fern shaded log cabin; and many annexes—built bungalow fashion—for extra sleeping accommodation, in the gardens. Coloured electric lights are strung overhead; and when we drove up in time for luncheon there were nearly a dozen cars parked on the drive before the main building.

The marvels to be seen in the neighbourhood of Wairakei are far too numerous to be inspected in one day. But, having stayed at Taupo, I had very little time to spare for Wairakei. A few minutes in one of the hotel cars took us up to the valley; and here a party of us wandered round in charge of a guide. One wouldn't wish to go alone! From every bank and cranny amongst the manuka and fern-covered hillsides steam is issuing. It is queer to see the ferns and native shrubs evidently enjoying this weird and steamy atmosphere. We saw the great Wairakei Geyser throwing high its column of boiling water to the wooded cliffs above; the champagne pool, where the cliffs and the rocks have taken on all sorts of colours. The pinky-red clay with which the Maoris used to paint themselves for war-dances is everywhere. But there are deep pools whose encircling rocks are orange-coloured; and chocolate mud-holes boiling sullenly. We saw the dragon's mouth—a geyser which issues from a petrified tree-trunk and looks

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most uncanny; the Eagle's Nest, where silica deposits on sticks and stones have turned them all to something resembling coral of a pale rose-beige shade. We sat in a tree-fern shaded grotto (the afternoon sun was very hot, and the steam of the valley made the atmosphere still hotter) to watch the Prince of Wales Feathers Geyser play; to watch the "dancing rock" thrown up in its boiling pool, at regular intervals; and we wandered on to see the boiling waterfalls. Every half-hour—to the very minute—a geyser at the top of high pinky terraces boils up, and over the coral-like steps descends the cascade of scalding waters.

Yet I think the most marvellous sight to be seen in the neighbourhood of Wairakei is the great Karapiti blow-hole. We saw this at night. Leaving the hotel in a car we drove for some miles along a dark and lonely road; and then, descending from our vehicle, proceeded on foot down a manuka-covered hillside, walking behind the guide, who flashed an electric torch to show us the irregularities of the track. It was very weird, walking in single file like this under the wide, starry sky, with the great roaring voice of the yet unseen blow-hole increasing in intensity every moment. As we drew nearer to Karapiti, the great column of steam became visible in the darkness; and soon we were close beside it. There—under the stars—our Maori guide told us the legends which his people had woven about this fumarole. Karapiti, known to the natives for five hundred years, was regarded by them as a species of god. The steam column never varies, never ceases. It issues from an aperture only nine inches across, and has a pressure of a hundred and eighty pounds to the square inch. No one knows from what depth it comes; but it must travel an enormous distance, for there is no moisture left in the steam when it comes roaring through the narrow aperture, which acts—like the upright spout of a gargan-

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tuan kettle—as one of the great safety-valves of all this thermal region.

After his little explanatory lecture, the guide proceeded to illuminate the scene for us. On the end of an iron rod, stuck in the hillside, he placed a sack soaked in kerosene. Putting a match to this, we were provided with an enormous, flaming torch, by which to view the column of steam. To demonstrate the power of the blow-hole, he threw big, empty kerosene tins over the aperture. The tins were tossed high in the air like corks. Rather dangerous, this performance, I thought; for the tins came down in all directions, not at all like corks, but as what they were—most alarmingly heavy missiles!

After this display, we were instructed, each in turn, to step up to the menacing, roaring steam vent, and endeavour to hold across it a light plank of wood. Of course it was impossible to do this. The plank was carried up above our heads, however much we struggled to keep it level.

Then came the crowning display. The whole flaming sack—like an early Christian being thrown to the lions—was pitched at Karapiti. The steam column seized it, grew red with flaming anger, tore the sack into a thousand blazing fragments, and tossed them to the sky. It seemed now that we were gazing on a raging furnace, with great globes of fire thrown rapidly aloft. The ascending steam had taken on the character of a violently agitated column of smoke, illuminated with fiery balls; and the never ceasing, never varying, deafening roar of Karapiti added to the wildness of the scene. It was indeed a marvellous spectacle, and one which no visitors to Wairakei should miss.

I was to view another wonder the next evening; a wonder which has been described as the “eighth wonder of the world”; the glow-worm cave at Waitomo. The Waitomo Caves are situated in what was once known as

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the King Country. This portion of the North Island was occupied by the Maoris at the end of the Maori wars in 1864; and though there were many so-called rebels amongst the chiefs and tribes settled in the wild hills of this unexplored country, the New Zealand Government wisely allowed the natives to live there in peace. The Maoris had elected Tawhiao to be their king. "If the white race have a queen, why should we not have a king?" they said.

There is, to me, something very pathetic in the advice given to Tawhiao by the Maori prophet, Te Whiti. "Proclaim this to all the tribes. Lay down your weapons. Be wise. I am going home to Kuiti to weep over my lost brothers. Though the whites exterminate the trunk, they cannot pull out the roots. Avoid all sale and lease of land. Permit no European to cross the border of this, our last free Maoriland. We want no roads or schools from them. Let them do with their own land as they will."

The passage of time has healed old wounds, and roads for the Maoris (and the white settlers) and schools for both are scattered far and wide to-day over the beautiful hills and valleys of the King Country. It is sad to think that most of the trouble between the two races might have been avoided had they understood one another more clearly. Now, however, the Maoris are in no doubt as to the Pakehas' goodwill, and no more loyal subjects of King George exist to-day than the brave Maori people.

Fifty years ago a white man entered the boundaries of the King Country at his own risk. Andreas Reischek gives an account of his journey into the King Country in 1882, but it was a journey fraught with much peril, and it was only through the friendship and personal interest of a great Maori chief that he was able to accomplish it.

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The Waitomo Caves were discovered and first explored in 1879 by the late Mr. Fred Mace—an intrepid surveyor. The caves consist of a series of great halls and chambers in the heart of wooded hills. A river, winding its way down the valley, suddenly disappears amongst the tree-ferns and the native bush of the hillside; and it was floating in a canoe on this river that Mr. Mace pushed through the forest growth, and entered into this underground fairyland of stalagmites, stalactites and glow-worms!

The glow-worms give to Waitomo its claim to fame. In other parts of the world there may be caves of greater grandeur and beauty, but the species of glow-worm known at Waitomo is found in no other portion of the globe. I think it is a mistake for the New Zealand Government to label their big, commodious hotel at Waitomo as a hostel. I expected to find a sort of hikers' camp instead of a great comfortable hotel.

After dinner on the night of my arrival we were marshalled to the equipment room to put on the thick boots necessary for our excursion. A short walk down the hillside, with electric lights gleaming amongst the tree-ferns, brought us to the entrance of the caves. This is high above the waterway by which Mr. Mace first entered; and this rocky portal in the hillside was then so densely covered with bush that it was not discovered until later. All the caves—with the exception of the glow-worm cave—are lit by electricity. The stalagmites and stalactites have taken lovely forms; and the lighting has enhanced the beauty of this great studio of nature's sculptural art.

Before entering the glow-worm grotto we passed through the Blanket Chamber; saw the Organ Loft; and descended to the great Cathedral Hall. This is really a magnificent cave, of great height, shaped with a massive dome, and showing in the most extraordinary fashion

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different examples of ecclesiastical architecture. From this hall we descended still farther, down by steep stairways and halls and corridors, to the underground river level.

When we were all gathered at the head of the steps leading down to the water, our guide informed us that the least noise made disturbed the glow-worms, and caused them to at once extinguish their little lamps; we must not speak at all. He further enjoined us to keep our hands within the boat, for the passage between upstanding stalagmites was often very narrow. The glow-worms, he told us, were not phosphorescent like the ordinary glow-worms, but produced some sort of chemical incandescence.

The worm is like a minute strip of silver. It lets down numerous cobwebby, sticky filaments about six to ten inches in length, and with these strands it catches the tiny flies and insects upon which it feeds. I'm sorry to say that after the dear little glow-worm has turned into a cocoon, and then into a very little fly, it serves as food for its friends and relatives, and is greedily eaten. Having during its glow-worm life made use itself of these filament snares, it really ought to have sense enough to avoid them! It hasn't. It lives, lights the cave, and dies in order that others may go on providing light. Personally I'm very thankful for its stupidity. I hope the supply of glow-worms at Waitomo will never fail, for the huge cave through which we passed on that underground river is a thing of marvellous beauty.

We stepped into the boat in silence, and in silence set out on the dark, mysterious waters. The boat is hauled forward by means of wires suspended from the walls of the cave; and only a little lap of water on our bow, and the changing contour of the magically lit roof, revealed to us the fact that we were moving. Myriads and myriads of glittering points of light surrounded us,

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on roof and walls, and were glitteringly reflected on the dark surface of the water. The outline of the boat and the stalagmites we passed were now dimly visible.

I've heard the roof of the great cavern described as a sky, glittering with stars. I suppose to everyone a different simile occurs. My particular illusion was that we were passing under a great trellised roof through which a very brilliant moon was shining. Bunches of grapes and vine leaves hung downwards from the trellis. These must, of course, have been stalactites seen dimly in the radiance. But the illusion was complete. All thought of an actual roof, and glow-worms, was gone. The moonlight was pouring down through a vineyard trellis, to us below.

Our boat took us to the entrance of the cavern through which Mr. Mace first floated. Near to this entrance the glow-worms had dimmed their lamps; for electric lights were set amongst the tree-ferns of the river valley, and glow-worms object to competition. It was very lovely here: the light shining through the fern-clad cavern's entrance before us, showing up clearly the shining water and the bushed cliffs of the portal before us; and behind us the glow-worms in the long reaches of the sparkling cave.

I wonder what Mr. Mace thought when his canoe first penetrated into the heart of these enchanted hills! He must almost have believed that some of the Maori legends of fairies in the bush were true, and that he had surprised the little people at a moment when their halls were illuminated for some festival.

Back by other winding ways our boat was hauled. We were still silent—more or less—for I couldn't help hearing a whisper occasionally behind me of: "Marvelous!" or: "Too beautiful!"

Waitomo is one of the natural wonders of New Zealand, in which no tourist has ever been known to

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be disappointed. In fact at the hotel (I really can't call it a hostel) two Australians told me that if they'd seen nothing else but this, it alone was worth the money they'd spent in journeying to New Zealand.

There were no more wonders to be seen on my journey on to Auckland, and nothing that was weird; but there was much that was beautiful. The Waikato district, through which the railway passes, is literally a land flowing with milk and honey; for there are innumerable herds of dairy cows, and many big apiaries. There are vine-growing districts also; and excellent New Zealand wine is made at Te Kauwhata.

With milk, honey, and wine, it seems rather incongruous to mix coal. But nevertheless the Waikato coal-mines add considerably to the wealth of the Dominion.

Hamilton, the largest provincial town in the Auckland district, is built on the Waikato plains, beside the smooth reaches of the wide Waikato River. Its parks and roads are well planted with limes and planes, and oaks and silver birches; and the town itself has a prosperous, happy air. As it is the centre of a big dairying industry, it has enjoyed a long lease of good fortune. Even with butter "slumping," the town is still well off. I saw more good-looking cars to the square yard, parked along its wide, flower-ornamented main street, than I'd seen in any other town in New Zealand.

It was in Hamilton that I was driven by a very interesting taxi-man. He was more interesting to me, of course, by reason of the fact that his history supported my contention that a man with the will to work and a certain amount of adaptability and common sense can make good in this country.

"It isn't so much ability you need," he remarked sagely, "but stickability." That, naturally, is true in any part of the world. He went on to tell me his story. "I come from the Fen Country—Norwich—

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Peterborough—I know all that part of England well. I came to New Zealand in 1912. Didn't know a soul here, and I landed with just eighteen pence in my pocket. I did have some letters of introduction to two farmers certainly, and they looked after me for a week or two till I got a job. I worked, and I saved a little every week, and then the war came. I married before the Expeditionary Force left New Zealand, but my wife was in a good job, and with my pay and hers we didn't do so badly. I managed to start her in a shop later on, and I may say I'm manager of this company I drive for now. My wife's still running the shop; we've got two fine children; and my bank manager told me the other day that my assets were worth at least twelve hundred pounds."

Not bad, that, for a man who landed in New Zealand with eighteen pence!

At Hamilton I had joined the Wellington-Auckland express and there were no wearisome delays along the line (of course a "stop for refreshments" at Mercer at afternoon tea-time—one couldn't do without that!); and on a glorious sunny afternoon the train drew near to Auckland. I was excited at the prospect of seeing once more a town I love, and in which I have hundreds of friends. But as Auckland is the most important town in New Zealand (I shall be hotly contradicted in this statement by Wellingtonians!), and the most beautiful (again this assertion will be questioned by other cities!), and is much the largest city, as far as population goes (two years ago the inhabitants numbered two hundred and eighteen thousand four hundred, and no one can deny *that!*), I mean to give it a chapter all to itself.



(*"Auckland Weekly News," photo.*)
AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY SEEN FROM ALBERT PARK

CHAPTER XVIII

AUCKLAND

IF you head a chapter *Auckland*, every inhabitant of that city—there must be nearly a quarter of a million of them to-day—expects you to continue with Kipling's words: "Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart . . ."

I've already given my opinion of Auckland as the most important, the most beautiful, etc.; but now I fear I'm running a grave risk of being burned as a heretic on my next visit to the north. *I don't believe Mr. Rudyard Kipling intended his words to apply to Auckland alone.* There! I've said it. I said it before in Auckland, and my host in that town wanted to bet me any money I liked that I was wrong. He rushed to the library, feverishly produced a copy of "The Seven Seas," and flourished it at me.

"The verse is headed 'Auckland,'" he said. "Here it is, in the 'Song of the Cities.'"

"*'Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart—
On us, on us, the unswerving season smiles
Who wonder 'mid our fern, why men depart
To seek the Happy Isles!'*"

"But Kipling is merely making Auckland stand for the *whole* of New Zealand," I replied. "Why, he's comparing our islands with the Elysian Fields, the Fortunate Isles; of course he means Auckland too, but it's the whole Dominion that's 'Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart . . .'"

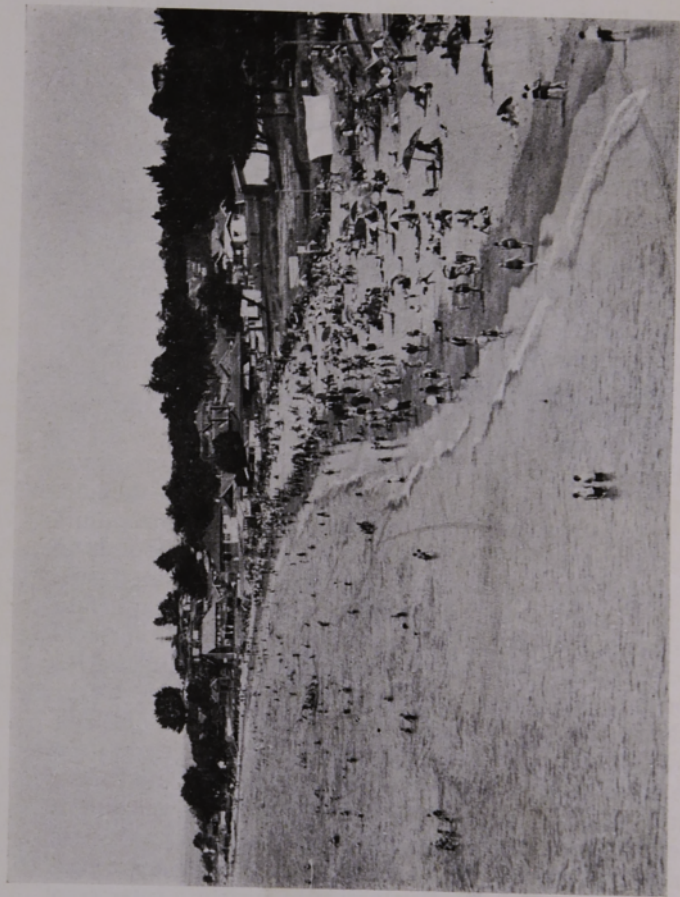
"Not at all!" contradicted my host firmly. "It's

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Auckland. It's always been Auckland. And if you dare to say it isn't, I won't read your wretched book! " And with that he banged together the pages of "The Seven Seas," and returned the volume to the library shelf.

Well, of course the only person who can decide the matter is Mr. Rudyard Kipling himself, and I'm quite sure he isn't in the least likely to do so. Having shown myself as a heretic, I'll now proceed to hedge. Heretics, of course, ought to recant and not hedge, but we'll let that pass.

Auckland *is* exquisite. Built about the shores of the island-strewn waters of the Hauraki Gulf, her harbour—the Waitemata—is one of the finest in the world. The translation of the Maori word Waitemata is "glassy waters," and this expresses the shining calm of the blue sea which stretches for score upon score of miles from the busy water-front of wharves and warehouses, to suburban bays and lovely inlets. A paradise for yachtsmen this; and on summer holidays hundreds of sailing-boats skim like white-winged birds across the sparkling blue of the Waitemata. No need to be a millionaire to own a yacht in Auckland. Duke's son and cook's son alike (though I don't think we've many duke's sons in New Zealand) can own a share in a small half-decker, centre-board boat, and can be off for week-ends, to camp on one of the many lovely islands within the gulf, and fish and swim to his heart's content. It is said that yachting is the supreme sport of thousands of New Zealanders, for no country is more generously endowed with great sheltered harbours and lovely, lonely camping-grounds. And in this supreme sport I suppose Auckland stands supreme; for there are so many places of interest to be visited besides the deserted beaches and bushed solitudes of innumerable bays. Kawau Island—where the home of the great statesman, Sir George Grey,



ONE OF AUCKLAND'S BATHING BEACHES
(By courtesy of "The Auckland Star.")

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twice Governor of New Zealand and once Prime Minister—still stands, the seaside resort of Waiwera, famous for its hot mineral springs; and farther afield—or rather afloat—Great Barrier Island, with its scattered farms and orchard-planted homesteads; and Coromandel and the Thames where all the northern goldfields lie. Only two of the myriad islands of the gulf are forbidden ground to holiday-makers. Of course the holiday-makers *may* be given a chance to visit these islands at some period of their lives—one can't hazard an opinion as to that—but it probably won't be from choice that they go there! The islands in question are Rotoroa and Pakatoa. The settlements on these islands are run by the Salvation Army for the regeneration of chronic inebriates—men on one island, women on the other.

Ninety-three years ago the site of the city of Auckland—then merely fern and manuka-covered hills—was purchased from the Maoris by the Crown.

For three thousand acres of this property lying on the narrow neck of land between two harbours—Waitemata on the east coast and Manukau on the west—the munificent sum paid by the Crown was fifty-six pounds in money, twenty tomahawks, fifty blankets, twenty pairs of trousers, twenty shirts, ten waistcoats, ten caps, four casks of tobacco, one box of pipes, a hundred yards of dress pieces, one bag of flour, one bag of sugar and ten iron pots.

Nine years after this purchase was made, an old lady, now living in Auckland, remembers being carried ashore from a ship's boat to the little settlement. The Maoris gathered on the shore danced a "haka" of welcome to the new settlers; and the old lady admits that as a little girl she was decidedly alarmed by so hearty a greeting. But she has seen this lovely city of nearly a quarter of a million souls grow up upon the lonely scrub-covered hills.

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The more one travels through New Zealand, the more one marvels at the wonderful things that have been accomplished during the span of one woman's lifetime in this little English land so far from England. And nowhere may one marvel more than in Auckland. There are lovely parks, magnificent buildings, charming homes set in wonderful palm-planted gardens. And, oh, the views out over the sparkling waters of the Waitemata from the drawing-rooms of these charming homes!

Sadly I must confess that I've been more often engaged in counting up the honour tricks in my hand, while in these drawing-rooms, than in gazing out of the windows across the flower-massed gardens to the wide vista of the Waitemata; with ferry-boats crossing to North Head, green against the blue water, and farther off the mauve and purple outline of Rangitoto—that three-coned old volcano—which guards the entrance to the inner harbour. Yet I've always managed (perhaps when "dummy") to see something of the beauty spread out there before me.

Is it the beauty of Auckland which so endears the city to my heart, or the generous hospitality of my Auckland friends? Both, perhaps. The luncheons, and the bridge-parties, and the dinners kept me busy; but I still had time for seeing old landmarks—and some new ones.

Chief of these new ones is the Auckland War Memorial—a noble, pillared building of white stone, housing the best museum collection in the Dominion, and set on the grassed hill-top of a wooded park which overlooks the whole wide sweep of the city and the harbour. In front of this building is the Cenotaph—a replica of London's Cenotaph—and on the slopes of the domain about it are lovely gardens; a tree-fern bordered stream; winding roads through native bush, and oak and silver birch plantations; while farther off the big cricket ground lies in its natural amphitheatre of wooded hills.

Aucklanders are fortunate in the situation of their War Memorial, for in the daytime the white-pillared building stands out in bold relief against green hillside and blue sky; and at night—flood-lighted—it dominates in its radiance the whole city and the harbour.

I was shown over the museum by a learned member of the staff. But he was young and not at all intimidating, and he didn't appear to despise me too utterly for my abysmal ignorance on all scientific subjects. He even took me up on to the roof to show me some Tuatara lizards—some live ones, not museum pieces—which are kept in hutches there. I wonder if they like their present quarters as well as the holes and burrows of the mutton-birds. For the Tuatara lizard—which isn't a lizard at all, but the one link existing in the world to-day between the present saurians and the huge prehistoric reptiles—lives as a lodger with these petrels. Or perhaps it is the petrel which lodges with the Tuatara! They each occupy a chamber within the burrow; and apparently live in harmony, and rear their young under the shared roof-tree. My official friend stirred up the Tuataras for my inspection.

"That one's only a baby," said he. "Only about fifty years old. The other chap in the corner there is nearer a hundred. They live to be three hundred years of age, and they've never changed their form since the days of the ichthyosaurus and the dinosauria."

He picked up one of the reptiles by the scruff of the neck, and showed me the thinly skinned spot on the top of its head. "There's a rudimentary eye—a third one—there under the skin, and it's sensitive to light. They're all a bit sluggish now—they're just going to sleep for six months."

Near to the gates of the domain in which the War Memorial is situated is the house where Hugh Walpole was born in 1884. His father was then incumbent at

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St. Mary's Church close by. If Wellington has Katherine Mansfield, Auckland can claim Hugh Walpole.

There are other public buildings in the city which were new to me; for it is ten years since I was in Auckland. The University, overlooking Albert Park, is one of them; and the Civic Theatre another. Albert Park is beautifully laid out in magnificent flower-beds, and planted with tall palms, and ornamental shrubs and trees. It is in the heart of the city, and in the days of the Maori wars the old Albert Barracks, together with a stone-walled place of defence, stood here. The Municipal Library is, of course, pre-war, and houses, besides a priceless collection of medieval manuscripts presented by Sir George Grey, many other treasures from his collection. The Art Gallery in the Auckland Municipal Buildings possesses the best collection of pictures in the Dominion, and this is due in great part to the generosity of Sir George Grey and Mr. McKelvie.

Auckland was fortunate also in numbering amongst her citizens Sir John Logan Campbell; for in 1901 he gave to the city, which was non-existent on his arrival in 1839, a park and pleasure-ground of four hundred acres. There is no other city in Australia or New Zealand which can boast of so fine a gift from any private citizen. As a young Scotch doctor John Logan Campbell came to New Zealand. But not to practise medicine. He had five hundred pounds with which to seek his fortune. In his book "Pœnamo" he gives a picture of Auckland in 1841:

"My large establishment representing not only the firm's business premises, but the resident partner's place of abode, consisted, as of old, of the historical tent. It had been pitched where a little trickling thread of water ran past, and I had dug a little well, which gave me a plentiful supply, and got hold of an

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old flour barrel and put in the hole. I had also . . . stuck up some poles and clothed them with ti-tree, so that I might have a screen behind which I could carry on all my domestic duties. . . . At the back of my fence I had rigged up a triangle, from which hung a hook on which to suspend my gipsy-pot, and the fire-place was backed round with large blocks of scoria stone, to prevent my fence from being burned down. Here I did my modest cooking of the oft-told menu, pork and potatoes—not a sheep or head of oxen had yet reached the capital, neither butcher nor baker had yet appeared on the scene. We all were still our own cooks and drawers of water, and jolly and well and happy every one of us looked. . . .”

In my schooldays I'd often walked, a miserable member of a miserable “crocodile,” to the top of Mount Eden, where we were commanded to admire the view of Auckland city stretched out below us. Here on Mount Eden are the old Maori fortifications of days gone by; but as a small schoolgirl I'm afraid I wasn't as much interested in them or in the view as I was in the hollow of Mount Eden's great grassed crater. To stand and look down into this vast cup, and picture it as it once must have been when filled with molten lava, was more thrilling to me in those days than the panorama of the city and harbour.

But I had never had the opportunity of seeing this same panorama from the top of “One Tree Hill,” the highest point of Cornwall Park, Sir John Logan Campbell's gift to Auckland.

A friend motored me up in the twilight one evening during my stay in Auckland. The road rises steeply past the golf-links, through a grove of olive trees—brought from Italy many years ago by John Logan Campbell and planted here—to the summit. In the

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gathering darkness we'd seen the little wooden hut—the first house in Auckland—built by the young Scotch doctor to take the place of his “historical” tent. It has been moved here from its original position, to be kept as long as the timbers last, in memory of the man who made so noble a gift to the city.

The name “One Tree Hill” was given to this conical eminence by reason of a single totara tree which grew on the topmost ridge in early days. That is long since gone, and four wind-swept pines now crown the hill.

The head-lights of our car scared the sheep, browsing on the grass of native embattlements centuries old; the lights showed, too, the red volcanic soil of the hillside, and turned the turf to a brilliant emerald. But we weren't taking our eyes off the narrow, winding road ahead until we reached the summit. Then as we looked about us, what a view!

After a perfect day, there had been a stormy-looking sunset which still left colour and glow enough in the western sky to show the outline of all the country round us. On one side the Waitemata Harbour, with its hundreds of bays and inlets, and all the islands of the Hauraki Gulf; on the other Manukau Harbour, with rain-clouds gathering over the wide, wild stretch of ocean; and northward, the Waitakerei Ranges.

The lights of the big city spread for miles and miles below us—the lights of smaller country towns were scattered farther. It is said that from this height one can count a hundred hills—each hill a dead volcano! I don't know if that is true. We didn't try to count them. We could pick out a few landmarks, of course; the open sweep of lovely Ellerslie race-course was below us; but it was not detail that we looked for. There was that magnificent panorama of city lights, and the long stretch of indentured coast-line on either side; the bushed ranges in the background; and over all, clouds



(By courtesy of "The Auckland Star,"

HOUNDS ON THEIR WAY TO A MEET NEAR AUCKLAND

(To face p. 223,

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driving across the sky. Under the wind-swept pines of the summit is an iron-railed enclosure, and a marble slab. Here lies the body of Sir John Logan Campbell; and for his epitaph, that chosen for Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's has been used once more: "*Si monumentum quæris, circumspice*" ("If you seek my monument, look around you").

To look over the city as we did that evening; to know that when the man now buried here first viewed the landscape from this point, there was nothing—no city at all; that as he lived and laboured honestly for his livelihood in a new land, the city grew; and that in the end he was able to make a great gift to the town in which he had built the first house—all that seemed to me, in the wildness of the gathering dusk, and in the loneliness of this solitary tomb, extraordinarily impressive.

I should like to have stayed longer in Auckland, but my pilgrimage was not yet over. I'd failed to visit the southern extremity of New Zealand; I really couldn't face my publishers again if I didn't reach *one* end of the Dominion. Besides, Cape Reinga, the rocky promontory which ends New Zealand to the north, is famed in Maori legends as the sacred "jumping-off" place of the spirits of the dead. The underworld—the Reinga—of Maori mythology lies in the direction of the legendary land from whence the Maoris came—Hawaiki. After death the soul of a Maori journeys to the north, and there, where the shore ends, it plunges into the sea, and so finds its way to the Reinga—the underworld. This is divided into three parts. The lowest is in darkness, and to this sink the souls of evil-doers; the middle part is still dark, but by the prayers of the Tohungas (priests) these souls may eventually be freed to pass into the upper part, the abode of light and of continual feasting.

New Zealand's most northerly point has, consequently, been christened Cape Reinga; and the bay

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sweeping round to the east of Reinga, Spirits' Bay. It was Spirits' Bay that I was determined to visit; for from here, I had always understood, enormous flocks of godwits depart every year, at the end of March or beginning of April, for Siberia, where they nest and breed, returning to New Zealand some time in October. Everyone talks about this migration of the godwits, but few people have seen it. I was determined, if possible, to be one of the few. But as it was now late in March, I must hurry, in case the godwits got away before I reached the north. And to reach Spirits' Bay is not so easy, unless one has a car of one's own. There is no railway farther than the Bay of Islands; and Awanui, sixty miles south of Cape Reinga, is the terminus of the service cars. Consequently, I had decided to go to a friend at the Bay of Islands for one day only, and make arrangements from there to continue my journey north.

I was so happy with one of the kindest of my old school-fellows and her husband, in Auckland, that I hated to leave them; but they had asked me to return, so I wasn't leaving them for very long. At the dinner table on my last night with them, my host (he who declared he wouldn't read my wretched book if I persisted in my statement that "last, loneliest, loveliest" referred not only to Auckland, but to New Zealand as a whole) scribbled off some verses which he handed to me. I warned him that I'd use this impromptu poem, and his wife said, "Do." So here it is, and now I've taken my revenge for his remark about not reading my "wretched book."

TO ROSEMARY REES

And why such haste to reach the farthest north?

*Surely "Last, loneliest, loveliest," can't fatigue you?
Or that strange lure which draws the godwits forth,
So much intrigue you?*

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*You want to know just why and where they go—
Such curiosity is only human.
Every man feels it, and if that is so,
Much more a woman!*

*I have no godwit-wings, or you would see
Me slip away from work—unseen, unheard—
No longer cooped up at a desk, I'd be
Off like a bird.*

*We'd fly together up the enchanted coast.
Oh! What a time we'd have in Spirits' Bay!
Or standing on Cape Reinga, watch the host
Of disembodied Maoris float away.*

*Disguised as godwits we'd be spirits too,
A different sort, on earthly pleasures bent;
Quite satisfied to keep for yet a few
Years, this embodiment.*

*I can't imagine how that trip might close!
We'd certainly improve in ornithology!
As your experience south distinctly shows
Both gold gained, and geology!*

*But what might be the psychic, moral lift,
(Or drop) for one of us, I cannot tally!
I leave to your imaginative gift
To picture the "finalle!"*

*It might be, after fluttering in the heavens,
We'd come to think ourselves too high and mighty,
And find our homes at sixes and at sevens,
Since we'd gone flighty.*

*So better you should make this trip alone
I'm quite resigned: nor would I think it fits
To mouth a prayer, "What God wills shall be done"
Dreaming of godwits.*

CHAPTER XIX

NORTH, TO SEE THE GODWITS GO

THOUGH to catch a glimpse of the godwits' migration was my chief reason for visiting the north, it wasn't, by any means, my only one. I had read, and seen photographs, of the great kauri forests which only grow north of Auckland, but I had never yet set eyes on a single kauri tree, and felt that until I did so, my knowledge of New Zealand was indeed incomplete. For these trees, some of which are believed to be at least seventeen hundred years old, measure in many instances thirty-five to forty feet in circumference, and are known as the kings of the New Zealand bush. It was for kauri spars that the whaling ships visited the north in the days long before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed.

I was anxious also to see the gum-fields from which twenty million pounds' worth of kauri gum has been taken out in past years. I wanted to travel along the Ninety Mile Beach, and dig on its wide sands for toheroas—those marvellous shell-fish of which such delicious soup is made; hoped to collect some gossip of the deep-sea fishing camps near Russell, and at Whangaroa; to find out something of the much advertised tung oil plantations; hear how all those new colonists from the East were faring with their citrus and passion-fruit farms at Keri-Keri; to call upon the Misses Kemp there in their historic home; to visit Russell, and look at the oldest church in New Zealand; and to wander over to the old Busby residence at Waitangi, which is now, through the generosity of Their Excellencies, Lord

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and Lady Bledisloe, the property of the people of New Zealand for ever.

All this was rather a big programme to get through; but first and foremost I must chase the godwits.

Just before leaving Auckland my enthusiasm was rather damped by a letter I received. The writer—an ornithologist—informed me that most of the stories current on the subject of the godwits' migration were a trifle highly coloured.

In the first place, the birds being waders, and seeking their food along tidal flats and shallow lagoons, are not likely to be seen in the vicinity of Spirits' Bay, where the beach for miles and miles is entirely composed of broken shell.

In the second place, though it is quite probable that the flocks of birds follow a leader, all the picturesque stories of the trial flights of the inexperienced birds under the guidance of "tutors"; of the clarion call of the old cock as they rise in one huge cloud, darkening the sky, and so set off in regular horseshoe formation on their eight thousand mile journey to Siberia; of the keeping of the weaker birds within the inner circle of the horseshoe, etc., cannot be authenticated.

Still, my kindly correspondent told me that from the mud-flats of Parengarenga Harbour, about twenty miles south of Spirits' Bay, he had seen the birds gathering in excited mobs last autumn; and that if I were lucky enough to get there in time I might see something of their flight.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but to get north to Parengarenga as quickly as possible.

I travelled by train as far as Opuā—the terminus of the railway—at the Bay of Islands.

All this country north of Auckland was new to me—and very beautiful it is. But I am told that one sees far more of its beauty if one travels by car. However, I

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found the railway journey most interesting. I hadn't realized before—and I think very few New Zealanders know it—that one sixth of all the butter produced in the Dominion comes from the dairy farms north of Auckland.

North Auckland has been called the Cinderella of New Zealand. People have talked for years of the "poor land" of the old worked gum-fields—the turned-over fern and manuka country under which lie the buried kauri forests which yield the gum; but amongst the three and a half million acres of land in the winterless north—peopled as yet by less than forty thousand settlers—there are immense areas, still unused, which undoubtedly will, in the future, become productive of great wealth. I think it is quite safe to prophesy that the Cinderella of New Zealand will one day have as brilliant a future as the original Cinderella of the old fairy-story.

The railway-line to Opua runs through fertile rolling country; past vineyards and farms, patches of native bush, and groves of cabbage trees and tree-ferns. There are only hills in the north, no mountains. The town of Whangarei, with its big, winding harbour, and the bushed hills round it, looks a really delightful little spot. I was sorry that I wasn't stopping to explore it, but the godwits were calling! I must go on.

At Opua the railway abruptly ends—ends almost *in* the Bay of Islands—for the line runs out on to the wharf over the tidal water. There is no town. To get to all the settlements and places of interest round the Bay of Islands—Russell, Paihia, Waitangi, Keri-Keri—one must travel by boat from Opua across this great sheltered inlet of the ocean.

Out of the train, along the wharf and into the waiting launch!

The end of my journey across the still water, in the

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evening light, was in some indescribable fashion quite thrilling to me; for here, amongst the lovely, lonely bays and scattered islands, I had reached the most historic region in all my native land. Here settlement first began; here was signed, less than a hundred years ago, the Treaty of Waitangi which made New Zealand one with England.

I'd pictured myself ending my book up at Spirits' Bay, watching the godwits go. That sounded dramatic! Godwits taking their flight from the same sacred spot as do the souls of the Maori dead; and I, sitting there thrilled by the marvellous spectacle (of the godwits, not the departing spirits) writing feverishly. Having learned that the godwits did *not* depart from Cape Reinga (though they undoubtedly might pass over the promontory on their northward flight), and being aware that I couldn't possibly see all that I wished to of the Bay of Islands in one day, I had now to reconstruct my plans.

My kind friend at Paihia suggested that I should return to her when I'd dealt with the migratory birds.

"My house doesn't pretend to be anything more than a seaside cottage," she said, "but you can be perfectly quiet and undisturbed to write. I'm only here for a few weeks in the summer, though it seems a sin to leave all this loveliness during the bright winter months."

Her house was really much more than a seaside cottage. It was a very roomy and an extremely comfortable abode, and the outlook was most lovely. Past the peach-tree branch which tapped against my bedroom window, I looked over the grassed garden plot to the beach, the quiet sea, the manuka-fringed sheltering island facing us, and on to the little town of Russell, five or six miles across the bay. The pastel shading of that quiet sea, and of the hills and promontories!

There is no grandeur here—only gentle beauty. The Yorkshire maid who brought me my early morning tea

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evidently shared my opinion. "Eh! but this is a most lovely spot!" said she. "And the sunshine! Don't I wish that all them I've left in Sheffield could see this place."

The settlement of Paihia Bay comprises about a dozen houses, two stores, a post office; the handsome stone-built church lately erected amongst the cypresses of the hundred-year-old churchyard by the descendants of Henry Williams, who founded a Mission Station here in 1823. There are pohutakawas (bright with crimson blossom in December) on the headlands of the bay; and bushed hills form a shelter for all the houses lined along the beach.

But my day wasn't to be spent in Paihia after all. I was motored north to see a kauri forest; then on to Whangaroa. We had our lunch amongst tree-ferns and a tangle of luxuriant undergrowth, with the great kauris towering above us. These forest giants are indeed a magnificent sight. Their massive trunks are mottled lavender and silver; and they are like the pillars of a great cathedral, uprising straight and sure and grand, for forty feet without a branch.

"There's a tree in this reserve that I almost feel I could go down on my knees and worship," said one of the young men with us, whose station homestead was near by.

He guided us to the tree—thirty feet in circumference it was—and one couldn't wonder at his respectful admiration. For there is something in the grandeur of these kings of the forest that is awe-inspiring.

I wish I could have seen the Trounson Park and the Waipoua Forest Reserve. Amongst the trees there are bigger kauris than those near which we had our picnic lunch. Yet it was quite impossible for me to see everything. The Trounson Park (which represents a value of at least sixty thousand pounds) was given to New Zealand twelve years ago by Mr. James Trounson; and



(By courtesy of W. C. Davies.

GIANT KAURI TREE, 14 FEET IN DIAMETER IN NORTH AUCKLAND BUSH

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seventy years before the generous donor made this gift to his adopted country, he was a little Cornish boy, walking two miles from his home to work for fourpence a day in the mines.

We reached Whangaroa soon after luncheon. I had expected to find a town—I was always expecting to find towns in the north and finding none—on Whangaroa Harbour. Here there are houses and two good hotels facing the wharf; and the scattered homesteads of settlers in the wooded hills about the reaches of the land-locked sea. It is from the wharf here that launches go out for the deep-sea fishing. In the bar of the comfortable and up-to-date hotel beside the wharf are photographs of the record thresher shark, 915 lb., caught by Mr. S. Ellis; but I'm not sure if it was here I saw the photograph of Captain Mitchell and his record black marlin sword-fish, 976 lb. These fish are, of course, caught with rod and reel; and when one examines the thin line with which the fish is played, one is amazed at the performance of deep-sea anglers. Perhaps some of them are amazed themselves! A story which was told to me in Auckland by a near relative of my own—whose photograph I show gazing proudly and affectionately at his first sword-fish—may serve to illustrate my point. I don't know much about fishing so I'll tell his story as nearly as I can in his own words. His fish, of course, isn't anything in the way of a record, being only 270 lb., less than a third of the weight of Captain Mitchell's nine-hundred and seventy-six pounder.

"We'd gone out in a launch from Deep Water Cove, where Zane Grey's camp is, near Russell," he said, "and a friend and I thought we'd try our luck from the dinghy. We didn't know one end of a sword-fish from the other; or the difference between a striped marlin, a black marlin, or a broad-bill. They're all sword-fish. We meant, at any rate, to do our best to get a big fish

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of some kind. Nothing like making a beginning. You know, there's been a lot of tosh talked lately about the cruelty of deep-sea fishing, but as it's been proved that the sword-fish possesses a brain just about the size of a walnut, and no nervous system to speak of, all he can feel is a slight inconvenience—certainly no pain. It's the angler that feels the pain very often! Of course in the launches they all wear leather harness, and are strapped in, so that they can take the weight of the fish on their backs. It would be quite impossible to play a fish of seven hundred pounds or so, for hours, with the weight of it all on the muscles of the arms. In our dinghy, naturally, we had no harness. Very primitive we were! I was sitting on a kerosene tin, and when I got my first fish—I've never seen anything like the number of fish there were about that day, the sea was alive with them—I fastened the butt end of my rod to the handle of the tin on which I was sitting. All our friends on the launch were being very funny at our expense, but we didn't care. We were novices, but we were out to learn. You can nearly always tell if it's a sword-fish you've got, by his striking away directly north. We'd got a sword-fish all right! After he's taken the bait—a whole kahawai on a three-pronged hook—it's necessary to 'strike' to secure him. If you don't he may broach—that is come to the surface and get rid of what he's swallowed. I've seen a sword-fish throw the hook and bait out of his mouth fifteen to twenty feet in the air. My friend and I weren't taking any notice of the chaff from the launch. 'What about striking?' he asked. I nodded, and struck. Unfortunately he'd laid hold of my rod at the same time and was striking too! Snap went the line, and away went our sword-fish! Roars of laughter from the launch! But soon they forgot us, for they'd got busy themselves. Then I saw their fish broach, throw out the bait, and make straight



A FIRST ATTEMPT AT DEEP-SEA FISHING

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for our boat. We'd got out another line, and I'm certain it was their escaped fish we hooked. Off north he went, and we went with him. He was towing the dinghy at the rate of about four knots an hour. Shouts from the launch: 'Are you going to Honolulu?' We didn't know where we were going, and we didn't much care, for we'd made certain of our fish this time. For two hours he towed us. I was wondering how long I could keep it up. So was he apparently, for his pace slackened. I reeled in, and suddenly we saw him close beside us. Have you ever seen a sword-fish's eyes?"

I had, and most gruesome things they are!

"Well, to see his eyes looking up at us from the water, a few inches away, was too much for us—we thought in another minute he'd put his sword through the dinghy! 'What shall we do?' shouted my friend. 'Backwater!' said I; and in another second it was we who were running away from our catch—not he from us. Fortunately, however, he decided to go north again, and away we went once more towed in his wake. At the end of another two hours I was just about played out. But so was he. We rowed over to the launch, scrambled on board, got him in close, and secured him, and that's his photograph. But in Russell that night when we were all sitting round with other launch parties recounting the doings of the day, and my friend had told of our exploit, he finished up by saying: 'After we were on the launch, we got him close alongside, and then as soon as we'd harpooned him, we hauled him up.' There was an awful silence. My friend knew he'd dropped a brick, but we were such amateurs then that we didn't know that no deep-sea fisherman uses a harpoon. You must gaff your fish, not harpoon him."

Apparently these anglers are now no longer novices, but old hands at the game.

At Whangaroa we saw, behind Mr. Ellis's house, the

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shell of a big turtle he'd caught a few weeks previously. It had got entangled in the line, and Mr. Ellis certainly harpooned *that* catch, but I suppose it's allowable with a turtle. I don't know if a turtle has ever been caught before by the deep-sea anglers. If not, Mr. Ellis holds the record for turtle as well as thresher shark. After this peculiar catch, the visitors at Whangaroa fared as sumptuously as aldermen for days.

Near the head of Whangaroa Harbour, deep in the ocean bed, lies the charred hull of the *Boyd*. This was a British ship which was captured by the Maoris in 1809, the crew killed, and yes—I'm sorry to have to add it—eaten.

"I expect it served them jolly well right," said our young friend who'd wanted to worship the kauri tree. "Most of those old whalers treated the Maori women abominably, and I believe one of them kidnapped two young Maori men, dumped them down on an island somewhere in the Pacific, and told them they could walk home."

It was this same young man who drove me on next morning to catch the Awanui service car. On the way we stopped at the old Mission Church at Waimate, and got out to wander round the churchyard. Here, amongst the oaks and elms planted more than a hundred years ago, are the graves of those who planted these trees—some of the earliest missionaries to the Maoris. Henry Williams, who came to New Zealand after Marsden, lies buried here. I had lunch that day at the station homestead of one of Henry Williams's great-grandsons. He told me that as a little boy he remembered his grandmother—Henry Williams's daughter—being taken in a bullock-dray to visit her friends. "No service cars in those days," he said. "And no roads for any vehicles other than bullock-wagons."

The road—an excellent one—on to Awanui, took me

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through the lovely Mangamuka Gorge. This is a fairy-land of tree-ferns, palms, and native bush, and I'm glad to say, a scenic reserve.

I'd been told that at Awanui I should find a very comfortable hotel; and when the service car—having passed through the somewhat larger town of Kaitaia (six hundred inhabitants at Kaitaia)—deposited me and my luggage at a small, one-storied wooden building, whose verandah ran flush with the road, I wondered if my friends had been endeavouring to be facetious! I soon found, however, that all they had told me was true. The Awanui Hotel is extremely comfortable; the food excellent (I had delicious toheroa soup made from toheroas gathered on the Ninety Mile Beach a few miles away); and Mrs. Fleming, the wife of the proprietor, is kindness itself. Electric light, an apparently unlimited supply of hot water in the shining bathroom, and a comfortable bed. What more could one desire?

Mrs. Fleming told me of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's departure from the Ninety Mile Beach on his flight back to Australia. "What a pity you didn't come up a few days earlier. Then you'd have seen it," she said. "It was a wonderful sight. They flew up in the *Southern Cross* the night before, and slept for a few hours in bunks we'd got ready for them in the garage on the beach. Then they took off from the beach in the dawn, and flew straight out to sea. We were very anxious till we heard they'd reached Sydney safely. I packed up a hamper for them to take with them. One or two roast godwits—they're delicious if they're properly prepared, and the birds are always extraordinarily fat just before the migration—and toheroa fritters. They mentioned those in the wireless news they sent when they were crossing! It was a wonderful flight; only thirteen hours and a few minutes! But then he's a wonderful man—Kingsford Smith!"

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As everyone knows, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith successfully flew the Tasman Sea—twelve hundred miles from New Zealand to Australia—with passengers for the fourth time on March 26, 1933.

But Mrs. Fleming had other news to give me.

“The godwits? Oh! They’ve gone, the Maoris say. The last of them went last week.”

This was a crushing blow, but having got so far I felt I must go on; and there was always the chance that the Maoris might be mistaken! Perhaps with luck I’d witness the departure of a few unpunctual birds.

Consequently next day I went on. My further progress was to be made on the front seat of a cream-truck.

The little township of Awanui, with hotel, post office, two or three stores, garage, and dairy factory is practically the last settlement in the north. When we had left that behind, and set out along the narrow neck of land stretching for sixty miles to the North Cape and Cape Reinga, we were travelling through old worked gum-country covered with manuka (ti-tree) scrub, fern, and bare sand-hills. There was one other passenger beside myself—a lad going out to look at a dairy farm which his brother thought of buying. A dairy farm! As we bumped along over the uneven road and viewed this desolation of sand and scrub and fern around us, I wondered where the dairy farms might be! To tell the truth my heart failed me. Why had I embarked on this enterprise? Was this really New Zealand? This appallingly dreary country through which we were banging and bumping along in the afternoon sunshine. Wasn’t it a wild-goose chase I’d committed myself to, rather than a godwit chase? And I was conscious, too, of an uneasy and guilty feeling. I’d bothered many friends in order to get to the north—given them no end of trouble to arrange my journey, and my accommoda-

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tion, for me. Nothing is more hateful than this. To realize that one has been imposing on the kindness of others for no sufficient reason. There couldn't be anything to see up here. I ought not to have come.

On we plunged and rattled. In the back of the truck the empty cream cans and the lad's bicycle seemed to be having a slight argument. How on earth would the poor boy ride his bicycle twelve miles back to Awanui along the sand-pits of this road? Well, that was his problem, not mine.

We passed a few gum-diggers' deplorable shacks. Austrians these, and very few of them, now that the value of kauri gum has declined. In some of the swamps the peaty ground was burning—a rather pleasant smell; and here and there we came upon a little two-roomed cottage, with grassed paddocks round it, and a small herd of cows grazing. Very pathetic dairy farms they looked to me after the rich pastures I'd seen farther south. But they *were* dairy farms. An empty cream can had to be deposited every now and then along the road; a mail-bag handed in to a cottage serving as post office. To our left high sand-dunes shut out the straight stretch of the Ninety Mile Beach.

"It's about four miles away," said our driver, "but you don't see it from this road."

The lad who was setting out to view the farm informed me that his brother was engaged to be married, but his young lady was fond of gaiety; he didn't fancy she'd like it much up here. Well, if she were looking for gaiety, she couldn't well discover a less likely spot in which to find it, thought I; and said as much to the driver when we'd put down the lad and his bicycle at a lonely little dwelling beside the road. The driver agreed, but he didn't agree heartily. "It's wonderful what you can do," said he. "It isn't bad for

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two young people if they're fond of one another—starting like this—and the far north grows on you.”

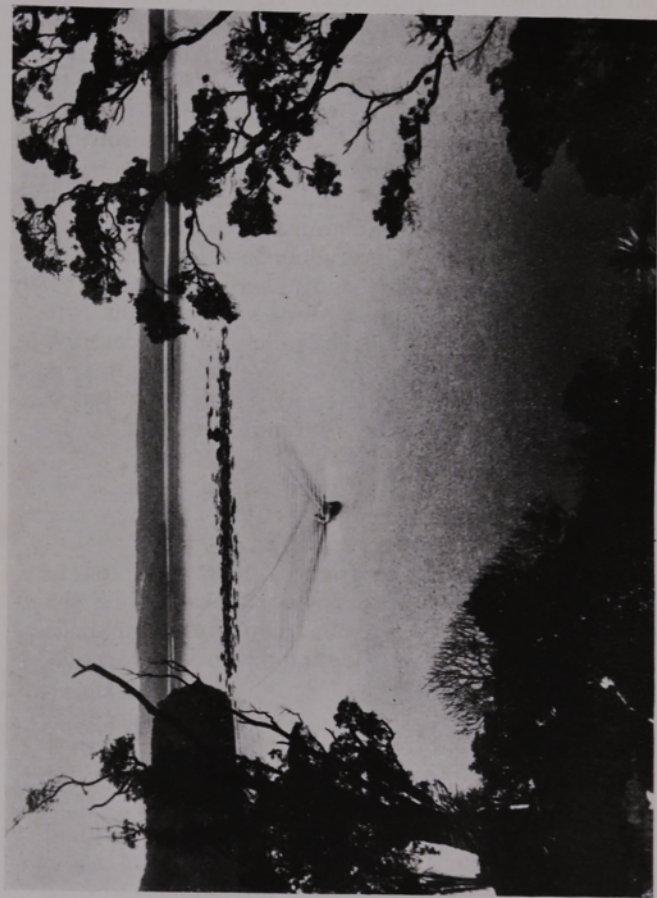
This was a new point of view. Would the far north grow on me? I very much doubted it.

The cream-truck was to take me as far as Te Kao. There Mr. and Mrs. Watt, the schoolmaster and his wife, would put me up for the night. I expected to find a township at Te Kao. Again I was mistaken. Te Kao is the name given to a group of Maori dairy farms; the school which educates a hundred Maori children; the schoolmaster's house; and the store.

Again as the cream-lorry pulled up beside the school-house in the gathering darkness, and Mr. and Mrs. Watt welcomed me, I was conscious of that horrid feeling of guilt. Why should I foist myself upon people in this way? It was an unwarrantable intrusion on my part.

I think I was dreadfully tired that night, and so discouraged. But my host and hostess were very kind, and I soon ceased to feel apologetic for putting them to the trouble of having me. It was interesting to hear of their work here amongst the Maoris. This farming settlement was started before Sir Apirana Ngata's Development Scheme was begun; but it is run on the same lines, and has been of incalculable benefit to the Maoris. I think these teachers in the Maori schools, scattered about amongst the back-blocks of New Zealand, are carrying out a really splendid work. They help the natives in every way. Mr. Watt—a clever Scotsman—apparently must dispense both medicine and justice, as well as learning, not only to his scholars, but to their parents as well. Mrs. Watt told me of her battle—a battle she has won—to improve the living conditions of the Maoris in their own homes. There is one other Maori school farther north—across the Parengarenga Harbour. I was to visit that later.

It was a warm, bright morning for my journey on



(By courtesy of "The Auckland Star.")

PEACE AT PARENGARENGA HARBOUR

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next day to Parenga. (I find that the final "renga" is seldom mentioned in the north.) Again, I had to be dependent on the kindness of my friends to secure my transport, for there are no cars to be hired in the far north.

I think it was on this lovely morning that the far north began to "grow on me," and has been growing ever since. Clouds sailed high in the blue sky over the wide stretch of rolling hills, and a little warm wind stirred the pink flowering manuka beside the track. The ti-tree, common to everyone in New Zealand, is almost invariably white. Only here in the north is it of all shades of pink, and soft crimson. In the spring, I'm told, the hills and valleys of this country are flushed with a rose-tinted glow. We caught glimpses of the blue sea, and the wide stretches of the Parenga Harbour, as we travelled on; but not a godwit could we see.

After about nine miles our road ended abruptly on the beach. We rounded a green headland where a big pohutakawa grew, and there was Paua.

I'd given this address to friends, believing Paua to be the name of a township. I saw a house beside the beach; a low, tin-roofed store, and some other tin sheds on a jetty running out over the mud-flats of the harbour. Here was my township!

At Paua—or rather, Parenga, as the post office (at the store) is called—I was once more gate-crashing! Deliberately forcing myself upon perfect strangers. But I'd been assured, by mutual friends, that Mr. and Mrs. Keene wouldn't mind putting me up for a few days, and this morning—having recovered from the fatigue of the night before—my conscience was no longer quite so active. In fact—not to put too fine a point upon it—I was as bold as brass. But Mr. and Mrs. Keene, and Miss Keene (aged five months) and Rene (their pretty

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little Austrian maid) didn't seem to object to my boldness. They assured me that they were glad to have visitors occasionally, and made me feel at home at once.

For a week I stayed with them in that house beside the beach, and it was a very happy week. After my journeyings I felt I'd reached a haven of peace. For ever Parenga and peace will be synonymous to me. From my bedroom I looked out over the reaches of the harbour to the Maori school and settlement of Te Hapua, six miles across the bay. At full tide the water flows up to the base of the hills. At low tide all the mud-flats are bare, but they are not unbeautiful. They catch reflections of blue sky and cloud, and it is on these mud-flats that the godwits feed.

They'd gone. The news I'd heard was true. *I didn't see a single godwit.* But at least I heard the true story of their migration; and if it didn't altogether tally with the picturesque accounts I'd read of their departure—the sky being darkened, and the air filled with the wild beating of wings, and the weird cries of the birds as in one great flock they set off across the ocean from the point haunted by ghosts of the dead—their flight is certainly wonderful enough, without embellishment. That every year thousands upon thousands of these birds, rising to the sky in wedge-like formations, should set off on an eight thousand mile Odyssey across an uncharted ocean; should nest and rear their young in the Siberian tundra; should then take wing again (with their young sometimes only a fortnight old) for this return journey to the South—surely is miraculous enough.

It is thought that in the dim, dim past there was a coast-line for the birds to follow, from New Zealand on to Asia. That as the land subsided, and gave place to a chain of islands, the birds by strength of instinct still followed the same route. And it is also believed that

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the godwit is not a native of New Zealand but a Soviet subject.

Perhaps that's why the godwits feed excitedly and voraciously before their departure, fattening themselves up tremendously. They may be considering the possibility of having to present their bread tickets in the land to which they are going! Lean and hungry they return to New Zealand in October and November, gorging to their hearts' content (is it the heart one should mention here?) during their second summer. But if I didn't see even the feather of a godwit while I was in Parenga, I thoroughly enjoyed my peaceful sojourn there.

Over sixty years ago, when five hundred men, Austrians and Maoris, were digging gum in these far northern hills, Paua was a busy place. A Mr. Yates—he was the son of a well-known London lawyer—opened a store, and built the wharf. His house was the house in which I stayed. In the overgrown enclosure of a tiny wooden church, perched on a ti-tree covered hillside by the harbour, one can see the headstone of his grave, and that, too, of his half-caste Maori wife—a woman of great charm and character. The little church, with broken windows, is deserted now save by the birds.

All the time that I was in Parenga I felt that there were stories round me. I wonder if some day I shall find them? I loved my rambles about the deserted hills; loved the views of sunset and moonlight over the wide waters; enjoyed seeing the weekly mail being taken off from the store (which is post office as well) by the mail-man in a gig.

"Don't you wish you had a camera?" asked Mrs. Chapman at the store on this occasion. "Departure of His Majesty's mail in the far north! Can you beat it?"

It would indeed be hard to beat, that picture! The gig appeared to be in the last stages of decay; the sleepy old horse's harness was tied up with all manner of odds

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and ends of flax and rope; and after portions of ragged sheep-skin under the collar and the saddle were adjusted, the mail-man climbed up into the gig, and slowly and solemnly drove off. But Parenga boasts of another mail-carrier—an auxiliary scow, which arrives in the harbour once a fortnight. She came while I was there. The tide wasn't high enough for her to come up to the jetty, so out beyond the mud-flats in the brilliant sunshine she lay, and with a great clattering of winches, unloaded her merchandise into a launch. A Maori boy, with a horse harnessed to a sledge, went out across the mud-flats, and collected the chests of tea and bales of blankets for the store.

The scow's arrival was not our only excitement at Parenga. There was cattle mustering. The tide was high, and the sun had set, when the bellowing cattle splashed along the beach before our garden gate towards the holding paddocks near the store. A dozen Maori owners—or would-be owners—all wearing wide, straw, sombrero-like hats, and cracking stock-whips, acted as drovers. Their horses splashed through the sea just as the cattle had done. It was after the mustering that the ownership of the cattle had to be decided; and Mr. West Hill, the manager of Te Paki station—the most northerly sheep and cattle run in New Zealand—was in attendance to watch over the interests of his station.

We were invited to lunch at Te Paki, and motored over one day when other visitors were present. These were Sir George Fowlds, Mr. Lovegrove, and Captain J. D. Hewitt; and they had left Auckland two and a half hours previously. It had taken me three days, by train and car and cream-truck, to reach the far north. They'd come in a Puss-Moth in two and a half hours! There is a flat paddock near Te Paki homestead. In this they landed, guided thither by four white tea-towels from Mrs. West Hill's kitchen, and there they tied their

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machine to the wire fence! It seemed an easy way to travel! But when we all accompanied them down to the paddock to see them fly off, I was rather glad I wasn't returning with them to Auckland; for a good stiff wind was blowing, and as they circled up and up over the wild hills, I didn't envy them their journey. However, we heard later that they'd got back to Auckland in just over two hours.

Te Paki station was originally the property of the Mr. Yates who lived at Paua. He opened up this country, and stocked it, in order to provide meat and stores for his gum-digging clients. Some time ago the property was purchased by the Parenga Tung Oil Company, and tung oil trees were planted in many of the big paddocks. It was to inspect these plantations that the visitors from Auckland had come.

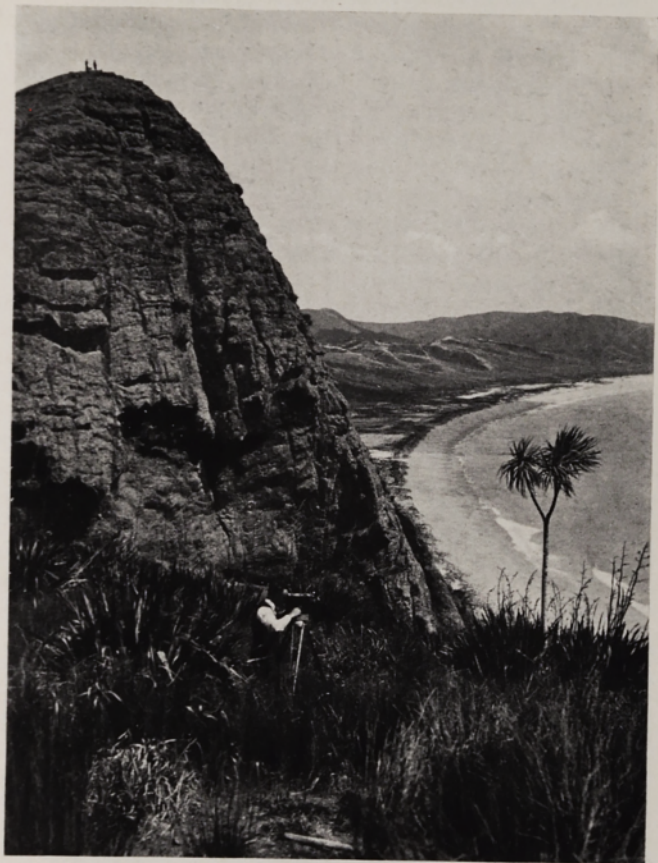
We had another excursion from Parenga. This time by launch across the harbour to Te Hapua. In the bright sunshine the sea danced and sparkled, and the great ridge of pure white silica sand, which runs for miles along the harbour entrance, shone like newly fallen snow. This sand is used by some Auckland company for glass-making. It is certainly very lovely against the colour of the sea, and I believe when the crimson pohutakawa trees are out in blossom and one looks past them over the blue harbour to the snow-white outline of the ridge, it is still more lovely.

We lunched at Te Hapua with Mr. and Mrs. Rust, the English teachers of the Maori school; and afterwards, it being Saturday afternoon, Mr. Rust was kind enough to motor me up to look at Spirits' Bay. The brilliance of the day had faded, and there were dark clouds gathering. We had to drive fast in order to beat the rain. After rain these clay roads are no joke. Not that they are very amusing before rain. There were one or two places we bumped into, and bumped out of, that

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were far from funny. It was really very noble of Mr. Rust to take me for this twenty-mile drive over a bad road; but in the north I found everyone kind, and everyone anxious that I should see all I wanted to see. We couldn't, of course, get as far as Cape Reinga, but we got on to the beach of Spirits' Bay—a beach composed entirely of broken, pinky-mauve shell—and looked for miles along the sweep of sand-hills, and the line of creaming surf to the rocky promontory which ends New Zealand. I'd really got to the end at last! We'd had to leave the car at some distance from the beach, and walk on past a Maori settlement, and a reed-fringed lagoon, to get to that shell-strewn shore. And on the sand-hills, over which we walked, were the great stones of old Maori ovens in which the feasts of centuries ago were cooked. There are ancient native burial-grounds here also, and the shifting sand is always disclosing something new—or rather age-old. The human bones we saw beside the cooking-stones may have been of Maoris who had died a natural death; but it was equally likely that the flesh that once clothed those bones had found its way into the buried ovens. One couldn't tell! One could only regard these bones with a queer mixture of awe and curiosity. Alas! poor Yorick!

Around these rocky northern coasts, in the old burial-grounds, some fine greenstone ornaments have been found. But travellers here are few and far between, and a great deal of this territory has been unexplored. The sand-dunes hold their secrets, but not for ever! Sometimes high winds will shift the sand—the stumps and ruined logs of a great ancient forest are disclosed. When did these giant kauris—which have left the enormous deposits of kauri gum—exist? When did the sea wash over all this land? It has been both sea-bed and forest; and when the forests decayed and fell away



(N.Z. Government Publicity, photo.)
A CABBAGE-TREE SENTINEL AT SPIRITS' BAY

(To face p. 244.)

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into swampy marsh, moas—those wingless monster birds that once inhabited New Zealand—roamed the land. Traces of them have been found in the far north, and once a perfect fossilized egg was discovered.

Other things of interest have been found up here. Years ago Mr. West Hill, of Te Paki station, came upon a little skull half buried in the sand-dunes. Not a child's skull and not a Maori skull, but that of some primitive man or woman. The bone was thick, and the forehead ran almost straight back from the eyes. A learned professor from South Africa was deeply interested in this skull, and wrote to Te Paki asking if Mr. Hill could find another. He did.

What is the answer to the riddle of those skulls? Was there another race—a much more primitive race—in New Zealand before the Maoris or the Morioris? I don't know whether scientists can answer this question authoritatively, or whether they can explain the origin of the carved lintel—showing a fine decorative art but differing entirely from the Maori carvings—recently unearthed from the bed of the Awanui swamp, close to the Ninety Mile Beach.

The far north had certainly “grown” on me! I was—and still am—consumed with curiosity concerning its secrets. But I hadn't yet seen the greatest wonder that the far north has to show—the Ninety Mile Beach. This is, in truth, not ninety miles but approximately sixty miles in length; and its hard sands are so level, and so wide, that it is hoped that Sir Malcolm Campbell will decide to use the beach for his speed trials at some future time, in preference to Daytona.

The Keenes had promised to give me an opportunity of seeing the beach, and of making the acquaintance of some toheroas in the flesh—as it were—at the termination of my visit to them. They were motoring south to spend the Easter holidays with relatives, and would take

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me with them. To motor along the beach saves all the discomfort of the inland road, and it is an ideal natural highway.

For two days before we started we'd been anxiously listening to the wireless weather reports. Rain would seriously interfere with our plans, for we must traverse ten miles of unmetalled road as far as Te Paki station, and four miles farther on, in order to get to the beach. During rain, and for some time afterwards, it would be impossible to get a car along this road.

The morning of our departure, however, dawned bright and warm; but other circumstances weren't quite so propitious. Mr. Keene—badly gassed in the war—was suffering with a severe attack of asthma, and the baby hadn't yet recovered from the effects of a cold. As the tides were running abnormally high, the car had been left overnight on a hillside near the little disused church. It wasn't even possible for us to walk round by the beach, for the water came as high as the grassy bank at the foot of the garden. Our baggage, therefore, was sent round the point by boat to the car, and we ourselves, walked over the hill at the back of the house.

Yet, even now, we couldn't start. There was an arm of the harbour to cross, and this annoying tide would *not* recede.

Into the car at last and off!

Did we imagine Parenga would let us go so easily? The water still defeated us. Half-way across the watery highway we were, when the car stopped, and declined to go farther. Something was wrong with the self-starter. Taking off his shoes and socks, Mr. Keene stepped out into the water, and endeavoured to crank up our recalcitrant machine. Such a pleasant occupation for a poor man already looking thoroughly exhausted, and finding even the breath he drew an effort.

Still the car refused to budge; but by this time, as the

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water had at last gone down, I ran back to the store to fetch a Maori boy with horse and chains to drag us out. The boy came; the car was dragged out; but nothing further happened.

After about three hours, Mr. Keene decided to replace the car battery with a wireless battery which he had with him. Of course it didn't fit, but eventually it was tied in securely, and after I had obligingly supplied a safety-pin to keep in place the strip of rubber serving to insulate the wire which connected up the battery (which sounds like a "This is the house that Jack built" sentence) our car moved forward, and kept on moving until we reached Te Paki.

Here we had lunch, and departed soon afterwards to cross the four miles of country which still lay between us and the Ninety Mile Beach. At Te Paki Mr. West Hill had told us he would telephone to Kaitaia in about five hours' time, and find out if we'd arrived safely; if we hadn't, a relief car would be sent out on to the beach to search for us. To be marooned on the long lonely stretch of beach all night—with the tide coming in—would be far from pleasant!

Beyond a few campers' huts, which might be unoccupied, there is no sign of human habitation save one near Hukatere, and that is nearly thirty miles from any settlement. To think that only a safety-pin, so to speak, lay between us and a night on the sand-hills, wasn't a very cheering thought to me. I had grave doubts as to the staying power of that pin; but no one else seemed in the least perturbed, and off we went.

The road to the Ninety Mile Beach crosses the Te Paki property, and ends in the Te Paki creek. Literally *in* the creek; for the bed of this wide, sandy stream is the road for the remaining two miles. Into the creek we went—splashing through the shallow water—with the bare, biscuit-coloured sand-hills rising on either side of

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us. Not all of them were bare. Along one reach of the creek, a thick grove of waving toi-toi ornamented the sand; and here and there were shining flax bushes. But it is a strange, desert-like region, though the clear, clean colour of the sand—blown into ridges by the wind—looked lovely in the afternoon sunshine against the blue sky. Opening up before us was the surf and sand of the Ninety Mile Beach. I was to see it at last!

No, not yet! About a quarter of a mile from the beach the car stopped, with the back wheels in a little runnel of water. It was necessary at once to find boards or logs to place under the back wheels before they sank farther. Mrs. Keene and I managed to unearth a large log, and some driftwood from the sand near the beach, and staggered back with them to the car. Mr. Keene, with great difficulty, jacked up our wheels and got the timber underneath them. The danger of getting too firmly embedded in the soft sand was over, at any rate, but we were no nearer starting than before.

Another three hours' work of cranking, pushing, hoping for the best! This time the car had turned mulish. She'd definitely made up her mind that she wouldn't stir a yard.

At about 6 p.m. Rene, the pretty little maid, offered to run back to Te Paki station and get help. Even if our car made up its mind to start now, we couldn't get down to Awanui along the beach, for the tide would be too high.

Rene had offered to "run back," and at the station they told us later, they thought she'd done so, literally, though running up the watery bed of the creek for two miles must have been pretty heavy going.

Down by the car Mr. and Mrs. Keene and the baby and I put in the period of waiting as best we could. By this time I'd gone completely "native"; wandering about in the soft sand and water of the creek without my

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shoes and stockings. The sky had clouded over, but there was a moon behind the clouds; and in this glimmer of light one could see the ghostly outlines of the high sand-hills round us, and the occasional clumps of toi-toi with their silvery plumes uplifted to the sky.

A misty rain drove me back for shelter to the car. By the light of an electric torch we managed to unpack from our suitcases the bare necessities for the night. I was able to stuff all I required into the wide pockets of my coat. We'd have to ride back to Te Pahi when the rescue party arrived; and one wants one's hands free on horseback.

At about nine o'clock we heard the sound we'd all been listening for—galloping hoofs upon the sand of the creek. Nearer and nearer they came; then with a great rattling of bits, and the clanking of chains, the horsemen pulled up beside the car. There was young Mr. West Hill, and there were three Maoris leading saddled horses, as well as a heavier animal, with chains, to pull the car out of the water.

It was really like a scene from the movies as they galloped up. The figures of the Maoris, still wearing their sombrero hats, and the horses, outlined in the pale moonlight, against the weird background of the white sand-hills.

The horse they'd brought with chains was harnessed to the car, and with a good deal of shouting he was urged to pull. But the horse, as mulish as the car, refused quite definitely to have anything to do with the project. He merely stood on his hind legs and pawed the air, endeavouring to affectionately paw one of the Maoris at the same time. They were careful, however, to get away from under with great dispatch. As a circus performer the horse may have been admirable. As a hauler of cars, he was quite useless.

The effort to make him pull was at last abandoned,

and it was a case of all hands to push the car. Out of the water she came at last; and up on higher ground, where she would be safe from any rising of the creek, we left her.

Now all that remained for us to do was to mount our horses and ride back to Te Paki. Poor Mrs. Keene! How sorry I felt for her, having to give up her precious baby! Tied up in a rug the little bundle was fastened round Stewart West Hill's shoulders. But they were the very capable shoulders of a very capable and kind young man. He held the baby in his arms instead of carrying her on his back "pikau" fashion, as the Maoris carry their children.

"Don't worry about her, Mrs. Keene," said he confidently. "She's perfectly safe with me. I carried one, only three weeks old, for the lighthouse keeper's wife the other day."

With one arm round the baby he swung himself up into his saddle, and we were off; our horses splashing up the creek in the misty rain. I rode beside the self-appointed nurse.

"Have a look at her," he said, pulling the rug a little away from her face for a moment. "She's as happy as Larry; quite enjoying herself."

I could only see a tiny white blur for a second in the moonlight, but the gentle way in which he replaced a corner of the rug, to shield the baby's face from the rain, quite won my heart. I believe she did enjoy that ride. At any rate she was perfectly contented the whole way, and exceedingly bright—her cold having entirely disappeared—when we reached Te Paki.

Just before we turned into the home paddock at the station, I found that the imperturbably good-humoured Mr. Keene was riding beside me. Out of the darkness I heard a voice: a voice of bitterness and gloom. "Do you call *this* a holiday in New Zealand?" he asked. However, his sarcasm wasn't very genuine. His

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strenuous day seemed to have improved his health, and he was very much more cheerful when we sat down at ten o'clock that night to a good hot dinner than he'd been at breakfast time.

A hot dinner, a hot bath, and so to bed; and none of us any the worse for our adventure.

At Te Paki, the kind West Hills were destined to have us for still another night, and most of the following day. But, as there seems to be no limit to the hospitality in the north, they didn't seem to mind; and we certainly did not.

At last, however—after a great deal of telephoning, and arranging for a motorist coming north to bring a new battery from Kaitaia; to leave it somewhere under a flax bush on the roadside, from which position it would be retrieved later—the fault in the car was discovered. My safety-pin was entirely blameless in the matter. It was discharged without a stain on its character. The fault was in the coil. That put right, we made our third start for Awanui, and this time got through without mishap.

I shall never forget our drive down the Ninety Mile Beach on that still, shining afternoon; the sunset light over the wide stretch of sands; and the long straight lines of surf rolling up on to the beach. From the edge of the sea, at low water, to the sand-hills, the width of the level strand must be close on a quarter of a mile, and the coast shelves out so gradually that the ocean begins to break a very long way from the shore. Seven lines of white breakers, one behind the other, I counted as our car sped smoothly and swiftly along the finest natural motor track in the world. At the foot of the sand-dunes to our left, above high-water mark, were wet patches of sand from the freshwater springs on the hills inland. Here, on the satin-smooth, mirror-like surface, the blue sky, the rosy sunset clouds, and the outline of the dunes, were reflected so clearly that we had a constantly changing picture gallery—pictures painted by

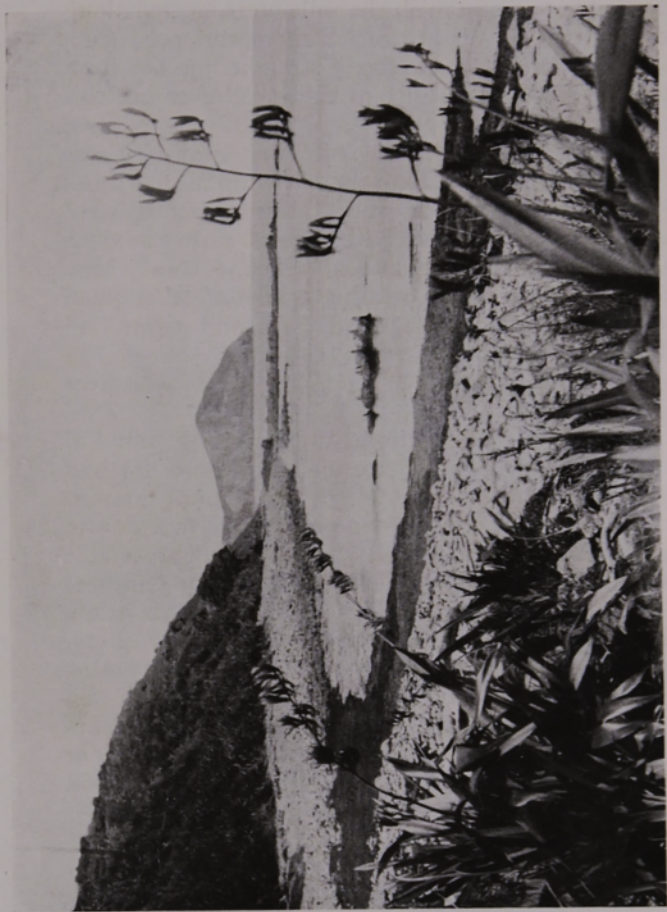
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the gigantic brush of some flawless pavement artist—to gaze upon.

There is something profoundly impressive in the magnitude of this great beach—in its lonely grandeur. Except for the flocks of sea-birds, as far as the eye could reach—straight ahead, along the wide sands, and far out over the lines of surf to the empty horizon—we were the only living creatures. “In sight,” I should have added, for, of course, there were the toheroas! Very much alive, these creatures, under the sands!

At Hukatere, near the garage where Kingsford Smith and his companions snatched a few hours’ sleep before their hop across the twelve hundred miles of the Tasman Sea, Mr. Keene stopped the car so that I might have my first experience of gathering the shell-fish. Toheroas, up to this moment, had been to me little molluscs like diminutive oysters floating in a very delicious soup. I learnt now that what I’d taken for the whole fish was merely a very small part of it. Toheroas are always minced before being cooked!

Stirring the sand with our fingers, we came upon masses of large, dark green, oblong shells, some of them five and six inches in length. The toheroa’s manners are, certainly, not all they might be, for, on his first introduction to visitors, he puts out his tongue and spits! With his tongue (or, I suppose, it is with his whole body) he holds firmly to the sand to prevent one’s pulling him out. A long pull, and a strong pull, and he’s out on the sand, and throwing out an angry little jet of water beyond the protruding tongue. And if you leave him long enough (only a few minutes will suffice), he has used this same tongue to dig a hole in the sand, and pull himself and his shell down again out of sight. Mrs. Keene and I didn’t give our toheroas time enough for this! In about two minutes we had collected a small sackful, and were making our way back to the car.



FLAX AND SHAGS AT THE NORTH CAPE

(By courtesy of R. A. Falla,

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NORTH, TO SEE THE GODWITS GO

Though the twilight was falling as we moved on, we were still able to distinguish the mile-posts erected along the sand-hills for "Wizard Smith's" motor speed trial. Here sixteen miles in a perfectly straight line has been marked off. Will Sir Malcolm Campbell ever use this track, I wonder?

Before we reached "the turn-off" for Awanui, it was quite dark. The road runs to the township for five miles over the sand-dunes; and very heavy going it was! After our recent experiences, we were all rather anxious as to the car's behaviour, and all (even, I think, Miss Keene, aged five months) breathed a sigh of relief when we were safely on a metalled road again, and within hail of Awanui.

I said good-bye here to Mr. and Mrs. Keene who were going on to stay at Kaitaia.

I hadn't seen any godwits in the far north, but I'm very thankful that I didn't abandon the chase; for had I done so I should have missed one of the most interesting parts of my "holiday"; and should have failed to make the acquaintance of all the kind and hospitable people who befriended me. And I'm not the only one who has journeyed north to see the godwit migration, and arrived too late. I heard the other day of a Wellington man who was as unsuccessful as I. He felt he must share his disappointment with his wife, and sent her, by wire, a laconic message. "Godwits gone." Unfortunately the telegram very nearly ended in an estrangement between the two, for it reached her in this form. "God be with you. Gone."

It wasn't long before I tumbled into bed that night at the comfortable hotel at Awanui. I had to rise at half-past four next morning in order to catch the service car for Keri-Keri. There, at the Bay of Islands, where all the history of New Zealand first began, I meant to end this diary of my tour.

CHAPTER XX

THE BAY OF ISLANDS

As no one in the hotel would be stirring at the early hour of my departure, I was told that the driver of the service car would wake me; or an alarm clock could be provided in my room. To make assurance doubly sure, I chose both methods of being roused; but I was dressed and ready when the service-car driver stepped in, out of the darkness, over the dogs sleeping on the verandah, to the little sitting-room of the hotel. (No doors, of course, are locked in this part of New Zealand—in fact, except in the cities New Zealand doors are seldom locked.)

It was a queer experience to be starting off like this before the dawn; but the working day had already begun for most of the dairy farmers. As we passed through Kaitaia, I wondered how my friends, the Keenes, were faring. I'd heard of them by telephone after we parted; and had been bitterly reproved by their host, Colonel Allen Bell, for my omission to visit Kaitaia.

"You ought to be punished for it," he said over the wire. But as I've remarked before, I couldn't see everything in New Zealand. As a matter of fact, I was very sorry not to meet Colonel Bell himself, for he apparently knows everything there is to know about the far north.

It was rather like a dream journey, mine, that morning: the stars fading, and the sun rising, and the country—tree-ferns, cabbage trees, and flax—dew-spangled. We stopped for breakfast somewhere—I don't know where—but I remember I was offered the

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choice of hash or fried chops. Not being one of Kipling's five-meal, meat-fed men, and having risen at 4.30, I'm afraid my shudder at hash and chops was quite perceptible! Fortunately, the tea and toast, and best New Zealand butter, were excellent, so I didn't do so badly without either hash or chops.

At the turn-off to Keri-Keri, another car met me, and I went on. It was a glorious day. Summer by the calendar was over, but for weeks yet we should have warm weather; and, of course, at the moment, wasn't I in the winterless north?

In writing of my visit to Keri-Keri, I feel that not only was my journey thither dreamlike, but my whole day dreamlike too. It may have been owing to the early morning start I'd made, and the fact that I hadn't the faintest notion where I was going; or again, it may have been that in the end I saw too much that renders my memory of that day so vague—no, not exactly vague, but rather unreal.

Having been given a letter of introduction to a Captain Voelcker, one of those newly arrived settlers from the East, I determined to call upon him first. My lucky star was in the ascendant evidently; for I found that Captain Voelcker and his pretty Irish wife were prepared to accept "paying guests" in their very charming home. A paying guest I at once became at "Shropshire Farm"! Of course, one might see on a Shropshire farm lovely old oak and china such as the Voelckers possess, but I don't think one would see the tiger and panther skins they have strewn about the entrance hall and living-room. Nor would one see in the garden of a Shropshire farm the tobacco plantations, or the passion-fruit vines, and lemon and orange trees, laden with fruit, such as there are here.

Well, I'd arrived at Shropshire Farm, Keri-Keri, and was now in a position to acquire all the information

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required concerning this settlement of Englishmen, who have come from China, India, Malaya, Burma, within the last four or five years, to make their homes in the Bay of Islands.

By the time I had finished acquiring information, I was so dazed that I fear I can make little use of that information now. The energetic Captain Voelcker motored me here, there, and everywhere; first, to the factory where the passion-fruit is graded and packed in cases, and where a great deal of the fruit is pulped.

"You see English people don't seem to understand that the black seeds are perfectly harmless, so, for the English market, we've got to extract 'em. Here you are! We've got a most ingenious contrivance here for pulping the passion-fruit. It's really a milking machine adapted to our purpose. Seeds and all go into the separator there, and out comes the juice only to be bottled and exported. We've got our market now in London—and it's a growing market. Then as soon as our lemons are ready—next year our trees will be bearing, and our grape-fruit coming on, too—we'll use this factory for grading, and curing, and packing. We've had our troubles—plenty of 'em—since our arrival, five years ago, but I think we're through them now."

He took me to see some of the tobacco plantations; and a young New Zealander, who has had experience, both in tobacco-growing and grape culture in Rhodesia, waxed enthusiastic over the possibilities of North Auckland for both these products. So far Nelson holds the record for tobacco-growing. From four and a half acres there, a crop worth seven hundred pounds has been taken in one year. And this has been done by a woman! As a matter of fact, the cultivation of tobacco can be very successfully carried on by women. It is neither hard nor expensive work. One girl can manage an acre, and

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can average about a hundred and fifteen pounds, gross, to the acre. Apart from the cost of the land, the plants sufficient for an acre would cost about ten pounds, and fertilizer four pounds. Beginning work at sunrise, a girl might take from 11 a.m. till 4 p.m. off, and work again till sunset.

The leaf grown in Nelson, and in Keri-Keri, this expert assured me, is equal to the finest Virginian leaf. But tobacco needs a "balanced" soil. A crop of potatoes, or the tobacco itself, will balance the soil; and the longer tobacco is grown on the same soil, the finer the product will be!

He had also a good deal to say with regard to the growing of the tung oil trees. He seemed to believe there was a future for the production of tung oil, too, in New Zealand. Personally, I think (but then, of course, I don't know anything about it!) this is rather problematic. The trees will grow in parts of New Zealand certainly, but it has yet to be proved that their nuts will yield the right proportion of oil. At any rate, with all these companies that are started, it is only common sense for intending investors to find out conditions for themselves before buying shares. It has been said, alas, that my lovely country is the home of many company promoters, who have been rather too—shall we say optimistic? I've seen some citrus plantations advertised as excellent investments which were sad, sad sights. No lemon trees could ever hope to thrive upon the fern and manuka-covered hills of some of the citrus plantations I passed through. And some of the tung oil trees, too, have been pathetic! I'm bound to admit, however, that the one tung oil plantation I saw at Keri-Keri was magnificently healthy.

Captain Voelcker told me something of the difficulties he and his fellow-settlers had had to contend with. And I'm sorry to say all the difficulties they had met

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with were not entirely due to their own ignorances, or to the perverse vagaries of nature.

"Everyone seemed to be out to take advantage of us," he said. "We were new chums, mugs, and as such, fair game for sharp practise. I'm not saying we were swindled, but we were undoubtedly misled, and badly advised. The region we were coming to was represented as a sort of Garden of Eden, into which we had only to 'walk, and pick the fruits thereof.'"

He gave me a short outline of the history of this settlement which has sprung up in the last few years. An area of seven thousand acres was cut up into twenty-acre sections, and advertised as suitable for men retiring from the Services, or for Civil Servants from the East. One or two men from China came first. They liked the place, saw great possibilities ahead, and told their friends. Men from India heard of it and came. (The Voelckers are from India.) Passion-fruit, of course, is a quick-growing crop. The vines begin bearing after the first year. But it is one thing to grow the fruit, and another to find a market for it! That was one of their difficulties, and it was in the marketing of their produce in the beginning that they were—we won't say swindled, but "let down." "We were badly advised—and by men we thought we could trust—in many ways. For instance, we were told to plant shelter belts of Australian blue-gums. They're useless. We've found out since that the ideal shelter is the *lopantha*. If I were starting again I'd buy my section, sow it in blue lupin, plant my shelter belts, and then forget all about it for two or three years. As it was, we came here, had to spend most of our capital in building our houses, and so forth, and then had to sit down and wait for results. Our place has cost us thousands. That's why, at last, we had the brilliant idea of turning Shropshire Farm into a guest-house. But I think we're all of us pretty well through

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our troubles now. You see, when things were looking blackest, we got together—there are about three hundred of us in the settlement now—to try and find out if, by concerted action, we couldn't achieve something; and I think we've succeeded. We've got our own factory, and our own electric supply from the Keri-Keri Falls. We do everything by electricity—cooking and so on. It's a company in which we're all shareholders."

Naturally I asked if he regretted having come to New Zealand.

"Regret it? Certainly not. I love the place—and the life. We're amongst people of our own sort, and in spite of hard work, we manage to knock out a lot of fun. Shooting, deep-sea fishing. Did you see these?"

He handed me some horrible black and white globular objects. "They're dried sword-fish's eyes. And these are the swords. I'm having them polished. We were out in a launch the other day. It's the finest sport there is. Then this is an absolutely perfect climate, and the soil here will grow anything. Of course, the country round the Bay of Islands is patchy. Some of it's very poor. But we're on good volcanic land, and there are three thousand acres of the same sort left for men who want small holdings, and are willing to work them. And new-comers arriving now will have the advantage of participating in all the benefits we've created for them. The electricity supply, and so on. Do I regret having come? Rather not."

I'd been prepared to hear stories of discontent and failure in this settlement at Keri-Keri. I was agreeably surprised. As a matter of fact, there seemed more optimism and hope for the future in this region than in a great many I'd visited during the course of my tour through New Zealand.

I had yet to keep my promise to Mr. Athol Kemp and to call on his aunts, living at the historic Kemp home-

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stead—the oldest house in New Zealand, built in 1819.

Captain Voelcker drove me down to the inlet, on which is situated the church, the post office, the old stone store, and the Kemps' house.

"We have a scow from Auckland once a fortnight here," said Captain Voelcker. "She brings up most of the stores for us."

We entered the store—very busy on this Saturday afternoon—and walked up the steep stairs to see Marsden's study. A few old relics are kept here, but also sacks of flour, tins of biscuits, fishing tackle, and other merchandise. In an adjoining room the Keri-Keri barber was giving one of the Keri-Kerians a hair-cut! Such a queer jostling of the historic past and the prosaic every-day!

The walls of this old stone store, which is built of stone from the river-bed near by, hauled up by the Maoris, and shaped by the missionary stone-masons, are two feet in thickness, and the windows are heavily barred. Erected in 1833, it was intended for use as a mission store, but could also be converted, if necessary, into a redoubt for defence against an attack by the natives.

Samuel Marsden, that intrepid missionary, who preached the first sermon ever delivered in New Zealand, on Christmas Day, 1814, was a chaplain to the convicts in New South Wales. Meeting with some Maoris in Norfolk Island, he became interested in them, and obtained permission from the authorities in Sydney to conduct a mission amongst the natives of New Zealand. Several lay missionaries came with him—Messrs. Kemp, Butler, Kendall, and others. On the wall of this room, where once Samuel Marsden laboured, is the framed copy of an old letter written by Butler.

I wish I had copied that letter. I think it begins:

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"This day has the first plough been put into the soil of New Zealand," and I think the date is somewhere about 1820.

Later, sitting on the verandah of "the oldest house in New Zealand," Miss Charlotte Kemp produced an old faded diary, written by her grandfather in 1823. She showed me the orange tree—still bearing fruit—which was grown by her grandmother, from seed brought from Sydney in 1819.

But I could not detain her too long. All visitors to Keri-Keri make a pilgrimage to the Kemp house. How tired the poor Miss Kemps must be of pilgrims!

I crossed the road on leaving the Kemp house, to the toy post office. My business here was to send a cable to Warner Brothers in New York with reference to the film rights in my latest novel. Again I was conscious of a queer and sudden transition from one century to another—of the incongruity of sending a cable to New York from Keri-Keri!

But it was in Paihia—back with my kind friend at her "seaside cottage"—some days later that I became more strongly enveloped in the atmosphere of the past.

His Excellency, Lord Bledisloe, had recently concluded a visit to the Bay of Islands, the reason for his visit being to convene a meeting of the Waitangi Trust Executives on the very spot—the old Busby homestead—which, with two thousand acres of the surrounding country, constitutes the Governor-General's and Lady Bledisloe's gift to the people of New Zealand.

A granddaughter of Mr. James Busby, New Zealand's first British Resident, was staying in Paihia. She came with us to picnic over in Waitangi Park. She'd lived as a small child with her grandmother, the widow of the first Resident, and was able to tell us many stories that her grandmother had told her.

As we walked along the beach beyond Paihia, she

pointed out the obelisk erected by the Maoris many years after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, in commemoration of that great occasion.

"There were thousands of natives gathered here for the unveiling of the Memorial Stone," she said. "And all along this bay the kits of kumaras and potatoes were hung—hundreds and hundreds of them. And dozens and dozens of dried sharks! I'll never forget seeing some of the Maoris arrive—coming up from the Heads in war canoes—and the 'haka' of welcome to the new arrivals. To a small child it was terrifying! The men were tattoed from head to foot, and I thought they were stark naked—perhaps they weren't! At any rate they'd worked themselves up into a frenzy with their blood-curdling shouts, and horrible contortions, and worked me up to a frenzy of fear at the same time. Miss Maning—a daughter of Judge Maning—was our governess in those days. She was a half-caste, for he'd married a Maori woman of high rank in the Ngapuhi tribe. She was with us, watching the 'haka,' and when one of the Maori men threw himself down on the sand, and began shouting in Maori, she suddenly turned round and gave him a good hard smack! That was too much for me! I gave up all hope then! I expected to be killed and eaten next minute."

"And what happened?"

"Nothing—he laughed, and so did she."

We were rowed across the Waitangi River, and walked up over the green hillside towards the house. The old oaks and silver birches of the plantation were already touched with bronze and gold; but the big pohutakawa tree near the verandah kept its unchanging dark green mantle. It is only in November and December that these "Christmas" trees are a mass of crimson blossom.

The workmen were busy repairing the Residency—restoring it to the original design of 1833—so that it may

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stand for many years as a memorial of old New Zealand, and house relics and historical records of early days.

Since these structural alterations have been in progress, an old account book of Mr. James Busby's has been found in the rafters. Some of the items refer to donations to the church at Kororareka—as Russell, the first capital of New Zealand, was then called. In those early days Kororareka was a wild, lawless, and wicked little town; and in 1831, when some of the Maori chiefs at the Bay of Islands applied to William IV for British protection, Mr. Busby was appointed as British Resident. This position—a very difficult position—he held until the arrival of Governor Hobson in 1840. James Busby was called a “man-of-war without guns.” He had no means of enforcing order amongst the lawless whalers, the traders, and the Maoris; and his lot must have been a most unenviable one.

Miss Busby pointed out the flat flag-stones of the verandah, all of which were brought from Australia in 1833, as were the hardwood floors, and the Australian cedar doors. She also showed us the mark of a bullet on the outer wall of her grandfather's study. A shot was fired at him as he sat here working, but only a splinter of the wood struck him. The workmen are reconstructing the wing where Mrs. Busby's bedroom once stood.

“When we were very small,” said Miss Busby, “my grandmother used to tell us of the day when two disputing tribes of Maoris called upon my grandfather. He'd told them he would do his best to arbitrate between them if they came to him unarmed. One party obeyed his injunctions, but the other came prepared for war. The unarmed party rushed in terror to the house, and crowded in, a wild, excited mob, to the first room they came to. This was my grandmother's bedroom, and she had left the baby—I don't know which one—there

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asleep in his cradle. In terror she rushed back to the room, and forced her way through the wildly excited natives. The cradle was empty! Distracted with fear, she began to search for her lost child, and an old chief, seated on a chair in the corner, beckoned to her. She crossed to him. Beneath the chair, hidden by his mat, was the still sleeping baby. The old man, fearing that the cradle would be upset by the terror-ridden mob of natives and the baby trampled underfoot, had secured the child, placed it under the chair and sat down over it."

Wandering across the garden, we came to the spot—a dozen paces from the garden wall—where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840. The form of the treaty—which is a unique document in that it was the first time in the history of the British Empire that such a treaty was made with an uncivilized race—was the work of Mr. James Busby. At the request of Governor Hobson Mr. Busby drew up the treaty, and though one or two paragraphs were transposed before the signing, no word of the British Resident's was altered. From the garden where we stood, we could look across all the lovely reaches of the island-dotted harbour to the little town of Russell, now, it seems, after its troubled past, quietly drowsing in the long sunshine of the north.

We were to see Russell at closer quarters next day, when my hostess chartered a launch to take a party of us over. Miss Busby again came with us, and again was able to tell us much that she had heard and known as a child. She took us to the small white-painted church round which the battle of Kororareka was fought in 1845; and pointed out the holes made by cannon-shot fired by H.M.S. *Hazard* from the bay after the church had been abandoned to the Maoris. These Maoris were the followers of Hone Heke—the native chief who three times in succession cut down the English flag on Flagstaff Hill above the town—and they plundered and

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burned the town. Hone Heke was a nephew of Hongi, "the eater of men," that Maori chief who, taken to England in 1820 by Kendall, the missionary, was received at court by George IV and presented with a suit of armour and many other gifts. On his way back to New Zealand he sold the gifts he had received, and with the proceeds bought three hundred muskets and ammunition. He had learnt something at least in England—the way to power! It was Hongi, who, having his war canoes carried secretly through the bush between the chain of lakes near Rotorua, was able to fall upon the Arawa tribe and decimate them. In seven years of warfare Hongi was responsible for the slaying of between twenty thousand and thirty thousand of his fellow Maoris. But on his death-bed Hongi solemnly warned his followers to welcome always the black-coats (the missionaries), but to beware of a people who wore red coats (the soldiers). It was these people—the red-coats—whom Hone Heke, Hongi's nephew, and married to Hongi's daughter, sought to drive away from Kororareka. He did actually drive them out of the town; and in the little church we saw the memorial to the sailors and marines of H.M.S. *Hazard* who were killed in this engagement. Their bodies lie together in one grave in the little tree-planted churchyard.

Later we strolled up to the house built by the Roman Catholic Bishop Pompallier. This house was protected by the Maoris during the burning of Kororareka. For Bishop Pompallier they regarded with great love and affection. It is said that in 1838, when he first appeared amongst the Maoris of the north, he was dressed in full canonicals. His future parishioners, consumed with curiosity, proceeded to undress him. Never, I imagine, was priest "unfrooked" in so queer a fashion. When the Maoris had reached the lowest strata of the Bishop's clothing, he remarked quietly, that in common polite-

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ness—as gentlemen themselves—the chiefs should leave him some garments to cover his nakedness. To this they agreed; but he had submitted to this ordeal with such a lack of fear, and at the same time with so much gentleness and amiability, that the Maoris were his devoted followers for ever afterwards. Mrs. Stephenson, who now lives in Bishop Pompallier's beautiful old house—lost in a tangle of trees and lovely flowers, dahlias, roses, and scarlet hibiscus all flowering together—was kind enough to let us see some of the sixteen rooms of the big house, built of cobblestone, with walls over two feet in thickness.

Back to Paihia, across the glassy water, shining in tints of pearl and opal, our launch carried us. I was to spend only one more night with my kind hostess here. From Paihia Bay—where in 1823 Henry Williams, the young English naval officer, established his mission, and where the church erected by his descendants in his memory now stands; where the first printing-press in New Zealand was set up in 1834; where the first boat was built and launched; where the first cricket match ever played in New Zealand took place—I was to take my departure in the morning.

Here in the Bay of Islands everything began. The first sermon was preached; the first plough put into the soil; the first flour-mill erected; the first printing done; and the first cricket match played. These "firsts" seemed to me as symbols of all that British colonization has always stood for. With Marsden's first sermon, religion; with the Treaty of Waitangi, justice; with the plough, husbandry; with the flour-mill and the boat building, industry; with the printing-press, learning; and with the cricket match—well, just cricket!

My tour was over. I'd accepted with many misgivings the commission from my publishers to write this diary of my wanderings. I felt, that though I loved my

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native land, I knew so little of it! I know more now! Whether what I've written will interest any but my own intimate friends, I can't guess. I can only hope that it will. And from all those who may read this book, I would beg indulgence for its obvious short-comings. Although I have sought an authority for all my statements, my simple diary does not profess to be, in any way, a book of reference on New Zealand; nor does it make any pretension to rank as "literature." It has been written in odd moments: as I travelled in trains; or sat alone in my room at hotels, or in the homes of all those friends I mention in my dedication.

If I had taken longer in the writing of this book, I might have made a better job of it! And then, again, I mightn't!

My "holiday" has been a strenuous one, but at least (to me) it has been always interesting, and sometimes quite exciting. But there was no excitement in my departure from Paihia. Excitement has long since spent herself here, in this placid inlet of the sea!

It was a dove-grey, peaceful morning when I took my seat in the launch at the Paihia jetty, and turned to catch my last glimpse of the little bay. All the islands and the headlands round me looked down, narcissus-like, to fall in love with their own reflections on the still water. But as the launch moved out across the wide sweep of the Bay of Islands, the sun broke through the mist, and the morning was no longer grey—there was colour everywhere. The sky was blue, the dancing sea was bluer. Waitangi showed her slopes of emerald green. Out towards the Heads, bluey-mauve in the sunshine, I could see the mountain under which Marsden preached his first sermon: "I bring you good tidings."

The tall Norfolk Island pines on many jutting promontories and the manuka-fringed headlands stood out, clear and distinct, in the morning sunlight.

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There was the train waiting for us on the Opuā wharf; and on the hillside close beside it tree-ferns, trumpet-lilies all in blossom, toi-toi, and pohutakawa trees.

I stood alone in the stern of the launch taking one last look at this fair Bay of Islands.

It was indeed:

"Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite—apart!"

May 27th, 1933.

GISBORNE,
NEW ZEALAND.

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