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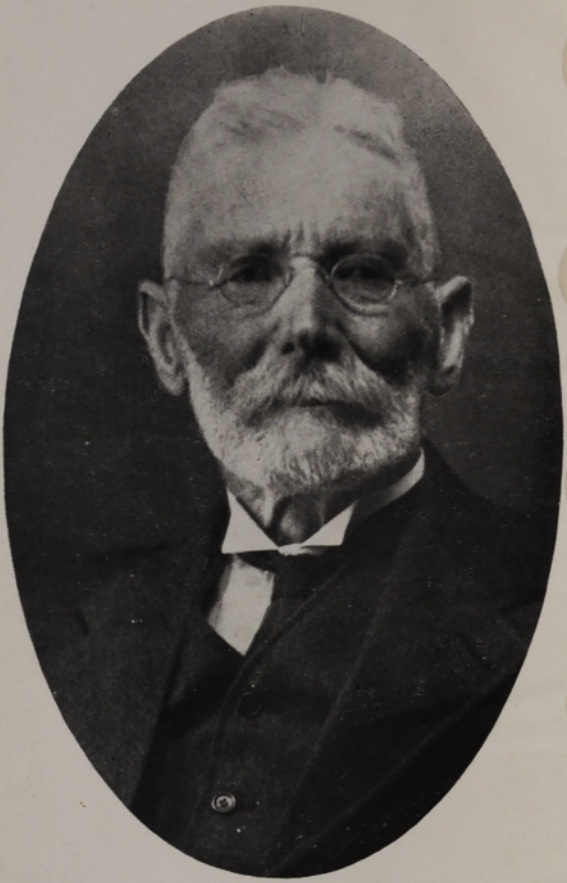
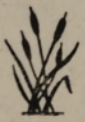


THE AUTHOR
In his 97th Year.

PIONEERING IN OTAGO

THE RECOLLECTIONS OF
WILLIAM AYSON
SET DOWN IN HIS
97th YEAR



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Foreword

I HAVE been asked by Mr. William Ayson to write a Foreword for this excellent little book. This I gladly do, for Mr. Ayson is an old and valued friend—a wonderful old man, now in his 97th year. In these reminiscences Mr. Ayson narrates his own personal experiences during the many years that have passed since he, as a boy, arrived in Otago in the ship *Royal Albert* in 1853 (84 years ago) along with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Ayson, of "Corydon," Warepa, and other members of the family.

In my opinion these recollections form a welcome and valuable addition to all that has been written about the pioneering days of Otago. The subjects treated are many and various, and from them much may be gleaned of the trials and hardships which the early settlers had to endure in order that they might exist, and thus be able to make homes for themselves and their families in this new land. Of exceptional interest is the description of the journey of the family from Dunedin to their new home at Warepa, similar no doubt in many ways to the experience of others in those early days. The

recollections of Gabriel's Gully, and of Mackenzie, the sheep-stealer, are instances of the interesting story Mr. Ayson has to tell. It is good to see the kindly references to one of the pioneer ministers of Otago, Dr. Bannerman.

This book is the outcome of a suggestion by the Otago Early Settlers' Association, with the author's approval, that one of their staff, Miss R. Pitcher, be permitted to visit Mr. Ayson at his home, "Southbrook," Waikaka, for the purpose of recording his reminiscences, although not originally intended for publication. From the many interesting incidents related by Mr. Ayson, Miss Pitcher has edited this account of the early days. Both Mr. Ayson and the Association value the good work Miss Pitcher has done.

There are other early settlers still happily with us who could also tell a good story. To these I would say—"Go ahead and do likewise."

W. PATERSON,
Secretary Otago Early Settlers' Assn.

Otago Early Settlers' Hall,
Dunedin, N.Z.,
20th September, 1937.

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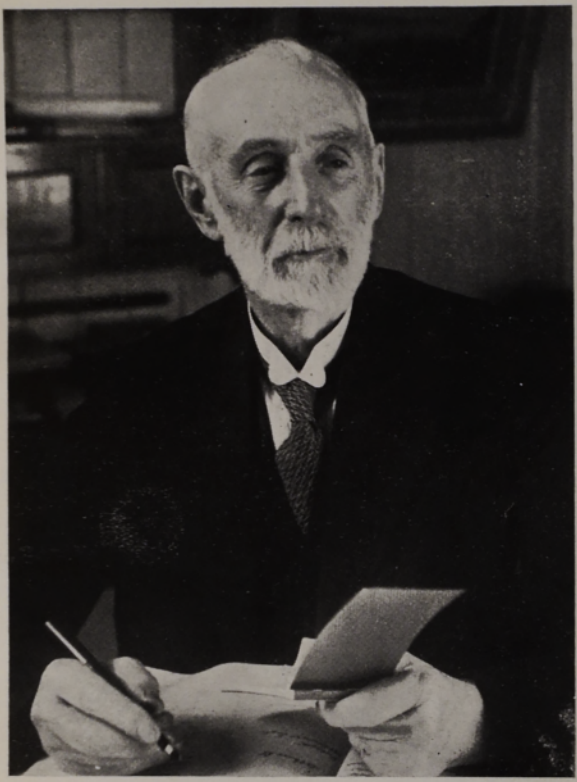

WILLIAM PATERSON
Secretary Otago Early Settlers' Association.

Glenshee, Perthshire, Scotland, the birthplace of William Ayson.

The Original Home of Peter Ayson, Warepa, built in 1853, afterwards occupied for a time by Dr. and Mrs. William Bannerman.
(From a drawing by Mrs. Bannerman)

THE HOMELAND

GLENSHEE was the name of the place in Scotland where I was born, in mid-winter, 21st December, 1840. Glenshee is a glen in the Grampians, the coldest mountains in the Highlands of Scotland, and is 16 miles from Blairgowrie, a town in Perthshire.

I was baptised in the Free Church of Strathardle, held in the arms of Miss Jessie Shaw, a sister of John Shaw and Miss Margaret Shaw, later of "Finegand," Clutha.

I was named after my grandfather, William Ayson, who was in the army, although he had never been in an engagement except in the Irish rebellion. His only brother, Robert, who was a tailor and clothier in Blairgowrie, found that as there were too many Essons about it interfered with his business, and he and my grandfather decided to change the name to Ayson. Robert Ayson never left Scotland, and had no family, so when my father and his two brothers came to New Zealand there were no Aysons left in the Old Country.

My father, Peter Ayson, was born at Cray, Perthshire, in 1807. He had a good knowledge of farming, but he had also served

his time as a carpenter and builder, an worked at his trade for the greater part o his life. At the disruption of the Church of Scotland he took a leading part in getting the Free Church erected at Glenshee, being an elder until he left for Otago. My father was a very severe disciplinarian, and when your I was always afraid of him.

I went to the Free Church School when was five years old. The teacher was a very severe Highlandman. Perhaps I was slow to learn. However, he thought he could drum it into me, sometimes with the taws (strap), the switch, on the hand, but generally wit an ebony ruler. I still have a few bumps o my head—not intellectual bumps, but ebony ruler bumps. The ebony rulers were used a good deal then by teachers, as there were no ruled copy books, and the plain paper was ruled according to the size of the text required.

When I was ten years of age I was sent to live with a farmer in Fifeshire, and went t school in a village called Abernethy, in Perth shire, on the border of Fifeshire. The teacher was very kind, and encouraged me as much as possible. He began by giving me a boy to teach, but that did not last long. He then put me into a class, and I was soon dux. After a while he put me into a much highe class. I found the work much harder, bu

"Corydon," Glenshee, Scotland, the Birthplace of the Author.

gradually worked my way up to the top, and kept there while I was at the school.

My father had made up his mind to migrate, and I had to go home, as he had a contract to build a farm-house before we left to come to New Zealand, and I had to help in a small way with this. My mother was also very busy with her spinning wheel, and there was a tailor in the house for some time making clothing for a large family—ten of us then. My mother was an adept at her share of the work.

I remember the first time Queen Victoria went to Balmoral Castle in 1850, when I was a boy of ten. The Queen on this particular occasion passed through the Glen (Glenshee). She had a bodyguard of kilted soldiers, and a coachload of great fat fellows called the Queen's "Beef-eaters." She went up the Glen again in 1852, this time in an open carriage with the Prince Consort and two young Princes in Highland costume, one of whom was later King Edward VII. The coachmen rode postillion. We went to a place where the horses had to walk up through a cutting, and, as we were on the bank, we could see right into the carriage. We cheered and cheered as the carriage passed by. The Queen and the Princes returned the greeting. I had the pleasure of meeting the Duke of

Gloucester at the Otago Early Settlers' gathering during his visit to New Zealand in 1935, and recalled stories of his great-grandmother.

Leaving the old Glen in Scotland was an unusual event, and I remember when Mr. John Shaw and his sister, Miss Margaret Shaw (afterwards well known at "Finegand," Clutha) left for New Zealand in the *Maori* in 1852, a year previous to our departure.

One of my father's objects in coming to New Zealand was to find more scope for his growing family, and to keep them together as far as possible. He had first intended going to South Africa, but had abandoned this owing to the outbreak of the Kaffir War. My father's object has now been achieved, as every member of the family settled somewhere in New Zealand.

Before leaving the Home Country he had purchased the right to a property in Otago, under the then existing land regulations. This property consisted of 50 acres of rural land, ten acres of suburban land, and a quarter-acre town section.

There were ten in our family when we came out, including myself, and I was the fifth child of a family of fourteen—four sisters and nine brothers. Shortly after our arrival in New Zealand a sister was born

PETER AYSON, 1807-1897.

MRS. PETER AYSON, 1811-1905.

First settlers in Warepa.

DUNEDIN IN 1856.

From an Oil Painting by John Turnbull Thomson, New Zealand's first Surveyor-General.
The new Post Office is erected on the site of Charles Kettle's House, marked X

in Dunedin and two brothers in Warepa. Another, Duncan, who was seven years of age, died just two months before we left for New Zealand.

My uncle, James Ayson, a younger brother of my father, accompanied us to New Zealand. He was then a single man, and in his early twenties. He had studied at St. Andrew's in Scotland to be a minister, but as his eyesight failed he had to give it up. His first situation, after he arrived in Otago, was as a shepherd for Mr. James Fulton of West Taieri. He afterwards took up land at Tokomairiro.

My father's other brother, Alexander Ayson, was later brought out to Otago by the Provincial Council as a teacher, and arrived in the *Southern Cross* in 1856, three years after us. He was the first teacher at Tokomairiro School. He had educated himself for teaching, and for some time was in charge of the Free Church School in Urquhart, Elginshire. He afterwards engaged in farming in the Warepa district.

AT SEA

WHEN we left Scotland to come to New Zealand in 1852, Mr. Grant of the Spittal Hotel—who ran a line of coaches from the head of Glenshee all the summer, to join with the train at Couper Angus (a distance of twenty-four miles)—took us there free of charge. After we had travelled about a mile from our home a neighbour waited for us and gave my father twenty pounds—all sovereigns. (I do not think there were any notes in circulation at that time.) "It will help to pay your way to New Zealand," he said.

My mother had a sister at Couper Angus (Mrs. Duncan) and we stayed there all night. Next day we arrived at Edinburgh, and the following day we were to sail for London. However, the boat did not sail, as there was a very severe storm that continued for a week. There was no railway then from Edinburgh to London, and we had to go by boat. I remember we left in a small paddle-wheel steamer. I do not know how long we took to steam to London; but when we arrived at St. Catherine Dock, our boat, the

Royal Albert, was preparing to leave, so we were all tumbled aboard with our luggage and sailed to Gravesend where, I think, the boat anchored for three weeks. I suppose we were quarantined. We had a wearisome time at Gravesend, and were pleased to get a change.

The *Royal Albert* left Gravesend for Otago in November, 1852. I remember we saw a great many windmills along the coast as we passed Dover. Our first and only storm was encountered in the Bay of Biscay, and we were badly knocked about for a few days. We sighted an island called Trinidad, and another Tristan da Cunha. A great gloom was cast over the ship for several days when we lost a man overboard. He was one of the seamen, a fine able man, and although everything was done to save him all efforts were unsuccessful. Several albatross were seen to attack him, and, by the time the boat reached him, he had disappeared. I remember in the Bay of Biscay we met a large paddle-steamer, homeward bound, the *Britannia*. We were told she was the first steamboat that had been to Melbourne.

The food was very plain, with plenty of it. We had oatmeal porridge, bully soup, pea soup, and salt beef which the sailors called "old horse." It certainly was hard and

tough. We also had salt pork, all the way from Cork, Ireland. In place of bread we had plenty of ship's biscuits. They were very hard and solid. We also had preserved potatoes, which were sliced and dried. Living a lazy life on board ship, I think everyone put on condition.

Arriving at New Zealand via the Bluff, the first land we sighted was the Snares, just off Stewart Island. We had a head wind, and were tacking. It was slow work. I remember one morning we were tacking close to the New Zealand coast, and the call was given "All hands about ship." The ship missed stays, and before we were able to about ship she was nearly ashore. We then ran into a fog, and the ship was hove to. We drifted a long way out of our course, as far as the Waitaki River, and it took nearly all day to get back to Otago Heads.

The pilot put up a signal on the flagstaff to "Stand out," and the Captain mistook the signal and stood in. He saw his mistake, and tried to slew out but could not, and he let go two anchors. She touched bottom, bumped heavily two or three times, trembled from stem to stern, and dragged her anchor. All the women and children were battened down in their cabins, and the men were kept on deck to assist if needed. I remember I fell

asleep, but was up and on deck early to find the ship anchored a good way from the land, and now safe. The pilot came on board, and steered the ship in. Asserting that she was drawing too much water to go up to Port Chalmers, they took her round to near the Maori Kaik, and anchored in deep water. When they let go the first anchor the chain broke. It was one of the chains we were hanging on to the night before. We were, however, thankful to find ourselves inside the harbour. There are many on the voyage of life who never reach the harbour because of unbelief.

DUNEDIN IN 1853

AFTER a voyage of nearly five months we reached Otago on the 6th March, 1853. We all thought it very beautiful. The hills on each side of the harbour were covered with bush to the water's edge. As soon as we were anchored several boatloads of Maoris paid us a visit, selling fish and potatoes, and some of the passengers bought these.

Father lost no time in going to Dunedin, and got a home in Rattray Street next evening. Mr. James Adams came with his craft to take us up the harbour. It was a fine night, and I think the journey must have taken us about five hours. When we came near landing Mr. Adams said, "the tide is out, and we cannot get alongside the jetty. We will just carry you ashore here." There were ten of us, big and little. The water at that time reached as far as the site of the present old telegraph office, and we were carried ashore there at one o'clock in the morning.

We were in bed quickly, had a good sleep, and were up early next morning to see Dunedin. I remember the fuchsia berries were ripe and we had a good feed, as they were plentiful. Dunedin was only five years

old, and except for a few houses it was very much in its natural state. The commercial Dunedin was in High Street. Jim Crow's butcher shop was in Princes Street, where Sagar's fruit shop is now located, between High Street and Rattray street. Smith and Allan's general store was on the corner of Princes street and Rattray street. On the opposite corner was George and John Duncan's butcher shop (now the Government Tourist Department). Later de Lacy's candle factory occupied the site. De Lacy was a shipmate in the *Royal Albert* in 1853. I think he would be about 30 years of age then. He claimed to be first cousin to Czar Nicholas of Russia. I remember, when coming out in the ship, de Lacy always made his own porridge in the ship's galley. He supped the porridge and whiffed a pipe, keeping the pipe burning all the time. This would be the de Lacy who settled at Ravensbourne and gave Ravensbourne its name. The house we occupied was John Sidey's, and I remember we boys slept upstairs, but we went up a ladder not a stair. The house was in Rattray street, near the corner of Princes street. The Royal Hotel stood where the Bank of New Zealand is now located.

A shipmate of ours, James Reid, started a watchmaker's shop near where we lived.

Mr. Alex. Rennie, tailor, had a house on the opposite side. He later occupied a shop on the corner of Rattray and Princes streets. He had two little red-headed girls, and his wife had died on the voyage out in 1850 in the ship *Phoebe Dunbar*. He was a member of the Provincial Council. It was said that on one day, while a Provincial Council meeting was being held in the Mechanics' Institute building—now the site of Cargill's Monument—and he was in the middle of a speech, one of his little girls called out from the door, "Faether, a man has come for his breeks."

John Hill, a cabinetmaker, lived on the hill about the back of Rennie's house in Rattray street. Some years later I went to his funeral. Mr. Willocks, a carpenter, was near the junction of Maclaggan and Rattray streets, now Scoullar and Chisholm.

Some distance up George street, near Valpy's flour mill, lived Dr. Purdie. It was said of him that he rode a very lean horse. A town worthy named Jock Bell knocked at his door one morning. When the doctor came Jock said, "Good morning, Doctor, do you make horses?" The Doctor said, "No, what makes you think that?" "Oh!" Jock said, "I see the frame of one in your paddock."

MY FIRST SITUATION

I WAS twelve years and four months old when I arrived in Dunedin, and three weeks after we landed I took my first situation. I was engaged as "cowboy and generally useful" by Mr. William Ferguson, a farmer, on the Island (now Inch Clutha). My mother made up my swag, and father made what they called a pair of moccasins for me. These were fixed on my feet instead of boots, as they were lighter than boots. My companions on the way were Andrew and John McNeil.

We started the journey on foot after dinner, and got as far as Taieri Ferry that night. Harrold, the ferryman, owned what was then the accommodation house. We were quite comfortable. I remember that the roosters were crowing above us all night. They were somewhere overhead although we could not see them. Next day we continued on our way, by Lake Waihola. We reached a point opposite the Horseshoe Bush, Valpy's Station, near Waihola, where we met two men named White who had finished a wattle-and-dab hut. They had a good fire on, and the kettle was boiling. They made some tea and gave us scones and butter. After a good

meal we started off to Tokomairiro (Milton), We stayed all night there at Mr. Crystal's. where we were made dry and comfortable.

After breakfast next morning we continued along the Tokomairiro Plain, through Lovell's Flat, named after John Lovell who built a wattle-and-dab hut there for his shepherd. There was nothing but a Maori track to guide us. From there we followed the leading ridge to Mr. Boswell's homestead, later the site of the township of Stirling. Mr. Boswell gave us a shakedown before the fire. It was there I had my first meal of wild pork. Mrs. Boswell was very kind to us. After breakfast McNeil "coo-eed" and Mr. Shepherd came over in Mr. Ferguson's boat for us. Mr. and Mrs. Shepherd were Mr. Ferguson's servants on the farm. I was now established in my first situation in the new country, having walked all the way from Dunedin, a distance of over fifty miles.

I had not learned to milk, and it took me a while to learn. There were only four persons on the Island at that time, the Mosleys, Pillans, Ferguson and Redpath. Mr. Mosley was married with a family. Mr. Pillans had a son, Albert, and two nephews, James and George Maitland, who had just arrived from the Old Country, also an orphan boy named Charlie Taylor. Mr. Redpath bought an

entire horse, and Mr. Ferguson a dark bay mare, and as they each had a single furrow plough, they were able to do a little ploughing instead of grubbing the ground with a grub hoe as previously. One day Mr. Redpath asked Mr. Ferguson to kindly send his mare up to him. Mr. Ferguson sent his man, and told him to ask Mr. Redpath to be very careful with her as she was in foal; whereupon Mr. Redpath said, "Take the mare home with you, and tell Mr. Ferguson that I do not need to be told to take care of her; he can take care of her himself." That ended the ploughing, and Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Redpath had to take to the grub-hoe again.

Harvesting in the early days was a primitive undertaking. Mr. Ferguson had about an acre of wheat in stook—a very good crop. He had no dray then, not even a bullock sledge, but he had a wheelbarrow. Mr. Shepherd made a frame for it, and got Mr. Boswell to help him with the "loading in." Shepherd made a rope of flax and fixed it to the front of the wheelbarrow, and then loaded it with as many sheaves as they could pile on, and with Shepherd in the shafts and Boswell in the traces they got it in. A few days later it was threshed with a flail, and the chaff was blown out into the wind. It took a long time to do, but it was well done. It

was a beautiful sample of wheat called Golden Drop, and I do not think I have ever seen any better.

We had a small hand flour mill with a handle on each side, and worked by two men. It made the wheat into whole wheat meal. When made into scones or a camp oven loaf it was very wholesome. Sometimes it was passed through a fine sieve, and then the bread was finer. We never had any butcher meat, but there were plenty of kakas and pigeons, and they were good eating. We had plenty of milk and butter, and often made our dinner of mashed potatoes and milk. Mrs. Shepherd was a good shot. She sometimes went out with a gun, and in a quarter of an hour would shoot enough to last a few days.

There was a Mr. Fuller in South Molyneux. With his small flock of sheep he shifted up to where Stirling now stands, and built a hut at the head of Boswell's Bush—afterwards Smith Bros., who bought Boswell out. Mr. Ferguson bought twenty merino wethers from Mr. Fuller and put them in the cow paddock. We had no sheep dog, and when we wanted to kill a sheep all hands had to turn out to get the sheep into the stockyard. After a time they became so cunning that we could not yard them. Dr. Williams was now

helping us, and we brought them up to the yard several times, but they broke away, so we were beaten. The Doctor said, "Give me a gun and I will shoot one." He was given the gun, and we got our mutton. After that, when the mutton was done, we sent for the Doctor to shoot another sheep, and he generally stayed a few days and helped us to eat the mutton. Dr. Williams was the first doctor in the Molyneux district, now Clutha.

I had forgotten to mention that we had porridge and milk for breakfast. The oatmeal was brought from California in casks. When the oatmeal was done we fell back on whole wheat meal, and that was a very good substitute for oatmeal. Our housekeeper, Mrs. Shepherd, left us, and I was promoted to do the cooking and butter making, etc. I asked Mr. Ferguson whether my sister could come as housekeeper. She was rather young, but did very well for a while. Then another married couple came, Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell.

I remember when I was doing the cooking at Mr. Ferguson's a good many Maoris used to come about. I got on very well with them. One day they came for a good feed, but I did not know what to give them. There was no mutton, so I got the biggest pot I could find, and put in a pigeon or two, also cabbage

and potatoes chopped fine. This made a thick Scotch broth. I did not give them spoons; they were not used to them, and I wanted to see how they would manage without. They got some totara bark which they used for the purpose, and about a dozen of them were all dipping into the pot at once. They must have thought it was all right, because I remember they were all saying "kapai, kapai, kapai."

After working thirteen months for Mr. Ferguson my father desired my assistance, and I then went home to Warepa to help on his farm. My brother James and I started to grub the land for the next season's crop. We had no plough, horses, or bullocks, so we did all the breaking up with the grub-hoe. It was a whole winter's job to prepare one acre for potatoes and three acres for wheat.

The swiftly flowing Clutha River had to be crossed by ferry. The two McNeil brothers, who had accompanied me when we walked through from Dunedin, stayed at Mr. Ferguson's one night. They left next morning, as their father had sent them to build a hut on the southern side of the river where it is now spanned by the new Balclutha bridge. It was his intention to come with the rest of the family and start a ferry across the river. There was no such place as Balclutha then.

I remember the locality was then all flax and tutu and fern. Woodhens (Maori hens we called them) were also very numerous. After the hut was built Mr. James McNeil got a whaleboat round from Dunedin. It was towed behind the schooner *Endeavour*, and later taken up the river. The site of Balclutha was for many years afterwards known as "The Ferry."

Sheep were taken across in the McNeils' ferry. Their legs were tied with flax, and they were put in the boat in rows. When the boat got to the other side the flax was cut and they were let go. I had the job of looking after each boat-load as it was brought over. I remember one of the sheep was the biggest merino wether I had ever seen—120lbs. dressed weight.

Later the Government put on a punt, but it was not safe after it had been used for some time. One day a heavy wagon with six horses went on to the pontoon. The load was too heavy, and the pontoon capsized. The horses were drowned, but I do not think any lives were lost. The Government then put on a double pontoon, which was quite safe. Balclutha has now one of the finest bridges in New Zealand.

John Shepherd, who was employed by Mr. Ferguson, was, while I was there,

appointed Chief Constable at Dunedin. I well remember when he left Mr. Ferguson to take up his position. It is said that he was the first constable in Dunedin, but I was always under the impression that this was not correct, as he was appointed chief constable, and remained chief constable until Branigan came in 1861 to reorganise the police force at the time of the gold rush.

The Author and his Wife at the time of their marriage, November, 1866.

Mrs. Ayson in after years.
(Died at "Southbrook," 1935, aged 86.)

A HOME IN THE BACKBLOCKS

My father had not been long in Dunedin when he left for the Clutha district to inspect the fifty acres of arable land which he had secured optionally at Edinburgh before we sailed. My father had also bought a quarter-acre section at Dunedin, but sold this to augment his finances when he decided to take up his fifty-acre holding at Warepa, in which district the Ayson family were the first settlers. My father, assisted by my eldest brother, Peter, who was twenty years of age when we arrived in New Zealand, built a two-roomed hut. They carried a complete outfit of carpenter's tools and other implements on their backs from Dunedin to Warepa. The tools were brought by my father from Scotland.

My father and brother were at Warepa for some time before sending for the family, and busied themselves digging the ground, sowing wheat, and planting potatoes. They did not possess a plough. They cleared a little bush, grub-hoed a small area, and sowed one acre of wheat and a patch of potatoes.

It was in November, 1854, that my father went for the family at Dunedin. My mother

and several of the younger members of the family made the journey to the new home in Warepa, the older ones, including myself, having secured situations in the meantime. The services of Mr. Cullen were engaged to take them to Scrogg's Creek (now known as Allanton), and they travelled this distance in a horse and dray. Mr. Harrold met them with his boat at Scrogg's Creek and took them on to Taieri Ferry, where he had an hotel, and where the family stayed all night. Next day he took them in his boat to the head of Lake Waihola. Here they were met by Messrs. Salmond and John Cargill with their bullock team and sledge, and were taken to Tokomairiro—now known as Milton —where Messrs. Salmond and Cargill lived. They stayed at Salmond's all night, and next day were taken on in the sledge to Lovell's Flat. Here they camped all night in a wattle-and-dab hut (10 feet by 12 feet) which John Lovell had built for his shepherd. It was unoccupied, Burney, the shepherd, being absent at the time.

The next morning there was a fall of snow about six inches deep, in November! However, the family went on undaunted in a snowstorm, and Mr. McNeil took them to the Clutha ferry, and on to Mr. Shaw's of "Finegand"—a distance of three miles from the

ferry. Here they rested for a week, and as this was the same John Shaw who had left Glenshee—our old Scottish home—a year before us, along with his sister, Miss Margaret Shaw, the reunion was a very jubilant one. Mr. John McNeil took them the rest of the way by bullock sledge to their new home, a distance of nine miles. Thus the Ayson family, with their two-roomed hut, were the first settlers in Warepa. All the luggage had been sent to Port Molyneux in the *Endeavour*, but she was three months in arriving, and during that time the members of the family suffered many hardships. When the vessel did arrive she was navigated up the river to near "Finegand," so the Aysons were the first to get their luggage so far up the Molyneux River, other settlers having to be content with getting theirs landed on the beach at Port Molyneux, from where it had to be carried over Kaka Point, and then taken in a boat up the river.

My father called our new home "Corydon," after our old home in Scotland. The first crop of wheat (the acre which my father and brother had grub-hoed) yielded eighty bushels. This was reaped with a reaping hook. We had no mill to grind the wheat into flour, and the only mills in use at that time were small steel mills with a wheel and

a handle on each side. Of course my father did not possess one, but our nearest neighbour, Mr. Andrew Mercer (seven miles away) had one. My brother James and I were sent off to borrow the mill, which Mr. Mercer kindly lent. But the difficult job was to carry it the seven miles back to Warepa. My brother James took the heavier part of the load, and I carried the wheel, which was about two feet and a half in diameter, and was a heavy load for the little chap that I was then. We found the job no easy one. We had a long rest when we came to Waitepeka Creek, and I remember I said to my brother, "I can't carry the wheel any further." He replied, "You surely are not going to be had." We started off again, and arrived home after a long struggle. It was the hardest day's work I ever had, and I have always declared that carrying that wheel gave me a lump on my back which I have had ever since. It was a case of carrying the mill to the wheat instead of the wheat to the mill.

Next day it was all hands to the mill. My father fixed the mill on a tree stump. We worked hard at the grinding, and ground all except what was required for seed the next season. My two eldest brothers, Peter and James, then returned the mill to Mr.

Mercer. By the time the next season arrived my father had made a water wheel, and the crop was ground by water power, the first water mill in the district. We used a small steel mill for several years, and afterwards got a round stone mill.

During the first year at "Corydon" my father bought 100 sheep, but owing to the whole country being taken up in big runs he did not keep them long, and eventually decided to breed cattle. He bought the 100 sheep for £100 and sold them for £200. The original fifty-acre section was afterwards gradually extended, until my father finally secured a fine farm of about 800 acres, and was later well known as a breeder of merinos. My father resided at "Corydon" until his death in 1897 at the age of 90 years. The property was then sold. My mother died in 1905 at the age of 94.

When my father and brother were building the new home at "Corydon" they visited Mr. Shaw every alternate Saturday at "Finegand," where the Sunday was spent. They were the first to mark out what is called Shaw's track by sticking up poles at certain distances apart. It is now a public road, and is still called "Shaw's Track."

WITH CHARLES H. KETTLE AT KAIHIKU

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CHARLES H. KETTLE, as is generally known, was appointed Chief Surveyor for the New Zealand Land Company, and made the original survey of Dunedin. Subsequently, for some years, he followed pastoral pursuits. It was when he was at Kaihiku that I was employed as shepherd by Mr. Kettle. My father and eldest brother had been building a woolshed for Mr. Kettle, and my father had arranged with him to engage me as shepherd. His sheep station at Kaihiku consisted of 25,000 acres, bounded on the east by the Kaihiku stream, on the west by the Waiwera stream, on the north was the Molyneux River, while the south boundary was along the summit of the Kaihiku ranges. I always thought that the Kaihiku ranges were the finest and most beautiful hills in New Zealand, and I have been over them many a time. Mr. Kettle had had charge of the survey party that divided all the country into 600-acre blocks, with a block road round each 600 acres. The district is still known as the Kaihiku district.

I was about a year at home at "Corydon" after I left Mr. Ferguson, and was about 15 years of age when I went to work for Mr. Kettle, in whose service I remained for three years.

When Mr. Kettle started sheep shearing he engaged me to cook for the shearers. The sheep were bad with scab and had to be dipped. As there was no ready-made dip then, we made a dip by boiling damaged tobacco and using the juice. There was a lot of damaged tobacco in the country at this time, and those who imported it had it damaged before it arrived, the reason being that no duty would then be payable on it. This damaged tobacco when boiled made one of the best sheep dips. It was no use without sulphur for killing scab, but when mixed with sulphur it was excellent.

Someone had told Mr. Kettle that lime and water was a good cure, so the bullock driver, George Sherriff, and I were sent to Willsher Bay to gather sea shells to make lime for sheep dip. We were there three weeks, but I do not remember how many bags we gathered. They had to be taken to the mouth of the Puerua River, and then up by boat to Redpath's store. The rest of the way was by sledge and bullocks to Kaihiku.

While down gathering the shells we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Willsher. Mrs. Willsher was a Maori chieftainess named Makariri, and we considered ourselves highly honoured. We made very good lime by burning a pile of shells on a great wood fire. We then made a tank by digging a long trench. The creek was handy, and when the trench was filled with water we put the lime into it and plunged the sheep in. It proved to be a very unsatisfactory sheep dip, so we had to make another. This time the head shepherd and manager, Adam Sutherland, made the dip by boiling tobacco, and adding sulphur to the juice and also salt. This proved to be a complete cure for scab.

When the lambs were taken from their mothers they gave me them to handle, and as there were wild dogs about I had to follow the lambs about all day, bringing them home at night to camp them near the homestead and sometimes in the yards. That is what they call in Australia "tailing," as the dingoes were very bad there in the early days. The wild dogs were a menace to the sheep, and I had to be out from daylight to dark. One particular dog gave us a good deal of trouble, but it seemed to disappear after a man passed through the district driving a flock of sheep. It had evidently attached itself

to his flock, as we were not troubled much after that. When we had got rid of the wild dogs they gave me two flocks to attend to every day. The wethers were out on the Waiwera hills, and the hoggets ran near the homestead. There were no horses in those days, and we had to do all our travelling on foot.

There was a two-roomed shepherd's hut built at Totara Island on the Molyneux River. This island was covered with totara trees. I occupied the hut for a while, and one morning after breakfast I saw smoke rising behind Popotunoa. I knew that if a wind got up the fire would come down through where the sheep were running. I ran quite three miles to where the sheep were, put the dog round them, and hurried them as fast as I could to a patch of burnt ground about a mile away, getting them in as the fire came raging in behind us. I lay down, and was taking a rest when Mr. Kettle came on the scene looking very pleased. He told me there were a few sheep about half a mile away, and some of them had got a bad singeing.

When working for Mr. Kettle a Mrs. Street had spent the evening at the house, and was leaving next day. Mr. Kettle asked me to carry her across the Kaihiku stream,

which would be about knee-deep. My trousers and boots were wet through, and on returning I met an uncle who scolded me for not changing my clothes. I well remember when he remarked, "Willie, you will be an old man before your time." But I never thought then that I would live to be 96.

Mr. Kettle, as I remember him, was a very pleasant, mild, good-natured man. I never saw him lose his temper during the three years I was working for him, and never heard him say an angry word. He was fairly well built, about 5ft. 10in. in height, and of good appearance. He was well educated, and altogether I thought he was a fine man.

MACKENZIE—THE SHEEP STEALER

I FIRST saw Mackenzie, the sheep stealer, about 1855, while I was working at Mr. C. H. Kettle's at Kaihiku. He was first known in the Clutha district about 1853 or 1854, but I never heard of anyone employing him as shepherd. I did not know his Christian name —he was always called Mackenzie. He was a tall, raw-boned Highlandman. He had some Highland friends at Warepa, John Ross and Sandy Gordon, with whom he stayed when he came to the district. He also had a Highland friend at North Taieri named McDonald, of Bredalbane farm. On one occasion Mackenzie called to see McDonald, and not finding him at home walked off with a pair of working bullocks and a sledge. Calling at Ross and Gordon's, the former, who had been a detective in Edinburgh, recognising the animals, said to him, "Where did you steal the bullocks, Mackenzie?" I do not think he had any bullocks before he stole McDonald's, and I remember he broke in one of them for a pack saddle while he was staying with Ross and Gordon. From what I knew of these men they were much too straight to be implicated with Mackenzie and

his sheep stealing. The only bond they had was that they were all Highlandmen.

Mackenzie had taken up the Edendale run, and was evidently looking round to see where he could get a few cheap sheep. Sheep in the 1850's were very scarce and valuable. About that time, while I was at Mr. Kettle's station at Kaihiku, the owner was in Dunedin with his family, but came to Kaihiku later and built a homestead. One day Mackenzie got one of his bullocks which was running near the hut of Kettle's shepherd, put a pack saddle on him with a good supply of stores, and went off to the unexplored interior, telling us that he was going to explore the country. After a few days the settlers in the Clutha district—there were only a handful then—were disturbed by a thick fog of smoke which came right down from the direction of where Mackenzie had gone. It was thought that he had lit fires, although it was not known at the time that it was probably Mackenzie's idea to burn tracks to bring the sheep through.

After a while he came back again. His bullock was skin and bone, and so was Mackenzie. He again stayed with his Warepa friends, Ross and Gordon. As we knew he could not swim, we asked him at Kettle's how he crossed the river. He replied, "I

just put the bullock in the river, took hold of his tail, and he dragged me across." After about three weeks he came for his other bullock, which was running near Kettle's, and put a pack saddle on him with all his requirements. It was fixed on with girths, the same as a riding saddle, and creels (baskets flat on the inside and round on the outside) were fixed on each side of the bullock. Waterproof covers were on top of the creels.

As I was doing the cooking at Mr. Kettle's at the time, I gave Mackenzie his dinner. I cooked him some chops, and I remember he said a long grace in Gaelic before his dinner and a long grace afterwards. He asked me how often we went round Mr. Kettle's sheep, and when I told him that the shepherd went round them every day, he replied that Mr. Rhodes (of "The Levels," South Canterbury) had a Maori shepherd who only went round the sheep once a week. When he left he told us that he was expecting some sheep from Australia, and he did not know whether they would land at Lyttelton or Port Chalmers. Although I did not realise it at the time, I was convinced afterwards that Mackenzie must have deliberately set out with the intention of stealing Mr. Rhodes' sheep, and probably these were not the first lot he had stolen.

That was the last I saw of Mackenzie, the sheep stealer. The next we heard of him was when word came that he had been caught stealing 500 of Mr. Rhodes's ewes. We were told at the time that Mr. Rhodes had a Maori shepherd who had gone out to see the sheep, saw two men some distance away, returned to the station, and told Mr. Rhodes. They got a policeman, and with three or four others watched these men pitch their tent. They had to wait till dark to make an arrest, for if Mackenzie had seen them coming he and his friends would have disappeared. When he was arrested it was reported that he fought like a madman, and they had great difficulty in getting the handcuffs on him. He later broke gaol, but was shot at and caught. He was afterwards released on condition that he left the country.

A great deal has been said about Mackenzie's dog, but I think a lot about it was invented after it was dead, as I never saw anything wonderful about the dog he had. I have seen a photograph of Mackenzie's dog which appeared in a recent publication, but this is not the black dog which I saw with him, and which I well remember. I have read of the dog rounding up and stealing sheep in the night, but I do not think this correct, as I am well enough acquainted with

sheep dogs to know that all Mackenzie is supposed to have taught it is not at all likely. I have known dogs that would guard sheep in the night. As regards Mackenzie's dog only understanding Gaelic, this is quite possible, as I have heard of sheep dogs being trained in Gaelic, in which case they would not understand any other language.

As I remember Mackenzie he had dark hair, not red as has been stated, and a dark beard. His eyebrows were so bushy and overhanging that I could not tell the colour of his eyes. It has been said that he only spoke Gaelic, but although he could do so, he spoke mostly Scotch with a strong Highland accent.

Various accounts have been given of the route Mackenzie took when driving the stolen sheep southwards from South Canterbury to his Edendale estate in the Mataura district, but I think his actual route will always remain a mystery. I think the most likely route he would have taken in the 1850's would be as follows :—

Through the Mackenzie Country—named after him—to the Hakataramea River. Next he would follow the Waitaki River to the Lindis Pass, and come right down through the Pass to the Morven Hills Station and to where Cromwell now stands. Then probably

he would come to Roxburgh, and through where Kelso is, and from there strike to the Long Ford (site of Gore, Mataura River). After crossing the river he would be practically at Edendale with his sheep.

It must have been a difficult job if Mackenzie had to get the sheep across the rivers himself, as I think it would require at least two men to do it. Doubtless he had accomplices to help him. Sheep, it may be added, are good swimmers just after they are shorn, but cannot swim with the wool on ; they struggle for a while and then sink. When the sheep are forced into the river, and one swims, all the rest follow. The rivers he would have to cross would be first the Waitaki, a very rapid river. Lindis is only a creek. The next would be the Molyneux, and it is possible that he would go as low down as Roxburgh, or he may have crossed where Clyde is. That would lead him to Old Man Range and to Waikaia.

I remember a mysterious man came to live at Moa Hill, about a mile north of Mr. Kettle's. He worked hard and planted a lot of potatoes, and was there for about three months. He then disappeared as he had come, and no one knew where he came from or where he had gone. As his name was also

Gabriel's Gully, Tuapeka, during the Gold Rush. The cross indicates the site of the Ayson and McNeil Claim.

Gabriel's Gully 75th Anniversary Celebrations.
William Ayson (left) planted a Commemoration Tree.

I was at Castlehope at the time of the 1878 floods Managing the Station for Messrs Murray Roberts and Co. That year we had the heaviest fall of snow I ever remember Sheep were snow bound behind the gorse hedges. The postoffice was over a mile away and we could not go for the mail for a week. There was a great loss of sheep especially in the high country. When Spring came with warm winds & rain the snow melted quickly and the rivers rose rapidly the Molyneux was very high and has not been so high since Nearly all the bridges was washed away I think all the bridges were washed off the Molyneux out to sea I remember Mr W. Pillans was out with a boat and crew taking families to safety. There was a elderly couple (German) they were washed out of Balclutha in their house towards the sea but the house stuck on a fence Mr Pillans went to their relief it was said that took Mr & Mrs Renberg to safety it was said they had a cat and a bottle of brandy but Mr Pillans left the bottle & the Cat in the house

Facsimile of a section of the manuscript of "Pioneering in Otago."

Mackenzie, we often wondered whether he was Mackenzie's mate.

Although Mackenzie was convicted of sheep stealing, I never heard of his accomplices having been caught.

The following appears in *The Otago Witness* of the 14th April, 1855 :—

"From the numbers of the *Lyttelton Times* and *Canterbury Standard* before us, we observe that the Province is making rapid strides, having a large revenue at its command, and preparation has been made to supply the labour market. From a private letter we learn that the election of the twelve additional members had taken place, but the names of the candidates are not mentioned. The enlarged council was to meet in a few days. The election had terminated in favour of the stock-holding interest.

"A daring robbery has been committed. It appears that Mr. Sidebottom, who has charge of the sheep station belonging to Messrs. Rhodes, received information from a native that a Scotchman had taken away a large portion of the flock of sheep under the native's care. Mr. Sidebottom followed the track of the sheep, and eventually came up with a man named Mackenzie, who was in possession of the sheep, and when he was

about to turn in for the night. Mr. Sidebottom intended to camp on the ground, but after he had stopped for about two hours he heard some suspicious calls, the dogs began growling, and the sheep broke camp. Mackenzie started up and began whistling and cooeeing. Mr. Sidebottom had only two natives with him, and as it was evident Mackenzie had confederates he deemed it best to drive the sheep back at once, which he accordingly did, but being unable to attend to the prisoner Mackenzie, he made his escape. The sheep were safely brought back a distance of 25 miles. Mackenzie had a pack bullock with him, and was prepared for a long journey. Tracks of two other men were discovered, and the road taken was the pass to the West Coast over the Snowy Mountains. Mr. Sidebottom says there seems to be a fine plain just at the back of the Snowy Range, and a first-rate pass through the mountains to it; and that he found old sheep tracks (large tracks) of a good mob leading up the same pass, and he is therefore of opinion that this was not the first mob Mackenzie had driven off. Mackenzie was captured on Thursday night, the 15th ult., by Sergeant Saeger of the police. He intended to have got away in the *Zingari*. He was committed for trial the following day.

"There seems to be a strong ground for believing that Mackenzie has confederates either at the back of the Canterbury or in this Province. The route taken was that by which it has long been affirmed was an easy communication between Canterbury and the southern portion of Otago; and we would recommend our settlers to keep their eyes open, and afford every assistance and information to Mr. Rhodes, who has proceeded to the south to endeavour to discover traces of missing portions of his flock."

From *The Otago Witness*, May 19th, 1855:—

"250 POUNDS REWARD

"WHEREAS a person of the name of James Mackenzie, and others, did on or about the 1st March last steal and drive away about 1,000 sheep from the Timaru Station, and as there is reason to believe that the same men have, on previous occasions, stolen both sheep and cattle, and driven them away, the owners are of opinion that there is a regular organized gang of thieves and receivers either in this or the Otago Province. £100 of the above reward has been paid on the apprehension of Mackenzie, and the remainder will be paid to any person or persons who shall give such information as will lead to the

conviction of all parties concerned and the recovery of the stock.

"R. & G. RHODES,

"Lyttelton, March 15."

The following is from *The Otago Witness* of the 28th July, 1855 :—

"CANTERBURY

"We understand that the notorious sheep-stealer Mackenzie made his escape from Lyttelton jail on Tuesday evening last. From what we have learned, it appears that he has been for some time engaged in cooking the food required for the prison, his chance of escape being, as it was supposed, sufficiently prevented by a pair of 12-pound shackles round his ankles. However, Mackenzie contrived to bolt, fetters and all, while the gaoler was employed locking up the other prisoners, and has as yet managed to conceal himself. A very active pursuit has been instituted, and we have no doubt he will be speedily recaptured."—*Standard*, June 21.

The following also appears in *The Otago Witness* from 16th August to 1st November, 1856 :—

"SHEEP STEALING !!!

"CANTERBURY AND OTAGO PROVINCES

"REWARD OF ABOUT 750 SHEEP AND £100 STERLING

"WHEREAS in the month of May, or June, 1853, about 500 ewes were stolen from the station of the subscribers at Timaru and have since been traced over the north branch of the Waitaki River (between which river, and the Bluff, in the Otago district, they are now supposed to be).

"THIS IS TO GIVE NOTICE that one half of the said 500 ewes, with the half of their three years' increase, will be allowed to any person who may give such information as shall lead to their recovery. The sheep were driven from the station by — Mackenzie, who was convicted at last Assizes, and who acknowledged that he had two accomplices one of whom was named Mossman. A further reward of £100 in addition to the reward above offered will be paid on the conviction of both or either of Mackenzie's accomplices.

"Apply to Messrs. R. & G. Rhodes,

"Canterbury, June, 1856."

"FINEGAND"

AFTER I had been working with Mr. Kettle for three years my father arranged with Mr. Shaw of "Finegand" who wanted a shepherd, to take me, so he gave Mr. Kettle notice. He did not consult me, and Mr. Kettle was very ill-pleased. I had to make a fresh start, and found "Finegand" much easier than Kaihiku, with more comfortable quarters.

My flock was the dry flock-wethers. One day I got notice from Mr. Shaw to put my flock of 3,000 sheep away back on the hill country of "Lochindorb," near the head of the Owaka River. I was the first to put sheep on that country. It was very much infested with wild dogs and wild pigs, and a close watch had to be kept, but it was very good sheep country. Mr. Shaw had taken up a Government leasehold of 25,000 acres in the hills of Lochindorb.

"Finegand" was the name of Mr. Shaw's old home in Glenshee, Perthshire, which he had left a year before us, coming to Otago in the *Maori* in 1852, accompanied by his sister, Miss Margaret Shaw, whom we had also known in Scotland. "Finegand" was

on the south branch of the Molyneux River, and, besides this freehold, he had a run extending to Warepa Bush which he afterwards gave up.

Mr. Shaw was highly esteemed in the district for his ready assistance when required. His sister, Miss Margaret Shaw, was also well known for her hospitality at "Finegand." Any traveller passing through the district would be hospitably accommodated. It was well known that if she and her brother had occasion to leave the homestead for a short time together, she would leave the table spread for the convenience of any traveller who might arrive.

Mr. Shaw sold his Lochindorb station in March, 1861, to Mr. Thomas Ord, and I remained with Mr. Ord until I went to the Gold Rush at Gabriel's Gully in 1861.

"Finegand" is still owned by the Shaw family.

GABRIEL'S GULLY

ON the 20th May, 1936, at the age of ninety-five, I attended at Lawrence the seventy-fifth anniversary celebrations of the gold rush to Gabriel's Gully in 1861. Being one of the few original pioneers still alive, I had the honour of planting one of the trees as part of the celebrations.

There were many of us who got the gold fever in 1861, and I well remember when I left to try my luck on the goldfields. It was the beginning of July, 1861, just a few weeks after the news of the discovery, and I was then twenty-one years of age. A party of six left my father's farm at "Corydon," Warepa—Robert, John and Andrew McNeil, my two brothers James and Alexander, and myself. We took a pair of bullocks and a sledge, with provisions, and timber for making sluice boxes, etc. Of course we all walked, one driving the bullocks. We went through Balclutha, and then took a track for Mount Stuart, on the south side of which we had to camp at night. The next day we proceeded over Mount Stuart, waded across the Waitahuna River, and then right on to a ridge on the west side of Gabriel's Gully. We had

walked about 50 miles. We pitched a tent, but as there was snow on the ground we could not proceed further for about three days, when we went down the gully and pegged off our claim. I remember it was very wet, and we all had very bad chilblains.

We started work on the claim, using the usual tin basins to wash for gold. We were making good wages—about £2 a week each or more, and all expenses paid. After a while the three McNeil brothers left us, disappointed that we had not struck a fortune with our claim. Another brother, Duncan McNeil, joined us, however, also Mr. Lindsay. We sometimes went away prospecting in the mountains, but never struck anything better than the claim we were working on. Begg's party—their claim was end on to ours—were said to have made £1,000 a man in less than six months, and Hay's party £500. It was also said that Brugh's party made £1,000 a man.

When we were on our way to the Gully, and were going down Mount Stuart, we met a man coming up, and as he got nearer we recognised him as John Strachan, a lame shoemaker from Balclutha. We saluted him, and asked him if he had made his pile. He replied in very broad Scotch, "I thocht I cud hoke it like tatties." (I thought I could dig

it like potatoes.) I remember another shoemaker from Balclutha, although I do not remember his name or the name of his party, who went into a little gully and worked there for a very short time and made £100. He then went home to Balclutha quite satisfied.

One day it was my turn to get the dinner ready. I went to the tent, but someone had been prospecting there before me, as everything was upside down. I made a dart for the gold, and to my delight it was safe—80 ounces. We kept it in a little box at the fireside, and all sorts of things were thrown in this box. I noticed that the only thing that had gone missing was the greatest book in the world—the Bible. We never found who the thieves were.

After we had been there a while all sorts of people began to come, even Jock Graham and Hobart Town Jack, and many others. A good many Maoris came to the Gully, but did not stay long.

Once a week Jock Graham would bring the *Otago Witness*. He would leave it with us, saying he would be back some time on the following day and pick it up. We were charged a shilling for the loan of it for one night. He would then leave it with others at another tent on the same terms, and so on. I don't know how many he left it with,

but he must have made a good many shillings each week out of one copy of the *Otago Witness*; however, we were very glad to pay a shilling to get the news. I remember some time later when Jock Graham (he was never called Mr. Graham) took the mail through from Dunedin to Invercargill. "Corydon," my father's farm at Warepa, was also a post office then. On his way Jock left a good deal of new clothing for my father to sell. He sold it nearly all, and when Jock returned on his way back to Dunedin he would collect the money, but I do not think my father got any commission. I remember also about that time that Mackenzie, the sheep stealer, was supposed to have had a box of gold buried somewhere at Edendale. Jock Graham got another man, Tom McGibbon, to run the mail for three weeks while he unsuccessfully hunted for the gold.

Food of every description on the goldfields was very expensive. There were quite a number of stores at Gabriel's Gully. One day I went to buy some mutton, and asked the butcher for half a sheep. The price was £2 10s., but it was very good mutton. The provisions we had taken with us did not last us long and we had to buy more. My father sent us a bag of flour. Of course we did not have to buy this as my father had

his flour mill. The flour was brought up by Mr. McNeil, who carted provisions from Balclutha to Gabriel's Gully. Others, however, were less fortunate than we were, as the price of flour on the goldfields was half-a-crown a pannikin full. Everything sold at the stores was done up in shilling's-worth. Salt was a shilling a pound, and the sugar was very poor and black and the same price. We had Chinese tea, and very poor stuff it was. The stores got it in 20, 50 and 100lb. boxes. It was sold in shilling's-worth, but I do not remember if it was a shilling a pound. We also had to buy our own potatoes. These were a shilling a pound, as was rice. There was no butter to be got, but we were more fortunate as my mother sometimes sent us butter along with the flour when it was sent up by Mr. McNeil. The only milk to be had that I knew of was from a shepherd who lived a few miles away and had two or three cows, but that would not go very far among the two or three thousand people at Gabriel's Gully at that time. We had porridge regularly, with sugar, but no milk. We always had plenty of dripping, as we cooked our own meat in the camp oven. Butter at that time was half-a-crown a pound, and could be bought from the farmers, although it was not to be had at the goldfields.

All that I had learned at my first situation with Mr. Ferguson in 1854, in the way of cooking, came in very handy while we were on the goldfields, as I made all the bread for our party in a camp oven, and it was very good bread. Of course no yeast was obtainable, but leaven was used instead. To make this boiled potatoes were mixed with flour (no salt). It was put in a dish, and left to set and ferment for two or three hours or more. When making the leaven a sufficient amount could be made to last a few weeks, and a fresh supply did not have to be made every time it was required.

To make the bread I mixed the flour with lukewarm water. Next I took about a cupful of the leaven and broke it up as small as possible into the flour. The dish was then put aside for three hours or more until the mixture had risen sufficiently. After being well mixed again, and kneaded thoroughly, the loaf was made into a size to fit the camp oven. Of course baking soda, at the usual shilling a pound, had to be added, otherwise the bread became sour. The inside of the warm camp oven was rubbed round with a piece of suet to keep the loaf from sticking. The loaf was then put in, and left about two hours to rise, although sometimes it took longer. The lid of the oven was put on the

live embers to heat and then put on the oven, which was hung on the hook over the open fire and embers being put on the top of the lid. The loaf took about an hour to cook.

While we were at the Diggings bread was not procurable at the stores, although it was sold some time later on after we had left.

FROM STATION TO STATION

About 1868 I was appointed manager at Hillend Station. For three years previous to that I had worked on my father's farm at "Corydon." In 1866 I proceeded to Australia, where I married Miss Mary Giffen, a sister of Mrs. Borthwick, at Port Lincoln, near Adelaide, returning with my wife to Warepa. The Maitland brothers, James P. and George, who owned Hillend Station, arrived in Otago in 1852. They took up about 17,000 acres on the north-east side of the Molyneux River, about eight miles direct north-west of Balclutha. The Molyneux River was the boundary on one side, while the Waitahuna River on the east was the boundary between Hillend Station and Smiths of Greenfield. Their uncle, Mr. Francis Pillans, had a station on the east side known as Manuka Station, about five miles up the Molyneux from Balclutha. At the time I was at Hillend this was considered to be one of the best properties south of Dunedin. There would be about 20,000 sheep on the run—a mixed flock, part merinos and part half-breds.

The Maitland brothers started a butchery business at Lawrence, about 30 miles from Hillend, and supplied the fat stock from their Hillend Station. After I had been there about two years they sold the station to Begg Brothers of Anderson's Bay (William, John, Adam and another brother, a surveyor) —17,000 acres, freehold, at three pounds per acre. I was manager for about a year after they took it over. They went in largely for growing wheat after I left.

At Hillend we used a splendid cure for scab—sulphur and lime mixed. The lime could be bought then, I think, from Milburn.

Though James P. Maitland and George Maitland came to Otago in 1852 in the *Slains Castle*, their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Maitland, and the rest of the family (David, William and Miss Maitland) came in the *Stately* in 1854. The family took up some land at Kaitangata, and made a homestead there. Mrs. Maitland was a sister of Mr. Francis Pillans.

While I was at Hillend William Maitland went to Fiji to take up sugar-cane growing. George and David followed later, but after a while they all gave it up as a bad job, and returned to the Clutha district.

James P. Maitland, who did not accompany his brothers to Fiji, was appointed

THE FAMILY OF MR. AND MRS. PETER AYSON (March, 1905)

Standing (from left): Alexander, John, Lake, William.
Sitting: Peter, Ann (Mrs. John Watt), Robert, Douglas (Mrs. James Davidson), and James.
In front: Duncan and Elspeth (Mrs. John Low).

The Family and Descendants of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Ayson. The Group was taken on the occasion of the Funeral of Mrs. Ayson at "Corydon," March 31, 1905.

Resident Magistrate for Tokomairiro and Clutha districts, and was afterwards Commissioner of Crown Lands in Otago. He married Miss Williams, a daughter of Dr. Williams, who settled for a long time afterwards in the Wyndham district, and was known as "Dr. Longyarn."

George Maitland married a daughter of Sir John Richardson, the Superintendent of the Province.

David Maitland, who went to England and married an English lady, afterwards bought what was known as Eweburn Station.

William married Miss Bathgate, who was considered to be a very good-looking Dunedin young lady.

After I left Begg Brothers at Hillend I went home to "Corydon" again, and worked on my father's farm for about a year. In the year 1873 I was appointed by Messrs. Murray, Roberts and Co. to manage their merino stud flock at "Carterhope," which station had been leased from Mrs. Adam Borthwick by Murray, Roberts and Co. for eleven years.

"Carterhope" was about nine miles south of Balclutha, and was one of Charles Kettle's original surveys. It was on both sides of the Kaihiku stream, about one and a half miles from Warepa. There were about 5,000 acres

carrying about 5,000 sheep, a stud-merino flock, at that time considered the best merino stock in Otago.

"Carterhope" was the old home of the Borthwicks, and was established by Adam Borthwick, who arrived in Otago in the late 1850's. His son William came over from South Australia in the *S.S. Aldinga* in 1862, accompanied by his wife and family, and also his wife's sister, Miss Mary Giffen, who later became my wife.

While I was at "Carterhope" Murray, Roberts and Co. sent out a new sheep dip, but it did not cure ticks. I got them to send a cask of sulphur, and this proved to be a complete cure when used with the dip.

I was employed at "Carterhope" for seven years, when the flock was dispersed.

After I had been at "Carterhope" as manager for seven years, and the flock was sold and dispersed, Messrs. Murray, Roberts and Co. gave me a position at "Gladbrook" Station at Strath Taieri, Middlemarch. "Glad brook" was then owned by Murray, Roberts and Co., and took in a good deal of Rock and Pillar.

About eight months after my appointment to "Gladbrook" I was offered the management of Moutere Station, owned by Messrs.

R. M. Turnbull and McLaren. I was there for about one and a half years, when Mr. Turnbull went home to England, and Moutere Station was sold to Mr. Lubecki who had his own manager.

My next position was Government Rabbit Inspector at Clyde, about 1885-1886. I had applied for this position, the duties being to supervise the destruction of rabbits. I was stationed at Clyde, but also had to travel the Lakes District to Queenstown. I did not find the job satisfactory, as the wages were only 12s. a day, out of which hotel and travelling expenses had to be paid, and I also had a wife and family to keep. At the end of two years I found I was about sixty pounds out of pocket.

I took over the management of the Linburn Station when Mr. Robert M. Turnbull and Mrs. Turnbull paid a visit to England. Linburn was part of Puketoi Station, owned by Mr. James Murison, who sold it to Mr. Robert Turnbull. There were 25,000 sheep, all merinos, and about 30,000 acres. Linburn was at the east end of the Maniototo Plains, and included the Serpentine, part of the ranges. The boundaries were the Taieri River on the east, and Teviot Station, owned by Mr. E. B. Cargill and Mr. Anderson, on the south. Watson Shennan's Puketoi Station

was on the west. Ranfurly is the nearest railway station now, although there was no railway then.

A good deal of gold digging was going on in the vicinity at the time I was at Linburn.

I managed this station for Mr. Turnbull for about three and a half years, when I left to establish my own "Southbrook" estate at Waikaka.

A PIONEER OF THE CHURCH

THE Rev. WILLIAM Bannerman, D.D., was the first minister of the Clutha parish, from 1854 to 1884. My father's two-roomed house at Warepa was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bannerman. It was the first Presbyterian manse south of Dunedin, and in it their eldest daughter, Clementina, afterwards Mrs. John Begg, Hillend, was born.

I can remember the arrival of the ship *Stately* at Port Chalmers in 1854. She brought two young Free Church Presbyterian ministers from Scotland, the Revs. William Will and William Bannerman, who arrived to assist the only Presbyterian minister in Otago, Dr. Burns. Mr. Will's charge extended from Green Island to Waihola, and Mr. Bannerman's still more extensive parish from Tokomairiro to Riverton—about 130 miles in extent. The different preaching stations were Tokomairiro, Inch Clutha, South Clutha and Warepa. I remember the first time Mr. Bannerman went to Riverton—the journey occupied a week. On the first day he travelled from Warepa to Popotunoa (Mr. Fuller's Station)—twenty miles—on foot. The next

halt must have been at Mataura, where there was a Maori settlement at that time. I do not know what his stages were between that and Riverton, as there was no Edendale, no Woodlands, and no Invercargill. From the site of Invercargill to Riverton was mostly dense bush, and I think the way must have been along the beach. He was away three weeks, so that it must have taken him about a week to get there and a week to get back, allowing for a week spent at Riverton. I remember we were all very pleased to see him back again. He probably had a guide as I do not think he could have found his way alone.

There were only four settlers in Inch Clutha—Messrs. Mosley, Pillans, Ferguson, and Redpath. Mr. and Miss Shaw were at "Finegand" and the McNeils at the Ferry. Mr. Bannerman's first meeting at South Clutha was at Mr. Hay's home, Hilly Park. I was not there, but heard that there were three baptisms, all members of the Hay family. After this the meetings at South Clutha were held at Mr. Mercer's, Puerua. "Hilly Park" was four miles from Mercer's, and Warepa (Ayson's) was seven miles. There was a service every third Sunday. Of course we had to walk, as there were neither horses nor motor cars then, and we

had to be at church about 10 a.m. A Sunday School was held before the service, and Mr. Bannerman was the teacher. There were eight children, the Hays and the Aysons. William Hay and myself were the two eldest present. The church service lasted from 11 to 12. Mr. Bannerman went home with us, and we were all ready for dinner when we arrived home. In the evening a service was held in the hut of Mr. Gordon, who lived about a mile away from Aysons. Mr. Bannerman also held services on Sunday at Tokomairiro. The next Sunday the service was held on the Island (Inch Clutha) at Mr. Redpath's, and on the third Sunday the service was held at Mr. Andrew Mercer's home. Such was the beginning of the Warepa and Kaihiku charge.

For some time Mr. Bannerman had been doing all this work on foot. Even his first trip to Riverton and back, 260 miles, was performed on foot. He eventually procured a horse, a fine roan mare. She had a foal, and when it was strong enough it followed its mother in all Mr. Bannerman's rounds.

The Aysons lived in a two-roomed hut for some time. We boys built a Maori whare and slept there at night, summer and winter. My father and eldest brother, who were carpenters by trade, sawed a good deal of

timber out of the bush, and built a five-roomed house. This left the two-roomed hut empty, but Mr. Bannerman had his eye on it, went away to Dunedin, took to himself a wife—Jane, the second daughter of Dr. Burns—and brought her to this hut which my father gave them. This two-roomed hut of my father's was therefore the first manse south of Dunedin. The Bannermans' first child, and I think their second also, was born there. In 1859 another minister, Rev. A. B. Todd, came from Scotland, and was placed in the Tokomairiro charge.

I remember that our first Communion service was a combined one. It was held at Mr. Shaw's house at "Finegand," to which some of the people had to walk 12 miles from South Clutha, and nine miles from Warepa. It was a beautiful day, and there was a very good attendance. There were two clergymen there. I think everyone brought lunch. When another minister, Mr. Kirkland, came from Scotland, and was placed in the Inch Clutha charge, South Clutha and Warepa were left to Mr. Bannerman. A new manse was afterwards built at Puerua, and Mr. Bannerman and his family shifted there.

A new charge was formed named Warepa and Kaihiku, and Mr. Waters was called to it. Mr. Bannerman's parish now consisted of

South Clutha only, called Puerua and Romahapa. One day he went away on horseback to visit some of his people, and when about a mile and a half from home his horse fell with him and he had a leg broken. He managed in a wonderful way to mount the horse and ride home. Dr. Manning, who lived about two miles away, was called and attended to his leg, and he was about again very soon. About this time the degree of D.D. was conferred on him, and I am sure he deserved it. He was a strong man spiritually, physically, and intellectually, and well fitted for the position he held.

When he retired from the ministry Dr. Bannerman lived in Roslyn. When visiting Dunedin I always spent an evening with the doctor and his wife. They both paid a visit to the New Hebrides Mission of which they brought back very a interesting account. Mrs. Bannerman in particular was a great leader in missions ever after. Dr. Bannerman passed away a few years before her. On one occasion when I called she was alone, and after a chat about olden times she said, "I'll go and get a cup of tea ready." When she returned and we sat at the table she said, "I go to church but seldom hear a word, and I have not heard a prayer for years." She was very deaf. She asked me to pray, and

when I finished said, "I heard every word." When parting with her I asked her what she thought about Christ's second coming. She said in her quiet way, "I hope He will come to-night." She was ready for His coming.

MY FIRST FLIGHT AT 95

In June, 1935, I decided to go to Tauranga in order to escape the cold winter of Southland, but was not looking forward to the long train journey to Lyttelton. I endeavoured to arrange to travel by sea from Dunedin to Wellington, but could not manage this. I had resigned myself to the usual mode of present day travel, when a friend of mine jokingly remarked that I should fly. That put the idea into my mind, so I immediately inquired about it, and made the necessary arrangements. I gave everyone a great shock at home when I told them about my flying project. On the 18th June at 8.15 a.m. I took my place in the *Kotuku*, the service machine, and had the honour of being the oldest passenger to fly with the Union Airways. I had breakfast in Dunedin and lunch in Palmerston North. The plane called at Christchurch and Blenheim, arriving at Palmerston North at 12.30 p.m. the same day, the journey with stops occupying 4¼ hours. I then went on from Palmerston North to Tauranga by train.

After spending the winter in Tauranga, where I renewed some old friendships and

made many new ones, I decided to make the return journey to Dunedin by air. I left Wellington by Cook Strait Airways for Blenheim, transferring there to the Union Airways machine for Christchurch. After spending some days in Christchurch I flew back to Dunedin. I still had an overland journey as far as Waikaka, Gore, and was asked in Dunedin whether I might charter an aeroplane to fly home, but I had some calls to make on the way.

I had never been alongside an aeroplane before, and did not feel nervous. I have seen many changes in transport in this country since 1853, but I enjoyed my flight to Palmerston North and back more than any journey in my life, and I had travelled in bullock sledges, wagons, trains, steamers, and motor cars. Naturally my mind flew back to 1853 when my mother with the younger members of the family travelled to Warepa to take up their new home there. They took about a week to go from Dunedin to Warepa, a distance of about sixty miles, travelling by bullock sledge most of the way. They had to wait three months for their luggage to arrive by the *Endeavour* from Dunedin to Port Molyneux, undergoing many hardships in the meantime.

I suppose, in time, a person will have his own private aeroplane and go where he likes, and, some day, he will be able to leave Dunedin after breakfast and enjoy forenoon tea in Wellington.

MY MARRIAGE

Miss Mary Giffen came over from Australia with her sister, Mrs. William Borthwick, and her husband, in the *Aldinga* in 1862. The Borthwicks settled at "Carterhope" near Warepa. Mr. Adam Borthwick, the father, had arrived in Otago some time in the late 1850's, and had established "Carterhope" prior to his son arriving. As Mr. and Mrs. William Borthwick did not like New Zealand they decided to go back to South Australia. They left Dunedin in the *Alhambra*, but owing to bad weather the boat could not get past the Bluff, and they came back to Dunedin. I met them in Dunedin, and renewed my acquaintance with Miss Giffen, so that if the *Alhambra* had not returned to Dunedin I do not think Miss Giffen would have later become my wife. When the Borthwicks went back to Warepa Miss Giffen and myself decided to become man and wife, but her brother-in-law did not seem to like the idea. Whether he did not approve of me or not I do not know, but his main objection seemed to be that I would take her away from her family in Australia. He said that Miss Giffen would have to get her parents' consent, but this was obtained in due course.

When Mr. and Mrs. Borthwick and Miss Giffen went back to South Australia in January, 1866, I decided to follow them and marry Miss Giffen. I left in the *Alhambra*, and had a good passage. We were married at Port Lincoln on the 9th May, 1866, and then returned to New Zealand. When I went over to Australia to marry Miss Giffen I did not know whether I would come back. As there was nothing suitable offering there, I returned with my wife to Warepa. We took up residence with my father at "Corydon" and worked on the farm for three years, until I was given charge of Hillend Station, owned by the Maitland Brothers.

My wife was always a willing help-mate, especially in my early experiments to establish my present Corriedale flock at Waikaka. She died at "Southbrook" on the 25th August, 1935, at the age of eighty-six years. We had been together 69 years.

My family consisted of three daughters—Adelaide, Mary, and Sylvia. They are now all dead. My sons are William of Waikaia, Sydney and Ernest of Waikaka, and Douglas of Gore. Fernihurst never walked, and died on the 15th May, 1912, at the age of 25 years.

MY WIFE

THE following obituary notice appeared in the *Mataura Ensign* :—

"DEATH.—At her residence, "Southbrook," Waikaka, on August 25, 1935, Mary Ann, beloved wife of William Ayson ; aged 86 years.

"News of the death of Mrs. Mary Ann Ayson, wife of Mr. William Ayson, an old and highly-esteemed resident of Waikaka, recorded in our columns this week, will occasion deep regret among all sections of the community locally as well as in the South Otago district, where also she was widely and favourably known. Deceased, though taking little part in public life, enjoyed a large measure of popularity by virtue of her kindly and hospitable disposition, and she was loved and respected by a host of friends. A daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Giffen, she was born at Edinburgh on April 3, 1847, and accompanied her parents in the ship *Bucephalis* to South Australia, the party landing at Port Lincoln, near Adelaide, in 1862. The same year the deceased sailed for New Zealand with her brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Borthwick, but she

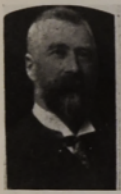
Rev. William Bannerman and Family

PUERUA, CLUTHA.




Mrs. John Begg. *Mrs. Bannerman. W. Bannerman, D.D. Mrs. S. Richards.

*Mrs. Bannerman was a daughter of Rev. Thomas Burns, first Presbyterian Minister in Otago.




Wm. Bannerman. Mrs. J. A. Somerville. Mrs. J. R. Wilson. Rev. Burns Bannerman.




First Church, Port Molyneux, 1864.

First Church, Clutha Parish, 1856.

Old Puerua Church.

Present Puerua Church.

Present Church, Port Molyneux, 1875.

Warepa Hut (see page 13).

Old Manse.

Present Manse.

Surviving Members (1937) of Peter Ayton's Family of Fourteen.
From left: Robert, aged 88. Elspeth (Mrs. John Low), aged 90. William, aged 96.

returned to Australia in 1866. Very shortly afterwards, about the end of March, Mr. William Ayson went across, and the couple were married on May 9, 1866, returning to the Dominion in the November following. They took up residence with Mr. Ayson, senior, for whom deceased's husband worked for some three years. Subsequently he was given charge of Hillend Station, then owned by Maitland Bros. Three years later he was engaged by Murray, Roberts and Co., Ltd., to manage their merino stud flock at Carterhope, near Clutha (the old home of the Borthwicks'). The company employed him for seven years, when the flock was dispersed. Subsequently the couple proceeded to Gladbrook Station, in the Middlemarch district. They had been there for eight months when Mr. Ayson was offered the management of Moutere Station, owned by Messrs. Turnbull and McLeod who, at the end of 18 months, effected the sale of the property. This necessitated a change of managers. The Government Stock Department next offered employment to Mr. Ayson, whose duties were in connection with the rabbit pest. They went to the Lakes County with headquarters at Clyde, and remained there two years. Then Mr. Ayson was appointed manager of the Linburn Station, in the

Maniototo district while the owner, Mr. R. M. Turnbull and Mrs. Turnbull, visited England. Three years later they proceeded to Waikaka to take over a property Mr. Ayson had acquired during his sojourn at Carterhope. After their arrival at Waikaka, in September, 1891, they made a wide circle of friends, and by industry and enterprise transformed their holding from its natural state to one of the most productive and attractive properties in Eastern Southland. The late Mrs. Ayson devoted most of her time to family and home management and to the local Presbyterian Church, but she was a willing helpmate for her husband in his early experiments to establish the present Corriedale flock for which the farm is renowned, and in overcoming the problems confronting him in various aspects of his labours. Deceased is survived by her husband and by four members of a family of eight—Messrs. S. W. Ayson and E. E. Ayson (Waikaka), W. J. T. Ayson (Waikaia) and Douglas Ayson (Gore)."

MY MOTHER

THE following tribute was paid by the *Clutha Leader* to my mother, who died on 24th March, 1905, aged ninety-four :—

"Surrounded by many members of her family, in her home in that beauty spot, Corydon—her only New Zealand home for 52 years—on the edge of the Warepa bush, with its lovely sheltered scenic aspect, there passed away across the Great Divide to the unknown the spirit of Douglas Lamond Ayson, widow of the late Mr. Peter Ayson, senior, at the greatly advanced age of 94 years. Full of years, the first half of which were strenuous years, Mrs. Ayson passed to her rest honoured and loved on Friday morning, March 24th, 1905. Her end was peace. For the last five months Mrs. Ayson was a great sufferer owing to an accident—a slip on the floor while performing some small household duty, and a fractured thigh-bone resulted which medical skill failed to heal. A patient and resigned sufferer during all these months, her every sense was unimpaired, and everything was done to alleviate her condition that loving attention and skill could suggest. Had it not been for this untimely accident (for

when it happened Mrs. Ayson was singularly robust and active) there is every reason to believe that with such a constitution a century of years might have passed over her life. As it is, a great personality at once historical and deeply interesting is gone from us.

"Mrs. Ayson has passed to her rest, but her worth and her example live after her. Though advanced in years far beyond the allotted span, her personality was ever striking. Her early life and motherhood had ever been vigorous. One has only to recall the struggles of the early pioneers to realise what it was to have reared and educated her large family in the surroundings which the year 1853 opened up to her in the clearing at the front of the Warepa bush. Strong in the religious faith inculcated in the far away Perthshire glen where Mrs. Ayson was reared, she set about giving evidence of that faith in her struggle with the founding of the Warepa settlement.

"Mrs. Ayson sailed from Scotland with her husband in the *Royal Albert* in 1852, and after a long voyage reached Dunedin in March, 1853, where the youngest daughter was born soon after arrival. Her husband and oldest son Peter went to Warepa to prepare a home on the land purchased, and to make provision for the mother and the

young family. Mrs. Ayson with her young children braved the journey to Warepa in November, 1853. Roads there were none. Tracks in places there were. The country was wild and almost unknown except for certain landmarks. Proceeding by dray to Waihola Lake, Messrs. Cullen and Stevenson landed the travellers there. Then by boat they reached the head of the lake, where a sledge and bullocks took them on to Tokomairiro Plain. Stormbound there for a time, they stayed with Mr. James Smith of Greenfield. When the weather moderated the next stage was Lovell's Flat. Thence to Mr. James McNeil, senior's, hut on the Balclutha side, the river being crossed by boat, and thence by boat to Mr. John Shaw's, Finegand. The late Mr. John McNeil piloted the family with two bullocks and a sledge to the Warepa bush, and there they found that the husband and oldest son had erected a home of rough timber for the shelter of the mother and the family. Hardships there were in those bygone days that we of to-day know not of; but of a robust constitution, with a firm resolve and strong faith, the deceased lady with her husband and family evolved out of the primeval forest and flax-covered ridges a lovely home and prosperous settlement.

"Mrs. Ayson lived to see, with one exception, her sons and daughters grow to manhood and womanhood, and her sons' sons also. Originally the family consisted of 14. One died in infancy in Scotland. Her daughter Margaret (late Mrs. John McNeil) and her son Hugh Fraser predeceased her. The youngest daughter Douglas (Mrs. James Davidson of Crookston) was born in Dunedin after landing in March, 1853, and Mr. Lake Ayson (Inspector of Fisheries) and Mr. Duncan Ayson (Palmerston North) were born at Warepa. There are still eight sons and three daughters surviving. There are also 75 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. Of the family in order of age there were the following :—Mr. Peter Ayson (Warepa), Margaret (Mrs. John McNeil, deceased), James (Kaihiku), William (Waikaka), Ann (Mrs. John Watt, Kaihiku), John (Christchurch), Alexander (Gore), Duncan (deceased, aged 7), Elspeth (Mrs. John Low, Balclutha), Robert (Warepa), Hugh Fraser (deceased), Douglas (Mrs. James Davidson, Crookston), Lake (Wellington), and Duncan (Palmerston North) The average of the 11 surviving family is just close on 60 years.

"The late Mrs. Ayson was essentially a mother in Israel—the care of her family and the household duty occupied her time and

attention. Though well read in the questions of the hour, and evincing the keenest interest in all that appertained to the welfare of the settlement and its people, beyond her regular attendance at the church and the ordinances thereof she took no part in outdoor functions. The writer's recollection of her in the early 'seventies calls up a picture of hospitality, cheeriness, and all charitableness that is pleasant to recall. Robust, vigorous in voice and manner, keen to appreciate the humorous, and kindly withal, these are the striking points in a great and good personality that has gone from us. That which should accompany old age was ever present in the household :

'Honour, love, obedience,
Troops of friends,'

and these Mrs. Ayson had and loved to have. The evidence of her fidelity to duty, her example, her precept, her every virtue are apparent in the lives she trained. The grave has closed over a great and good colonist who left her impress for good on all who came in contact with her. A life full of good example, simple but strong Christian faith is left behind. The virtues of a good woman rise to point the way to higher, to better things. Bodily pain darkened the closing months of her sojourn on earth, but strong in her

religious faith Mrs. Ayson went out on the morning tide conscious of the hope, the larger hope, that the Pilot would meet her face to face when she crossed the bar and put out to sea.

"It is significant that Mrs. Ayson never once visited Dunedin after landing there 52 years ago this month. Some influence was exerted to persuade her to attend the rejoicings at the Jubilee of the Province seven years ago to take part with the old identities in that historic gathering, but without avail. With her husband many years ago she went on a special excursion of old settlers to Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu, and though then well advanced in years climbed Ben Lomond. This train journey with two others later to see her sons at Waikaka were the only times she felt compelled to be absent from her home by rail. As the wife of the first farmer in Warepa district, she leaves a name honoured in every household. And not only there but far and wide, for Mrs. Ayson came in contact with many who were high in the councils of the Colony—Sir John Richardson and Sir George Grey amongst the number. Born in 1811, married in 1833, Mrs. Ayson has lived under five sovereigns, and has seen or read of all that has taken place in the progress of art, science, and invention in that period. It is not given to many

women to live through what Mrs. Ayson has done, or to see much result from the seed planted, but her children to-day can rise up and call her blessed and feel grateful that the rest which remaineth for the faithful is now hers."

On Sunday morning, in the Warepa Church, the Rev. Mr. Orr referred to the death of Mrs. Ayson, and in the course of his reference said :—

"We are met to-day under the shadow of a great loss. The irresistible summons of Him Who doeth according to His own will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth has called at last his good old servant to her eternal home. We do not, we must not, grieve on her account, for she has passed from the midst of suffering to the presence of God, where there is fullness of joy ; from the scene of her labour and trial to receive the reward of a well-spent life. But her gain is our loss. By her departure we feel that a family held in estimation wherever they are known has been bereft of a mother whose counsel they sought and valued to the last ; this church of one whose devotion to its interests, support of its work, were never failing ; and the whole community of one with whose life the history of this parish was connected in a peculiarly intimate

manner. The earliest settlers can remember how the hardships of their pioneer days were lightened by her words of counsel and works of love. To the sick and sorrowing she was a faithful friend, and when the days of active service passed away, she still endeared herself to them by solicitous enquiries on their behalf, while to the young, the name of the old lady, who from her retirement followed their doings with a lively interest, was as familiar as their own. She was an ideal example of that grand old-fashioned type of Scottish character, industrious, persevering, patient, imbued with a deep sense of the solemnity and dignity of human life ; a little severe, perhaps, but with a severity relieved by the innate gentleness of a kindly heart. With the characteristic caution of her race she was opposed to all ecclesiastical innovation, but her conservatism was free from intolerance, she made full allowance for difference of opinion. She was inflexible indeed on matters of vital importance, but on lesser matters gave generous consideration to ways of thinking that differed from her own. She was emphatically a good woman. To her faith, which was deep and fervent, she added virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and goodness, and sisterly kindness, and charity, and her whole

life was a steady and constant growth in the grace and knowledge of her God and Saviour. It was my privilege to attend upon her during the closing year of her long life, and I reflect with gratitude on the beneficent influence of her quiet conversations upon my own work. She spoke often of the manifold blessings with which God had filled her life, and certainly the Lord dealt bountifully with His servant. She was spared to reach an age far beyond the allotted span, and retained her faculties unimpaired to the end. She had the satisfaction of seeing her family grow up to be a blessing to her old age and an honour to the name they bear, and even those few closing months of suffering and trial but served to emphasize the characteristic virtues of her life and to manifest her unfailing trust in the goodness of our Heavenly Father. Now she is gone ; now she is glorified, but she has left to us the fragrant memory of a life crowned with piety and virtue. Henceforth she shall occupy an honoured place in that cloud of witnesses who bid us run with patience the race that is set before, and reiterates to-day with Heaven's power the lesson which her life supplies. 'Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.' Fight the good fight ; lay hold of eternal life."

The attendance at the last solemn rites over the deceased was very large. A special funeral service was held under the shadow of the native bush at Corydon. In the funeral cortege were representatives from far and wide. Messrs. T. Mackenzie and J. W. Thomson, M.H.R.'S, were amongst the number. The Rev. S. W. Currie, Balclutha, read the service at the graveside, the Rev. Mr. Orr (Warepa) gave a special address, and Rev. Mr. Kilpatrick (Green Island) engaged in prayer. The Rev. Mr. Ramsay (Stirling) was also present.

"Black Peter"

Black Peter's name was Edward Peters and he was a native of Bombay. He discovered the gold at Gabriel's Gully before Gabriel Read. I remember when he was working on a sheep station not far from Gabriel's Gully called Bellamy Station, owned by Messrs. Bowler and Davy. He did odd jobs, and was working there when he discovered the gold. I knew Black Peter to speak to. He worked for a good many people about Balclutha, and also worked for my brother-in-law, Mr. John McNeil, who married my eldest sister Margaret. Black Peter was an intelligent man, and spoke good English.

"Black Andy"

Black Andy was an Australian black, and was not known by any other name. In the 1850's, when he carried the mail from Dunedin, there were only a few settlers south of Dunedin. There was no Invercargill and no Balclutha. The site of Balclutha was known as "The Ferry." The settlers would ask Black Andy—"Any letters to-day, Andy?" and Andy would tip the few letters out on the grass for each one to pick their own, as

he could not read, and only spoke broken English. I remember John Ross, a shepherd in Warepa before we arrived in 1853, called him "a black devil" once, and Andy replied, "De debil, he no black, he red." Mr. John Ross had red hair. Although Black Andy could not read, he could pick out a letter by the appearance of the writing. He carried the mail to Clutha on foot until about 1856, when Jock Graham, a well-known character, carried the mails on horseback.

James Brugh, Senior

Mr. Brugh came to Otago in 1853 and took up land in the South Molyneux. He called the farm "The Cloan"—I think after their farm in the Old Country. He got his ewes from Australia, and they ran with Mr. Shaw's of "Finegand." Mr. Shaw took on what was called thirds at lamb marking time, and put his own earmark on every third lamb. A great many of Mr. Brugh's sheep were black and white, like Jacob's flock. Previous to this Mr. Brugh took up the "Wisp" run, which took its name from a hill at the head of the Owaka Valley. I remember he had a shepherd named William Pringle, a very fine man over six feet in height. One day a wild cow rushed him. He never got over his injury, and died two or three years later.

James Brugh was a very wonderful old man. He was very courageous, and would go into the stockyard among a mob of wild cattle with a good stiff stick, and if any of them rushed him he would knock them down. A wild boar attacked him once, and he knocked it down with his stick. His eldest son James was a stout, stern looking man. Sheddan Brugh was also a strong looking man, but I do not think any of them had the stamina of the father.

I remember there was a neighbour of the Brughs who had a small farm adjoining. His name was Doig. His farm was very steep, so steep that it was said of him that when he was planting his potatoes he had to put a spike nail through each one to keep them from rolling down to the foot of the hill.

The Big Flood of '78

I was at "Carterhope" at the time of the 1878 flood, managing the station for Messrs. Murray, Roberts and Co. That year we had the heaviest fall of snow I ever remember. The sheep were snowbound behind gorse hedges. The Post Office was over a mile away, and we could not go on horseback for over a week. There was a great loss of sheep everywhere, especially in the high country.

When spring came with warm winds and rain the snow melted quickly, and the rivers and creeks rose very rapidly. The Molyneux was very high, and has never been so high since. Nearly all the bridges were washed away. I think it was the Beaumont bridge that came down and washed the Balclutha bridge away, and I suppose they were washed out to sea. I remember Mr. Pillans was out with a boat and crew taking families to safety. There was one elderly couple whose house was washed away, and they got stuck on a fence. Mr. Pillans rowed out and took them off in his boat. I do not think there was any loss of life in Balclutha in the 1878 flood, but Balclutha was very much damaged. Great holes were washed out here and there. The Government supplied an engine, rails, and trucks. The rails were laid up to the head of the flat where there was a quarry of rotten rock, and the holes were filled with that. An embankment was also made to keep the river from overflowing further, and this was extended down past where the new Balclutha bridge is now. There have been a few floods since the 1878 one, but little or no damage has been done.

In 1853, when I first saw the Island (Inch Clutha), it was all swamp, excepting for a narrow belt of dry ground round the

"SOUTHBROOK," WAIKAKA
The Homestead of William Ayson.

SYDNEY AYSON
Manager of "Southbrook."

side of the river. The silt from the 1878 flood, and also the other floods since, improved the ground to such an extent that, now that it is cultivated, the turnips and mangolds grown there are much better than in any other part of New Zealand. I think it may safely be called the Garden of Eden.

Central Otago

Vincent Pyke called Central Otago the Garden of New Zealand, and I think if it were properly irrigated almost anything could be grown there. I have seen a paddock there on which grew seven crops of good turnips in succession. The seventh crop was the best, and no manure was used. The land is the best for merino sheep. Mr. Shennan's merinos at Puketoi are hard to beat. The climate is good—it is very warm during summer, but in the winter season the ground is frozen like iron. I spent five seasons in Central Otago before I went to Waikaka, and consider it is very good country.

Willsher and Russell

Willsher Bay, near Port Molyneux, was called after a man of that name who, with Russell, were the two first settlers there. Willsher was one of a company that imported cattle into the country from Australia. He

and Russell were not whalers, but had come over from Sydney in a ship which left with a herd of cattle. The cattle all died on the voyage, excepting a cow and a bull. The bull wandered away and they lost him, but the cow was in calf, and had a bull calf. I remember when we arrived in Dunedin in 1853 I heard that Willsher had about 40 head of cattle. He did not return to Sydney, but lived with the Maoris at Willsher Bay. He took to himself a Maori wife, a chieftainess named Makariri. Russell never spoke to him after that. Willsher's bull which had wandered off was found a good many years after by the Andersons on their Wyndham run. He was identified by the brand which tallied with the lost bull, which did not live very long after he was found.

Some time in the late 1850's Willsher cleared off to England and never returned. He did not take with him his Maori wife who was left to mourn his loss. Later on I heard that a Clutha resident, when visiting England, had met Willsher in London.

As I have never seen a photo of Willsher, and I do not think there is any in existence, a description of him may be of interest. He was a man of about forty years of age as I remember him, and would be about 5ft. 10in. in height. He had clear-cut features, and

was of good appearance. His eyes were blue and his beard was inclined to be fair, but not ginger. Willsher was a very gentlemanly, well-educated Englishman, and was a man with a very ready wit.

I have read that his Maori wife, Makariri, had an ungovernable temper, and that she threw pots, pans, and furniture about, but I never saw her in a temper during the three weeks I was staying with them at Willsher Bay. I had been sent down there when I was working for Charles Kettle to gather shells for making lime for sheep dip.

How My Brother Robert Lost His Sight

One evening Mr. Andrew Mercer came to my father's farm at "Corydon" with some cows which father had bought from him. He came into the house, and his dog followed him. My brother Robert, who was only eight years old then, and who was very much afraid of dogs, suddenly turned to put a fork on the table. His hand caught the edge of the table, and the sharp end of the fork went into one of his eyes. He lost the sight of the injured eye. As there was no doctor or eye specialist at that time he gradually lost the sight of his other good eye, and became totally blind. He is now 88 years of age, and

has led a very useful life. He lives at Toiro, Clutha, and his three daughters, who are all school teachers, are strong and active. My brother Robert, my sister Mrs. John Low of Balclutha (now 90 years of age) and myself are the only remaining members of the Ayson family of fourteen.

"SOUTHBROOK," WAIKAKA

It was on a Sunday morning on the 1st September, 1891, that I arrived at "Southbrook." I have been 45 years at Waikaka, so that I was 51 years of age then. This was the first time I really settled down after being married, as previous to this we had many changes. While at "Carterhope" I had purchased the "Southbrook" property, and had in the meantime leased it to the late Mr. John Turnbull. The area was 270 acres, and the agreement was that for three seasons it would be leased for cropping. The rent was to be one bushel in every four. Before the expiry of the lease I had supplied English grass seed, and when I took over the estate the ground was in good condition for grazing.

My first lot of sheep was 600 half-bred ewes, just at lambing. These gave a very good return, and the fat lambs brought about nine shillings per head. My ambition was to start a Corriedale flock, and the proper way to establish a stud is to mate stud merino ewes with stud Lincoln rams. The manager of the Puketoi Station made me an offer of 200 merino ewes, which I accepted, but the

late Watson Shennan, the owner of "Puketoi," cancelled the order.

At this stage I gave up hope of getting a Corriedale stud flock. The next I tried were Romneys, but these proved to be a failure as far as the fat lambs were concerned. I then turned my attention to Shropshires, but the wool was very poor. I thought Lincolns would be more satisfactory, but with these I was also disappointed. Border Leicesters I found were no better. Some time later I met a friend who had a small stud merino flock for sale. He had crossed his cull merino ewes with Lincoln rams, and I arranged with him to purchase the Merino-Lincoln ewe-lambs, as this would help me to establish a Corriedale flock. However my friend cancelled the sale, and I was again disappointed.

When I finally made a beginning, I managed to buy about 80 ewe lambs by merino rams out of Lincoln ewes, so this was the start of my Corriedale flock. A short time after I managed to get 50 merino ewes from the late Watson Shennan, and crossed them with stud Lincoln rams. I also had some Merino-Lincoln ewes. About this time I went to the Gore Ram Fair where I saw a pen of rams which, after a thorough examination, I was delighted to find were Corriedales. This pen had been passed at

auction at the Burnside Fair, and had been bred by Mr. Leonard White of Rakaia. These I purchased, and was later very successful in the establishment of a Corriedale flock which I gradually improved. It was not long before the wool commanded top price at the sales. That is how I started with my "Southbrook" Corriedale stud-flock.

At the London wool sale of the 27th March, 1928, I had the satisfaction of obtaining record figures for my wool. Of the 41 bales sold, 19 brought the record price of 30½d., and six bales (pieces) 23½d. Later sales were effected at 33¼d. Regarding this sale, I received the following report from the London brokers :—

> In this clip was a very good example of well-grown Corriedale wool of good quality and bright and attractive appearance; in fact it was some of the brightest of its class that we have had the pleasure of seeing for many a long day.

I received the following letter from Sir James Parr, High Commissioner :—

> I have just heard from the Bank of New Zealand that the price realised for your wool was the extremely high price of 30½d. per lb., which I am sure must be very satisfactory to you. I have obtained a sample of the wool from the bank, and I am giving instructions that a display of this should be made in this office.

The following are from newspaper reports of the period :—

GOOD SHOW OF WOOL. DUNEDIN WINTER SHOW

The wool exhibited made a good show, the fleeces being particularly bright and of good texture. The condition was all that could be desired, and some of the fleeces were awarded the maximum points. Among those who were successful in securing 100 points was Mr. Wm. Ayson, Waikaka, whose exhibits of Corriedale wool were perfect. Mr. Ayson, by careful selection and breeding, has reached a high standard in wool production and his exhibits command attention in any show. Bright, silky, and of great density, the fleeces shown by him were a credit to the district and Southland.

DUNEDIN WOOL SALE

The main feature of the catalogue was Mr. Ayson's beautiful clip of 33 bales of Corriedale wool from Waikaka Valley. Concerning this lot, one of the largest buyers attending the Dominion sales said :—"I have never before seen a clip which could equal it either for breeding or condition." And the record price realised bears witness to the reliability of the statement. The wool was clean, bright, beautifully bred, and of good length.

There is a great demand for Corriedales all over the world at the present time. There is no better sheep than the Corriedale for lambs, wool, carcass and also constitution, and during my eighty years' experience among sheep I have found that Corriedales

are the best for general purposes. I have had to do with merinos all my life and like them. The Southdown ram has proved its value as a producer of fat lambs, but there is no comparison between the Southdown and the Corriedale.

The Australian Corriedale Sheep Breeders' Association issued the following statement for the guidance of purchasers :—

General Appearance.—The Corriedale should at once give the impression of being a well-woolled and evenly-balanced sheep, with a remarkably hardy constitution, the ram being of distinctive character and bold outlook. Being a dual purpose sheep, consideration should be given to both wool and carcass.

Head.—Hornless, broad, strong, well-woolled, but free from wool blindness. Black or blue spots on ears are no defect, but black or brown spots on hair or wool are defects. Wide, open nostrils—black preferable.

Neck.—Broad and strong, forming a good scrag; back from neck to rump long, level, and broad; brisket, deep and wide; ribs, well sprung and deep; hindquarters, well apart, deep, and broad, and well let down towards hocks.

Legs.—Moderate length with good bone, set straight and well apart. Black markings on wool or hair are defects. Brown markings on wool or hair are to be considered as serious defects. Hoofs of fair size, well formed, and black in colour preferred.

Wool.—The Corriedale should carry a heavy even fleece of good length, dense, staple, pronounced crimp, and an even tip. The object quality is a long-stapled, dense, bulky 50's-56's, but a somewhat lower spinning grade, especially in a ram, is not to be discriminated against. A characteristic of the pure Corriedale sheep is the remarkable evenness in the length, density, and quality of the fleece throughout. In the males the purse should be covered with wool not too coarse or hairy in texture.

Although I have secured the maximum points for wool exhibited at the Dunedin Winter Show, I have never served any apprenticeship in wool classing. What knowledge I possess has been gained by lessons learned in the hard school of experience. I have done wool classing in various parts of Australia and the Dominion, and have also acted as judge of sheep at various shows.

I have achieved my results as a Corriedale breeder by careful attention to in-breeding, which I considered gave the best results. Naturally every care had to be exercised, and particular attention had to be given to constitution. I have every confidence in the future of wool. Countries with cold climates require woollen clothing. I have always worn fine woollen underclothes, and have scarcely had a day's illness during my 96 years. I think warm woollen clothing goes

a long way towards keeping one in good health.

I established the "Southbrook" estate in 1891, there being no farm or homestead there previously. I gave the farm the name of "Southbrook" for the reason that the Little Waikaka Stream is on the north side of the homestead and the Big Waikaka Stream on the south side. The homestead is between two brooks, so I thought that a very appropriate name would be "Southbrook."

There are now 700 acres and about 1,300 sheep on the estate. Shearing takes place in January. My son Sydney has been an efficient manager of "Southbrook" for the past twenty years. He took over the management when he returned from the Great War, after having served two years in the New Zealand Rifle Brigade. After leaving school he had spent some years learning the wool business, in order to gain a thorough knowledge of all matters connected with the industry. For several years he has acted as judge of the different breeds of sheep at nearly all the leading shows throughout New Zealand.

My principal interests in the Waikaka district have been in the Presbyterian Church and Sunday School. I have held office as an elder all the time I have been in Waikaka,

and for many years was Superintendent of the Sunday School. I have also acted as a lay preacher when required at Kelso, Otama, Knapdale, Waikaka and other surrounding districts. I was on the School Committee and also the Waikaka Road Board for a short time.

This may be a fitting place to refer to an event which occurred some years earlier, and which, in a remarkable manner, influenced my whole life. It was in the year 1878, at Carterhope, that the Spirit of God came upon me and led me to see myself as a lost sinner. The conviction so strongly affected me that for three weeks I ate and slept but little. One night as I lay awake I said to myself, "I'll give it up ; I cannot do it." Though I had been reading my Bible and praying, I was trying to save myself, and felt that all my efforts were unavailing. Next day, as I was driving some sheep to a paddock a mile from the homestead, this verse of Scripture flashed into my mind : "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." "Any man," thought I, "means me. I see it now. Yonder is Jesus at God's right hand. He pleads for me ; I can never be lost." Then and there I took God at His Word. He has kept me ever since, right up to this my 97th year.

MR. AND MRS. SYDNEY AYSON.

A Glimpse of "Southbrook."

The Pet looking for her Biscuit.

Though my physical powers are now declining, I am thankful to say I am still sound in wind and limb, and am happily finding St. Paul's word true that, in my case, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

Above the waves of earthly strife,
Above the ills and cares of life,
Where all is peaceful, bright, and fair,
My home is there, my home is there.

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Ayson, William
Pioneering in
Otago