

road winds along the edge of the lake to the station. In the summer, when the scarlet mistletoe is in bloom, a prettier drive can hardly be desired. Away to the north, looking over the six miles of flat at the head of the lake, an extensive view of the snow-capped peaks of the Southern Alps is seen, which adds to the beauty and grandeur of scenery which, for variety of form and colour, ranks, I think, next to the famous Lake Wanaka, about which so much has been written.

Although it is possible to drive to the Hopkins from the station, a distance of six miles, it is better to ride, because the road is not well formed, and the journey can be done more quickly and comfortably on horseback. From there to the fork of the Huxley River, which is as far as horses can be taken, the river-beds, which are smooth, and free from large stones, will have to be followed; but by taking advantage of the numerous grass-flats as they present themselves, to push ahead, the distance of sixteen or seventeen miles from the station can be done in four hours.

Though I have not space or time to describe, it must not be thought that the scenery on the road is dull or uninteresting; on the contrary, at every turn something pleasing strikes the eye—now a huge grey rocky peak standing against the sky, its boldness and bareness contrasting strangely with the stunted birch bush out of which it seems to spring; then a grassy flat, with trees and shrubs dotted over it in such a manner as to suggest that the hand of art had helped nature to make it look like a pleasure-ground; and so on in endless variety.

Having given a short description of the road as far as it is usual for people to go—though in the pursuit of wild cattle Mr. Maitland has been right up to the bend in the creek just below the saddle we went over—I will give a short narrative of our trip down into the Landsborough River to a point reached by Mr. Mueller on his visit of exploration from the west coast side of the Island in 1887. From the point marked C' on the plan, on the south side of the Huxley River, looking over the pass, we saw the sea on the west coast. This point is 6,930ft. above sea-level; and from there we also had an excellent view of Mount Déchen, which bears 4° 18' west of north from C'. It can be seen from many places on this side of the range, and looks as if it was a peak of the Southern Alps. It is snow-capped, and surrounded by glaciers, and is one of the most purely-white and interesting-looking mountains in the great chain.

On the 28th March, accompanied by Mr. Sladden, I left our camp near the fork of the Huxley, and went up on to the pass to fix its position with the prismatic compass; but when we got there the Landsborough River looked so near, we determined to visit it if we could kill any birds for food. Good luck bringing two keas (*Nestor notabilis*), which we knocked over with our sticks, we then hurried on, and reached the river before dark, the journey from the camp having occupied about eight hours.

Snow-grass, alpine plants, and scrub all grow close up to, and again on, the pass; and a few wild cattle are running within a mile of it on the Canterbury side. After the first quarter-mile, going down on the West Coast side, the creek is tolerably smooth for about two miles, after which for a mile it is one continuous series of waterfalls, and we were obliged to take to the bush and climb down by clinging to the trees and scrub. The last part of the journey was much easier, the country becoming flatter and the bush more open; and we soon found ourselves on a nice flat of blue-grass on the river's bank. There were no signs of rabbits or of anything having ever grazed on it. The grass stood in seed like a hayfield ready for mowing, but here and there through it we saw the well-beaten tracks of kiwis, kakapos, and wekas. The bush was principally beech, though a good many of the usual West Coast trees were mixed with it; amongst others the curious *neinei* (*Dracophyllum latifolium*) was very common. The luxuriance of the growth makes a very striking contrast with the stunted vegetation on the Canterbury side. The bush is full of the green-leaved trees cattle are fond of, and in it, and on the river-flats, numbers of them could be grazed; but they could not be got in from Canterbury, and I do not suppose grazing would be very profitable even if they could, because so many would go wild.

The track over the saddle could never be made anything but a passable footpath; but, in the event of gold ever being found in the Landsborough River, it would be as easy, judging by the account Mr. Mueller gives of his route into the place, to get provisions in from Canterbury as from the Coast, and perhaps a good deal easier, for without a very large outlay a packhorse could be taken to within a mile of the pass. It appears more than likely that Mr. Mueller determined the height of the saddle we crossed, and was under the impression that it was the watershed of the Hunter instead of the Huxley River, for his height of the Hunter saddle is 5,529ft., while I make the height of our pass 5,309ft. Mr. Mueller has marked on his plan that his altitude was obtained by aneroid and clinometer measurements, so that the difference of 220ft. between the two heights may be attributed to the inexact instruments he was obliged to use. It will be found that the position of our pass—43° 57' 50" south latitude and 169° 44' 20" east longitude, approximately—nearly coincides with what is shown as the Hunter Pass on the map of Mr. Mueller's explorations, 1887.

It rained off and on during the night, and without shelter we could not keep dry, though by keeping up a large fire we were warm enough. Having insufficient food, and being wet through, we thought it more prudent to return the way we went, without looking for a better track, than run the risk of having to stay out another night. The return-journey occupied twelve hours, as we had to work our way carefully round some dangerous places which had become more slippery since we went down, and also because it is a much stiffer climb out of the river than from the Huxley to the pass. I think possibly a better track than ours could be got by keeping more to the east, after getting into the bush, than we did. I had the misfortune to break my aneroid, and so have not been able to give as many heights as I would have wished. The Landsborough River is roughly placed on my plan from Mueller's survey. No known points were visible from the river to enable me to fix it.

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