

REPORT BY THE GUIDE.

There has been a considerable increase of visitors to the Mount Cook locality this year, a large percentage of whom availed themselves of my services, and, though on several occasions the weather proved very treacherous, I have the good fortune to report that not the slightest accident occurred to any one under my charge.

Many excursions were made to the Tasman Glacier and the Hochstetter Ice-fall; this will always be the greatest attraction of the district. Several climbing expeditions were organized, but most of these were marred by bad weather; in fact, only one peak was topped during the season—namely, the highest peak of the Hochstetter Dom, at the head of the Tasman. On the 5th January the Rev. M. Fisher, headmaster, Armidale School, New South Wales, started with me from De la Beche rock-bivouac, and made the ascent. On our way back, and soon after leaving the summit, we were surrounded by a dense fog, and, though I had an intimate knowledge of the ground, we mistook our way, and had to retrace our steps, and it was only with the greatest care that we succeeded in regaining the bivouac. Mr. Fisher, a gentleman of alpine experience, expressed himself pleased with the expedition. We returned to the Hermitage, and planned trips to Mount Sealy and elsewhere, but about eight successive days of rain prevented us doing more than make short daily excursions.

The new hut at the Malte Brun is now completed, and must prove of incalculable use to tourists visiting the head of the glacier, and to those intending to climb the mountains in the locality. The hut is situated on a grassy terrace some 500 ft. above the glacier, and from it can be obtained one of the finest views on the eastern side of the main divide. Visitors weather-bound at this hut will find equal protection and as many comforts as at the Ball Hut, without having to submit to an imprisonment in a valley hemmed in on all sides by the hills and moraine embankments.

The Lendenfeld Saddle, the Hochstetter Dom, the Rudolf Glacier, and Graham's Saddle, leading into the Franz Josef Glacier, and many other alpine heights, are within an easy day's climb from a comfortable camp. Supplies of provisions, blankets, firewood, &c., have been carried to "Brodrick's hut," as it is known to us, in readiness for next season.

The various tracks are all in good order, and offer facilities to tourists to visit the larger glaciers without extreme fatigue.

The suspension-bridge across the Hooker has just undergone considerable improvement, the decking being widened and the whole structure strengthened and supported by two strong cables. Hitherto the bridge, on account of its frailty and narrow decking—only a single plank—has been rather difficult to nervous tourists wishing to visit the terminal face of the Mueller and Hooker Caves, or to make excursions up the Hooker Glacier to the Empress Ice-fall and Ball Pass, but the improvements made will now allow one and all to cross it without fear.

The Ball Pass was crossed by myself and a party early in the season, and Mount Kinsey, on the Wakefield Spur, was also visited later on. The view from this mountain affords one of the most comprehensive views in this alpine district, and I consider later on this will prove one of the popular climbs in the district, situated as it is within a good day's work of the Hermitage. I had the privilege and honour of escorting His Excellency the Governor, Captain Dudley Alexander, and Lieutenant Ward to the Tasman Glacier and Hochstetter Ice-fall. Barron's Saddle was also visited, and from here views of the Dobson Valley were obtained.

The grass-seed sown in the spring-time in the burnt bush around the Hermitage is coming on well. The ferns and many of the smaller plants and shrubs are beginning to revive again; so that in the near future we may expect the hill in front of the Hermitage to resume its green and attractive appearance. Mr. Ross also contemplates assisting the growth by sowing next spring seeds of the broad-leaf totara, birch, and other native shrubs.

The tourists to the glaciers, without exception, have expressed themselves charmed with the scenery and with their visit generally; and, but for the elements, over which we had no control, I would have had the honour of guiding many climbers to the summits of mountains which still remain virgin peaks. I accord my best thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Ross for their kindness and attention at all times.

The following list will prove of interest and value to alpinists, as being a complete record of the peaks that have been climbed in the Mount Cook district:—

Mountain.	Height.	Climbed by	Date.
	Ft.		
Cook	12,349	T. C. Fyfe, C. Graham, and Jack Clark ...	Christmas Day, 1894.
"	12,349	M. Zurbriggen	14 Mar., 1895.
Tasman	11,475	E. A. Fitzgerald, M. Zurbriggen, and Jack Clark	6 Feb., "
Silberhorn	10,756	" " "	6 " "
Haidinger	10,054	" " "	8 " "
" (north end)	10,030	Malcolm Ross and T. C. Fyfe	30 Jan., 1897.
De la Beche	9,816	T. C. Fyfe and G. Graham	17 Feb., 1894.
"	9,816	Malcolm Ross and T. C. Fyfe	" " 1897.
Minarets (first peak) ...	10,058	" " "	9 " "
" (second peak)	10,022	" " "	9 " "
Hochstetter Dom	9,179	Dr. Von Lendenfeld and wife, and H. Dew ...	25 Mar., 1883.
" *	...	G. E. Mannering, P. H. Johnson, and T. Annan	5 April, 1889.

* Lower peak.