

On 1st January Professor A. Heim, Director of the Geographical Survey of Switzerland, and his friend Dr. Hundhausen, arrived at the Hermitage. With me they visited the Upper Tasman, Hooker, and Mueller Glaciers and Murchison River. They were especially interested in the enormous quantity of moraine distributed over our glaciers. Professor Heim very kindly wrote his opinion of the Southern Alps and glacier system, which I beg to enclose. I was advised from Hokitika that a climbing-party, consisting of Rev. Mr. Newton, of Ross, and Dr. Teikleman, of Hokitika, were leaving for the Hermitage *via* Copland Valley, expecting to reach the Hermitage on 24th January. As they did not arrive on that date, and as the pass is hard to find from the western side in bad weather, I decided to go and meet them. Taking James Smith with me, we crossed the range, and camped at a point within two hours of Welcome Flats. During that night and following day rain fell heavily, and the narrow Copland River soon became flooded, making progress along the course of the river impossible, so we had to return to the Hermitage. A week later, while in the Tasman Valley, I met the party referred to. The flooded Waiho River had prevented their going south, and they had crossed by Graham's Saddle. Wishing to make a new route back to Westland, we agreed that as Baker's Saddle (6,360 ft.) and Strachan Glacier offered the most interesting crossing we would return that way. The Hooker Ice-fall was badly broken, crevasses running in every direction; but we succeeded in getting through, and bivouacked on a ledge on the steep rocks above the ice-fall. On 6th February we crossed the pass, and, working through some bad bergschrunds, followed the Strachan Glacier and Valley down to the Copland. Excellent views were obtained of Mounts Cook, Sefton, and the western peaks from the terraces of the Strachan. There is also a fine rock-face on Mount La Perouse, so sheer that a stone thrown out from the top would not strike until reaching a distance over 3,000 ft. below. The pass itself is a good one, but, owing to the difficulty of ascending or descending, the Hooker Glacier will seldom be used except by alpine men. We had to "spear" the Copland River to reach the track. There I left the party to continue down the river to Scott's, and I returned over Fitzgerald's Pass alone.

It was during my absence on the Westland expedition that the only mishap of the season occurred. Lady Alexander and Mrs. Gough engaged the services of James Smith, assistant guide, to do the Hochstetter Glacier. Arriving at Ball Hut, they proposed going on to the Malte Brun Hut, and overcoming Smith's strong protest that the ground was too rough and his doubts of their ability to stand the strain, they persisted in making the attempt. Half the journey was accomplished in fair time, but during the afternoon one of the ladies began to tire and progress was necessarily slow. A north head wind added to their difficulties, but they reached the side of the Glacier, where the ice was badly broken, just at dark, and here Lady Alexander became completely exhausted. A dark, rainy night, a maze of crevasses, with a helpless member, advance was impossible, although they were within an hour's journey of the Malte Brun Hut. Smith did all in his power to make them comfortable, but it was not safe to leave them and go to the hut for blankets or sleeping-bags. Fortunately, the morning broke fine and they soon reached shelter, recovering sufficiently to return to the Hermitage two days later. It may be worth recording that although exposed on clear ice during a stormy night none of the party suffered through it, even from a chill.

Lady Ranfurly, Lady Constance Knox, Captain Dudley Alexander, and Mr. Worsley spent five weeks in the mountains. I had the honour of escorting them on a five-days expedition in the Tasman. They visited the upper ice-fields, spending two nights at the Malte Brun Hut. Lady Ranfurly and Mr. Worsley made several fine alpine paintings. The party afterwards made expeditions to the various points of interest from the Hermitage.

Perhaps the most energetic visitors of the season were Miss Maud Williams and Miss Elsie Williams, Wellington. With Lady Constance Knox they did the glacier and ice-fall under the precipitous face of Sefton, Stocking Glacier, Hooker Glacier, Mount Ollivier, and, later, alone they made the ascent of Sebastopol (highest rock-peak) and rocky main spur of Mount Wakefield. The Misses Williams then spent fourteen days in the Tasman, twelve of which were at the Malte Brun Hut. From there they climbed Hochstetter Dom, Turnbull Peak, and made various excursions in the vicinity.

My last expedition for the season was with Mr. Donne, Wellington, and Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, Dunedin. Leaving the Hermitage on 25th April, we rode to Ball Hut, and spent the night there, the following day proceeding to Malte Brun Hut. The glacier was hard, especially above the ice-fall, and the use of the rope was necessary in crossing the broken ice during the last hours of the journey. The weather continuing fine made the party ambitious to see the West Coast from the slopes of Hochstetter Dome. Starting about 6 a.m., we made good progress for three miles, beyond that point the light crust on the new winter snow would not carry us, and we sank at every step, there being a depth of 39 in. of new snow. Crevasses were numerous, and great care was required in crossing the snow bridges, which are anything but strong at that time of the year. Reaching Lindenfeldt Saddle at noon, the party were rewarded for their fatiguing climb by seeing the West Coast, without the suspicion of a cloud, from the coast-line to the Main Range. Going some distance up the slopes, we had lunch, and then retraced our steps. The snow was softer for the descent, and two of the party fell through snow bridges into ice-crevasses, but with the rope in use no injury resulted. This is the latest trip which has been made to the upper ice-fields of the Great Tasman Glacier.

Next day, after leaving the huts secure for the winter, we made the through journey to the Hermitage.

The various tracks are passable, but urgently need repairing. The new track from the Hooker Bridge to the cage is almost finished. It will be of great service to visitors.

The Hooker cage still stands; as the river had deviated from the left bank to the centre of the bed, it may hold for some time yet. The Hooker Bridge has been thoroughly repaired and improved, strongly stayed up and down the river, and two heavy steady-cables fastened and strained along the decking prevents the bridge from rocking.

Blue Lake Stream foot-bridge, which was carried away in 1890, has not been replaced. A foot-bridge is urgently needed for travellers between the Hermitage and Tasman.

A rough track has been "slashed" through the bush in the Copland Valley from Scott's to a point within ten hours' walk of the Hermitage. This will be a great boon to parties crossing to the West Coast.

The huts are in good repair, sleeping-bags, blankets, and an excellent assortment of canned fish, meats, fruits, &c., are stocked in the zinc-lined lockers at both huts.

The season has been a particularly busy one. Much more travelling was done than in previous years. Twenty-eight persons visited Malte Brun Hut, and over fifty made use of Ball Hut.

I have, &c.,

J. CLARKE,
Alpine Guide.

T. E. Donne, Esq., Superintendent, Tourist Department, Wellington.

In my opinion, a coach service should be established between Mount Cook and Lake Wanaka, even if maintained once a week only as a commencement. Tourists naturally dislike travelling twice over the same route, and to avoid the necessity for this I propose that a Southern Tour should be developed as follows:—

From north travellers would leave the main line of railway at Timaru, going to Fairlie, thence coach to the Hermitage Hotel, Southern Alps, thence direct to Lake Wanaka and across the Crown Range to Lake Wakatipu, *via* the Mount Nicholas and Mavora Tracks to Lakes Te Anau and Manapouri, *via* the Waiau River to Otautau, and on to Invercargill, diversions being made to Milford Sound and other places of interest as desired. Passengers from Melbourne and other visitors from south would commence their journey at Invercargill, and, travelling this route the reverse way to that indicated, join the Main Southern Trunk Railway at Timaru.

LAKE WANAKA.

It is proposed to plant the reserve of 10 acres on Hemby's Point with trees; also to plant trees, place additional seats, improve tracks in the vicinity of Paradise Lakelet, and extend the jetty on Manuka Island.