

RESOLUTION ISLAND.

THE following notes and memoranda were received from Mr. Richard Henry, caretaker at Resolution Island:—

Pigeon Island, 26th August, 1902.

The "Hinemoa" called on the 8th June. The "Tutanekai" called in on the 5th August, when she was looking for a lost steamer. A few days later I went to Woodhen Cove, because it is a great place for catching wreckage from the north; but there was no new stuff. Then I got ready for a good cruise around, and went to South Point—another good place; but there was nothing new.

At Woodhen Cove the hens were as plentiful as ever, or perhaps more so, and all in splendid trim. Pigeon Island is swarming with them and penguins. I had to break my dog off them severely, and now I have trouble to get him to hunt kiwis or kakapos. Even if I was to let him hunt woodhens I would be no better off, for they are more sport for a dog and more plentiful, so that he would never find me a kiwi except by accident. I have some of those birds on Parrot Island, and he will not find them, though I can see that they are there by their tracks. I am out every fine day trying to get him into my work again before I have to get the birds for the "Hinemoa" on the 1st October.

Pigeons are very plentiful here this year, probably because there was a great crop of red-pine berries, which does not happen every year. I saw one young one barely feathered. I think they have only one, for this is the third nest I have seen with only one. They are very hard to find, for I spent a lot of time looking for them. I found this one by seeing the parents going often to the tree. The parents carry the food in their crops, of course. They give the young one no berries at first, but when it is well grown I think they must give it about a bucketful a day by the number of journeys they make. I think there were many reared here this year, for there is often a flock of playful ones flying about over Pigeon Island, and the old ones do not do that. The young ones grow up wonderfully quickly—perhaps are able to fly in about three weeks. They are eating miro berries and mapous now. The woodhens also eat the fallen mapou and red-pine berries, but not miro.

The kakas have just come, because there are a few rata-blossoms coming out and plenty of *Panax arboreum*.

Fish have been rather scarce this year, for a wonder.

28th November, 1902.

The "Tutanekai," with Captain Bollons, was here on the 11th October. She came at 5 p.m. and left at 8, which appears to be lots of time for me to answer letters particularly; but many people came ashore, and I am so glad to see some one that the time soon goes.

I hauled out the cutter and copper-painted her bottom when the paint came by last steamer. The worms would soon eat her, but I have kept her perfectly sound as yet.

Whenever there is a westerly wind and a fine day I go for a sail in "Putangi." She is a 16 ft. centreboard boat—a good little sailer. I took her up to Te Anau nineteen years ago this month, and she is a good boat yet.

It has been very bad weather lately—only five fine days in this month so far. I must either wear oilskins or stay indoors, so I am glad to get out when it is fine.

I sent away two roas and five woodhens by the steamer for Rotorua. I had two kakapos that I got with difficulty with my clumsy dog, but they were very poor when I got them, and there was no hope of keeping them. They ate so little and worried so much to cut out of their cages that both were dead before the steamer came.

I had also two grey kiwis, which are the hardest of all to feed, for they will not eat the big worms until they are nearly starved. They want grubs and tiny little things. They were so reduced after a fortnight in my store that I saw they would not stand many days on the steamer, so I put them out on Resolution before they got too weak to recover.

16th December, 1902.

On the 6th the sun came out, and having my boat packed I started for a camping-out cruise, for I find that I learn nothing about the inhabitants unless I camp out for a night or two. I was up Acheron Passage to the Gilbert Islands, but the swell made the landing disagreeable, so I camped in Occasional Cove on Resolution. It is a miserable place, with kiekies and ferns up to my neck, and no place for a walk. I heard several roas at night, and there were wekas at the tent, but no other birds except penguins, which were sitting about in dens shedding their feathers.

Then I camped under the great scrub-patches on Mount Foster. I wanted to train my dog to find kakapos, but found none, though I heard one or two there at night. But we gave that place a great hunting with a dog that would scent one a quarter of a mile away. Probably we took over a hundred kakapos out of that when we were hunting. Then on the 9th, when it was still beautifully fine and warm, I came to Mount Evans, on the south coast of Dusky, making a very long day of it, calling at various places. I did not see a single teal nor a robin, though the robin was always the first to meet me at a new landing. Nor did I notice a single rata-blossom, so that they are very late this year. Mount Evans ought to be a good place for kakapos, and I never hunted there because it was too steep, yet I heard very few. Kakapos are demons to fight with their powerful beak and claws, and I cannot imagine a weasel killing one. It would take a ferret all his time. There cannot be any ferrets, because the wekas were there at my tent and others along the coast; and I know by experience at Te Anau that the wekas go at once before ferrets.

I caught three kakapos there in three days' hunting, all in very poor condition—no rata-honey for them this year as yet. My dog has got the idea of looking for them, but is not good for birds. His snout is so short that I cannot fasten the muzzle on securely, and he is so small he can get in the holes, which are two very bad things; yet he is clever, and I might get worse.