

quoits with some old maul-rings which we found in the whare, and also having an eel-hunt in the adjoining stream, with fisherman's luck.

At midday two men landed up in a gig, and we found them to be stalkers who were going over to try their luck in the Tauherenikau Valley, which was being opened for the first time. They decided to stay the night as the weather was still bad, and we had some very interesting accounts of deer-stalking adventures in different parts of the Wairarapa around the fire that evening.

Saturday morning found the sun shining brightly with the clouds lifting off the ranges, and our spirits rose accordingly. It did not take us long to have a dip in the stream, get breakfast over, and fix up our swags. The deer-stalkers were packing their gear on the horses, so leaving them to go up the road and follow the horse-track, we cut across the corner and made for the steep zigzag which showed up on the spur above us. This steep pinch is a real good pipe-opener, and on reaching the top we were glad of a spell to get our second wind. The barometer showed a rise of 890 ft. from the hut. Here we got the first view of the Wairarapa plains which was beginning to spread out below us. Ahead of us the track rose much more easily, and our next spell on the edge of the green bush showed 600 ft. rise and one hour's journey from the hut. Looking to the north the Waiohine River shone like a streak of silver in the sunlight with Mount Holdsworth as a background, below which the saddle, where the mountain-house is located, showed out very clearly. Away to the west Mount Reeves stood out as a bare brown patch amongst the surrounding green. The back ranges were becoming clearer, and our spirits rose as the mist floated away from each peak. The track is well cut through the bush, and, being along the top of the ridge, is fairly dry and good walking. The bush is principally birch, and this accounts for the absence of bird-life, a stray fantail or a tomtit being all that we saw.

After a stretch of half an hour's bush travelling we came out suddenly on to a small open rocky knob, 2,210 ft. altitude, or 350 ft. above the edge of the bush, where a good view was obtained of the ridge ahead. Another half an hour's bush track brought us to another rocky knob in the open, where our deer-stalking friends caught up and passed us with their horses; altitude, 2,485 ft. The ridge ahead for some distance is open and runs out level, and this was very much welcomed after our long climb from the Waiohine River. Just where the track takes to the bush again there is an old camp, where water is within easy reach down to the right.

Another twenty minutes up a steeper grade and we had reached Mount Reeves, altitude 2,949 ft., after two hours and fifty minutes' journey from the hut. Here we had a good spell, and made a start on the prunes and chocolate, which we had kept in a handy position. Mount Reeves commands a splendid view of the Wairarapa, from Rangitumau Hill above Masterton right down to Palliser Bay. The different towns are easily picked up, and the topography of the district shows up like a map. Our interest was more centred on the country towards Mount Hector. Away down below us we got a glimpse of the Tauherenikau River, and beyond it could identify the ridge up which the track goes over Bull Mound and on to Omega and Alpha, besides the main range to Hector.

On our last trip we got no farther than the Tauherenikau River, and the weather was so thick the whole time that we did not even get one glimpse of the country.

It looked a tremendous drop down into the Tauherenikau, and it is rather disheartening to think that after climbing up to Mount Reeves from the Waiohine the same thing has to be done over again from the Tauherenikau to Omega. There is a good leading ridge from Mount Reeves to Mount Hector over Cone Trig., which would have avoided the big drop into the Tauherenikau, but the track committee reckoned that the ridge was too rough for a horse-track. However, it would not take much to cut a walking-track along it, and it would be a good dry route for foot traffic only, whereas the horse-track is always bound to be a bit muddy.

There is a long burnt spur running out from Mount Reeves in the direction of the Tauherenikau, and it is the intention of the committee to use this spur for the horse-track, as it is much more direct than the present route. The spurs running in several directions from Mount Reeves are rather confusing in a fog, and notice should be taken of the tin direction-pointers.

Continuing our journey we followed the ridge along a fairly level grade for about twenty minutes, and then worked away to the left and started the long drop, as we thought, to the river. After a short down grade the track ran out level, and then up slightly on to a knob, then down again, another piece of level going, and up slightly on to another knob. We knew we had a big drop in front of us, but still the track kept out level until finally we reached what seemed to be the end of the spur, with a big drop ahead. I read the barometer, and working it out later found that this drop was 1,320 ft.

Down we went, and the lower we got the muddier we found the track. Pack-horses do not take long to churn up the ground on these steep portions, coming down with all feet together, sliding half the time.

We slid about just as much as the horses, with our swags on our backs upsetting our balance. At last we heard the sound of the river, and, crossing a small creek, came out on to Mr. Workmann's camp on the Tauherenikau River bed. Whilst we boiled the billy Mr. Workmann, who is doing contract work for the committee, gave us a short description of the track ahead. He mentioned that the track was to be deviated and brought direct from Mount Reeves to the Tauherenikau River, meeting it just where the spur across the river leads up to Omega. A hut was being erected up under Alpha, and another one was to be built in the Tauherenikau. This should be a favourite spot in time to come, as here the river rushes down between shingle-beds and small clearings, with steep bush-clad spurs towering up on both sides, and altogether is a charming spot.

We sat in the sun smoking and having a real good spell, enjoying the surroundings and the yarn with Mr. Workmann—but not the sandflies—until we realized that we still had some distance to go and time was getting along.