David Scott Mitchell.

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AUCKLAND.

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A. Tramp

Horton, Phototype.

CASUAL RAMBLINGS.

UP AND DOWN NEW ZEALAND.

[*Reprinted from the Auckland Weekly News and the New Zealand Herald.*]

BY

A. TRAMP, ESQ.

AUCKLAND:
WILSONS AND HORTON, GENERAL PRINTERS.

MDCCCXCI.

INSCRIBED

TO

DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY,

TO COMMEMORATE OUR MEETING IN THE WILDERNESS
ON THE UPPER RANGITIKEI,
AND OUR ONE, SINGULARLY INTERESTING CONVERSATION,

BY

A. TRAMP, ESQ.

He said,
"Good Day!"

I said,
"Good Day!"

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Prologue.

"As Good as a Play."

This is a Funny Book!

It is funny more ways than one!

It is funnier in some parts than others!

We think it prudent to point out the fact that it is so!

Otherwise, the Reader might fail to perceive it!

The information also furnishes him—or her—with a ready-made reply when asked his—or her—opinion of this Rambling Volume!

That it is a Funny Book nobody is more surprised than ourselves!

Several able Editors, besides a number of important subsidiary editors (Scotch), not to mention the "Old Woman" and the "Devil," have done their utmost, and their best, to prevent it from being funny!

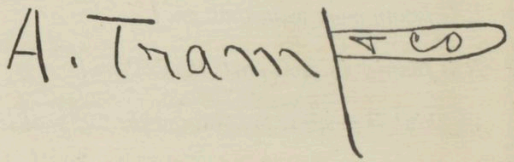
The devil above referred to is the Printer's Imp of the Ink Tub. When the other fellow is alluded to we address him by a more respectful title. Because, we have a reverential regard for the Potentate of the Dark Dominion!

Moreover, when too full of lightning spirits and fire kindlers, we engage a dyspeptic undertaker, with his panoply of woe, to stand by, while we are composing our poems, to make us feel sad with the thought that we are writing for a Chronicle of his craft!

But, notwithstanding our confederated efforts, there is still a lot of fun left, if the patient Reader can only find it!

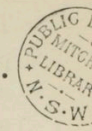
Readers, who have trundled up and down New Zealand, will at once confess this is exactly the sort of Book they would write, if they had the time—and were paid for it!

Readers, who have stayed at home, will, now, know more about New Zealand than they did before they had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of



Auckland,
August, 1891.

CASUAL RAMBLINGS.



Up and Down New Zealand.

ROUND MOUNT EGMONT.

Chapter I.

A Misquotation—Its Probable Effect—Ethereal Egmont—A Thing of Beauty a Joy for Ever—Editorial Duties—Boomerang—The New Zealand Weather Gage—Mokau—Highway Robbery—The Yeomen of the Mountain—Some Members of the House of Representatives—The Buller Lion—The New Plymouth Water Spout.

"Wight Wallace upon Egmont stood
And blue his bugle round."
—*Lay of the Latest Minstrel.*

This quotation anent the Scotch philosopher will, I have no manner of doubt, raise the hair of some forty parson-power of his bald-headed countrymen, who will immediately contribute half-a-ton of "letters to the editor," maligning the able author thereof; denouncing it as an unvarnished lie; and declaring that Sir William Wallace never saw Egmont, and never had a bugle; and, further, that he stood on a mound in the vicinity of Cadzow, in Russian Poland, when he sounded his slogan, "Britons never, never shall," etc.

This will bring out some idotic person—from Wanganui, probably—who knows all about Russia and the Poles, or, maybe, the Russian Consul himself, who writes the language like a native, and miles of Russian characters, with footnotes, will be sent in, disclaiming all connection with Sir William Wallace, and asserting that Sir William Tell was the great anti-slavery champion.

Then some thousand irate "old subscribers" of twenty years' standing will want to know, you know, what the Sir William Tell the editor means by lumbering his columns with matter of no interest to the public—or themselves in particular. Next follows several stacks of foolscap from lawyers, instructed by the surviving relatives of the defunct heroes aforementioned, demanding apologies or threatening actions for libel—your money-or-your-life epistles—and, finally, the editor throws up his hands in despair, and clutches his golden locks—carrots!—and prays for the removal of the innocent cause of the mischief to a better land far, far away.

In the meantime, the Innocent Cause is, once again, standing at the foot of Taranaki's lovely snow-tipped pyramid, calmly surveying Cook's godchild with a piece of smoked glass stuck in his left eye.

Ethereal Egmont! It requires no aid from distance to "lend enchantment to the view." Viewed from near or far, Mount Egmont is always enchanting, and excites our admiration under any aspect; whether we see it glistening in the moonlight, a triangle of silver suspended in mid-air; or in the morning light, vainly trying to conceal its blushing pleasure behind a fleece of vapour, as the crimson beams of light shooting out from the eastern sky herald the presence

of the quickly mounting god of day; or, in the gloom of night, a dark and beetling mass of crags cowled in sable clouds, and so close, apparently, that its rugged sides seem almost within touch; or, viewed from a distance on the plain, in the clear noonday, a clean-lined mighty pyramid rising in stately grandeur, from its base of "bush" stretching to the horizon on either hand, springing its apex far up into the vaulted heaven, filling the azure arch, "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever." How's that for "high" on the mountain?

"Still life" was the subject the editor-in-chief gave me to write about—a safe one certainly, and unlikely to hurt anyone's feelings. In the case of the mountain, for instance, it can't go and kick the editor if I should be unable to do it justice, and there is no danger to the proprietors from actions for libel. But there is only one mountain in Taranaki, and I am afraid I shall soon run short of dead meat, and so——— Yes, well, I am sure, the editor is agreeable to take a kicking on my behalf—he is paid for it. When I was an editor I received several kickings—as proxy for my contributors—and took them all as a matter of duty. The editorial chair is not exactly the place for a person in search of a quiet life to retire to. The public now-a-days will not be content with second-hand corpses, and yet there be editors of weekly prints who fill their pages with stuff as stale with age as an Egyptian mummy, and ask their readers to believe it is the real flesh-and-blood article of to-day—rough on the intelligence of the readers. But we are wandering from the subject. Let us return to the mountain, and trot out our faithful steed, and full partner in the firm of A. Tramp and Co., Boomerang the son of Musket and Byronia—*vide* New Zealand Stud Book, vol. ix., page 13.

I have never stood on the "topmost pinnacle" of Mount Egmont, and, like Sir William Fox, taken whisky for snow water, or *vice versa*—I am not sure which it was, but Sir William's voucher may be taken for an ice-cold fact—therefore I cannot say what it looks like from that position; but since the authorities have made a commencement in the way of affording facilities for climbing the mountain, and are about to build a cottage for the enterprising climber to rest and shelter in, I am in hopes they will continue the good work now begun, and finish up with a carriage drive to the summit, so that I can walk "the Co." up and show him all the marvellous sights to be seen from it. The new Minister of Public Good Works, the Hon. Mr. Richard Seddon, will see that a perpetual supply of hot water is provided, so that members of the teetotal body will not have to resort to mixing whisky with their snow-water to prevent griping; a kettle of hot water would have saved Sir William much pain. Whisky-punch might be an inducement for such picnic parties as the "Rum Buffers" of Wanganui to take a little fresh air on the summit, hup la! I've not a doubt we shall get up there in time —excelsior! Provided always that no, fairly good-looking, maiden beseeches us by the way to "stay and lay thy weary head upon this breast." I'm afraid we should stay; eh, Boomy? And the wisest of all the Muskets winked, and wagged the fiddlecase that serves him for a knowledge-box.

Boomy is not the grave and reverend seigneur he used to be. Some reflected rays of Carbine's glory have fallen on him, and he is giddy with too much life; and the echoes of the applause that followed the fall of Jim Philson's hammer upon the price of the great Nordenfeldt has caused this, no less illustrious, son of Musket to become as light-headed as

some of the lucky politicians whom accident has recently raised to the degree of honourable Ministers. I have just taken him up from one of Mr. Thomas Bayley's fattening paddocks, and he is simply a ball of butter. His fame as a mowing machine is firmly established on the coast; and several farmers, who find a difficulty in obtaining stock to keep their pasture good, were anxious to obtain his services. His old friends, Messrs. Livingstone and Fantham, put in their claims; but he preferred Tom Bayley's, of Waitara. The amount of grass going to waste this year would feed many thousand Boomerangs.

In the face of Captain Edwin's warning about bad weather—Edwin, prophetic soul, has been kept pretty busy lately, with gales and rains and falling glass, and he will be "kicking" us for a rise in screw; he may succeed in getting another fifty a year now that the "skinflint" party has disappeared from Parliament—the "Co." and myself started on a visit to the Mokau, its river, its coalmines, its flaxmills, intending to relate our observations thereon to the readers of the AUCKLAND WEEKLY NEWS. But "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley"—handy quotation that. Edwin's prophecy caught us at Urenui, and we gave up the excursion and returned to Waitara, and sat down out of the wet to "pad" out this column of space with such matter as came uppermost.

At Urenui we met the noted Mokau Jones on his way to Wellington, to complete arrangements for the opening up of the coal measures on the block of land known as the Mokau-Mohakatino. During the last decade, Joshua has been a-many times to Wellington on the same errand, but this he says is to be the final. Delegates from the

Brunnerton Miners' Association have inspected and reported favourably on the coal seams, and as soon as arrangements are completed with Mr. Jones, the mine will be worked on co-operative principles, and fifty men from the Grey forwarded at once to get coal. That the undertaking may prove successful is a consummation devoutly to be wished. Should it be so, the miners' strike at Brunnerton will mark the commencement of an era of prosperity for Taranaki.

Returning from Urenui the "Co." was guilty of a misdemeanour that greatly shocked me. Nothing short of witnessing the deed could have persuaded me to believe that one of his noble lineage could so far forget himself as to break the law and commit a felony. I had taken off the saddle and bridle, and was riding in a waggon with Mr. Piggott, the popular landlord of the Star Hotel of Urenui, and Boomy was trotting quietly alongside—he follows without being led now—when he espied a spring cart some distance ahead, and scooted after it, and laying close behind, kept bobbing his head into the back of the cart every now and again. We could not make out what the deuce he was about till we saw him with a mouthful of carrots. He must have stepped very lightly as he approached the cart, or the old fellow who was driving his vegetables to market must have been a bit deaf, for he did not turn round till he heard the rattle of our waggon close behind him. We spanked Boomy, and drove him on in front. I did not intend to bring discredit on the family by telling this story about him, but Piggot said "it must go in."

And day after day the rain continueth and ceaseth not; the face of the farmer lengtheneth, and the prospects of gathering in that fine crop of grass-seed darkeneth; and

there is the wheat, too, that looked so promising a day or two ago, beginning to suffer. If this untoward weather continues much longer, it must bring ruin and disaster to Taranaki. At the present time of writing, the outlook is not of the cheerfullest for the yeomen of the mountain.

The stranger, when he first beholds "the mountain," will scarcely suspect that Egmont is a vast beehive; that that great stretch of apparently unbroken forest forming its base, is honeycomed with clearings, some of considerable extent; that what he is apt to fancy a wilderness of solitude is alive with the hum of thousands of human beings, their flocks and their herds; that there are dozens of towns, scores of publichouses and churches, and all the other paraphernalia belonging to civilisation. Indeed, there is said to be more open land inside the bush than on the plains outside of it. When the weather clears, we may take a stroll round the mountain and see what manner of men they be, these yeomen of the mountain.

On Tuesday last the Northern contingent of M.H.R.'s passed through here by the express train on their way to the scene of their labours. As some were seeing Taranaki for the first time, I run down a short stage with them to point out the beauties of the mountain, and the "lay of the land" of beef. Unfortunately it rained the whole time, and the mountain was veiled in the storm-cloud, and we only obtained a glimpse of the country here and there. It was a case of love's labour lost.

Mr Eugene O'Conor, M.H.R. for Buller, was among the crowd, and evinced much interest in the country. His constituents consume large quantities of our beef. He

expressed some disappointment at not seeing so many head of stock as he expected. I explained that it was the length and luxuriance of the grass that rendered them invisible. He seemed relieved at this, and said he heard that Mr. Lawry, M.H.R. for Parnell, had once driven stock through the district, and he was afraid had not left a hoof behind. "The Buller Lion" was facetious. He could afford to be so. While other members were in the throes and agonies of a contested election, he was quietly spending a holiday at the Hot Lakes with the money his constituents saved him by returning him to Parliament unopposed.

I had the pleasure of introducing my old and esteemed friend, E. M. Smith of New Plymouth, to his fellow-members of Auckland, Parnell, Thames, Bay of Islands, Waitemata, and Buller. The only Eugene was greatly taken with the man of many irons in the fire, and much coveted a large and lovely rose that blossomed on his manly bosom. He invited Mr. Smith to sit alongside of him, ostensibly for the purpose of talking about the merits of their respective harbours, but really, I believe, with the sinister intention of prigging the Smithsonian nosegay. It was "mane" of the Buller lion, but the sand-Smith was pleased with his tale. Eugene promised to lend the Buller dredge to remove the New Plymouth breakwater, and the representative of the kingdom of "kumi kum" bubbled over with gratification, and wrung the lion's paw, but he did not offer the fragrant flower he wore. After a session in Parliament Mr. Smith will have learnt that all business is conducted on the give-and-take principles. Had Waterspout Smith presented the Buller lion with the lovely red rose, I am sure that in his then gracious mood the evergreen Eugene would have thrown in the loan of the Buller harbour along with the use of the dredge, for the benefit of Taranaki.

Chapter II.

A Winter Scene—What the Farmers are Doing—Their Bad Luck — A Sample of Bush Settler — Plodding Peasants and Political Pensioners — Cidereal Observations — Real Jam — Ye Trout Streams—The Guide Book—The Jubilee Committee on the Summit—Party Fight for Representation of Egmont.

And the rain it ceaseth not, but descendeth, yet, with a steady descend, and the yeoman of ye mountain despondeth with a heavy despond. Ye golden vision of a harvest bringing much cheer, and plenty of coin, hath vanished, and all is blank and blackness. Ye bright star of hope hath waned, sunk below the horizon of his imagination, and left him desolate, and despairing as to how he shall gather the wherewithal to pay his debts.

Here we are, on the second day of February, in a country "pub" at the foot of the mountain—Inglewood to wit—warming ourselves at a roaring fire of logs, piled half way up the chimney. The fireplace is hung round with the steaming rags of a company of cattle-drovers. The owners sit about, half-naked, awaiting the drying of their clothes —a winter scene surely. During the past fortnight we have had, at intervals, four dry days.

Now the Controller of the skyey reservoirs has settled down to business in earnest. For the last forty-eight hours the fountains of heaven have been opened wide, and there are no signs of the cistern clouds running dry. Were it not that we are divinely assured that the waters will not again cover the earth, we should say a

second deluge had begun. Jupiter P. is evidently of opinion that there is a scarcity of sand on the Taranaki coast, and is bent on sluicing down the mountain to meet the requirements, regardless of expense.

Expressing disappointment at being unable to carry out my programme—arranged without consulting the clerk of the weather—of visiting the settlers dwelling within the shadow of the mountain, for the purpose of seeing what they were doing, a canny drover, a Scotchman from the North of Ireland, I believe, said,

"That need not trouble you; I can tell you what they are doing, and save you from bogging Boomerang or breaking your neck in search of the information; they are just sitting by their firesides anathematising the weather."

"Ah, thanks. I have no doubt it is so."

The effect upon the weather, however, is not discernible, and they must be kept pretty busy at their cursory employment. It would require patience akin to that of the long-suffering Job to enable a man to sit silent and see his waving fields of ripening crops laid a waste of worthless straw; the corn strewn and twisted beyond hope of recovery, to be cleared off with a firestick instead of a reaping machine; the strong-stemmed, yellow-headed wheat broken and rusted; the grass seed washed out, and hay rotting; the purple-tasselled "remorseless thistle" spreading far and wide his prickly sway, making impenetrable jungles of the fairest paddocks—I like to see the thistle, but one may have too much of a good thing.

Mr. Lysaght, one of the largest Maori leaseholders in Egmont, converts his thistles into silage. This may be a

wrinkle for my friend "Rambler," whose agricultural soul was vexed to bursting point at the inroads his national emblem was making on the Matamata estate.

Verily the seasons, if not the times, are out of joint, and bad luck pursueth the bush settler. Last year at this date the country was as dry as tinder. Bush fires devastated the district, and left him naked—a marked contrast from the prevailing wet of the present summer. But whether he prefers the burn-out to the wash-out I have not as yet been able to ascertain. The farmer in this region ever seems to be "between the devil and the deep blue sea." He really does not get a favourable season above once in seven years. But in spite of the ravages of the elements, of the plunderings of his natural enemies, the shoals of middlemen, who stand between him and the consumer of his produce, and of the burdens laid upon his back by the blunders of successive Governments (general and local), the yeoman of the mountain thrives—at least the majority of his class do so.

The weekly pat of butter dumped down at the stores in this little village of Inglewood amounts to about ten tons, and is all hand-made. The district has not yet realised the advantages of the dairy factory. The Inglewoodian walks slowly. And the price is fivepence per lb. This is where the iron enters the soul of the farmer deepest. Butter at "fi'pence" he considers the greatest calamity of all, and declares that he cannot live at the price. Deaths from this cause, however, are not on record.

Those who thrive best are the foreigners, whose severe habits of thrift keep their wants within the limits

of their means. As a sample of how scores live and thrive, take the case of one Valentine Belski—a Tyrolese. He started on a deferred payment section of 50 acres, with nothing, gathering fungus to keep himself and family in food while he felled, fenced, planted, and sowed an opening patch to live on. Grass seed won him a cow, and by the sale of his butter, eggs, and surplus vegetables he acquired a few sheep. He shod his family with clogs of his own make, and his wife with her spinning-jinny—probably her marriage portion—spun and wove the wool, and clothed them from cap to sock comfortably and decently. His store bill for tea and sugar will not amount to more than £12 per annum, while his revenue from the sale of his surplus products will average £50 yearly—and now he has money to lend.

Thus it is these people live, eating their own flour, meat, poultry, butter, eggs, vegetables, fruit, and many drinking their own wine or home-brewed beer and smoking their own tobacco, selling their surplus produce, and paying their taxes without a murmur, living in happy ignorance as to who is king—Cæsar or Pompey. It is even more than likely that the half of them never heard of E. M. Smith, the M.H.R. for the district.

The English-speaking portion of the farming population do not thrive so well. Their wants are not so easily satisfied, and, as a rule, they more than live up to their means. Colonel Trimble came to settle in this district with £6,000. Now he has to be "provided for"—like his chief, Sir Harry Atkinson—by the State. Had the Tyrolese peasant failed in his farming operations he would have been "provided for" by the Charitable Aid Board. But

ex-chairmen of English Chambers of Commerce and ex-Premiers, who have essayed without success to live on butter at fivepence a lb. and made a general mess of their own and other people's affairs, have to be provided for in another way.

The services — past and present — rendered by Mr. Belski are of more value to the State than the united services of both Sir Harry and the Colonel, but he was not even thought of when the J.P.'ships were being so freely distributed. But let the valiant Valentine remember virtue hath its own reward. Where there is no virtue the reward must come from some other source.

It has been rather an unfortunate circumstance that Messrs. Atkinson and Trimble were not born Swiss yodelers — singing Lul-I-I-lul-lul lahee o-o o. The native population down this way think so at all events. I am told as a positive fact that while Sir Harry was donning the Speaker's robes he was humming the old song, "We've aye been provided for, and sae will we yet."

The settlers mostly all cultivate a "bit of an orchard," but fruit from Inglewood is never likely to figure largely as a staple of export. I fancy it will pay them better—even with butter at "fi'pence" a lb.—to stick to the gifts the gods have given them in the shape of grass, and leave the cultivation of wealth-producing trees to their northern, and more favourably-situated neighbours.

The only orchard of any consequence in the district is that of Mrs. Riley, at Lepperton, half-way between Waitara and Inglewood. It comprises 17 acres, well stocked with all the fashionable varieties of apples, plums, gooseberries,

American blackberries, currants, and other small fruits. It is closely sheltered, and must have cost a small fortune to bring it to its present state of excellence. This season's crop has been rather a light one, which is not to be wondered at, considering the awful bad weather that has prevailed for such a length of time. The fruit is all manufactured on the spot—into jams principally.

The Lepperton Jam Factory has long since established a reputation for the purity and flavour of its conserves, and there is always a steady inquiry for the brand. The fruit is carefully picked, and the sugar used is English crushed lump. "The factory" is a substantial wooden building, with concrete floors, clean, sweet, and airy. Mrs. Riley, with praiseworthy enterprise, has recently imported a cider press, and is now making a first-class quality of this wholesome beverage. I have drunk all sorts of abominations and vile compounds in New Zealand under the name of cider, but here at last I had the pleasure of quaffing a flagon of the pure, unadulterated, insinuating juice of the apple. Mrs. Riley disposes of as much cider as she can make, and it can be obtained at some of the hotels in New Plymouth, Waitara, Inglewood, and Hawera; but, so long as the brewers control the licensed victuallers the introduction of cider into their houses is not likely to be encouraged. Mrs. Riley is assisted in the management of the orchard and factory by her brother-in-law. Both are exceedingly kind and courteous to visitors. We spent a very pleasant afternoon there—Boomy reckoned it was a place where everything was "real jam."

Besides its butter, its Alpine peasantry, and Colonel Trimble, Inglewood is famous for its trout. The mountain

streams, they say, are full of them. I've tried to catch 'em, but Mr. Trout never seems to be hungry when I go a-fishing. The Inglewood trout is a fly customer, and not to be easily caught with base imitations. It is only when expert disciples of old Isaak, like Duigan (of Wanganui), George McLean, or Smith (the Commercial), cast their lines that Johnny Trout gets a chance of an airing. Butter at fivepence a lb. does not allow our yeomen much time for rod-fishing, and, although the speckled tit-bit is at the foot of the paddock, there is no fish for breakfast. In the course of time, no doubt, Inglewood will find itself famous as the great trout-fishing rendezvous of the North Island.

Since forwarding my last communication I have come across the "Taranaki Holiday Guide-book," issued by the Jubilee Celebration Committee, giving full directions for the ascent of Mount Egmont by five different routes, viz., via Egmont Road—where the proposed hut is to be built,—the Ranges, Stratford. Manaia, and Eltham routes. Now, it seems to me that an easier and shorter route than any of those mentioned in the guide-book could be found, and made at half the cost of the proposed tourists' hut, viz., by way of Waipuku. Twenty pounds, or less, would suffice to cut a good bridle track through the bush, and horses could be taken farther up the mountain than by the other routes, and thence the ascent is shorter, and, I believe, easier than from any other point. Tourists then could leave by the ordinary morning trains from New Plymouth or Hawera to Waipuku, and by the aid of a good horse and an Alpenstock they can ascend the mountain, see what is to be seen from the summit, and return in time for the evening trains, and go on their respective ways rejoicing. I think in common fairness the Taranaki Jubilee Celebration

Committee ought to prospect this route, and give Waipuku a show. I don't see why it should be left out in the cold, like a forlorn step-child.

Of the summit of Mount Egmont I cannot speak of my own knowledge, but by the authority of the Taranaki Jubilee Celebration Committee—who all know "what it is to be there"—I can state that "You stand apparently on the summit of a huge billow of snow; then you gaze enraptured on the glorious scene around you"—provided it dosen't rain, and there are no clouds in the way. "Far away to the south gliston the snowy peaks of the Southern Alps in the South Island; on three sides of you lies the ocean. Apparently immediately below you, though nearly twenty miles distant, is the shore of the circular promontory of Taranaki, extending from Waitara on the north to Hawera on the south, yourselves standing in almost the exact centre. At your feet are the various towns, villages, clearings, and homesteads encircling the mountain, the swamp lying between the Pouakai Range and yourself, the Stony river (Hangatahua) like a silver thread winding its course to the sea, and the numerous rivers which take their rise in the mountain—all can be clearly traced. To the south-east are two green and yellow patches, like small meadows; these represent the Ngaere Swamps—thousands of acres in extent. To the east tower the snow-clad peaks of Ruapehu and the cones of Ngaruhoe and Tongariro; and to the north are the Paranini Cliffs, a thousand feet in height, though apparently just above the sea. New Plymouth Breakwater is dwarfed to the size of a walking-stick, and the Sugar-loaves, though one is 500 feet high, look like thimbles. Having partaken of lunch, washed down by melted snow with the chill off"—I was not aware they had

a kettle up there—"then you commence your descent of the mountain."

The Holiday Guide will be found very handy for tourists, and the price is only sixpence.

Next to the weather topics, Egmonters are much exercised over the election fight between Messrs Bruce and McGuire. Bruce bears the banner of the fallen Conservative party, while McGuire fights under the auspices of the triumphant Radicals. In this constituency the Conservative, or stupid party, is much the stronger, but they have no more intelligence to guide their strength than a mob of their own bullocks—the leaders are all seared on the rump with the Atkinsonian J.P. brand. This gives a chance for the Liberal, or wideawake party, to have a say in the representation of the district. Besides the fact of him being a very good fellow and a bachelor, I fail to see what there is in the late member for Rangitikei to recommend him to the electors of Egmont. If the three hundred Maori leaseholders, for whom Major Atkinson was so ready to confiscate the property of natives, think they have found another tool in Mr. Bruce they are very much mistaken; or if the payers of harbour rates expect that he will help them to saddle the country with their liabilities they will be greatly disappointed. Mr. Bruce is too scrupulous a politician to do anything of the sort. The Radicals may see their way to give the ratepayers a measure of relief by cutting up the big Maori leaseholds into smaller portions, and reducing the rate per head of taxation by settling a greater population on the land, and so save Mr. Bruce all further trouble with these two awkward subjects, should the Stupid return him as their representative. His election, however, cannot affect the Radical tenure of power. It is clear that party has come to stay.

Chapter III.

Moved Out—General Chute's March Round the Mountain—The Bush the Country's Bulwarks—Fall of the Federation Obstructionist—A Lost Opportunity—Central Supremacy—Cause of Stratford's Progress—The Opunake Road—A Sermon on Unselfishness—Wolves in Sheeps' Clothing—Hurried Up.

Three days' incessant rain, then Jupiter Pluvius suspended his sluicing operations—his water Joeys, it is not unlikely, went out on strike for shorter hours and more wages—and we got away from Inglewood, proceeding along the mountain road by Stratford and Eltham to Hawera.

General Chute once came this way. It took him ten days to ramble his way through the bush. That was six-and-twenty years ago, and he had an army at his back. Now Boomerang, in heavy marching order, can do it in as many hours, including stoppages, which are neither few nor far between.

Villages, or, as we love to call them, townships, are much more numerous in the bush settlements than in the open country, the percentage of men to the acre of land greater. The extra cost of clearing the bush country has been a safeguard against the big estate curse, and also to some extent against the equally baneful effects of the operations of the land-speculating shark. Had we the open plains settled with holdings of the average bush areas, the wealth and also the taxes of New Zealand would be more evenly distributed.

Now that the Radical party have secured the reins of Government, and are certain to hold them for a lengthened period, we may, at an early date, expect a change in the incidence of taxation, and the redistribution of the landed property of the colony. An immediate change, however, can hardly be looked for. The Hon. Mr. Ballance is not cast in Cromwellian mould, and anything rash, or calculated to revolutionise the present system of government, is not to be expected. We shall have a lot of tinkering at the laws but no amendment till the Radicals—the party despairing of its fondest hopes being realised in Mr. Ballance, that gentleman, with his anti-federation views, will be gently pushed from power—under a stronger, more daring, and able leader, effect the changes necessary for the development of the resources of the colony, an equitable adjustment of the taxes of the commonwealth, and general contentment of the people.

It has often occurred to me that the Conservatives missed a splendid opportunity of discomfiting the Radicals—or to use the old D'Israelian phrase, "to dish the Whigs"—by not purchasing the landed properties included in the *globo* assets of the Bank of New Zealand. It would, I think, have been an honest way of assisting the Bank and preventing a national calamity, and at the same time legitimately recovering for the State a large slice of the people's lands at a very cheap rate. The new power may burst up the big estates in any way they choose, short of confiscation —and the Radical is not yet in New Zealand who is prepared to proceed to that extremity—but it can never acquire them cheaper than at the valuation the late Mr. David Hean put upon the Bank's territorial possessions. We would have had more value for our money by the purchase of the Bank's estate than we receive from the purchase of

Maori lands under the present system. But "it is no use crying over spilt milk." The grand opportunity has been missed. Such a *coup* was worthy of a Beaconsfield, a Vogel, or a Grey; the Atkinson Government never had a soul above billets.

Since we first saw it, Stratford has materially improved in size and commercial activity. I note a new church opened, a new "pub" in course of erection, and a newspaper established. This is where Stratford has "got the bulge" on Eltham, its rival for the position of the bush capital. Eltham has two "pubs" to Stratford's one, and is divided into east and west ends—all the same as London, —but it has no newspaper to advocate its cause, although it is not wanting in the material from which country editors are supplied. If Eltham is to hold its own, it must have a newspaper, and it would pay the inhabitants to buy Mr. d'Arcy Hamilton, the schoolmaster, a printing press. Jehos! how he would make things hum; what a time Vereker Bindon, the school inspector, would have; and, when a member of Parliament was in request, Bruce might return to his clansmen and his stub-covered hillocks in Rangitikei, Hutchinson to wail by the willow-banked waters of the sweet Wanganui, and McGuire to the shades of the cloister to repent him of his imprudent remarks on the beauty of his parish priest's intelligent countenance. All other rags will be as dumb dogs in the presence of the *Eltham Electrifier*.

Stratford may date its revived prosperity from the time Mr. Thomas Bayley (our Waitara friend) relinquished his hold upon the big block of land with which he blocked the way of Stratford's progress. Considerable areas have since been occupied. Bush-felling and the extension and

formation of the East road have given employment to a great number of hands, not a few being settlers in the neighbourhood. Some 150 natives are also at work, when the weather will permit, grass-seeding. Stratford, as the distributing centre, has assumed quite a metropolitan air of bustle and bounce. Eltham's boom will come when the Ngaire and Pukengahu Blocks are cut up for sale, and the road to Auckland in course of formation—and the good time's coming boys; *taihoa.*

There is one work of importance the Stratfordonians are supinely indifferent about, and that is the completion of the Opunake road. The opening of this direct line of communication between Stratford and the port of Opunake would be greatly to the advantage of both townships and, also, to the intermediate districts.

I was in Opunake the other day, Sunday it was, and received an invitation from the Rev. Mr. Hammond, of Patea, to go and hear Mr. Harkness, M.H.R., of Nelson, preach a sermon in the Presbyterian Church on—what do you think? No less a theme than "Unselfishness," from the text, "No man should live for himself alone." Had it been to hear Mr. Hammond, I should have gone with pleasure. He is not one of those parsons who continually, in season and out of season, ram religion down your throat. He gently insinuates it, and always leaves you feeling better than when he found you. Had he, I say, delivered a sermon on "Unselfishness" I could have believed in his sincerity, and that he practised what he preached. But for to go, for to sit, for to listen, to a sermon on "Unselfishness" from a member of Parliament, in whose pockets were one hundred

and fifty graven images of gold, still warm from the coffers of the Colonial Treasury—pay for a week's session of Parliament—was too much of the too, too good for my worldliness. I sauntered out and took a stroll and a survey of Mount Egmont in the twilight.

I am sure there are many people more in need of a sermon on unselfishness than the Egmont electors. They have put their unselfishness into practice, and returned good for evil, by calling on the stranger and the foe to represent them in Parliament. By the way, it is rather a singular coincidence that those two unordained priests, Messrs. Goldie and Harkness, M.H.R.'s, both belonging to the same political party as Mr. Bruce, should be on a preaching tour round the mountain at this particular juncture. I wonder which gospel they are most interested in promulgating, that of the Friend of Man or that of the friend of himself, lately Premier of the colony? The Conservative press are howling at the bare mention of any leaders on McGuire's side putting in their "spoke." But, then, the Radicals come in an open, barefaced manner, as political canvassers for the party, not disguised as strolling evangelists—political wolves in sheep's clothing.

We had a couple of days' fine weather, and I was unselfishly offering up a silent prayer on behalf of the long-suffering, and nearly ruined, washed-out yeomen of ye mountain for its continuance, and speculating upon the chances of threading my way with safety through the many ways and byways of the mountain, in the unselfish work of condoling with the farmers, and mingling our swears, when I received a wire from headquarters, asking why the ——— a swear word—I did not proceed to Rotorua, via the

Hunterville route, as I promised to do. This I considered pretty cool on the part of the chief. Here was I, unable to get about where the country is full of roads, expected to travel where there is only an apology for one. But let me answer one question with another: Why did he not send me down a pair of wings for Boomerang and a cast-iron suit for myself? Waterproofs are quite useless. It is all very well for one who sits high and dry all day, an utter stranger to mud, bog-hole, or flood, to ask why—— But there, it is no use arguing with my chief, he won't be put off with excuses, so I must go to Rotorua.

CASUAL RAMBLINGS.

Up and Down New Zealand.

A JOURNEY OF FACT AND FANCY,

—OR—

A TRAVELLER'S TALE.

Chapter I.

The Chief—The Route—Storm Swept Country—Wanganui to Hunterville—Making up the Expedition—Rawini—Te Kooti—Arabi Pasha—Hunterville—The Grand Trunk Line—Boomy's Load—The Jaeger Garment—The Saddle—Bungebah—Mr. White's Tip—Three Boiled Eggs—Pawerawera Lodge—Boomy Lost and Found—Off the Track—The Dismal Swamp—Tommy Poata's Canoe.

My last communication saw us started for Hunterville *en route* to Rotorua, in compliance with the wishes of "the chief." When I wired him that the whole country was in a state of flood, and that I thought the time inopportune for an excursion into the interior, he calmly replied,

"'There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;' now you have the flood at your feet, swim in it, my boy!"

"The chief" is no mythical personage, a mere figurative character, as some people might suppose—some there are who even doubt the existence of Boomerang; he is a material fact in our office, and head of the department in which I serve.

The route prescribed was to follow the Grand Trunk Railway line from Hunterville to Taumarunui, then to cross over to Tokaanu, go round Lake Taupo, and thence to Rotorua, where—the proprietors of the WEEKLY NEWS were kind enough to say—I might stay a while and take the baths for the benefit of my health.

From Patea, whither we had arrived, we splashed down to Wanganui, the country round us sodden with rain; the Patea, Whenuakura, Waitotara, and Wanganui Rivers rolling down their heavy volumes of storm waters, pouring a clayey deluge over the low-lying lands along their course, devastating fields of golden crops and green pastures, and doing serious damage to roads and bridges.

There are two roads from Wanganui to Hunterville; one, via Marton, metalled throughout; the other, by way of Kauangaroa and the Parakaretu block, partially metalled, shorter and easier for riding; but, as the Turakina River is unbridged, and, just then, unfordable, we took the Marton road. Now that the hon. member for Wanganui is in power he may, with the assistance of "his nob" of Waitotara, find the ways and means for keeping open the direct communication between the riverside city and the inland town.

At Hunterville many good friends tried to dissuade me from attempting the journey. "The road," they said,

"must be impassable; not even a Maori has come through from Patea since the storm." This "Inland Patea," or "Patea Moawhango," is, be it remembered, quite a different Patea from the Patea in Taranaki. "One of the jawing fraternity," and a well-known Esculapius of Wanganui, were the last to come from Moawhango, and they assured me that at no price would they again go through the same experience of danger and discomfort.

All this was anything but encouraging, but I determined to go, and went on with my preparations.

My notions of the indispensable requisites for a picnic of this sort were based on what I had seen done, and provided for, by the Ministerial party who escorted Mr. David Christie Murray to Taumarunui, and what I had heard of Lord Onslow's equipment for his journey from Napier to Rotorua.

I collected a lot of pack mules and saddle horses, and a quantity of oilmen's stores. In the way of tinned fish, I would recommend our Kaipara Mullet in preference to any other. Sardines are tasty, but they make one unquenchably thristy when travelling. Above all things avoid "potted" meats. Then I provided a large marquee—capable of housing the whole party,—several small waterproof tents, blankets *ad lib.*, and many other things essential to comfort, and health, and wisdom; I did not forget a feather bed, an American cooking-stove, a milch cow, half-a-dozen laying hens and an equal number of roosters, to supply the expedition with fresh eggs—and crows in the morn,—and, also, in cases of emergency, a basin of chicken broth; a hogshead of Domain Brewery pure beer, several cases of wine, chiefly dry Monopole, a few of JRD whisky and a small soda-water

factory, for morning refreshment; 20,000 cigarettes, made specially for us by Austin Walsh & Co.—the quantity of cigarettes consumed in this country is appalling; a patent medicine chest, also, specially prepared for the purposes of this expedition by Messrs. Sharland & Co.; a box of Pears' soap, from the eminent Auckland chemist Graves Aickin, as recommended by Lily Langtry; and a half a gross of axes, large and small. Being a sort of literary George Washington, I could not travel without my little hatchet.

To man the expedition, I engaged a *hapu* of Maoris, female portion of it undertaking to do the cooking, washing, etc.

Some of these Maori women are invaluable in the bush. I know one on the East Coast, attached as cook to a survey party, whose knowledge of the bush, and all it contains, would do credit to a North American Indian. A dead shot with fowling-piece and rifle, and an expert pig-huntress, she not only cooks for the party but provides it with meat. Rawini was one of Te Kooti's early wives, and did her share in the work in that hero's *coup de maitre* at the Chatham Islands. She may, indeed, be, for aught I know, the very one who eloped with him in the days before he had become famous, and when his alliance was not considered an honour to the *hapu*. The elopement was managed in this way. One evening Mr. Te Kooti (Scott) walked into the *pa*, that held his love, with a pig in a sack. At dusk he was seen leaving the *pa*, with the sack slung over his shoulder, as before. But the "pig in the poke" this time was the belle of the *kainga*. While Mr. Scott—wonder how our punctilious ruler of the Queen's Navee would like being styled Admiral Te Kooti—held her people's

attention, the artful maiden quietly released the *poaka* and crept into the sack, and Te Kooti carried her off in triumph. In her young days our old friend "Ra" was, no doubt, capable of being a party to such a trick as this, or any other devilment.

I also secured the services of a Hindoo, in a dark frock coat, and a red sash and a fez—the costume formerly worn by Arabi Pasha—to uncork the champagne. I have noticed high-toff tourists generally carry an ornament of this kind with them, so I thought it well to be in the fashion.

To save any demonstration on the part of the citizens of Hunterville—who, had they known of it, would have turned out *en masse*, headed by the mayor and a brass band —I despatched the expedition northwards very early in the morning, before the good people were up. The "Co." and I followed later on in the day. B. had feasted to the full on John Dalziel's oats, and the rain and the roads had no terrors for "he" (Cornish). Hunterville is more hopeful in tone than when I last visited it. Several new buildings have been erected. It has not yet got its telephone, but it has got a representative who will make things warm if there is any unnecessary delay over it.

A contract has been let for the extension of the Grand Trunk Railway line a few miles farther, and the contractors are busy with the preliminary work. This is probably the last contract the present generation will see completed on the Grand Trunk. The formation of the road line is proceeding slowly, but there is a possibility of our seeing that finished, and perhaps getting through on four wheels. About 14 miles are let in small contracts, on which 50 men are employed; up to the 28th mile contracts have been recently

let, but little has been done on them as yet. The weather has been a sad bar to progress, and neither contractors or men are likely to make a sheep run out of the job. The men get a shilling an hour, and pay 16s. per week for their board. This is good enough, were it not for the broken time.

Boomerang carried me, my leggings, a suit of Dr. Jaeger's sanitary clothing, and a celluloid shirt—so that I could appear respectable when asked out to a dinner party or a ball!

The Jaeger garment is a splendid invention for bush travelling; it is extremely light, and combines an under and upper shirt in one, made so as to protect the vital parts of the body from colds and chills—a warm, comfortable, and health-preserving article. McLachlan's in Queen Street is the only place I know of in Auckland where they can be procured.

A shaving brush completed our load—I had heard that there were many keen shavers in Rotorua, but no barber.

I rode the "Co." in a patent American saddle I picked up at Wiseman's—a saddle, I can say, after several months' trial, you can ride in all day and not feel sore, and which will save the misery of riding a horse with a galled back. The peculiarity of it is that it has no stuffing, being merely a plain wooden tree covered with pigskin, and having an open channel from pommel to cantle; this keeps the back perfectly cool. The girth is a broadweb bellyband, with rings at the ends and straps that pass through other rings, attached to the saddle by two pieces of leather coming down in the shape of a V. With the double purchase obtained you can girth up a horse till his ribs crack. Under the

saddle is worn the ordinary saddle-cloth. Over the seat is placed a dog's or a lamb's skin, and you sit as comfortable as in an easy chair. It is a little surprising this sort of saddle is not in more general use here. Mr. White, a brother of the late Hon. James White, tells me they are quite common on "the other side," that he has ridden on one for years, and uses neither skin nor saddle-cloth. Among other advantages, they are much lighter than the ordinary saddle, and cheaper. I do not know the name of the maker, but Mr. James Wiseman, the well-known saddler, will be able to furnish any particulars required concerning this latest improvement in saddles.

Mr. White, I may mention, was formerly the owner of Bungebah, and he tipped him as a moral for the Newmarket Handicap, but not having a bookmaker or a totalisator attached to the expedition, I could not take advantage of his "straight tip."

I had almost forgot to say that Boomerang also carried three hard-boiled eggs; this was in case I might at any time get separated from the transport corps. One can live comfortably for a day on three boiled eggs. I remember two of us once getting bushed for twenty-four hours, and we lived on a raw onion I happened to have in my pocket. That onion gave us such a taste for water, of which there was an abundance, we never felt the least bit hungry. I had no fear of starvation so long as Boomy carried three boiled eggs.

We passed up the little gorge from Hunterville, turned to the right at Simpson's woolshed, crossed the railway line, and were fairly on the road north. The day was fine, and the settlers were busy with their grass seed. The road

was good, and we swept along at the rate of ten knots an hour, cantering down the siding from the high terrace on to a broad flat—an old bed of the Rangitikei. There is a beautiful piece of road opened through a belt of bush here—which, from the shingly nature of the bottom, is quite dry—and one could almost fancy we were in an avenue belonging to some baronial castle in the vicinage. It was very pretty, with its wealth of foliage of fern and pine, but it did not last long. Up we rise again, and then down an unfinished cutting into the Makahina Creek, which was just recovering from the effect of the flood, and we crossed without trouble. Here I overtook young Mr. Barron, the son of the Government overseer of the contract parties, who invited me to spend the night at his father's residence, Pawerawera Lodge. I accepted the invitation, and left the transport party to manage itself for one night.

Pawerawera Lodge, ten miles out from Hunterville, is a regular house of refuge for belated travellers, and as is open to all, and nothing to pay, it is pretty well patronised. It must be a great tax on Mr. Barron's food supply, besides the trouble it puts him to. I suggested he should hang up a "kitty" for the Wanganui Hospital, so that those who really felt grateful for the accommodation might have an opportunity of expressing it in a more substantial form than words.

After tea—it was then late—I looked round the clearing to see how the "Co." fared, but he was nowhere to be found. I was slightly alarmed at this, as I had never known him to stray away. The whole camp turned out in search. Thinking he had felt disappointed at not receiving his usual supper of oats and gone back to Hunterville, Mr. Barron and I went as far as the creek, but discovered no trace of him.

We searched and searched till we came to the place we started from, and there he was quietly cropping away at the grass. Where he had been was a mystery till Patukohu, a little girl belonging to a member of my *hapu*, said,

"'Boomalong' had been up a tree, and had just come down."

"He had got up to look at the moon, eh, Betty?"

The expedition was under weigh by sunrise, passing Hammond's station a little after. Crossed a good patch of natural clearing, and into the bush again. A big slip barred the way, but a youngster belonging to a party of bush-fellers showed us a track round. Mr. Bell, of Feilding, has some 1,500 acres under the axe here, but the prospect of a successful burn is anything but promising.

On the road again, we pegged away, passing the last of the road-parties as they were "turning to" at eight o'clock, making good progress so far. A few miles further on, Wharu, who led the advance, left the main line, and took a track to the right, which I thought was to avoid a swampy portion, but after some distance we emerged into an open natural clearing on the river. After fossicking around for some time, I discovered the road led only to an out-station of the Hammonds. You can't wander far on the Rangitikei without striking a Hammond. I tied Wharu up to a tree, and gave him fifty lashes, but I should like to have administered them to the engineer-in-chief of the colony, who neglected to put finger-posts along this line. But what can you expect from a man who is responsible for excavating a £50,000 tunnel where it was not required? Since the completion of the Poro-o-tarao a route has been discovered which would

have advanced the Grand Trunk Railway a further distance of 20 miles without a tunnel at all. That's the way the money goes. Still the country thrives!

After the loss of an hour we retraced our steps and got on to the main line once more, and proceeded steadily and without mishap till we came to a dismal swamp, where we had an awful bad time, and progressed at the rate of half a mile an hour. Here one of the Maori women let her baby fall, and it sunk to rise no more. We fished and dragged for hours without success; that swamp had no bottom within reach of our grappling-irons. By the aid of tussocks and roots of trees we at length scrambled through on to solid ground. Then the Maoris insisted on holding a *tangi* for the lost *pickaninny*, so we camped and I distributed the Domain Brewery among them.

From here I despatched Toby Ringtail back to Hunterville with my letters. He returned with a telegram and a letter that were posted at Wellington in November last by Mr. Harry Butler, and which had been chasing me about the country ever since. You can't well beat our postal arrangements for speed and promptitude of delivery. I also received a communication from the energetic and thoughtful secretary of the Mercer Regatta, inviting me to be present and man his brand new big war canoe with my tribe. He says it is a beautiful looking craft, 80 feet long, and capable of carrying 60 paddles. He is building a private grand-stand for His Excellency the Governor, who patronises the show, and I can have one if I choose. No, thanks, Porter, old boy; I prefer my grand-stand among the crowd. If we can get the *tangi* over in time, perhaps we shall be "all there."

Chapter II.

The Tangi—The late Judge Maning's Account—At Parihaka—Joy and Grief—The Awarua Block—350,000 Acres—Good Land—The Native Land Court Sitting—Cost to the Natives £25,000—The Long Swamp—A Black Squall—No Finger Posts—Boomy's Mishap—Blood Tells—The Remorseless Thistle—Good Night.

The lament for the dead is one of the last of the ancient Maori customs the observance of which is most generally practised. Although not now observed in the desperately demonstrative fashion of former times, when the female mourners cut and gashed themselves in a most frightful manner, and the wives of defunct warriors were expected to hang themselves—the Maori *wahine* is too scarce an article now-a-days for such extravagance—it is still a costly affair of honour, lasting sometimes for weeks, and exhausting the resources of the *hapus*. It costs hundreds of pounds to give a Maori of distinction a proper "send off" to the other world. Since chiefs of high standing like Te Whiti begin to grumble at the expense of these too frequent funeral feasts, I anticipate the Maori *tangi* will, in time, degenerate into a mere whine and whisky revel, like an Irish wake.

The late Judge Maning in "Old New Zealand" thus describes a Maori *tangi*, as he saw it:—

"A number of women were standing in a row, screaming, wailing, and quivering their hands about in a most extraordinary manner, and cutting themselves dreadfully with sharp flints and shells. One old woman, in the centre of the group, was one clot of blood

from head to feet, and large clots of coagulated blood lay on the ground where she stood. The sight was absolutely horrible, I thought so at the time"—the horribleness wore off as he became familiarised with the custom, "She was singing or howling a dirge-like wail. In her right hand she held a piece of *tuhua*, or volcanic glass, as sharp as a razor; this she placed deliberately to her left wrist, drawing it slowly upwards to her left shoulder, the spouting blood following as it went; then from the left shoulder downwards, across the breast to the short ribs on the right side; then the rude but keen knife was shifted from the right hand to the left, placed to the right wrist, drawn upwards to the right shoulder, and so down across the breast to the left side, thus making a bloody cross on the breast, and so the operation went on, the old creature all the time howling in time and measure, and keeping time also with the knife, which at every cut was shifted from one hand to the other, as I have described. Her face and body was a mere clot of blood, and a little stream was dropping from every finger. A more hideous object could scarcely be conceived. I took notice that the younger women, though they screamed as loud, did not cut near so deep as the old women, especially about the face."

I was present at Parihaka on the return of Te Whiti from New Plymouth Gaol, where he had served a term of three months' imprisonment rather than liquidate a debt which he felt he was unjustly called upon to pay, and witnessed a *tangi* on a very big scale; over two thousand natives taking part in the ceremony. It was a double event. A *tangi* of joy and grief. Joy for the safe return of their prophet, priest, and king from the prison of the *pakeha*; grief for the departure of Hikurangi, his wife,

to that bourne of the blessed, from whence there is no return for either Maori or *pakeha*. Hikurangi was much beloved by the tribes. She had cheered their drooping courage in the dark days of war, and in the "piping times of peace" set them a good example of sobriety and industry. Only a week or so before the expiry of Te Whiti's sentence, Death, who waits not for chief, nor slave, knocked at the *whare*, and Hikurangi died in the midst of the preparations being made for her husband's welcome home. The natives felt this untimely visit keenly, and in their chants and songs did not fail to express their intense disgust at the cruel *atua*, who could permit such a dire misfortune to happen to his prophet.

A band of dusky dames and damsels—there were about 500 of them—fantastically festooned with garlands and wreaths of green vine leaves, looking like so many "Jacks i' the green," headed by an old buck of some 60 summers, with *taiaha* in hand, acting the part of drum-major, waited till Te Whiti, who was advancing at a snail's pace amid successive discharges of guns and tumultuous *haeremais*, reached the centre of the *marae*, or open space, in front of his house; then the mass moved slowly forward, stamping and yelling, legs, arms, and bodies moving together as though it were a piece of steam machinery in motion, and halted in front of Te Whiti, who was now standing still as a statue. Dance and song continued for, perhaps, an hour, with occasional rests, affording an opportunity for ambitious orators to address an *haeremai* to the prophet, till, in the lament-song for Hikurangi, the allusions to the *atua* became so gross and scurrilous that Te Whiti could stand it no longer, and tearing the green wreath of mourning from his "billycock," ordered them to squat—they all dropped to

to the ground as one man—*wo*man,—and said he had had enough, that he was perfectly satisfied with the work of his *atua*, who had taken Hikurangi to a better *kainga* far beyond the sky.

A freethinking *wahine* ventured an interjection of dissent, but she was promptly tucked under the arm of a stalwart *tane* and flung into a *whare*, and she disturbed the meeting no more.

Te Whiti said Tohu had spent too much money in feasting the people for so long a period, and although he felt the compliment very much, he also felt for the treasury.

Tohu, who was seated on the hillside, surrounded by a dense throng of chiefs, asked him to let that pass, and invited him to enter the house from which he had been so long absent. Te Whiti walked slowly up to his house, but did not enter.

In a tent inside the fence were the professional mourners, who were weeping, and moaning, and groaning for all they were worth; one or two I noticed scratched their cheeks and breasts, and showed a thin red streak of blood, just enough to swear by, but the damage done to their good looks was slight. The majority gave tears in plenty, but not a drop of blood.

Te Whiti sat on a bench, and the whole population passed in single file, and rubbed noses with their revered chief. In the evening the greater part of the female population danced up in pairs, with the *kai* in kits; the feasting began, and we took our leave. Boomy was there too!

It is now time to move forward the expedition. Our own *tangi* ended simultaneously with the last swig of beer. We held an inquest on the baby, and returned a verdict of "Death from natural causes."

Round the spurs of the Whahakauwae Ranges the roads were dry, and we made good progress. A tree or two had fallen across the narrow track, but we got round without much trouble. We were now fairly within the famed Awarua Block — a block of land of which it has been said, that it was rich enough to support the present population of New Zealand. I will not go so far as to say that, but there is no doubt there is portions of it "real fat," and the railway line does not go through the worst portion of it either, which is a wonder. One has only to look at the cocksfoot growing on the track to become acquainted with the fact of its richness.

When weary with "splodging" up to our necks in liquid mud, among a net work of hidden roots and logs—they were solid enough when you struck 'em—it was some consolation to think we were traversing a country capable of sustaining a not inconsiderable portion of the human race, and that I might, even before the expiry of the present decade, find thousands of happy settlers sitting, on a perpetual lease, under their own vine and figtree, reading their AUCKLAND WEEKLY NEWS; and that the badness of the road—it was bad, I shan't forget it in a hurry—was only a question of months. With the labour party in power I may, by the end of next summer, be bowling along it with Boomerang in a buggy.

Flop! Up to the crupper that time. Steady! he scrambles out, and I stood him on a log to take breath—the most sanguine view of the situation generally occurs after taking "a breath."

The Awarua Block extends from the Turakina River back to the Ruahine Mountains, and contains upwards of 350,000 acres of bush and open land. On the open lands a few Maoris, aided by European capital and experience, are making an attempt at sheep-farming. The bush land awaits the axe of the yeoman settler. When he will be permitted to enter upon the work of reclaiming the wilderness it is impossible to guess.

Some half-dozen tribes are claiming the block, or portions of it; a Native Land Court has been sitting at Marton for the past nine months to determine their several interests. The Court has, I believe, now closed, but it does not follow that the case is settled. There is nothing definite or final about a Native Land Court. Indeed, I am told "on the very best authority" that the present proceedings are merely the opening of the case. Some clever youth of the modern type of Maori will probably discover that a very remote ancestor once spat on the ground, from the top of Tongariro; the whole *hapu* will swear to it, and proceedings will commence *de novo*, and the Court may still be sitting on it nine years' hence.

It is not to the interests of the judges to shorten the proceeding. Some of them had a lot of trouble to get their judgeship, and it is not to be expected that they will work themselves out of a job. Like limpets to a rock, they will cling to their billets till the Radicals knock them on the head with the club of reform.

The land is supposed to be under negotiation for purchase by the Government. The natives declare they know nothing about it, and have no intention of selling.

A tax on unimproved land may help them to change their mind—if the cost (£25,000) of the nine months' sitting of the Land Court does not do so.

Here's another swamp, the Long Swamp, they call it. Twenty odd miles in from Hunterville I should guess it to be—I did not chain it. It was not the length of it—and it was long enough, goodness knows—so much as the depth of it that troubled us. I think it must have taken us hours to negotiate that swamp. I took no tally of time, eternity was uppermost in my thoughts just then. With many a groan and a grunt Boomy plunged and dived his way through, I really don't know how—the shanks of his hind legs were pretty well skinned by this time, and blood was trickling down his thigh—but we got to the end of it somehow, with nothing more serious the matter than the loss of an ancient *wahine* of the party. The stupid old screw of a beast she was riding persisted in taking his own course through an extra soft place, and sunk over the ears and out of sight, dragging the old squaw down with him till the mud was up to her chin. She squalled—a Tom Henderson pun, d'ye notice it? We tried every possible means to extricate her, but she had got so tangled up with horse, saddlery, and tree roots, that, finding the case hopeless, to shorten her misery I cut off her head. She squawked no more—another Hendersonian atrocity!

We held no inquiry into the cause of death, because, like Dr. Philson, I do not sanction inquests on my own cases.

Another track to the right! That must be the short cut to the inland Patea (Moawhango), but there is nothing to indicate that it is not the main line to Auckland. We guess

it is not, because there were more signs of traffic on it than on the main line—just the thing most likely to mislead the stranger, say one coming direct from Wanganui, and unaware of the fact that Maoris were frequently coming and going between the Land Court at Marton and the Pa Moawhango. Here's another track! further on, bending to the left, showing tracks—there are none at all on the main road. We take it, guessing it to be a detour to avoid a swamp, and come out right. What fungus-headed people these engineers-in-chief of ours must be that they cannot, or will not, see the danger and inconvenience the public are put to for want of a few simple directions as to the way they should go. The expense is so trifling that it would never be missed from the screw of the head of a department. If it is worth while spending thousands of pounds surveying and cutting bush tracks, surely it is worth a few shillings to show us where they lead to.

I intend to deputationise the Minister of Public Works, first time I see him, for a milestone every five miles and a finger-post at every track on this road.

About four in the afternoon I was congratulating myself that the worst was over, and swinging along at a good trot on a dry bit of ground, but full of stumps and roots; Boomy, hopping among 'em like a cat, caught his foot in one, and stumbled heavily forward and almost fell. When I recovered him he was standing on three legs, holding the off hind one high in the air, the blood welling from a wound on the coronet, of which I did not take much notice at the time—I thought his hip was out, or his back broken, at least. After a close examination I could discover nothing more than the wound on the coronet;

examined it again, but saw no trace of a splinter—yet it was there all the time, an inch and a-half long and an eighth of an inch thick. It had broken short off, and the hoof closed over it.

As near as I can guess—you do a lot of guess work in the bush—we were about 15 miles from Adamson's, a station on the outskirts of the bush in a corner of the Murimotu Plains, which we hoped to reach before nightfall. There was nothing for it but to push on, and we did; Boomy hobbling along with his "three legs and a swinger" most gamely—blood always tells at a pinch.

The thistles now began to annoy us very much. Thicker and thicker, and higher and higher they grew, till I began to fear the expedition would come to a standstill altogether. The "Co." had to hoist his head to a great elevation to prevent the Scotchmen from tickling his nose. Boomy has a skin like a kid glove, and he suffered severely while boring our way through the jungle of thistle. It extended for about ten miles.

Holloa! here are are fresh horse tracks, going our way too, strange I did not pick them up before, he can't be far ahead.

"Coo-oo-ee?"

"Coo-oo-ee!" echoed another voice in response, and in a few minutes we came upon an old camp where a couple of young fellows were preparing to spend the night. They were packing themselves and their blankets to Hunterville, and were very glad to know they were on the right track. They had seen another track further back, they said, and were doubtful whether they had taken the right one or

not. One of them had been a mile down the road to try and find out, and those were his returning tracks I saw.

"How far is it to Adamson's?" I asked.

"Nine miles, they replied; we came from there to-day."

"It is now six o'clock; do you think I can reach there before dark?"

"With that lame horse? No."

"Oh, he's all right when he's set a-going. I'll try it. Are the thistles better or worse than they are here?"

"Oh, much worse! This is a poor crop."

"Good night!"

"Good night!"

Chapter III.

Sylvan Shades—Camped Out—Boomy's Troubles—Supper's Ready—Arabi Slung Out—A Toast—Gentle Sleep—Sunrise—A Bath—More Fomentations for Boomerang—Expedition Disbanded—A Public Park on Ruapehu's Peak—Preservation of Snowballs and Glaciers—A "Capital" Site—Tongariro and Pihanga, of which more anon—Tom Adamson's—The Man—His Wife—An Obstinate Pig—Tom's Opinion of Boomy—An Incredulous Colonel—Boomy Relieved—A Station of the Studholme—A Radical on the Stump.

From the old camp, where we left the two men, Adamson's is nine miles—and a "bittock," I fancy. Under ordinary circumstances there would have been no difficulty in reaching it before dark. But, what with the crippled condition of our means of locomotion, the rankness of the thistles through which we could only fight our way slowly—I

should like to own a thousand acres of the land that produced them, though—and the detention caused by a great pine tree that had recently fallen across the track, round which we had to cut our way, night was fast descending upon us before we had emerged from the bush.

When we entered the forest on the Rangitikei bottom I felt quite light-hearted, and improvised a concert of Robin Hood ballads "Under the Greenwood Tree," but I felt much more joyful when I got out of it, and thought only about my supper. The monotony of the plains is trying enough, but the slow, dead "slog" through bush is wearisome in the extreme.

Coming out of the forest a small patch of open land is crossed, and a narrow strip of bush, then we debouch into a large natural clearing, where a troop of wild horses are at play, and—— Wonder where the track goes to now? Here are several. Is that it up the little valley or does it take across the river? or does it enter the bush and lead up the river bank into that gorge? Such are a few of the questions that perplex and worry the traveller, and which three pennyworth of black paint and a piece of timber might save him the anxiety and trouble of solving. A surveyor with a head on—that wasn't a cabbage—would have thought of this.

Yonder are some *whares*. We make for the farthest one, at the point of the bush there, by the river. We find it unoccupied, but furnished with a table, a long form, and some bunks. We camp here.

There is the "remorseless thistle" again, so, that must be the main road in the bush up by the river. Wonder what this track is round the bush to the left; is it

merely a cattle track leading nowhere, or can it be a path to Adamson's ? I explored a mile or two of it while supper was getting ready, and returned satisfied that Adamson's was not in that direction, and feeling that I would like to make a finger-post of the head of the department responsible for this road.

My first care now was to attend to Boomerang. The swelling and inflammation about the coronet of the injured foot plainly indicated the locality of the hurt, and that it was serious. Although strongly suspecting a splinter, I could not make sure of it, and was reluctant to cut away the hoof. I relieved the pain a little with fomentations, and made him as comfortable as I could. He hung around the hut all night, occasionally putting his nose to the window to see what was going on, and would whinny every time the door was opened.

"Supper's ready, sir."

"Very good."

"Arabi, give me a glass of wine."

"No wine, sah."

"What ! you 'fellah,' you ; where's all that champagne gone ?"

'Me put um in de ribber, sah, to cool, sah ; de ribber, sah, he cum down in am hurry and wash away de champagne, sah."

"You lying heathen Hindoo ! You thieving Egyptian ! You're drunk, you black rascal. Here ! Rangipo, Whareatua, Billy Barlow, tie me this slave, neck and crop, and chuck him into the Hautapu. And, hark you, 'If it were done, when 'tis done 'twere well it were done quickly.'"

"That's how I like my steak grilled, Maxwell"—Maxwell was the name of the cook. He is now serving with His Excellency the Governor, in the Urewera campaign.

"No soup, thank you."

"Fish, with two forks—sardines! I prefer to eat them with my fingers."

"What is this? Pigeon pie?" Paretiti shot a couple of brace, eh? Good girl, Pare! I shall give her an especially commended notice in my report to the editor of the WEEKLY NEWS. He wants a clean and sturdy housekeeper to give him 'pie,' and see him home o' nights, if the school teachers can be believed."

"I think I will take a slice of cold ham, thank you."

"Salad Watercresses!—those hard boiled eggs will come in here."

"What! a bottle of whisky left? Oh, joy! oh, rapture unforseen! John Robertson, my old friend, sit thou on my right hand."

"A toast—rat-a-tat—John Robertson he, makes the real highland whisky in bonny Dundee. Hurrah!"

"Phew! Phœ-bus! that fire throws out a prodigious heat. Put the *whare* back, some of you. How drowsy I feel. Arabi!—pyjamas—bed. Arabi's gone. John Robert—son, —Dun-dee. Good-night, Boomy. Come—gentle sleep—nature's—soft—n-u-r—s—e." (Slow music).

What! Ho! Up, sluggards! In the rosy east old Sol, with outspread fan of fire, wafts purple waves of radiant light far into the west; where the silvery sheen of the dead moon still whites the dull sky. The steely sparkle of the stars extinguished. Up! sluggards, up! A lake of molten

gold flushes the earth with a bright glow. The icy chill of night chased by the warm breath of the morning day ——— and Martin, my boots. Stay, I'll have a plunge in the river first.

Then I fomented Boomerang's hind paw for an hour.

After breakfast I handed over the charge of the expedition to the editor of the WEEKLY NEWS. It was my intention to have guided it to the top of Ruapehu, and ascertained the exact altitude of this notable mountain, and to have given the whole party a picnic in the great public park belonging to the colony in the centre of the island. Ultra-utilitarians assert this public recreation ground, of which we have heard so much, is a myth—the mythography of Ruapehu is somewhat hazy, likewise voluminous,—but I can assure the public their park is all there, and dogs are not admitted. This noble breathing space was secured by the Hon. John Ballance, as a heritage for ever, for the people New Zealand. The cost to the country I cannot tell—neither can John,—but very large sums have been expended in laying it out. The generous manner in which the Maoris parted with this choice bit of property is quite unprecedented in the history of native land transactions.

The land ceded by the alleged owners extends from the snow-line right up to the sheeted peaks, and includes all the snow and the glacier. As Ruapehu is 8888 feet $8\frac{1}{8}$ inches above sea level, the people can behold their park from very long distances. They have no occasion to go within a hundred miles of it to convince themselves "it is there, my child," and that if it be a myth, it is one of very considerable dimensions. And, being upon the very highest ground in the North Island, the salubrity of its situation

cannot be impugned. A ring fence has been placed round the property at the snow-line. Visitors are strictly prohibited from drinking snow-water, without blending it with whisky, and all are systematically searched on leaving, in case they might happen to have stowed a glacier or a snowball in their side pockets. It would possess no attractions for Alpine Clubs if all the snow and glaciers were carted away, and the revenue might, also, suffer in consequence. Under the iron hand of a strong Liberal Government I have no doubt the people's park will be preserved in all its virgin purity, and handed over, intact, to the future generations for whom it was acquired.

Should the Federal Convention be at any time in want of a site on which to build a seat of Government where they can pursue their deliberations without fear of pressure from their own mobs, or of danger from an incursion of that heathen Chinee, I can confidently recommend Ruapehu as a capital place.

I also contemplated an investigation of the interior economy of Mount Tongariro, and a minute examination of the crater of Pihanga, but my notions being considered too extravagant at headquarters, and having a slight difference with the chief over a Maori woman, to whom he thought I was paying too much attention—cut her head off, that was all,—I gave them up, and leaving the expedition to the care of the editor, as I have stated, proceeded on my way with the "Co." alone.

Boomy, poor chap, was in very bad case, and moved forward stiffly, and with evident pain. Another half mile of thistles, and we emerge again into the sunshine; crawl along the hillside with the river below us; then descend on

to the flat, where the track becomes difficult to follow up. We keep the river on our right, and hug round the base of the hills, till we come in sight of houses and cultivations, and recognise, at once, "Tom Adamson's."

I came upon the owner of the name and croft rather unexpectedly, just outside his paddock fence. Not having received any intimation of my coming, he was not dressed in his Sunday go-to-meetings. His costume consisted solely of a striped shirt and a pair of easy-fitting moleskin pants. He carried his *potae*—it could scarcely be called a hat—in which were a few potatoes, in one hand, and a stout oak walking-stick in the other. Squarely built, spare of flesh, a stubbly crop of grey hair, with small patches of clearings in it, he presented a grizzly and grim appearance; but there was a mild expression in the eyes that betrayed the kindly heart that beat beneath the rough exterior. With him was his wife, a well-made, good-looking dame of the native race, tidily dressed, wearing a straw hat and lace-up kid boots; quite a superior looking party to the barefooted, ragged, and rugged Tom, a contrast that caused me to wonder if, by any possibility, the races could have changed positions while I was in the bush.

They had been pig-hunting, and had made a successful capture. Mrs. Adamson was attached by a lariat to the hind leg of a sleek *poaka*, which Tom was alternately coaxing with the potatoes, and caressing with his cudgel, zealously intent on training the pig in the way he should go. But piggy was perverse, and pugnaciously inclined. He had entrenched himself in a flax bush, and, grunting defiance, obstreperously proclaimed his determination to hold the fort against all-comers, and in spite of

all persuasion. I offered my services as a reinforcement to the attacking party, but Mrs Adamson said it would only further exasperate the ireful *porcus*, and being a stranger to porcine wiles, I might get wounded; that if Tom and I went away she would manage him by herself.

"Come," said Tom, and we went down to the house, the "Co." limping behind.

After noticing his lameness, Mr. Adamson said,

"Your horse is not a handsome one, but I can see he's a gentleman."

"A remark that does credit to your perspicacity," I replied. "It is not imperative that one must be good-looking to be a gentleman, otherwise you and I would not be in the running."

Then I reeled off Boomy's pedigree, by Musket out of Byronia, showing he was a three-quarter brother of Mitrailleuse, the fastest three-quarter miler in the world, that he was the son of the sire of Martini-Henry, Carbine, Nordenfeldt, and other equine wonders.

Tom was not so rude as to say so, but I could see he did not believe a word of it, and that's were the fun came in for me. I never feel offended when people disbelieve me if I'm telling the truth. It is when they refuse to accept lies that I feel injured.

The incredulity existing in this small world is amazing. It was only the other day, in Queen Street, Auckland, Colonel Shepherd seriously and confidentially asked me if Boomerang was *bona fide* a real live horse, or merely a—you know—newspaper article—a horse marine in fact. I solemnly

assured him, on my honour as a tramp and a gentleman, that Boomerang was a real *bona fide* quadruped of the genus *equus;* that his name, station, age, and race were all recorded in ye golden book of ye stud, and therefore I could not lie about it. Having more dead horses to lie about now, than I am likely to work off this side of the Styx, it is unnecessary to fib about a live one. The gallant colonel went away satisfied.

Mr. Thomas Adamson scratched his head, and said, "Young man, I will subscribe to that paper. Now, let's look at your horse's foot. I'll get a knife and a pair of pincers. You go inside and have a cup of tea."

While I was still drinking—I had an awful thirst on me that morning—my host entered, and showing me a bloodstained chip of wood, an inch broad, two inches long, and an eighth of an inch thick, said,

"I think he'll be easier now that's out."

"Gracious me! Yes; what agony he must have suffered. I'll keep this, and present it to the Auckland Museum."

"Well," said he, reaching something down from a shelf, and putting it on the table, "you can also place that in the Museum, if you like."

"Why, it's limestone. You did not get that out of Boomy's foot, too, did you?"

"No; it's from a reef of limestone I have discovered not far away."

"I should not have suspected it from the appearance of the country."

"Dr. Hector said that it was impossible for limestone to exist in the country. Now I'll show you that it does, if you like to visit the place."

"Well, I should like to, very much, but I've no time on hand. Better get Sir James himself. I must start on the road for Moawhango."

"Right you are, sonny! Here are some shearers from Ruahanui going there; they will take you straight through."

"Ruahanui, is that Studholme's station?"

"Yes, one of them; it carries 17,000 sheep on 11,000 acres. They shore 4000 lambs this season."

"A sheep and a-half to the acre—that is very good, but such land in the hands of small settlers can be made to carry double that number. A village settlement would thrive here." I'll make a note of it for the Premier."

"The first great want of this great country, Mr. Adamson, Ladies and Gentlemen" (this was addressed to Mrs. Adamson and her daughter, and the two shearers) "is men. Men, sir; more men from England to help us to pay our taxes; men, sir, who will cover these plains with golden fields of corn, and make two blades of grass grow where there is now only one. Men, sir, who will fill that bush with the sweet music of lowing herds and chiming bells; men, sir, who will bridge the Hautapu, and build in Ngaurukehu (Adamson's) a town of metropolitan proportions. Men, sir, to read the AUCKLAND WEEKLY NEWS. But how can we expect to increase our population, and so decrease the taxation, when we have no soil to stand it on? While the Studholmes, the Russells, the Ormonds, the Williamses,

the McLeans, maintain the lock-out, it is impossible. The mutton lords live on roast duck and green peas, and wear purple and fine linen, and we, the people, and our sisters, and our cousins, and our aunts, must pawn our shirts to pay the taxes. The wool king reposes on rosebuds and softest down, while his men are downed in 'quarters' that a Chinaman would turn his nose up at. A royal commission must be appointed to inquire into the sanitary condition of the 'men's quarters' on these up-country runs." "Hear, hear" (from the shearers), "it's shameful the way we are put up." "Sir, the hon. member for Hawke 's Bay represents sheep, not men, and is at the present moment doing his best to convert New Zealand into a big mutton walk—a colony of sheep and slaves. Captain Russell, as the delegate of the landshark and squatter—whose products are wool and mutton, whose market is in London—opposes New Zealand's entry into the Australasian Dominion. Why? Because he knows full well that the effect of her not joining the confederacy will be to close the Australian markets to the New Zealand agriculturist and manufacturer, and to open more sheep space in the colony, which the wealthy members of his class will not be slow to gobble up. A Radical Parliament, at the most momentous crisis in the history of Australasia, has relegated its trust, 'to shape the destiny of the colony,' to three irresponsible persons, and at the Federal Convention, as New Zealand delegates, sit—the Honourable Captain Russell, representing sheep; Sir George Grey, representing the unborn millions; Sir Harry Atkinson, representing his salary. But where is the representative of the farmer, on whom the colony really lives? Where the representative of our commercial interests? Where the representative of

ndustrial products? Where, in short, is the representative of the living people? Echo answers, where? To come to the next great want of this great country. Gentlemen, and Ladies—I must keep the ladies in view,—the late Lord Palmerston, who knew a good deal about the wants of a new country, for the simple reason he had never travelled in one, said the second great want of New Zealand was 'more roads.' The English statesman, as it happens, was right, and the colonial statesman at present at the head of the Government is alive to the fact, and the Government, of which I hope soon to become a member, is pledged to the hilt to gridiron this fine country with roads! roads!! roads!!!—and men. If it does not fulfil its pledges, I shall vote in favour of its immediate and utter annihilation. You also want a telephone. Next time I come I shall bring a few in my pocket for you to choose from. Gentlemen, I represent sheepskin, thunder, pitch, and plaster, and I don't want anyone to steal my thunder—it's copyright."

I was duly elected, and sailed off in company with the wool-choppers *en route* for Moawhango.

Chapter IV.

The Hautapu Crossed—Turangarere Downs—Arcadian Scenes—Boomy Recognised—In Search of a Pie-House—"Give Me to Eat"—A Word by the Way—The Schoolmaster Abroad—Arrival at Moawhango—Boomy on Oats—The Moawhango, a Tributary of the Rangitikei—The Pa—The Population—Mr. Batley—A Place of Worship—Pubs and Churches—Prohibition—Ellis Bros. and Valder—Moawhango as a Centre—Harvesting—Trotted Out—Boomy Abandoned—Kairama—Alf. Clayton.

The Hautapu is crossed shortly after leaving Adamson's, and we are again on the Awarua Block. From the river we rise by degrees on to a bit of poor table-land, then there is a descent to the Turangarere Downs, where we strike the main road from Moawhango northward to the Murimotu. From Ngaurukehu to Turangarere the road is a mere horse track; from thence it is a good dray road. Parties were at work finishing the formation at the time we went over it.

Turangarere is a Maori *pa*, and a sheep run, managed by an "old Shell" looking party named Mitchell. On a flat, between the stream and the main road, stands a woolshed, and also a small scouring plant. On the opposite side are some huts and tents for the use of the people handling the fleecy product of this Arcadian district.

The scene we approached was quite an animated one. Bales upon bales of wool were being packed and unpacked; drays loaded and packhorses unloaded; wool-packers, pressers, scourers, sorters, were all more or less busy. A few loungers were about—visitors, or passers-by like ourselves, probably. Some of them knew Boomy, though, and made tender enquiries as to how he came by his lameness.

Funny thing that that horse should be known in the most sequestered spots, and that people recognise him at first sight who never saw him in their lives before.

A touch of picturesqueness was imparted to the scene by some Maori women washing in a creek, a short distance off, but whether they were washing themselves, their clothes, or their children, my modesty prevented me from taking an observation close enough to ascertain.

I was bolder, however, in another direction. It is surprising what a stock of impudence gathers on an empty stomach. The "Shell" who runs the show had dined, and thought everybody else in the world had done so likewise. I was dreadfully hungry, and seeing no prospect of an invitation to eat, I strolled round in quest of a kitchen, or a Glasgow pie-house.

I bailed up a woman and asked her if there was such a thing about the premises. She pointed to a shanty across the creek and said something that sounded like *whare-kai*. I fished up some of the native lingo from Sister Austin's "Manual of Maori Conversation," presented to me by Mr. Wildman (our own William) the famous Auckland stationer, and waltzed in.

"*Tenakoe! Ho mai etahi kai maku?*" meaning, "give me some food, my pretty maid."

"Great Scott! What would you like, good sir?"—she said in beautiful English—"Roast goose or ——?"

"Oh! I'm not at all fastidious; I've not been dining with the Governor lately."

The goose was mutton, and not so tender as it might have been; people will cook their goose—mutton I mean—before it is well hung. I dined!

"Will you have some pudding, sir?" inquired the nut-brown maid.

"Cold? No, thanks, my dear, I'm not in love"—at least not with the pudding.

The Maori culinary art, in the matter of puddings, has not yet got beyond the duff stage. The scientific attainments requisite for the manufacture of plum pudding belongs to a higher state of civilization than they have at present reached.

"I'll take another cup of tea, please—L. D. Nathan's Standard blend.—Thanks."

I threw her a florin and a kiss—her bright, two-shilling, smile haunts me still. Had "the expedition" been at hand, I should have taken a photograph of that smile for the use of the editor of the HERALD, when a deputation of school-teachers wait upon him to inquire who wrote that famous article on education.

I don't know who wrote that article, "no more'n Adam," but I know the O'Donoghue. I'll swear he never wrote it. Had he been the writer he would have denied it point blank when taxed with the authorship by his fellow-teachers—knowing that, so far as the office was concerned, he would never be bowled out. But seeing them bent on barking up the wrong tree, he, out of pure native "divilment," finessed the question, and strengthened the scent on the false trail and left them. And these unsophisticated chool-masters will continue barking up that tree till somebody ties a tin kettle to their leaders' tails and starts them off on another "mad career."

The schoolmaster is very much abroad when he accuses the editor of composing articles under the influence of

intoxicating liquors. Nothing could be further from the truth, and dominie has rendered himself liable to an action for libel. As a disinterested peacemaker, I should advise him to apologise for the vulgar lie and his want of manners. Our editors drink! They simply can't do it. I have always to do the drinks for the crowd. In a great concern like the HERALD, where all persuasions must be catered for, it is absolutely necessary that there should be someone on the staff who can be "asked out," and who knows something about spirits. Gentlemen, I am the Wine and Spirit Editor-in-chief; send up your samples. Cannot guarantee to return empties. And, dominie, when you see me the worse for liquor, take me home.

The next stage of ten miles we travelled very slowly, the "Co.'s" lameness increasing at every step, and arrived, a little before dusk, at Moawhango, or The Pa, as it is locally designated, where Mr. Batley, the principal storekeeper, postmaster, and agent for the AUCKLAND WEEKLY NEWS, took possession of us, and we were immediately surrounded with all the refinement and home comforts of civilisation.

"We have been expecting you for a long while," said Mr. Batley, "ever since you were at Kuripapanga. I made certain that sooner or later you would pay Moawhango a visit. And that's the celebrated Boomerang, is it? What a pity he has lamed himself. It does not seem to have affected his appetite much."

Boomy, who had not smelt oats since he left Hunterville, was by this time buried up to his ears in a mangerful of Batley's shilling feeds. I felt good towards Moawhango when I saw "Horse feed one shilling" marked up in "plain figures," and no elevenpence halfpenny added in faint lead

pencil, as is the wont of those, dapper, draper fellows. Good feeds, too, they were—would make about two of the half-crown feeds of the tourist country. The "Co." is a first-class judge of oats; and is the very 'cutest "critter" alive as to what constitutes a fair feed. They can't have him with chaff. When he gets his feed, he turns it all over with his nose; if it is right, all's well; if not, he just shovels it out with his muzzle on to the ground, and then there is trouble with the ostler; but Boomy winks and laughs all the time, and asks for more; an equine Oliver Twist is he. Mr. Batley's oats received his best attention, and the inhabitants gathered round to see him eat—all the same as Carbine!

Moawhango, situated on a terrace of the stream of that name, a tributary of the Rangitikei, is a Maori settlement on which is grafted *pakeha* institutions, such as "stores," boarding-houses, billiard saloons, blacksmiths', saddlers', and shoemakers' shops. Our champion tailor, Mr. J. H. Dalton, the inventor of the "extra pair of trousers" has not yet established a branch there. Ready-made clothing is the fashion, and every man is at liberty to execute his own repairs with as much neatness and despatch as his inclination, taste, or time will allow. Society does not impose it as a *sine qua non* that all frayed, broken-kneed, or otherwise damaged nether habiliments should be renovated.

The population is largely native; the resident "whites" are the business and trades people; the floating population comprises packers, bullock-drivers, shearers, and other station hands from the adjoining runs of Messrs. Birch and Studholme.

Of the three stores, that of Mr. Batley is the oldest-established, and commands the largest business. This

enterprising trader has recently added to his already extensive premises a spacious receiving shed for stores and wool, the latter principally. The building also serves the various purposes of a shearing-shed, a concert and ball room, and occasionally—very occasionally—a place of worship. Clergymen are exceedingly rare in Moawhango, but not so rare as the congregation is scarce. Church-going is not a strong point with the Moawhangese. They receive a clerical visit about once a year, but that is found to be one too many.

This apathy in regard to things theological is, I am inclined to believe, owing in some measure to the want of a public-house. The church, I notice, always follow the "pub," and the more public-houses the better the churches thrive. It is mainly the small change circulated by the "pub" that fills the plate and the church. For example, a man finding himself on a Sunday morning with nothing less than a whole sovereign in his pocket would never dream of attending a place of worship with it. If, on the other hand, his better half discovers two threepenny pieces amongst his loose change, there is a church parade of the whole family.

A good hotel, I always think, adds to the respectability of a place. The profit derived from the sale of liquor is mostly returned to the public in the shape of increased accommodation and better food. It supplies a pattern of cleanliness and order which the housewife of the district may copy with advantage. Moawhango, unfortunately, does not possess one. It is a native licensing district, and the prohibition ticket rules.

Prohibition is as great a failure at Moawhango as it is at other places where it is in force. It certainly enforces a temporary teetotalism on the stranger and the traveller, to whom a pint of beer, a bottle of wine, or a glass of spirits, are medical comforts, but it does not prevent dwellers in the district from getting drunk, and making beasts of themselves. In flush times private syndicates are formed, and wholesale orders sent to town, which are duly executed; the whisky ring proceeds to business, and hell is let loose.

Local jealousy has, I believe, up to the present prevented the opening of an hotel. Perhaps they might compromise the matter by granting licenses to three hotels, which would be an improvement on the present state of things.

The well-known Ellis Brothers, of Kihikihi, have established themselves here under the sign of "Ellis Brothers and Valder"—(Mr. Valder is the managing partner of the Hunterville branch). In connection with the store are a billiard-room and a boarding-house. The firm's branches are spread pretty well over the Maori territory. Talking about the want of finger-posts, Mr. Ellis informed me that he was erecting posts on the Moawhango-Hunterville line at his own expense. This, I take it, is not a work that should be left to private enterprise.

On the opposite side of the river is the establishment of Mr. Morris Levy. Besides his store, Mr. Levy runs a commodious and well-appointed billiard-room.

Here I first learnt that McGuire was duly elected for Egmont, and that Robert de Bruce had retired to his *stub*-covered hills on the Turakina. The last time I had occasion

to refer to these hills, the P.D. made me say that they were slab-covered. I'll cover him with a slab one of these days ! There being several McGuireites present, we opened a case of orange champagne—I should have preferred Scotch toddy on this occasion,—drank Mr. Bruce's very good health, and chalked up a case of real Mumm to Felix the First.

Moawhango, as the depôt and distributing centre of a large, although at present sparsely-populated district, will always be a place of importance. Its port and outlet is Napier, weekly communication being kept up by a coach, which accomplishes the distance (82 miles) in two days—each way. The completion of the road to Hunterville will place it within an easy day's ride of the railway system of the Colony, and afford it an alternative port in Wanganui. The country around it is open, hilly, good grazing land, with rich patches on the slopes of the hills and on the river terraces. Adjoining the township there are crops of potatoes and oats that would do credit to the Waimate Plains.

I saw Moawhango at its best and, I may say, busiest time, just at the close of the shearing. It was strange to me at first, and seemed as though I was having two clips in one season. In November I had seen the wool harvest gathered in Hawke's Bay, and now within a hundred miles of Napier I was witnessing another in the latter end of February. The harvests in Moawhango are usually late, but this year exceptionally so. The grain crop, too, was golden ripe, and the Maoris were reaping it by torchlight. Grass was abundant, as it is everywhere this year. I fancy that in the winter time the district presents a bleak and bare appearance, and that feed is not over plentiful. But

sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. There was a "busy hum of men" in Moawhango at this time, and business was brisk.

Mr. Batley very kindly supplied me with a horse, and we trotted out as far as Mr. Birch's station. Mrs. Golding, his sister, accompanied us. I enjoyed the ride very much, extended my knowledge of the country, and forgot all about Boomy's troubles for the rest of the afternoon.

We had the "Co." up to his neck in linseed meal poultices, but all our skill and care could not cure him in a day, so I resolved to leave him.

In view of this contingency, I had been quietly taking stock of the Maori cattle likely to suit me, and fixed on a light dun-coloured pony, with white legs and breast, and of the feminine gender. From private inquiry, I learnt she was just broken in, was without vice or blemish, and that "Dummy (her owner) never owned a bad 'un;" a statement I am prepared to endorse so far as the pony is concerned. I interviewed the dumb proprietor, and, pointing to the pony, held up fingers representing the number of pounds I thought the animal was worth. He held up one more. I counted out the notes, and took possession of my purchase. It is quite a pleasure to deal with dummies; there is no superfluous gag or lying in doing business with them. I had the pony shod. The price of shoeing here is 9s. a set. We christened her with a bottle of hop beer—Weep, Waiapu! Weep!—Kairama. Then we were ready for the road.

My *compagnon de voyage* was to be Mr. Alfred Clayton—a brother of "Charlie," the well-known and popular surveyor,—and one of the kindest and best of good fellows it has

ever been my lot to meet with; one of those great-hearted men who are never so happy as when they are doing somebody a good turn. The brothers have a run on the Rangitikei, on the southern boundary of the Awarua Block. Mr. Alf. was journeying from this station to his brother's camp near Tokaano—where he was engaged surveying a block of land—when I met him at Moawhango. All arrangements being completed we bade adieux to our kind entertainers at Moawhango—commending Boomerang to their especial care. The morning was beautifully, treacherously, fine and we suspected we should get a wetting before we reached Karioi, which was to be the end of our stage for the day. We were not disappointed in our anticipations, only the wetting came upon us, or we came upon it, much more suddenly, and a good deal sooner, than we expected—Hem!

CHAPTER V.

How I crossed the Moawhango—Alf. Clayton to the Rescue—Saved!—Hung Out to Dry—The Short Cut—Price of Butter at Murimutu—Over the Whangaehu—A Glimpse of Ruapehu Mountain—In the Glooming—A Sample of the Genus Guide—Tourist Pleasure—On Rangipo—The Waikato River at its Source—Onetapu Desert—The Kaimanawa Ranges—There may be Gold There—Professor Pond's Puns—The March Resumed—Indian File—Alf. Clayton Leaves Us—We Arrive at Tokaano.

THE Moawhango is not much of a river to look at, but, oh, 'tis a beggar to go. It is not one of your "still waters run deep" class of streams, neither is it a shallow "babbling brook." It is a current, with a mind-your-own-business-and-I'll-mind-mine air. It runs hurriedly through "the

pa;" hidden deep down in the channel it has burrowed for itself, disdainful of notice. Some streams flow gently and sweetly on, lipping and kissing their banks as they go, wooing attention. But the Moawhango "ain't built that way." It bores along in a gruff get-out-of-the-road style, and occasionally gets its back up so high nobody dare cross it.

There are two places where the banks have been cut down and the river can be forded. Boomy brought me safely over the lower one on the night of my arrival. The upper ford— about a quarter of a mile up—I crossed on the morning of my departure. But how did I cross it? I crossed it partly—a very short partly—on the back of Kairama, partly with Kairama on my back, partly by being rolled down stream like a log, partly by groping among the pebbles on the bottom, and best partly by being hauled across between Mr. Alf. Clayton and a native.

I descended into that river with a light heart, and as gay as a bird; I came out dank, dripping, dismal as a deck swab. How it all happened I can scarcely explain. I stopped to let Kairama have a drink; Mr. Clayton, and a native, who was with us, crossed in front of me; but not noticing particularly the course they took, I missed the ford. "Keep up," they cried; but it was too late. Swish! the Moawhango had us, and we went under. When I recovered myself we were some distance down stream. The bridle-rein was still in my hand, and Kairama at the end of it. I struggled hard to keep my footing; she, the jade, would not make an effort, but drifted with the stream; I let her go; and just as I was going myself, "Alf." rode in to the rescue, caught hold of my hand, and hung on to me

till the native, who had quickly stripped, came to his assistance, and I was landed safe on *terra firma* once more, minus sundry loose articles I had about me, including a lunch Mrs. Batley kindly stuffed into my pocket at starting, plus a few bruises about the body and legs, and a cut over the sinister optic that presently developed into a lovely black eye. But what cut me most was, to think that I, who had crossed, almost without a wet foot, such rivers as the broad and deep Rangitikei and the sweeping Manawatu, on the West Coast; the insidious Waiapu and the dangerous Motu on the East, should be flopped into an insignificant creek like the Moawhango, and dragged out like a washing of soaking clouts.

Kairama had crawled out on to a small flat point under a steep cliff, on the same side of the stream we started from. Mr. Clayton went after her with a long tether-rope, one end of which was held by the Maori, and fastening it round her neck drove her in, and the Maori hauled and towed her up to the landing-place. Clayton sent his own horse over the same way, and then climbing the cliff, came back to the ford, where the native met him and brought him over.

I kept quite cool during these exciting operations, which took some little time, and allowed the surface water to drain off me. Alf. suggested we might go back to Moawhango and get some dry clothes, but I said I did not want any Moawhango (this pun is very watery! so was I, remember) I had had enough of it, and if he did not mind, I should prefer to go on. I thanked the native, who was not going any further, and we mounted and rode briskly up and over the hill for about five miles to Waiu, one of Mr. Studholme's stations. We found nobody at home and

the doors all locked. I took off my clothes, wrung them out, and spread them on the shrubs, in the front garden, to dry. Taking advantage of the shelter afforded by the verandah from the cold wind, now blowing, I sat down in the sun with nothing on, but my black eye. I wetted it from time to time with a lotion of J.R.D. which the thoughtful Batley had filled my flask with. I occasionally wetted t'other eye, also. Clayton wetted his eye, too. In half an hour our "things" were "rough dry," and without waiting for the mangling we put them on and made a fresh start.

The track—it was a short cut we were on—led for miles over rough, bleak upland, covered with the long wiry snowgrass, then down a valley, and into the plains. Fifteen miles from Moawhango we strike the main road to Tokaano and Karioi. A finger-post, indicating the direction of the several roads and showing the mileage, erected here, would be a great convenience. Make a note on't, Mr. District Surveyor.

At this junction is another station of the Studholmes'. We lunched here, and made a good square meal. I was informed that butter cost 1s. 6d per lb.! Think of it, ye butter-men of the mountain, who have to find the grass and the cows, and make the butter for fivepence a lb. Think of it, that in sight of Mount Egmont, and only a day's ride from Hunterville, butter is eighteenpence a lb., and rancid at that—dear enough and rancid enough to have been to London and back again. Mutton, too, is dearer—judging from the price (2s. 6d.) they charged for a meal of it—here on its "native heath," than in the butchers' shops of Auckland, Wellington, and Wanganui. Of poultry they have none; eggs are unknown. I carried one of my three hard boiled eggs as far as Karioi, and left

it on the dressing-table as a curiosity; but I doubt very much if they'd know what it was. Electors of Egmont and Waitotara, you must butter John Ballance for "more roads," and if you don't get them, cowhide McGuire and hoof! Hutchison. As for the Auckland representatives they should be hanged off till we get a phalanx that will do its duty; "More roads" we want, "more roads" we must have. "We are the people!" Hurray!

But we must push on—the threatened change in the weather had come, and it was now cold and showery. We plod along the plain with no more hills, and only "one more river"—and that's the Whangaehu—between us and Karioi. From the Whangaehu crossing to Karioi is, I think, about four miles, but I won't vouch for the correctness of my calculations of distances, my pedometer and Waterbury both having stopped in the Moawhango.

At the Whangaehu we are inside the volcanic zone, the land of pumice. I looked for Ruapehu. The plutonic colossus was shrouded in a drapery of clouds and mist from peak to butt, and during the whole time we were wheeling round its broad base I obtained but one partial glimpse of it, and it struck me as being an extremely rugged and useless piece of furniture; massive, it is true, but misshapen. Distance I think "lends enchantment to the view" of Ruapehu.

We arrived in the gloaming at Karioi, or, to be more truthfully descriptive, I might say in the glooming. Karioi, I thought the gloomiest habitation that ever I had put my foot in. Christie Murray, who once came this way, had a very gloomy time of it here, too, I'm told. A pall of gloom seems to overhang the place. With

one exception I did not see a smile on the face of man, or woman, or child. All seemed affected by the gloomy surroundings. There is a perfect gem of a waiter in the accommodation house here, who, in another atmosphere, would be as bright and as brisk as a bee, but in Karioi a bee in the leg of his trousers would not disturb the sedateness of his deportment. The house is a good one, of its class, beds clean, and meals substantial; tea, bed and breakfast, three half-crowns, which is not unreasonable—when the waiter is thrown in. I am surprised they don't charge more—there is nothing to prevent them. Karioi is another of the stations belonging to Mr. Studholme—he does stud 'em pretty well over this country. The manager is a Mr. McDonald; I knew him well—Horatio. He was a broker on the Thames. I did not recognise him at first sight—from a shy habit he has of not looking one straight in the face. He is, I am glad to say, thriving here; the accommodation house, store, and billiard-room are, I believe, his perquisites. The gloominess of the place cannot affect his countenance—not much!

We were up betimes next morning—early rising is the rule of the road. Kairama had accomplished the 25-mile stage from Moawhango to Karioi very satisfactorily. To ease her for to-day's journey of forty odd miles, Alf. Clayton, with his characteristic good nature, relieved her of my swag, and we set out for Tokaano. With us was the popular guide, McDonald, of Ohinemutu, an active, prepossessing young fellow, always on good terms with himself and everybody else, an excellent companion—one who does not bore you to death with his chatter. I hate a chattering guide. McDonald had been escorting the Deputy-Governor of British Burmah to Pipiriki, on the Wanganui, and was

now returning with his two horses to Ohinemutu. His Excellency of Burmah was travelling for pleasure — the occupation pursued by most of the people I have met in this district. Where they find the pleasure I am at a loss to discover; I never found much pleasure in hard work myself. The dangers, discomforts, and toil they undergo, and call it pleasure, is most extraordinary. I can only understand it on the supposition that to those born to a life of ease, whose existence is one round of pleasure, a spell of hard work is as healthy a change as a day of rest is to a bricklayer's labourer.

Let us see what these gentlemen call pleasure. We may take it for granted the globe-trotter can ride—the aristocracy and gentry of England all can, they have been taught how—the "newly rich" may be spotted at once by their awkwardness in the saddle—but that he has not been in the saddle for some time. He is put on a sturdy, hard-paced horse, one he cannot kill, his riding gear is as rough as the horse, and the road is the roughest of all. His first day's stage is fifty miles. Before he is half way, he is bruised and blistered; and at the end of it, he feels "all shook to pieces," and seeks his "virtuous bug walk" early, to give his bones a chance to set.

At daybreak, next morning, when he is in deepest slumber, and "taking no thought of the morrow," the guide has him dragged out, breakfasted, and horsed, before he realises the fact that there is forty more miles of misery in front of him. On that day the Taupo volcanic region possesses no interest for him. His interest is centred in a region limited by the seat of his saddle; his observations on the geology of the country are confined to the peculiarities of the formation of the road in front of him. Night finds him with his bruises a shade bluer, and his blisters bursted, and he feels stiff and sore all over.

Morning comes, but he is not refreshed. He begs for a little more rest, but the guide fiend is inexorable. There are his dates; his journeys, arrivals, and departures all ticked off for him on a card; the canoe waits on the Wanganui, but the steamer will not wait for him at Wellington. It rains; but the time-table was not founded on meteorological observations. Another forty miles must be accomplished to-day. The slave of time is huddled on his horse, and marched on, on, on, all day long, with his nose on the pommel of his saddle and the rain-water oozing through his boots. Ruapehu, Tongariro, Pihanga, Taranaki might all be in Jamaica or Jericho for anything he knows or cares; he would swap the lot for a feather pillow. He arrives at the end of the stage more dead than alive.

On the fourth and last day he brightens up a bit, and passes the time in cursing all the Cooks—from the great Captain down to Cook and Son—the climate, the guide, and the Government that owns the road. Then he is floated down the Wanganui; thence railed on to Wellington, up to time, and returned to his native land; and when the talk is of New Zealand, its wondrous sights and scenes, its lovely lakes, its magnificent mountains, its rushing rivers, and its big gooseberries, he will be in the front rank lying, like an immigration agent, on our behalf. That's his pleasure.

Guide McDonald—no relative of friend "Gloomy"—led us by a short cut on to the main road thirteen miles from Karioi. We followed up on the right-hand bank of Whangaehu (we had re-crossed it) for a considerable distance, swept round the Rangipo tableland, over the watershed, and crossed a puny stream that could hardly run, which they said was the Waikato. You may not think it, my

Lud, but it is the self-same stream that shoots its pent water through the narrow race at the Huka with the velocity of a thunderbolt, hurling it, a broad white stream of flashing foam, with deafening clash into the deep spuming pool below; the same stream that flows, still and deep, with majestic sweep past Mercer. "That's the Waikato." We cross the Onetapu desert, then rise on to a terrace, and camp at a deserted Maori *pa*, on the edge of a bush, for lunch.

Ruapehu, Tongariro, and company were obscured by thick sheets of mists, and we saw nothing of them. Away on the right, the Kaimanawa mountains—their bushy tops capped with mist and storm clouds—loomed dark and solid; a huge massive rampart. Alf. Clayton seeing me scanning and sniffing at these ranges, said,

"You seem interested in the Kaimanawa. Do you think gold is there?"

"I have only the old digger's instinct to guide me," I replied, "but you may depend upon it that serried battalia of hills has not stemmed the lava rush for nothing. I think gold is there, in more or less quantity, but it will take a mint of money to prove it. However, accident may some day disclose what money might fail to discover. Have you ever been on them?"

"Oh yes, frequently. Here are a few pieces of quartz I obtained there. You can have them."

"Thanks, not unkindly-looking stone. I will take it to Mr. Pond, the analyst, and if he is not too busy making butter-boxes, he will test it for us. Good fellow, Pond, but an awful bad punster. I won't risk one of his atrocities on you without a smelling bottle. You might faint."

Our halting place was reckoned half way between Karioi and Tokaano, but the worst half was before us. Kairama had done very well so far, and was good enough for the entire distance, but McDonald having very generously placed his spare horse at my disposal for the remainder of the journey, I availed myself of the favour, and transferred myself to "Tommy," and Kairama *pikaued* the swag. Clayton gave the call, "boot and saddle," and away we went, McDonald in the van, then Kairama; I followed next on Tommy, Alf. bringing up the rear. Indian file is the order of march in this part of the country. With the exception of half-a-dozen deep, rough gullies, the road is a fairly good horse track. The gullies passed, the country slopes away down to the level of the lake.

Seven or eight miles from Tokaano, close on the boundary line of the Auckland and Wellington provinces, Clayton turns up to his brother's camp by Rotoaira. We parted company with some regret, but hoped to have the pleasure of meeting him again soon. He promised to see Boomy at Moawhango on his way home.

The road improved. McDonald put on steam and kept up a swinging trot all the way to Tokaano.

Chapter VI.

Hotel Tokaano—The Baths—Precarious Situation of Tokaano—A Future Prospect—Our Heritage of Health—The Bad Old Route—The Legend of Taranaki, Tongariro, and Pihanga—Vespers—An Out-Lying Picket of Holy Rome—Round Taupo Lake—Taupo—More Wire Wanted—The Telegraphic, "Old Toucher," on Taupo—Mr. Dick Swiveller—Jolly Old Pals—Boiled Down.

"A. Tramp found much comfort in Tokaano," is what I wrote in the visitors' book at the hotel. I am glad to say there is an hotel at Tokaano—a good one too. Although not of the newest design, or of leviathan proportions, it is clean, comfortable, cosy, and the landlord is a gentleman. Hungry, not thoroughly dry—my clothes I mean—and completely tired, Tokaano's pub was a perfect haven of rest. We dined—we banqueted. We slept on eider-down—coiled under a forty-guinea kiwi-feather quilt; and—manna in the wilderness—fresh eggs for breakfast. We bathed—elysium! the deliciousness of that bath—grateful! comforting! Epps' cocoa! it was beyond expression. Soft! soothing! it would calm the perturbed spirit of a Wanganui lunatic. I have been in many hot baths since, but in none have I felt the same tranquil pleasure I experienced in Tokaano's; the thrill of it clings to me still. Why I ever left it I cannot well comprehend. It must have been owing to the guide.

Once a man, no matter how strong-minded he may be, is in the hands of a guide, he is no longer a free agent. He cannot make his own pace. The victim tourist must start when the guide starts, walk when he walks, trot when

he trots, stop when he stops. The relations between myself and my guide differed, in one respect, from the usual custom. Instead of me paying him, he paid me for the privilege of conducting me through. In some places the loan of a horse is considered such a small favour as scarcely to deserve notice, but in a country where it is the sole business of every man, woman, and child, white and brown, to take in the stranger and pluck the tourist, it is an obligation of some magnitude. When I accepted guide McDonald's offer to ride his horse to Ohinemutu, it was understood to be under his guidance, and was as binding as a written contract, and had to be carried out. Next time I receive an invitation to stay at Tokaano, I'll pack up Boomy and stop a week. There is plenty to be seen and learnt around Tokaano, and a week can be filled up comfortably and profitably.

Before proceeding further, it may be as well to mention for the information of those of my readers who may never have heard of Tokaano, that it is a Maori village lying on the southern shore of the Taupo Moana, or inland sea, at the foot of a chain of cone-shaped hills, or rather mountains—Pihanga, the highest cone, is from three to four thousand feet above sea level. Along the base of these volcanic hills, for miles apparently, are *piuas* or pools of hot springs, geysers, fumaroles, solfataras, and all the other thermal curiosities, dead and living. I don't suppose there is another place in the the world which so realistically illustrates the common expression, "between the devil and the deep sea," as Tokaano. In front lies the great deep blue lake, dreaded of the Maoris; close behind is a steaming, boiling, bubbling, quaking hades, which may at any moment—— But no, let us not anticipate!

In Tokaano, the populations of the West Coast, from Waitara to Wellington, have a sanatorium, second to none in the world, at their very doors. When the road now in course of formation is completed Tokaano will, by train and coach, be within two days of Wanganui. When the railway reaches the Murimutu Plain, passengers can wipe their faces with a wet towel at Wellington in the morning, and be bathing luxuriously the next day, at noon, in Tokaano. Rotorua will always have the globe-trotter in addition to the population of the north and east, but Tokaano will command the bulk of what Mr. Vaile would call the "internal trade" of the colony—that is to say, it will have the heavy populations I have just mentioned, and also those of the Middle Island. Should gold or silver be found in the Kaimanawa—and it is not at all a remote contingency—such a city will arise on the southern shore of the Taupo Lake as the world has never yet seen.

Provide cheap facilities, enabling the public to reach the attractions of nature, and the prevailing pernicious pastimes would be abandoned, and we should become a healthier and a wealthier people. What greater attractions can be found for the mass of humanity than the life-restoring waters and earth's wonders of our thermal districts? Their alluring power is discovered in the thousands of visitors drawn from the four quarters of the globe. But it is only the millionaire who can afford the luxury of a visit to this wonderland of ours; the toil and cost of getting there, and the expense of living when you are there, is an effectual bar to the "million." The sense of enjoyment is as keen in the million as it is in the millionaire. The million will yield a larger return to the State than the millionaire. Open, then, this country to the million by road

and railway line, and let New Zealanders all, great and small, enjoy their heritage of health. That the Tokaano-Hunterville Road will, when opened, be the popular tourist route between Wanganui, West Coast, and Auckland there cannot be a shadow of a doubt.

From an advertising point of view this will be advantageous to the Colony in general and the West Coast in especial. As things are at present, the tourist is run from Oxford to Rotorua, to Taupo, to Napier, through millions of acres, without seeing a blade of grass or a hoof of stock. At home he "gases" much about our geysers and glaciers, but upon the subject of our graziers he is dumb. Don't blame him; he has not had an opportunity of seeing them. When he comes to travel through a country with the tall cocksfoot tickling his nose, John will be able to go home and tell his friends that we don't live on geysers altogether. The Alpine clubs, too, by this route will be able to hop easily over to Taranaki and climb the mountain cone of Egmont.

The Maoris have a legend about Egmont. They say, that Mount Taranaki (Egmont) originally belonged to the Taupo volcanic zone, and stood near to Ruapehu and Tongariro, but that Pihanga, the shapely cone-wife of Tongariro, loved the tall and handsome Taranaki. He reciprocated her affection and determined to elope with her. The plot was discovered, by some of the smaller members of the Tongariro family, and duly reported to the head of the *hapu*. Tongariro declared war against Taranaki, and forthwith began pelting that stately gentleman with lava boulders. Taranaki replied with an avalanche of snow and nearly smothered the slave cone to death. Recovering himself, Tongariro belched a storm of red hot cinders

at Taranaki, who, having only snow to reply with, was compelled to retire before the fiery shower. He retreated down towards the sea and took up the position where he now stands, sad looking, and lonely, but magnificent and beautiful, worshipped by the multitudes who live and love in the shelter of his wide-spreading skirts. The track he made in his flight is now the course of the Wanganui River. Taranaki brought away with him all the life-sustaining soil of Taupo, and left his quondam friend Tongariro with a desert—and his wife Pihanga, who is kept imprisoned between her fiery *Tane* and the Lake. When the Maoris see the steam-cloud of Tongariro settle on the crater lips of Pihanga, they exclaim, "Ah, he is loving her this morning." But one can see, by the way she turns aside from him, that Pihanga has no love for Tongariro. Taranaki took that with him too. Whoever beholds Taranaki loves him, so we may forgive Pihanga her weakness. Tongariro is occasionally admired by an extensively-got-up globe-trotter who, when told to look, put his eye-glass to his eye, and says, "Demme-yas-wealley wonderful!"

For a couple of hours previous to retiring for the night we enjoyed the pleasure of the society of the Roman Catholic priest stationed at Waihi, a *pa* about three miles from here; the stranger will recognise it by a waterfall that hangs out there. It was Sunday, and the rev. father had been holding service at Tokaano. We arrived too late to attend vespers, for which I was very sorry—on McDonald's account.

I like to meet these good fathers of the Church of Rome, they are such sociable chaps; nothing of the Chadband snuffle, Puritan stiffness, whangdoodle unctuousness, or pharasaical

holiness about them. Educated, intelligent, and learned in the ways of men and women outside their own little circle, they adapt themselves to the company into which they may be accidentally or temporarily thrown. They are not afraid of their Church toppling over if they happen to sing anything stronger than a hymn to a piano accompaniment, or being tried for heresy if they happen to take a little wine, for their "stomach's sake," with A. Tramp. Father, I drink to you; verily "thou almost persuadest me," etc. The father told us some of his trials and troubles with his flock, from which I gathered that the heathen of Tokaano, instead of paying for their conversion, expect to be paid for it.

We chatted on various subjects till we went to bed, taking with us a good man's benison.

Morning came; McDonald was at the door with the horses, all impatience to be off to Wairakei— McDonald was; the mokes and myself were not in the least hurry. I felt more inclined to stay than to go; I was hankering after another bath in the silicious waters of Tokaano. "The man who hesitates is lost." I hesitated, and lost my bath. At last we are off, McDonald's mare settling down into her long swinging trot, with Kairama at her heels—she can't steal away from the pony; Kairama is a hummer—and Tommy, steadied into a canter, close up. So we scampered round the eastern shore of the Lake, coming into Taupo in the order named—as "Phaeton" would say, when describing a race. The ride is enjoyable, and the road is a fairly good one; buggies can be driven all the way. But the highway provided by Nature is the Lake, and the conveyance of the future is the steamboat. We crossed the Waikato with a wet foot each — the one that

caught the current of the stream — and made only two stoppages on the way. One was at a Maori *pa*, where we met Mr. Axeworth engaged in taking the census of the Maori people. I had an invitation to go with him into the Urewera country, but declined it, not wishing to be guilty of an act of impoliteness by anticipating the visit of His Excellency the Governor. Besides, I had some misgivings as to the likelihood of the Tuhoe surviving the consecutive visitations of two such "leading *rangatiras*" as I and my Lord Onslow.

From Taupo I reported myself to headquarters by wire, the first opportunity I had had of doing so since leaving Marton. Hunterville, as I have already mentioned, has not yet got its telephone, although months have elapsed since Mr. George Hutchison put up the money for it. Moawhango is shut out from the rest of the world for want of the talking wire, and Tokaano, also, is in the same fix. The natives of the latter place have offered to find the necessary labour to extend the line to Taupo, and Mr. Blake, the landlord of the hotel, who is an experienced telegraphist, is willing to run the bureau for nothing. The establishment of telephones in these several places is a "crying want," and I would respectfully suggest, to the present stiff-broom Ministry, that a few more barnacles should be scraped off the civil service list, and the saving devoted to these useful public works.

The telegraph officer-in-charge at Taupo is Mr. Park, a man of strong personality—readers of the AUCKLAND WEEKLY NEWS will remember we met him last at the cable station at Wakapuaka, on the Nelson coast; he thinks there is no place like Taupo, and when he learned it was not my intention to stay, expressed much disappointment, and looked upon it as a personal affront.

"You will go away with a wrong impression of Taupo," he said. "You have seen nothing of it."

"I am open to receive any number of impressions," I replied, but my present impression—and my first impressions of persons and places are never far out—is, that Taupo is just as bare, as bleak, and as barren a waste as the most hypochondriacal person could desire. Have you many suicides here? Where are your cultivations? your grass paddocks? your orchards? Surely the soil will grow trees, if nothing else? What do you live on?"

"Live on!" exclaimed Park. "We live on tourists, and it is a very good living too. We have had a very good crop this season. It is the healthiest place under the sun. Nobody dies here."

"Should think they'd be very hard up for a dying place if they did."

"Look at the Lake," said the popular lightning jerker. "It is just 25 miles long and 20 miles broad."

"I see the pond; it was thudding the strand, as we came along, with as much cheek as the Pacific Ocean. Best thing you can do is to scrape all the pumice off the top of the volcanic mud and put it in the Lake; then the country would be worth something."

"There's where the Waikato leaves it. We have some hot springs too, and there are three pubs—"

"That settles it, Park, I'm going on; can't do the three you know; I've not come in to my fortune yet."

"Well, come and have a drink with me," said Park, "before you go."

I would not have gone with Park, but for the entreaties of dear old "Dick Swiveller"—Stubbings is his proper name, well known all over the Waikato—one of the kindest and jolliest of mortals out of heaven. His brother, who manages the store at Karioi, was the bright "one exception" among the smileless people in that gloom-stricken place. Mr. Stubbings is a surveyor by profession; what he is doing in Taupo I do not know, unless he is living on tourists like the rest. I spent a very pleasant half hour with Dick over a modest glass of J. C. Seccombe's bottled stout (a case, more likely.—Ed). I merely mention this fact so that "J.C." can swear to it, in case anyone challenges me for a proof of my ever having been to Taupo.

"Well, good-bye, old pals, 'jolly old pals.' Sorry my engagements will not permit of my spending a night with you; better luck next time. Start the waggon."

Wairakei, Rotorua, Okoroire, to do yet, and the chief's limitations as to space nearly exhausted—and, I fear, also his patience. I must condense. "Hie!"

"Huka Falls," said my guide, turning half round in his saddle, but not breaking his trot, as we passed that celebrated water shoot.

"Got 'em," said I, "in a photo. by Hanna."

"Bridge unsafe?"

"Don't want it. Heave ahead! Full speed."

Wairakei, five miles from Taupo—private property, 4,000 acres, belongs to Mrs. Graham, widow of the late Robert Graham—possesses a whole factory of geysers, baths, creeks, pools, fumaroles, solfataras, of all shapes and sizes,

in endless variety. After tea, had bath in lukewarm creek for half-an-hour; then—— There's old Park at the telephone! Wants me come back and spend day at Taupo; see him in—bed first. Think about it in morning.

Chapter VII.

Wonders of Wairakei—McKinnon and his "Prads"—Ateamuri—Arabi Pasha by "Jingo"—Tasker the Tourist—The Slaves of Fashion—A Rock of Refuge—Had for a "Bob"—Finger Posts erected in Rotorua District—Patetere—Hora Fugit—The Hemo Gorge—Whakarewarewa—Rotorua—Kairama given away—A double-breasted Hotelkeeper—Ohinemutu—Maori Extortion—The Sanatorium—Okoroire—The New Itinerary.

Next morning I was afoot without being called, and soon put myself outside breakfast, registered my autograph in the visitors' book, and paid the bill—tea, bed, breakfast, 7s. 6d.; two horse feeds, 5s.: total, 12s. 6d. Bath free. Then resumed our journey to Ohinemutu, taking a short cut to the main road, under the guidance of Mr. Graham, and viewed the wonders of Wairakei by the way. In a gully, covered with the common vegetation of ti-tree and fern, with a creek of varying temperature running at the bottom, are the grand and curious geysers of Wairakei. Some of the most interesting are the—

"Champagne Cauldron"—boiling and bubbling like a washerwoman's copper; anyone with a weakness for "champagne hot" can have it here.

"The Eagle's Nest"—accident or design, or both, have placed sticks and twigs around the vent-hole of this geyser,

and these, becoming silicated over, a very fair and pretty representation of the great bird's eyrie has been formed.

"The Great Wairakei"—erupts every seven minutes.

"The Porridge Pot"—is a round mud pool, that "geysers" like a pot of stiff boiling porridge.

"The Packhorse Pot"—another mud geyser, into which a packhorse deposited his burden, and his bones, and has not been heard from since. That packhorse must have been a mule.

"The Prince of Wales' Feathers"—is a hot water geyser, with a partition in its flue, which throws the water into a shape resembling the well-known plume.

Then there are "The Blue Lake," "Devil's Punch Bowl," "Crystal Pool," "Devil's Trumpet"—this must be a misnomer. I always understood that it was the good archangel that blew the trumpet; his wicked brother "arch," I know, is always represented with a three-pronged instrument.

The prettiest wonder of them all is, I think, the Twin Geysers, which play alternately every five minutes. Truly a wonderful little gully this. But art has done little to supplement the wonders of nature. Given an adequate capital, Wairakei could be made one of the most attractive haunts for health-seekers in New Zealand.

Having run through the geysers, Mr. Graham and I returned to the track where we had left McDonald and the horses, and found that happy gentleman doing his beauty snooze in the morning sun. Mr. Graham saw us safe on to the main road, and left us to pursue our journey by ourselves. But we were not long without company.

We were overtaken on the road by Mr. McKinnon, the widely-known and popular Waikato sportsman. Mac, I may mention, is first cousin to Sir William of that ilk—H. M. Stanley's friend. He was riding a sturdy little pony, one of the "Dumple" breed—up to any weight, and travel for a week with it—and leading a rakish-looking bit of blood that he had picked up in Hawke's Bay, and seemed anxious to get home with it without too many people seeing him. At Ateamuri he told the landlord if anyone inquired for him to say that "only me and the pony had passed by." Had I not known that the McKinnon was utterly incapable of a questionable action, I should certainly have surmised that he had stolen that horse, who, by the way, is the "dead spit" of the steeplechaser Orangeman. "Mac" has evidently got a "dark 'un" in hand, or thinks he has, and of which, I daresay, we shall hear something some day. He was trotting past, and did not answer to my hail, but I presented my pistol and that fetched him. He was amazed to discover me at the end of the weapon.

"Well, I'm hanged," he exclaimed, "if it's no' Captain Tramp, and without Boomerang!"

He was much concerned to learn of Boomy's accident. With Kairama he fell in love at once.

"Aye, mon," he said, "I can see she is a bit o' a speeler; ye should enter her in the pony hack race."

Ateamuri, the half-way staging house between Taupo and Rotorua—we lunched and fed the horses here. While doing a smoke on the verandah of the little "pub," a coach and four drove up, containing a millionaire, his wife, her maid, his valet, several cases of wine—champagne mostly—and—yes, it is—Arabi Pasha, by thunder! Wonder where Tasker picked him up? He can have him; I won't say a

word. Mr. Tasker, the millionaire, is an amiable young gentlemen of some 25 summers—he always addressed the landlord as "guv'nor." His wife is a handsome pleasant-looking young lady, barely out of her teens. They were on a tour of the world, and were undergoing all the inconveniences and discomforts which a tour of our Wonderland entails, simply because it was a duty imposed upon them by the fashion of their set at home. And Arabi was their butler!

The principal object of interest at Ateamuri, besides the Waikato River—like "Iser"—rolling rapidly, in front of the hotel, is a remarkable rock, which comes in handy for guides to amuse tourists with, but of no practical use at present to the colony. When the Chinese invasion comes, which it may do sooner or later, a remnant of the Anglo-Saxon race in New Zealand will, probably, be glad to crawl up it to die—hard.

Lunch and horsefeed cost me two shillings and sixpence each; my companions were only charged 2s. each. "That," explained McKinnon, "was because they took you for a tourist."

It seems there is a "favoured nation clause" in their scale of charges, and where the tourist pays 2s. 6d. the local traveller gets off with 1s. 6d. or 2s. at the outside. Such is the custom of the country. I had no ambition to be thought a tourist after this experience. To do this Lake Country cheaply the tourist must do it in disguise.

"But, I say, Mac, what did the landlord take you for when he charged you half-a-crown for three drinks?"

"I think he must have taken me for a 'fule,'" replied the sage Highlander, as he turned along a road to the left,

where stood a finger-post, on which was written in plain characters, "To Lichfield."

Rotorua is much better supplied with these dumb, but useful, guides than the districts I had just come through. Rotorua is a pet district and wants for nothing. It has even got an intelligent road surveyor and engineer; and, more surprising still, an energetic overseer in the person of an old friend of mine, Dennis Murphy, yer sowl! But Dennie is an old "Thames joker," you know, and the "grit's in 'em all."

We came on straight ahead. Pushing by the confines of the Patetere Land Company's territories, a blade of grass was here and there observable, and that was about the greatest curiosity I had seen since crossing the Whangaehu.

Of course, my faithful guide pointed out to me the beetling crag at Horohoro, called Hinemoa's Rock, or, as the Maoris say, Hinemoa turned to stone. As stone-cold Hinemoas possess no attractions for warm-hearted people like myself, or Tim Doolan, I made no attempt to carry off the veiled female figure from Horohoro. Besides, *hora fugit*—the dinner may be off before we reach Ohinemutu.

As we opened the Hemo Gorge, the moon, a great round shield of bright copper, was slowly lifting above the hilled horizon, shedding soft refulgent streams of light over the Rotorua basin, and I obtained my first view of the Lake and its famed island of Mokoia, and a whiff—my first sniff—of its sulphur springs. Coming down on to Whakarewarewa, the numerous steam clouds stealing steadily upward in the still night, reminded me much of a big mining camp lighting its evening fires. It did not take us

long to dash across the ti-tree flat, and through the Government township of Rotorua into the Maori and "business centre" of Ohinemutu.

Horses and men all tolerably fresh after their long ride; indeed, Kairama was fresher on completing the last fifty miles, from Wairakei, than she was when we started from Moawhango. McDonald took a fancy for her, and I made him a gift of her, and so we parted, but she is still to be called Kairama.

Mr. McRae, mine host of the Lake House, and also of the Palace Hotel, gave me a warm welcome. Mac is a very good fellow, but I do not think it is of any advantage to the public that he should "host" both houses. It is not good for customers when fair competition is extinguished. In the hands of less honest and agreeable parties this monopoly would seriously affect the public, but McRae, while bossing both shows, with profit to himself, manages to make things pleasant for visitors—a very canny Scot is he.

The little township was quite lively. The streets were thronged, the shops all alight, and doing business. There were a considerable number of tourists, and more than the usual quantity of natives "in town." A Native Lands Court was sitting. Native Lands Courts do not appear to do much else but sit. It was on the eve of a race meeting, too, which brought in the sporting "push" to swell the number of visitors. Concerts and balls were announced, and there was a "sound of revelry by night" in Rotorua; but I slept through it all.

I had several offers from guides, professional and amateur, who offered to cart me round the geysers, but I

threatened to kill the first man that said "Geyser"—I was about full up of that curiosity. A new one had burst out in the back garden during the night. As the eccentricities of the frolicsome geyser were not under any visible control, and no guarantee given against a hot water fountain playing up under your bed mattress at any moment, I went in search of a mail coach to take me home.

I asked the representative of one coaching firm the fare to Okoroire.

"Twenty shillings," he said.

Subsequently I saw by an advertisement that I could get down by another coach for 12s. 6d., and I took a box seat at once. Healthy competition is required in directions other than coaching in Rotorua.

As there was no chance of leaving till the following day, I resigned myself into the hands of Mr. Griffiths, of the *Hot Lakes Chronicle*, who very kindly volunteered to drive me round. We picked up Mr. Sherrin, a veteran journalist not unknown to fame, and drove to Whakarewarewa, hung the horse and trap up at Taylor's hotel, and strolled towards a foot bridge. Here a Maori demanded 4s. 6d.

"Ghost of misery! for what? See geysers? Not me! Any charge for smelling them?"

"One herring, you like."

"*Kahore!* Me no like. Anything to pay for breathing the air?"

"You like, you makee the shout."

"Gentlemen, it is quite evident they take us poor pressmen for millionaires. You have seen these geysers before; I have seen all I want to. Let us go back to the hotel, and have eighteenpennyworth of our old friend, John Robertson's Scotch cordial."

But we did not have to "part." At the hotel we met the millionaire proprietor of the Masonic Hotel, Tauranga, who would insist on "standing Sam." Host Whitcombe—one of Boomy's friends—understands pressmen.

Returning, we called at the Sanatorium, where I had a swim in the Blue Bath, opened by my esteemed friend George Augustus Sala. Lucky George! The two chiefs of this institution are the engineer and the doctor: both able men. This Sanatorium of ours is one of the noblest institutions of the colony. It is certainly the purest and most wholesome thing in Rotorua. In the hot springs of the Rotorua district we have a big asset against the national indebtedness. We have spent enormous sums on Rotorua, but, so far, the expenditure has only benefited a few hotelkeepers, coach proprietors, guides, and the Maoris. The general public have had no returns as yet. The completion of the railway is the first step towards altering the present unsatisfactory state of things. Then the township title must be clearly defined, and a revenue obtained. The Maori must be made to understand that the colony is run, or going to be run, on the lines of the "greatest good for the greatest number," and that the people of New Zealand mean to boss the show. As one of the attractions of Rotorua Maoris are all very well, but when they attempt to set up their paltry private rights against the public necessity they become obnoxious, and must be removed.

The diversity of colour is undoubtedly one of the many attractions peculiar to Rotorua. That there is a magnetism in the natural charms of the Maori *wahine* which is irresistible to the average Anlgo-Saxon male, no honest man will

deny, and I can only account for it by the supposition that it is owing to their not wearing stays. That the Maori "garb of old Gaul" may be a similar attraction, in a lesser degree, to our opposite sex is just possible. Be it clearly understood here that I am not hinting at anything immoral or improper. Immorality may, or may not, exist in Rotorua; I saw nothing of it, although from what I had read, and heard, I was prepared to find it rampant. I think before we begin to talk about the immorality of Rotorua, or any other place, we ought to clear our own streets. I am simply referring to the diversity of colour attraction as a curiosity. When I have anything to say about the immorality of a place I shall say it straight out.

I intended to have given Rotorua a whole chapter, but my story has already exceeded the limits, so I must cut it for the present, and—

"All aboard for Okoroire."

That we arrived safely in Okoroire is due to the skill, care, and nerve of the driver Rogers. We were on a coach —not the regular diligence—that had no brake, or rather it had one that was worse than none at all; the roads were greasy and rough, and we had some narrow escapes, but our whip was equal to the occasion.

Three years ago when I was at Okoroire there was nothing but a hole of hot water. Since then a great caravansary has sprung into existence, and the hot springs have become famed. All this is due to the genius of one man. Mr. Isaacs is a magician, and keeps himself and his wares well advertised. That's where his magic comes in. He gave me 10s. to give a good account of Okoroire. I took it and said to myself—

"One hundred and ninety odd pounds were spent on Mr. Sala for a favourable notice, of Rotorua, from his pen. Being a great literary celebrity, perhaps he was worth it. I cannot pretend to his attainments, but when it comes to noticing a place, favourably or otherwise, it is not £200 to ten shillings in George's favour. I wonder if Mr. Isaacs is aware that my articles cost the proprietors of the WEEKLY NEWS more than £10 each. They paid Mr. Sala £40 per article, and they have been too long at the business to pay more for an article than it is worth. They know specialities must be paid for. Mr. Isaacs 'I'm a speciality; your 10s. will purchase about a line.'"

"You can't expect much, you know," I remarked aloud.

"Oh," he said, smiling, "you can say so much in so little."

He is an artist, is Isaacs, I felt the compliment, and that's how he comes by this long notice. The 10s. will be handed over to the Institute for the Blind!

When the railway is opened into Rotorua, Okoroire will, I fear, get left in the cold. In the days coming the itinerary will be:—

Auckland to Rotorua (by rail)		One day.
Rotorua to Tokaano (by coach and steamer, with lunch and geysers at Wairakei)		One day.
Tokaano to Wellington ,, Napier ,, Wanganui	(By coach and rail)	One day.

FACT!

CASUAL RAMBLINGS.

Up and Down New Zealand.

DOWN SOUTH.

Chapter I.

Refrigeratory—A Government Official, unlike the Roman Soldier, when he is told to go, Remonstrates—A Dicky Ministry—Lemons—Down South—Civil Servants apply for removal to the North, always to the North—A Top Sawyer Shifted—Hankering for the Flesh Pots of Auckland—Southland not Siberia—But very near it—Write something about the South—I do it.

Business in connection with the commercial department of the Herald and Weekly News requiring the visit of a plenipotentiary to the South, and the Lake district of Otago, I received the "office" to go on my return from the Hot Lakes of the North—a dose of cool refreshment I did not freeze on to with avidity. But reflecting that a cold shower after a hot bath was bracing in its effect, and that the Antarctic breezes of the South might take off the limpness induced by our balmy northern zephyrs, I prepared for my refrigeratory excursion without more ado.

When a Government official receives an order distasteful to his feelings he puts in a day filling a ream of Government foolscap with remonstrances, and rallies his friends for a rescue. A Cabinet meeting is held to consider his case. Under the Atkinson Government (the maternal parent of the Civil Service) the appellant would, as a rule, succeed in getting the obnoxious order for removal rescinded. With the present "Ballancing" Ministry the result is generally a compromise. This course of procedure only applies to the upper classes of the Civil Service; the lower orders, such as engine-drivers, platelayers, and policemen, who have no friends, are bundled hither and thither with scant ceremony or consideration.

By the way, I am often asked my opinion on the stability of the Ballance Ministry. I put the question to a dear and valued friend of mine, Mr. James Duigan, the editor of the *Wanganui Herald*, who has an intimate and practical general knowledge of men and things possessed by few in the profession, and in whose sound commonsense and good judgment I place implicit confidence. He said,

"It is, popularly, the strongest Government that has ever risen to power, and will, in all probability, last through the decade—bar accidents, of course."

I softly observed,

"It seems to me to be rather a 'Dicky' Ministry."

The gentle James glanced at me round the corner of his cerulean-tinted spectacles.

"Nuff 'Seddon' it, old fellow," quoth he.

Then we tempered the "icy blast" with some hot water and lemon.

This wholesome drink is easily procurable almost anywhere outside Auckland. Strangers are apt to account for its scarcity here as owing to the poor water supply of the city, the want of coalfields at the door, and the unsuitability of the soil and climate for the production of fruit trees in general, and the lemon in particular. Whatever the cause, there is the fact that you may go into the "toff" first-class hotel in Queen Street and call in vain for hot water with a slice of lemon in it—nothing but the raw deadly "cold pison" can be obtained. As commercial travellers affect the house, I shall not be surprised to learn that the proprietor has received an order from the council of that august body to invest in a copper kettle—I supply the lemons.

To return to our "ramblings," or from our ramblings, whichever it may please the reader. Having a business firm to deal with, in place of a maternal Government, it was useless protesting that my chest was weak, and that sure and sudden death would follow the change of air, and a whole family of orphans thrown helpless upon the world. So I went out into the cold, and "down South." But I did not stop any longer than I could help, having no more anxiety to remain there than a member of the Civil Service. Heads of departments have piles of applications from men desirous of being transferred to the North Island, but not a single application for removal to the South. The Civil Service Johnnies stick to the North like a bur. Some of them would sooner die than leave the island.

The other day a high-ranked official in the North was ordered to proceed South. He objected for climatic reasons, ill health, family suffer by the change, and so forth. After the set correspondence and negotiations the

usual compromise followed, and the high-billetted official consented to shift to a drier, and a deadlier, climate in the east.

This reluctance to serve in the South is not confined to the Civil Service.

Of the many Aucklanders whom the necessities of business, or the vicissitudes of fortune, had driven there, I met none who did not express the wishful hope of returning again to "dear old Auckland."

Yet Southland is no Siberia. The grainopolis planted on the Southland plains is as healthy, if not healthier, than the gumopolis piled on the spur-fringed shores of the Waitemata. But it is so damp, disagreeable, and cold—oh, so cold!—that longevity is not a thing to be greatly hankered after in Southland.

Returned to headquarters with the business completed to the satisfaction of the commercial chief, the head of the literary department plumped on me for a descriptive article of the "south countrie"—that's the way I get double-banked. I pleaded that my visit was of too limited and casual a character for anything of that sort.

"Well, you must write something, anyhow."

So I'm trying to write something, anyhow; and if somebody will tell me what it is all about by the time I get it finished I shall be "much thankful."

Chapter II.

A Rambling Narrative—The Wakatipu Goldfield—Old Times—On Tramp—Bill Fox—The Arrow—Invasion by the Picks and Shovels—Queenstown—Change—Sunday on the Lake in the Early Days—The Lean and Hungry Cassius—Still Alive—Eichardt's Hotel—Tourists not Plundered—Railway Route—The Diggers' Trail.

"Short sketchy descriptions and observations—pertinent and impertinent—incidentally suggested by the trip."

Ah! thanks, 'tis a large order, but I'll endeavour to fill the bill. Say we call it "a Rambling Narrative from the Tablets of My Memory" for short.

The Lake district of Otago is an extremely interesting region. I was there about 30 years ago—with the bloom of youth on my cheek, and the down still on my chin—along with some five-and-twenty thousand other fellows; a party quite beyond the resources of Thomas Cook and Son's agency to transport and provision even at the present day. The only Cooks we were acquainted with, in those days, were the immortal navigator and the great mountain called after him, the snowy peak of which some of us had had a glimpse of. That "small tea-party" of 25,000 men provided their own means of locomotion and supplies. I walked all the way from Dunedin at the tail of a pack-horse; but the most of the party carried—or, as the redoubtable Captain Barry would put it, "humped their swag"—an average weight of 50 lbs. avoirdupois. We were not tourists; the now familiar globe-trotter was then a thing unknown. We were not travelling for the benefit

of our health—we were in the pink of condition. Neither were we in search of scenery. We had not come to ramble over the Southern Alps for fun, nor scale their rugged peaks for pastime. We were not in pursuit of pleasure under the auspices of an Alpine club.

Ours was a serious business; and our especial object was not to reach the top, but to find "the bottom" of this Alpine country. Instead of an alpenstock, each man carried a long-handled shovel. We were merely gold seekers. For the great pick and shovel army the beauties of nature had no attraction—none whatever. It was the bounties drew it. Nature had been, indeed, bountiful in her golden showers over this district, and fabulous were the finds. About the time I speak of, the vanguard of this noble army was in hot pursuit of a gentleman named Fox—Christian name William—commonly called Bill. This once famous character is in no way identical with the notorious teetotal knight. No, Master Bill was quite another sort of Fox from Sir William, and he came from Tipperary. Fox discovered the Arrow, and a party working in it. Thinking it better to proclaim it than to "keep-it-dark," Bill went down to the Dunstan, and claimed a prospector's area. But on Warden Keddell asking him on oath if he was the first discoverer of the locality he—although he could tell a lie as well as anybody on ordinary occasions—had to confess he was not. The Warden refused to recognise his claim, and Bill retired crestfallen, but promised to show the spot in "the marning." Morning came, but the artful William had vanished during the night. Then the rush took place. The Picks and Shovels entered the Arrow, swarmed into the Shotover, swept up the Skippers, and took possession of the Wakatipu (I think we originally spelt it with an "h"—Whakatipu) lake country, with Queenstown for its headquarters.

The lacustrine capital has changed its aspect since I last beheld it, in the golden days of yore. Yes, there is much change. Where gleamed the flapping tents, and flickering camp fires, of the adventuring thousands congregated around the head of the little bay, are cosy cottages and trim gardens. The flimsy calico and green baize constructions that lined the business thoroughfares have been superseded by solid structures of the newest architectural invention—ornamental and otherwise. Capacious and comfortable public buildings abound. Justice sits luxuriously at ease, surrounded with all the paraphernalia and formalities of modern urban civilisation, instead of standing in the pelting rain up to the knees in mud, elbowed by a spluttering crowd of litigants, to deliver its decrees. I do not think that Justice is dispensed more evenly, or more fearlessly, now, than it was then, but it takes longer and is much more costly, and—— "Silence in the Coort!"

Where, with high-crowned, broad-brimmed, brown felt hat—the long sleever of the period—Crimean shirt—and pea jacket when in full costume—red silk sash, moleskin pants, and knee boots—of the nugget pattern—strode the stalwart gold-digger, buoyant with hope, tanned with the hue of health, in the fulness of his manly beauty, there struts the helmet-hatted—the fore-and-aft peaked shingle—knickerbockered, stiff-starched collared tourist, with his eye-glass and his crutch and toothpick.

A grand and a lusty race, those gold-digging men of the sixties. Properly mated it should have reproduced itself, but the women were of a lower class, and inferior type, and the breed deteriorated. The new generation is wanting in physique and stamina. Nowhere is this more noticeable than on the West Coast of the Middle Island.

Gone, too, are the mosquito fleets that bobbed up and down at their anchors in the bay, and in their stead a trio of steamers, of respectable tonnage, are tied head and tail to a substantial wharf.

The miners were fond of playing with the lake. The little beach was a favourite resort, and on a Sunday they would hang round it as thick as bees—in those early days, Mr. Seddon, they could remember the Sabbath day without the aid of the Police Offences Act—and squat, and muse, and murmur, or skim pebbles "along the smooth lake's level brim" for hours and hours. You will never catch a tourist at that game—he might burst his buttons, you know.

Change indeed. No tourist would ever suspect that this quiet, smug, douce, irreproachably respectable looking township, with its five churches and Roman Catholic convent, had once contained a boxing saloon, a rat pit, or a harem—shade of Cassius!—wonder how the lean reprobate is now. His stout chum, Mr. P. Comiskey, has, I believe, taken up his abode in London—Cassius, I hear, abides in Siberia; I thought Michael had roosted in a warmer place. Then, "there was a sound of revelry by night"—every night,—"a thousand beards wagged merrily; on went the dance, and joy was unconfined." Now, joy confines itself to a quiet game of cards in the snug parlours of the "pubs"—"nap" seems to be the most serious dissipation indulged in.

The "pub" of the present is quite a different affair to the "pub" of the past. The principal hotel (Eichardt's)—standing upon, or near the site of that once kept by a well-known police trooper, Sergeant-Major Bracken—is a spacious, well-designed, and handsome two-storeyed building,

replete with all modern conveniences for the "welfare of the human race," presided over by a lady who is assiduously attentive in her supervision of the wants and comforts of her guests. Altogether, Eichardt's is the best tourist hotel outside the four cities, and the charges are fair and reasonable—less, in fact, than in gloom-stricken Karioi.

In this wonderland of the South, one is free from the petty, but irritating, extortions to which we are subject in the North. They do not charge you anything for breathing the delicious air of the district, nor for gazing at their remarkable mountains through a telescope; you can bathe in their waterholes—and there is much waterhole—as long as ever you like—you don't like long—without being asked for a copper. They don't even charge you for catching their fish, and they have a great variety of beautiful trout.

To reach Queenstown, from Dunedin, the quickest and easiest way is by train, leaving the Otagan metropolis for Invercargill at 8.10 a.m.; lunch at Clinton at 12.35 p.m.—Clinton has the best refreshment room on the New Zealand railways, with the exception of Aramoho, near Wanganui; Timaru is the worst of its class without any exception. You have twenty minutes at Clinton, but in that time they manage to stuff you to the full, with three courses of palatable, tasty dishes—cheese and a cup of tea or coffee thrown in,—without fuss or bustle—the charge, a florin. The man who leaves that table unsatisfied is a menace to society, and ought to be restricted, in his walks abroad, to the precincts of a—— "Whew! you know," and—— The magpie whistles all the time. Change for Kingston at Gore—100 miles from Dunedin, arriving at the Lake at 7.30, and at 9.30 p.m. land at Queenstown Wharf, 200 miles from Dunedin.

A wondrous change all this since the days we "swagged it," trudging on, day after day, in sunshine and in storm; up by the Molyneux and the Kawarau: blessing "Roaring Meg" and sweating and swearing over the "Gentle Annie."

Shall we regret that we did not build the railway before we discovered the goldfield?

Were we not a little too enterprising and progressive in the Golden Age?

Chapter III.

The Priest—Pass Echoes—Up Hill, Down Dell—The Shotover Valley—Skippers — The Phœnix — Lady Onslow Visits the Phœnix—The Captain of the Mine—Queenstown Appalled at his Rashness—The Earl's Gratitude—The Coming K.C.M.G.—The Proprietor of the Phœnix—Dredging—Light of the Phœnix - Electricity recommended for the Thames—The Telephone of the Phœnix, which Is—The Telephone of Hunterville, which Is not, yet—Down Skipper's Creek - Light and Shade—Parted with the Priest—To Arrowtown—The Softer Influences—High Farming—Under the Crook — Arrowtown Described — Return by Lake Hayes—Frankton Hospital—Doctor Douglas—Pears and Whisky —The Return Ticket.

On the morning following arrival at Queenstown, I set out on a tour up the Shotover and into Skipper's, to the Phœnix mine, in company with Mr. Logan, District Inspector of Telegraphs, and Mr. Dewar, the local postmaster. I had been introduced to Mr. Logan by an old friend—Mr. Innis, the postmaster of Palmerston North, who was spending a well-earned holiday in the South—and we travelled together from Dunedin. We obtained capital mounts from the

manager of Cobb & Co.'s stables; and by the generous courtesy of Mr. Logan I was given the pick of the bunch, an upstanding grey, known throughout the district as "The Priest," from the fact that he was constantly ridden by a rev. gentleman who had discovered his merits—you can't beat the holy fathers, much, as judges of horseflesh and whisky. The Very Rev. Father in God, Monseigneur McDonald, is a notable instance of this strong point of the Roman Catholic clergy.

From the township a good metalled road is formed through a gut, or pass, that widens and narrows between high and steep rocky sides, showing indications of having been, in times remote, the outlet of a considerable volume of water. Near the Queenstown end there is a peculiar echo—soft and distinct—to be heard, but we did not stop to parley with the sweet unseen spirit of sound. My friend, Mr. James MacMahon, is coming to catch it on his new phonograph.

Five miles from Queenstown we come to the Shotover, and cross by a well-built bridge, then we edge off to the left, and, slanting up the side of the range, climb, and climb, till we climb atop of the saddle; then we zigzag down, down, down a narrow carriage road, hewn out of the precipitous crags that wall in the deep gully leading down to the river.

At the bottom, we turn up the Shotover Valley, if valley it can be called. It is about the roughest sort of valley made. At an exhibition of chasms, now, the Shotover Valley might have a show of getting a "highly commended" place. Rough as it is, they have scarped a road through it nearly to Skipper's. What it cost, goodness,

and the Hon. Mr. Fergus, only knows. Roads in this "land of the mountain and flood" have been rather expensive jobs; but as the Lake people have given Fergus as a legacy of wisdom to the councils of the colony, I suppose we must not growl at his extravagances in this direction. The Shotover Road will come in useful for tourists, and will, also, be a great convenience to the handful of digging population left there, in the removal of their few sticks of furniture. I met a piano on its way down—it must have been a great comfort to the piano to find itself gliding smoothly along all in one, instead of being packed in different pieces and banged about on a mule's back. Population follows the piano—"hear the pibroch sounding, sounding far o'er much mountain and glen!"

We landed on the Skipper's side of the Shotover by means of a suspension bridge—the road for wheeled traffic ends here—and clambered up a zigzag acclivity on to the terraces where the little straggling township is situated. Mr. Logan remained here to attend to his telegraph duties while we went on to the "Phaynix" mine at the head of Skipper's Creek. I had no particular business at the Phaynix, or the Shotover either, further than, to gratify a curiosity, to see what Lady Onslow saw in it to induce her to take such a trip.

Mr. Captain Evans, who appears to have acted in the capacity of guide, philosopher, and friend to the courageous Countess during her sojourn in the Lake district, undertook a tremendous responsibility in escorting her ladyship to the Phaynix.

Queenstown was appalled at the audacity of the captain of the mine, and in a tremour of anxious apprehension in

case "anything might happen," and their joy was only equalled by the Earl's gratitude at the safe return of his wife. His Excellency thanked Mr. Evans and presented him with his portrait, asked him to dinner, and, it is said, recommended him to Her Majesty the Queen.

Mr. Evans has gone home to float the Phaynix into a company, and the Lakers are fully persuaded it will arise from its ashes, and that the gallant captain will return with the regalia of a K.C.M.G.—in a glass case.

The Phœnix is at present the property of a Mr. Bullen—identical, I believe, with the Bullen who owned a clothing store in the principal "diggins" of the day. The mine has been skilfully and economically managed by Mr. Evans, and has paid its owner some big dividends. The Phœnix is a quartz claim, the only live one I heard of in the district. The area of gold-bearing reefs is limited to Skipper's Creek.

The goldfied proper is alluvial, and the working is now almost wholly confined to river dredging. The dredges, however, are not a pronounced success.

I don't think "Anno Domini 2000" is going to see any millionaires dredged from the bottom of the Molyneux.

That the gold-bearing rocks of Skipper's have not been ground and washed into the bed of the Molyneux ages ago is due to accidental natural causes. The Phœnix Company are now doing what nature left undone, but, by their process of disintegration, the gold is diverted into other channels than those of Nature's making—the dredgers get the sand!

The Phœnix crushes its rock with a 30-head stamper battery, which is driven by electricity. The lightning is

manufactured by means of a strong head of water and two Pelton wheels. The generating station being situated in a gully some two miles away, "the power" is conveyed by wire into a receiver in the battery. The mine is lighted throughout with it. The days are very short up here, but darkness is not much hindrance to the Phœnix, for, with its powerful illuminating apparatus, it can simply put the moon in the shade. The first, last, and total cost of this motive-power, which does away for ever with engines, boilers, engineers and stokers, fuel, etc., did not exceed £2,000.

Our Thames jokers are trying to saddle the tax-paying ass of the colony with another little burden of a quarter of a million pounds for a railway to cheapen the price of their coal. If they employ the amount of money it will cost to grease the wheels of their railway, in producing electricity, they might enter on a new career of prosperity.

The Phœnix is pretty close upon the snow line, and is, so far as I know, the highest mine in New Zealand. But, although it may be said to be at the "nethermost part of the earth," it is not so remote from the centres of civilisation as—Hunterville, for instance. The manager in London, or the proprietor in Blenheim, can communicate their instructions direct to the manager's office at the mine. While poor, dear, delightful, stupid Hunterville has denied itself the luxury—necessity!—of a telephone for fear the expense might burst the colony, every "point," with a cottage and a cabbage-garden, in this chasm of the Shotover, is in telephonic touch with all the world—Hunterville, of course, excepted. Yet the Shotover folks were represented by a Scotchman, claiming—like his fellow of Hunterville—descent—very much dissent!—from the Scottish kings. He still

represents them, and is now, by royal warrant, styled the Honorable Mr. Fergus. He was telephonic. The non-telephonic man he—— Well the good—members—die young—" 'tis the wail of the Cameron men !"

"Oh! give the Hunterville telephone a rest," I hear a friend remark; "why such damnable reiteration ?"

Why! look at the success of Sir George Grey as a damnable reiterationist. Why should not I follow so good, so noble, and so wise an example ?

Heave ahead with that Hunterville telephone, Richard, my hearty; they are going to give us a banquet at the Argyle when it is finished—haven't had a banquet for an age—Mumm! Run it along, lad, and I'll ask Sir George Grey to move "the address in reply." He'll do it—youngest member of Liberal party, you know. Do postpone Parliament till the G.O.M. arrives—see the conquering hooray comes. Drums!—guns! Blazes!—scalps!—*væ victis !*

Lady Onslow telephoned her lord a sweet good-night, and slept at the Phœnix—angels guard ! We had to refuse the proffered hospitality of the deputy manager, Mr. Evans, junior—son of the future K.C.M.G.—and telephoned the little hostelry, eight miles below, that we were marching down to dinner. The priest and his mate having had a twenty minutes' lunch off Phœnix oats, and feeling much refreshed thereby, cantered gaily down the creek. The road has not shifted much during thirty years. It still keeps the bed of the creek, and one is splashing in and out of the water all the way.

Away from the clank of the battery, Skipper's is mostly solitude. The bustling throng of Saxon and Celt has disappeared, like snow off the mountain, and a few starved-looking Celestials sluicing in a kink of the creek is what we

see, now, as we rattle down the shingly bottom. Rising the terrace at the mouth of Skipper's, a party—white,—stripping a face with the old-fashioned squirt, and the miles of iron waterpipe, undulating athwart the country like a great black snake, show that alluvial mining is not quite extinct.

At dinner Mr. Logan rejoined us, and after a substantial meal—well served—and the horses fed; the Priest is a good "doer"—we saddled again and started on the home track as the "shades of evening were falling fast." Move on the Priest!

It was a clear night and Luna was somewhere in the heavens, but she only silvered the caps and shoulders of the Alpine ranges, and as the soft white light stole down their massive sides it seemed to deepen the shadows in ravine and valley. Mistress moon—she has a man, I believe—has to get up pretty high before she streaks the Shotover Valley with her beams. We had her company for a little while, as we topped the saddle, but soon lost sight of her bright face as we rapidly descended the other side of the range.

Down on to the Shotover again—across the bridge—and through the mirky gorge into Queenstown, alighting at Eichardt's Hotel shortly after 10 o'clock.

Handed over the Priest safe and sound—the last I saw of him, he was walking out a pale-faced tourist. The distance we had covered being, so they said, fifty-six miles, but I hardly think it can be so much, at least I did not feel to have done over fifty miles; but it may be, the air of Lakeonia enables one to stand a greater amount of fatigue than the denser atmosphere in other parts of New Zealand.

Next day Mr. Logan's duties necessitated a visit to Arrowtown, but not feeling inclined for any more riding, he

engaged a double-seated buggy and a pair of horses, and invited me to a seat. Logan is an awfully good fellow—when Scotchmen lay themselves out for being good fellows other races are not in the running. He is a perfect laird with the ladies, and will allow no Taffy that ever wore a leek to outdo him in courtesy to the fair sex. We were honoured with the company of two of its members. The country did not appear to be quite so rugged to-day — the softer influences prevailed.

We drove out by the Shotover Pass and along Millar's Flat—a piece of rich agricultural land settled by a farming population. The Otagan "diggings" have had the great advantage over the West Coast and our North Island goldfields of having good agricultural and pastoral land around them. On terraces 2,000 feet above sea level they grow splendid crops of oats. The digger settler was driven thus far up because all the great plains below—which could have absorbed and settled the whole goldfields' population—were monopolised by a few squatters.

Same thing occurs in Hawke's Bay, where sheep, under the sway of the sceptre crook of King Shepherd, occupy the plains, and men are driven to the mountain tops to make a living and denude the country of its forests!

Not much change in Arrowtown. The farming interest seems to predominate over the mining, and "The Arrow" is considerably Conservative. Two rows of wooden shanties where stood the calico ones of old; a beautiful avenue of trees, the pride of the place; a museum, containing some chips of greenstone and a Maori chisel; and a four-page newspaper published every Thursday at the old-fashioned

price of sixpence, is Arrowtown of to-day—and, unless a healthy fire takes place, will be the Arrowtown of a to-morrow thirty years hence.

After lunch, at Gee-up Jopp's Hotel, had a stroll—in my mind. I laid down and had a sleep—Arrowtown is so drowsy. We returned by the Lake Hayes route, which leads through a capital agricultural district. Lake Hayes is a rather pretty spot, and is famed for its trout fishing.

We passed through Frankton, where the hospital is situated. The peculiarity of this hospital is that the most imposing portion of it is the doctor's residence—the patients have a shed somewhere on the premises. Dr. Douglas is an old identity, a skilful practitioner, popular, accomplished, genial, and—he asked me to have a drink.

The Hotel de Frankton and post-office are kept by Mr. O'Kane. O'Kane and his pub have been on the same spot ever since the foundation of Frankton. I mention this fact not because Mr. O'Kane keeps a pub, but because he has an orchard, and grows some of the finest pears I ever tasted in either island. We blow about our fruit-growing; the Southerners, amateur and professional, can give us points. O'Kane makes as much out of pears as he does out of whisky. I think we must have eaten a peck of the mellow fruit during our short stay there. The hospital, Kawarau Falls, and the pub are all that's left of Frankton.

Six o'clock the following morning saw us on board the Lake Wakatipu Steam Shipping Company's steamer returning to Kingston.

I have said that tourists were not so subject to impositions in this Lake district as they are in the North. I must make an exception in favour of the Lake Wakatipu Steam Shipping Company (Limited).

In the *New Zealand Railway Time Table* for April this company advertise fares from Kingston (the railway terminus) to Queenstown (distance 25 miles, steaming time 2¼ hours)—Single, saloon, 7s 6d; Return, saloon, 12s 6d.

On the passage to Queenstown I asked for a return ticket, and was bluntly informed there was no such thing issued by the company; that I must pay 7s. 6d. each way, even if I returned next morning. I explained that I was not a tourist, merely a commercial traveller—the drummers claim me as a member of their Iwi,—and, as such, was entitled to the usual twenty per cent. allowance; but the master of the s.s. Mountaineer was as impervious to reason as a wharf pile. I paid the three half-crowns, not feeling in the humour to argue with an automaton—my stomach was full and I wanted peace. We had had a fish supper on board. I must have consumed a whole trout—8lb. is about the average weight of a lake trout. They resemble our mullet somewhat. All alive, oh

Not the least wonderful thing in this wonderland of the South is the wonderful appetite one gets. The stewardess appeared most anxious about me—afraid I should burst before paying for my supper—two shillings—not unreasonable.

Returning by the other boat belonging to the company, I suggested to its skipper the propriety of including breakfast in the 7s. 6d. I paid him, so as to save his company the reproach of having broken faith with a trusting stranger; but that frivolous navvygaitor had a nob like a cork fender—I could make no impression on it, and—sto-per— I came away with the feeling that the Lake Wakatipu Steam Shipping Company (Limited) had

enriched themselves, to the extent of an extra half-crown, at my expense—eight half-crowns make a pound sterling —that's a significant fact!

N.B.—The Railway Commissioners are careful to inform the public that they are not answerable for the fulfilment of the Company's engagements, as advertised. Kingston! Seats, please,—w-h-e-w!!!

Chapter IV.

Mr. John Rabbit—A Conservative Plague—A Member of the Liberal Party—The Exodus—Its Cause and Cure summed up in One Word—The Right Sort of Country for Village Settlements—Invercargill—Its Water Supply—Its Tower—Splendid View from—But Chilly—Hurrah for the North—On the Railway—Rule of the Road—Breaches of it by Squatters, Spielers, and Larrikins —Wrong View of it by an R.M.—The Buckley-Mirbach Incident —A Barren Title—The Smoker—Difference between Smoker and Ordinary Carriage explained—The U.S.S. Company enforce the Rule—Likewise all First-class Hotels.

From Kingston to the main line again we run through a few of the "Big Estates" we read about. The lordly squatter, generally representing a money-lender—euphemistically, "Financial Institutions"—has taken a big grip on the "Five Rivers," the Waimea, and Mataura Plains. The "bould pisantry," a "country's pride," don't exist to any appreciable extent. Its place is occupied with sheep—and rabbits!

The rabbit is an interloper; he squatted on the big estates without so much as a "by your leave, gentlemen," and, in spite of all Acts of Parliament to prevent him, there

he squats. Mr. Jack Rabbit is a great Radical, and has been even a more terrible plague to the Conservative party than Sir George Grey. That the already sufficiently appalling exodus has not totted up to still larger numbers is due, in a great measure, to Johnny's persistent efforts to settle in the country. If this Grand Old Man Rabbit had anything like fair play accorded him he would "bust up the big estates" without expense to the colony, and supply the means of livelihood for larger populations than those supported by a gumfield, or a goldfield, or a big railway contract.

Mr. John Rabbit's special mission is to provide canned rabbit for all the world; but his progress—by leaps and bounds—in the fulfilment of his mission has been looked upon as a movement threatening to revolutionise the present system of land tenure in the colony; and the foulest means have been adopted to arrest his action and prevent his intrusion upon the sacred domain of sheep. Baa!

And the cry went up to Parliament, and much time and money has been spent in devising schemes, framing laws, and raising taxes to protect mutton and prohibit the export of rabbit; and to import stoats and weasels—these "varmints" may eventually exterminate our poultry, and bleed not a few infants to death, but it does not signify to the squatter so long as they don't eat grass. Side by side with the compulsory emigration of men and women from the country of their adoption, and for some of them "the land of their birth," the assisted immigration of stoats and weasels continues. The Conservative party can boast that for every man their land policy deported from the colony, they have imported a stoat and a weasel. Baa! baa! black sheep!

To preserve the property—stolen, some of it, as Sir George Grey truly says—of a few mutton lords, and to provide dividends for sundry money-lending syndicates, Bunny, it is decreed, shall be poisoned, and hundreds of thousands of tons of the world's food supply wasted—the many shall die of want that the few may live in luxury.

The closing of the rabbit-canning factories, and the opening of the rabbit-poisoning season was about to take place as I passed through the district. The profits of an important industry is thus lost to the colony, and a few more hundreds added to the list of the unemployed—or the exodus. I have always maintained that the proper way to deal with the question was to pot the rabbit, not to poison him; but it was as the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." However, I have hopes now that we have a righteous Radical Parliament in possession, that Mr. Jack Rabbit—as a member of the party—will obtain a recognition of his rights.

A splendid country this for village settlement. Here, there's rabbit and work for all. No danger of starvation on such a soil; and with fish, flesh, and fowl for the catching. Trout for breakfast, rabbit pie for dinner, quail on toast for supper—how d'you like it. Here's wealth for honest labour—neither capital nor capitalist required. John Rabbit, as an employer of labour, is equal to a Government—Baa! sings the Conservative sheep. The Radical rabbit says nothing at all, at all; but there he's sitting—waiting for men to catch him and eat him." The Exodus, its Cause and Cure," may be written in one word—RABBIT.

On to the main line again. We run down to Invercargill, getting a glimpse, by the way, of the grain-producing country of the South. I did not see it under

a favourable aspect, the flats being pretty well under water and the hills looking exceedingly bleak. But it is good land and well cultivated.

As the reader has probably surmised from the introductory chapter to this epistle, I did not stop in Invercargill for any lengthened period—in fact, I came away by the next train leaving there.

It is often said of Invercargill that it is only fit for Esquimaux, or Scotchmen, to live in. Such untruthful sayings are apt to give erroneous impressions of the place. I saw quite a number of Chinamen there. People, to whom climate is of no consequence, can exist without any great inconvenience in Invercargill. The prevailing weather is sleet. Blizzards are not uncommon, but they are not at all dangerous; owing to the immense width of the streets they manage to sweep through without hurting themselves.

I really don't see what there is for people to cavil at about Invercargill. It is a scientifically and artistically laid out, well-built town, and has a cleanly and a healthy appearance. It has a splendid water supply—both from above and below. Beneath it there is an underground river or lake, into which they have sunk a Watertight Iron Cylinder Well, and from it the water is lifted into an iron tank on the top of a high tower by a pair of steam engines equal to 30 h.p.—Kilmarnock made. They say they have pumped continuously for three months 15,000 gallons an hour without lowering its permanent level at 25 feet from the surface. It is to be hoped the crust of earth between Invercargill and its underground river is strong enough to bear it.

I see no possible chance of Invercargill ever getting burnt out. Besides the reserve of 66,000 gallons which the

tank contains, the water can be pumped direct from the well into the mains; and the streets are of such a width that a conflagration may be raging on one side without affecting the temperature on the other.

The Water Tower is the most striking object in Invercargill. It strikes the beholder, from a distance, pretty much the same as does Partington's Windmill in Auckland—conspicuous landmarks both! There is just this difference to the stranger, however: he is able to recognise the purpose of the windmill tower at once, while of Invercargill's tall edifice he has to make enquiries to discover what it is all about. At first sight I thought that the Invercargillites—despairing of being numbered among the "elect"—had started another Tower of Babel. Later I was informed it was erected for the town water tank, that it was designed by the Town Clerk—it may have been the engineer; up our way I know it would have been the Town Clerk. Perhaps it is different down in Southland, and the Council and Engineer count for something. The tower is built over the well, and is 140 feet high, and half a million of bricks were used in its construction; it weighs 20,000 tons, and cost £5,000. There being no hills in the vicinity, the tower is very useful as a chest expander, and a capital view can be obtained of the surrounding country—when there is no mist, sleet, or blizzards about. Below you lies the town, flat as a chess-board; yonder is the Bluff, only you can't see it for the squall—— Shivers! Icebergs! Take me down, bring me a warming pan, and "call me early, mother dear!"

"It's a good place for business this, you know," said our old friend Mr. Culpan, of the New Zealand Insurance Company—he was good enough to come to the railway station to see me safe off; "much better in that respect than Wanganui."

"I daresay, but I know a lot of respects in which it is not to be mentioned in the same street. There's the 'Rum Buffer Club' for one; you have no Rum Buffers in Invercargill I know,—in that respect Wanganui stands alone. It has the rummiest crowd of Rum Buffers in the world. You haven't got a lunatic—— "We're off! Hurrah for the North!"

The engine-driver, with his shining Monday morning face, loosens his steed, and we settle down in our seats as he steams away with a rush on his northward journey.

On the Invercargill-Dunedin section of the Bluff-Hurunui line there is no "express" train run, as on the Dunedin-Christchurch section. It is merely an ordinary passenger train, and stoppages are frequent; but in spite of all delays we manage to cover the 139 miles in a little over seven hours—a much faster rate of speed than we get out of the mail train between New Plymouth and Wellington. The Christchurch-Dunedin "express" does the distance (230 miles) at the rate of 23 miles an hour, including stoppages.

I wonder if the alleged inventor of the zone system will knock a higher rate of speed out of our northern tea-kettles when he gets control of the New Zealand railways. It's a pity Mr. Vaile did not patent his invention, and prevent that rascally Hungarian Government from using it without acknowledgment.

I have never joined the "hue and cry" against the Railway Commissioners, or Mr. Maxwell, for the simple reason I could never find any cause to do so; yet I have had as much practical experience of the railways as most writers. Those who complain most are, as a rule, those

who use the railways least. The general public, especially the travelling portion of it, are fairly well satisfied with the present management. One member of Parliament—a free-trader—will argue that the farmer ought to have his manure hauled for nothing; and another that he—the aforesaid farmer—must have his produce carried at the same cheap rate. But what of the revenue we expect the railways to yield? The Commissioners cannot make bricks without straw, any more than the ancient Hebrews.

I do not mean to say that the system is perfect or that the management cannot be improved, but I do say that the New Zealand Government railways are better managed and more popular than the private companies' lines in the colony.

On the Southern lines the public are punctilliously observant of the unwritten rule of the road: that when a seat is known to be occupied—although for the moment vacated—it is not to be "jumped." In the temporary absence of the occupier, a hat, a coat, or a book are symbols of the rights of prior occupation, invariably respected. In the North they are not so particular; indeed, they are sometimes brutally indifferent to this gentlemanly custom. I will give two instances that came under my own observation.

I was travelling with a companion on the Napier section between two termini, and we occupied seats in an ordinary first-class carriage—not a smoker. At an intermediate station—stations are not numerous on this line—an uncouth proprietor of a big estate in the neighbourhood came in and jumped the seat of my friend, who had gone out for a smoke. I protested, and placed my feet on the seat to preserve it, but the wealthy squatter had friends and

toadies in the carriage; I had to give way, and my friend had to look for another seat. The word squatter is not a synonym for gentleman. I have seen such a squatter so misconducting himself in a place of public resort that had he been a poor man he would have been run in with the utmost expedition at the command of the "foorce."

The other breach of the "rule of the road" I witnessed at Aramoho, on the Wanganui section. At this station the through train from New Plymouth to Wellington stops twenty minutes for lunch, and, as they do not serve the lunch in the carriages, the passengers have to get out for it. While so engaged, on this occasion, a gang of swell spielers from Wanganui took possession of the empty seats. The ousted passengers came back and claimed their rights, but the spielers only laughed. One silver-haired old gentleman appealed to the guard; but that functionary replied "there was no regulation concerning seats; they belonged to anybody and everybody; those that could keep them had the best right to the seats." The old gentleman had plenty of friends about, and it was proposed to "chuck the spielers out;" but he declined the restoration of his seat by this process, and, refusing all offers of another seat, stood up alongside of his own, till at last the spielers became ashamed of their act, and relinquished possession of the old man's claim.

Recently an assault case, arising out of mistaken notions as to the right to a seat in a railway carriage, was heard before a Resident Magistrate in Hawke's Bay. Dr. von Mirbach took possession of an empty seat in a carriage, and was ejected therefrom by parties who thought he had no right to it. He charged them with assault. The Bench

inflicted a nominal fine, but reprimanded the doctor for taking the seat after having been warned that it was occupied. There was no by-law or rule, he said, but there was a custom as regarded seats which Dr. Mirbach should have observed. He also told the defendants they should have consulted the guard before taking the law into their own hands. Now, it seems to me, the magistrate did not grasp the situation at all. In the first place, in the absence of any regulation of the railway authorities, appeals to the guard are made in vain; he is powerless—if he does interfere, he does so at his own risk. In the next place, the action of Dr. Mirbach in taking possession of the empty seat was quite justifiable. The defendants were altogether wrong in claiming it, and ought to have been severely punished for their gross assault upon the doctor.

The difference between the Mirbach incident and those which I have related above is this: they happened in the ordinary travelling carriage; that of Dr. Mirbach's in the smoking carriage. Had it occurred in the travelling carriage proper, the strictures of the Bench would have applied and been richly deserved by Dr. Mirbach—or the Baron, as Dr. Philson styles him.

When Dr. Philson ironically dubbed him with this title, he was probably not aware that his professional brother was a Count of the German Empire. When the intended sarcasm was pointed out to Von Mirbach he calmly remarked, "Dot ish mien tidles."

The smoker is attached to a train as a convenience—same as a dining car. It is the common property of all smokers travelling on the train, and no one has a right to occupy a seat there to the exclusion of others, unless he is

using it for the purpose for which it was intended. The smallness of the compartment proves that its occupation was only intended to be temporary, and it is unreasonable to ask a score of men to forego the pleasure—or relief—of a pipe that half a dozen may make a gambling saloon of the smoking carriage. A man has no more right to the possession of a seat in the "smoker" after he has finished his smoke than he has to monopolise the seat in the lavatory for the whole journey.

No doubt, had Mr. Buckley quietly let Dr. Mirbach have his smoke out, and then asked for the seat, he would, most likely, have obtained it, with the doctor's compliments —but political feeling runs high in Waipawa, and it is at times apt to make men forget their manners, and judges to lose their wisdom.

"The custom" as regards seats is enough for gentlemen; but, as we have seen, they are not all gentlemen who travel on the New Zealand railways. It is therefore necessary that the Commissioners should incorporate the "rule of the road" in their by-laws and regulations. They cannot do better than take a leaf out of the book of the Union Steamship Company, whose management of passenger traffic is as near perfection as possible—globe-trotters tell me it is the best in the world. There is no jumping of seats on their line. Your seat is allotted with your ticket, and although you may be absent—and temporary absences are much more frequent on board ship than on a railway train - your seat is always kept open for you till you feel well enough disposed to sit in it.

Again, in all well-managed hotels your right to a particular seat at table is as sacred as your right to a particular

bed. But no one can expect a seat in the smoking-room—or a bath room—to be reserved for him during the whole period of his stay in the hotel.

Chapter V.

Jewsalem—The Lost Old Identities—Ring up Vogel—A "Bob's" Worth in Dunedin—Georgie Smithson—A Chat with Sir Robert Stout—About the Weather.

Of the four cities of the colony, Dunedin is eminently premier. Its streets of massive piles raised to Commerce, its municipal, religious, and scholastic edifices, are all on a scale of grandeur that quite eclipses the structures of its three rivals. Its scenery, if not so enchanting as Auckland's, has a stern wild beauty of its own—quite in keeping with the Caledonian character of the people who first possessed it. Dunedin is, however, no longer a Scottish possession—it is a city of the Jews.

The snuff-sniffing old identity—high of bone and thin of nostril, with his sober gait and bonnet sae blue, has gone under; and the stove-piped, hooked-nosed, thick-lipped, cigaretted son of Israel reigns in his stead—s'help me!

Solomon in all his glory—shiny hat and velveteen coat—presides at the Loan Office. Solomon—arrayed in horse-hair wig and silk gown—practices at the Bar. Ole Clo' is all over the shop—mit a brand new—shoddy—shingle garment at de 'olesale brice.

The Bible-read Scot, with the Psalms of David in metre singing in his "pow," has a sort of far-away reverence forth

chosen race, and does not resent the peculiar people putting their spoon in his parritch—making a Jewsalem of the Scottish Zion; but oh, Josephus! it does vex the proud soul when he is compelled to eat Scotch kale grown and made by a chopstick-feeding Chinaman.

Good Jews are few and far between. The only one we ever had in the colony, worth keeping, left in the beginning of the exodus—he was named Vogel. The "bone and sinew" follows the "brains"—the self-same cause drives both from the colony, and that cause is—— Let us ring up Vogel and inquire.

"Central!"

"Hello?"

"Hook on to St. Margaret Mansion, Victoria Street, London—Sir Julius Vogel."

"Holloa!"

"New Zealand desires to know what was the cause of your exodus from New Zealand?"

"Low wages—£800 a year may be a satisfactory stipend for a fellow like George Fisher, who could never earn more than three, or at most four, pounds a week, but, really, I could not live on it, so—exodused."

"Can you suggest any cure to stop exodus, which, to use a newspaper phrase, has reached appalling dimensions."

"Raise wages and increase spending power of the working classes. Have always maintained colony cannot prosper unless people are well paid. Warned you before I left what a reduction of wages meant to the colony, the capitalist, and the employer of labour. Great mistake to

resist shortening hours of labour and increase of wages. For the extra sixpence—'sprat'—or two a day paid to the labourer, a fourfold return would be reaped in trade — 'mackerel' — and an increase of the rate per head of taxation prevented. Sorry find emigration so excessive — much larger even than I anticipated—and immigration so exceeding small. And I suspect it consists mainly of such undesirable foreign parasites as Chinamen, Assyrian pedlars, Italian organ-grinders, and Russian Jews —spielers and usurers you have always with you—blood-suckers all; human stoats and weasels, who should be poll-taxed—poleaxed—out of the country."

"While everybody congratulates everybody on our increased production and export, nobody gives an opinion as to the cause. To what do you attribute the increase?"

"Railroads. *Ergo*, extension of roads means still further increased production and export."

"How is that to be done? Our borrowed money is exhausted, or nearly so, and they say 'Poor Trust is dead.'"

"Wait!—borrow more when you get the chance; you missed your market once. When I proposed to borrow more—while credit still good—to complete railways and retain population, you roared for retrenchment. You've retrenched population certainly, but very little else besides. And my contention that the country was well able to bear the weight of taxation is proved by the last Budget. At that time, too, I proposed that twenty-five of our wealthiest landowners should voluntarily take up and wipe out our floating debt (£500,000), and thus postpone the—for them — evil day, which I told them was at hand. It has now

fallen upon them. But changing the incidence of taxation will not cure the exodus nor complete the railways. Borrow you must. When you awake from your illusory non-borrowing policy to the fact that the snail-way of progression is obsolete, and are prepared to give the Colonial Treasurer a screw equal to that of a first-class bank manager or a second-class lawyer, say £2,000 per annum, I may possibly return and bring the exodus with me."

"Touching Vaile's railway sch—— "

"*Vale!*"

"Ring off!"

I should just like to swap all the Jews in Dunedin for Vogel.

Clothing, in fact everything, is cheaper in Dunedin than in any other town of the colony; a shilling will go farther there than elsewhere. For a shilling one can have four meals a day, with beer to wash them down. It is the custom—and a right good custom too—for Jewsalem publicans to bait their "bars" with a good supply of tempting edibles—rounds of beef, tongue, fish—several varieties—brawn, pork-pie, pickles, sandwiches—assorted, watercress, biscuits; twist, cottage, or other fancy bread. Thus for a morning meal Mr. Hungryone proceeds to an early house—he soon gets to know where the early worm is to be found—and calls for a glass of Speight's sparkling beer, and to show his obliging disposition and willingness to assist the barman, hands him the largest empty glass within reach. While the bar-keeper pulls the beer, he takes stock of the provisions, smilingly puts down his threepence, asks for the morning paper, and helps himself to a piece of cold beef or a slice of tongue and a roll.

For the midday meal he has a greater range of choice, and his difficulty is, out of so many good lunches offering, to select the best; but he generally banquets on fish, brawn, pork-pie, pickles, and threepenny-worth of beer at Miss Gebbie's. For tea, his threepenny-bit will introduce him to biscuit *ad lib.*, a bit of cheese, and a salad of watercress, if nothing else. For supper he is sure to strike something tasty at Georgie Smithson's—a Scotch oatmeal cake and shrimps, or a fresh sandwich.

"How rude," I hear 'one of the dowdies' remark, "not to address the lady as Miss Smithson." That's dowdy ignorance. We don't address the divine Sara as Miss Bernhardt, or say Mr. Julius Cæsar, or Mr. Vincent Pyke. The Bohemian Georgie would brain me with her fan, or a soup ladle, if I put such an affront upon her.

Georgie has retired from the stage, but she is still a public character. Her hotel is in Princess Street. She told me that her cook left her in a hurry one day, and she at once took her part without a rehearsal and cooked dinner for twenty people. When I innocently asked, "Did any of them die?" she struck her best Lady Macbeth attitude, and grasping a bundle of hair daggers, broke forth, "Insolent slave, and darest thou then—" I didn't wait for the curtain.

For two shillings one may eat and drink all day in Dunedin. Yet there is a certain class of people anxious to shut up the charitable institutions that enable one to do so. I was simple enough to pay a cold-blooded hotel-keeper ten shillings for three meals without beer, but I will know better next time.

One need not concern oneself about beds in Dunedin. The weather is so warm and mild that it is a pleasure rather than a hardship to sleep in the street. At least that is Sir Robert Stout's opinion.

I called to pay my respects to the ex-Premier of the Liberal party at his office—a circular dome-shaped building of the butter-cooler pattern. I found him in his study, in a white waistcoat and his shirt sleeves, fanning himself with a paper knife. I had on an extra flannel suit and an additional great coat, and a pocketful of handkerchiefs to wipe away the tears that trembled on the point of my nose, which is not "tip-tilted like the petal of a flower."

"Oppressively warm this morning," said Sir Robert; "rather unusual though. Dunedin, you know, has the most perfect climate in the world."

"Glad you told me so, Sir Robert; I should certainly have gone away with quite a different impression."

"You have nothing like it in Auckland—in fact, there is no such thing as a climate in the North."

"No, Sir Robert, we are not ambitious about a climate; we are thankful for small mercies, and take it as it comes. Is that snow?"

"Ah, a few stray flakes from the Southern Alps."

"I quite believe all you say, Sir Robert, and that Dunedin is really the capital of New Zealand. It's a pity that bar—— "

"That's another fallacy. There is no such thing as a bar in our harbour. We have dredged it away altogether."

"Well, I'll let the Admiral know, and he will probably rendezvous the Australian squadron here. I'll just get up North and see about it. Good morning, Sir Robert."

Stout's wud; Macandrew over again—Otago is New Zealand, and Dunedin its capital—"clean wud."

Chapter VI.

Church and State—Gambling—State Lottery—To Burst up the big Estates and Church Property Without Injury to the Individual—Conditional Immortality Carr—Women and Wanity—The Female Franchise—Dunedin Belles—Cab, Sir—The Christchurch Cabby—A Hint for Auckland Cabmen—Christchurch Constables—The Palladium—The Lost Coat—Sir George Grey's Farewell to Vincent Pyke—Christchurch Gentlemen of the Press—Gaiters.

In churches, chapels, and cathedrals, Dunedin is immensely wealthy. The early fathers must have been very good to the Church—good to it at the expense of the State. Her temples and her tabernacles have all the breadth, solidity, and calm contentedness of fat monks with rich endowments and regular meals.

Places of public worship abound everywhere in New Zealand, and the capital sunk in them is enormous—greater in amount even than that invested upon our racecourses. It is all "flam" to grunt and groan over the weight of necessary taxation when we voluntarily burden ourselves with such exhausting luxuries as these. Mark Twain,

struck with the contrast between the poverty of the people and the immense riches contained in their places of worship, exhorted the Italians to sell their churches.

I am not prepared to advocate the application of so drastic a remedy by New Zealanders; but, if it be that the present burden of taxation is greater than we can bear, let us at once turn some of our churches into schoolhouses and our racecourses into ploughed fields. In these utilitarian times it seems monstrous that these great edifices should cumber the country as useless ornaments for six days out of seven. The racecourse abolished, and with it the hordes of non-producing parasites who prey on the vitals of the public, the colony would experience a measure of relief—much needed!

As the gambling spirit of the nation—any more than its drinking habit—cannot be suppressed by prohibition, it behoves us to control it, and guide it into a channel at once safe, innocent, and profitable. The inauguration of a State lottery would satisfy the spirit; the lottery prizes to be farms cut out of the big estates.

The owners of the estates, I presume, would have no objection to sell at 10 per cent. over the property tax valuation, a price which, by this process, we could afford to pay. Having abolished the race "curses" and burst up the big estates, to the satisfaction of all parties, we could put up a choice lot of cathedrals and—— But, no, there would be altogether too much joy and happiness in the world if the churches were disposed of, and the preachers turned into ploughmen. But nevertheless, if "the worst comes to the worst" we'll take Mark Twain's advice, and sell our churches to pay our debts.

Talking of churches reminds me that I saw in Dunedin an old Auckland friend, Mr. Carr, who has forsa ken the plane for the pulpit, and is lecturing with some success on the subject of conditional immorality or immortality, I really could not be sure which it is. I get lost among the multitude of Christian doctrines, and life is too short to worry the way out. After eighteen hundred years hammering at them we don't seem to get "no forruder,"—as the well-seasoned old whisky worshipper said, when he could not get drunk on wine—than we were at the commencement of the Christian era.

Dunedin displays a considerable amount of wealth upon the backs of its womankind. Jewesses are notoriously given to wearing purple and fine linen– and jewels. The simple homespun tastes of the original inhabitants—the old identity—have been corrupted by the extravagantly dressed sisterhood of Jewry. This weakness of Jewish women is probably the secret cause of the Russian expulsion of the Jews. They could not help flaunting the "spoils of the Egyptians" in the faces of their victims, and so aggravated to fury the Russian women, who in rage and envy goaded on their males in the work of expulsion—the Russian Pharoah has a big contract on hand.

From the time of Eve, woman, it is understood, is at the bottom of every great calamity that has befallen the children of sin. It is to be hoped this reproach will be removed when she obtains the franchise. I see their Don Quixote champions in the House have no intention of admitting women to Parliament. If women are not fit and proper persons to represent the holders of the franchise, I fail to see how they can be considered fit to exercise it. Let us emancipate them from all their disabilities at once,

give them all the rights and privileges of man and be done with it. Let them serve on juries—they will be especially handy at coroners' inquests—let them be policemen if they want to. Let them have the whole pig or none, but don't let us go on jabbering about the female franchise for ever. I believe it is a put-up job to burke the Constitution Bill and the Federation question, Sir George.

But let us return to our Dunedin belles. "These beautiful gals" are of a type of beauty distinct from the long-haired, willowy Nelsonian, or the lithe, creamy Aucklander, and quite superior beings to the sheepish-looking Canterbury "plains," or the dumpy, dowdily-dressed, weather-beaten Invercargillite. A well set up lot are the Dunedin lasses, clear-complexioned, dimpled, laughing, happy-looking, and, if not the best-dressed, are the most richly apparelled of all Zealandia's fair—gaudy butterflies! There can be no objection to expensively dressed womanhood—none in the least—when it can be afforded. It is good for "bishness," and "Solomon" and "Ole Clo'" rub their hands and chuckle as they see the flash of diamonds and the glitter of gold among the massy velvets, sheeny satins, and rustling silks, sweeping up Princess Street on an afternoon. 'Tis their stock-in-trade. *Selah!*

Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof; I have had just one day in Dunedin. Hi! Lady Onslow! take me to the station—railway, not police station, stupid. The cabbies here have christened their vehicles after popular and famous women of the time, such as "Grace Darling," "Kitty O'Shea," "Princess of Wales," "Lady Onslow"—the one I hailed—and so on. It is rather a good idea; one can remember a name easier than a number. The Dunedin

cabby is scarcely so sharp and extortionate a villain as his Northern contemporary. But he is somewhat stupid—the cold, I suspect. One drove me to an hotel other than that which I told him I wanted to go to, and I did not discover the mistake till next morning.

At Christchurch a cabby drove me from the railway station to an hotel and charged two shillings. I afterwards found his legal fare was one shilling. Then I went in quest of that cabby, and spent the best part of a day over it; but I found him at last, and made him return that colonial Robert he robbed me of. Another colonial Robert was by my side, or perhaps I should not have fared so well. Mr. Policeman A1 expressed some surprise at his act, and told me that cabby was one of the best marks on their books, which caused me to wonder what sort of atrocious rascals the worst marks might be. I have declared war against the cabby, henceforth.

Our Auckland cabbies should adopt the Dunedin custom and call their cabs after some of our local celebrities of the male gender. They have a capital nomenclature from which to select appropriate names, viz.:—Greenway, Cooper, Cotter, Skipper Bowden, Abbott John, Hitchens, Rae, Goldwater, Webster, Kohn. To afford their fares food for reflection, a photograph of the worthy whose name the cab bears might be inserted in the panel. Hip! Harpies!

The Christchurch constabulary are a steady, sober-sided set, and have been on the beat here from youth to age, and have gathered together considerable property. I don't like to hear of bobbies acquiring wealth—it is ominous for the drunks,—but I believe the Christchurch constables' gains have been legitimately acquired. Exit the preservers of the peace.

Enter the protectors of the British liberties. The newspaper press is the most wonderful institution of the age. Its power for good or evil is universally admitted; its advertising columns present the only royal road to fortune—Professor Holloway and the proprietors of Pears' soap found the way. It has made more millionaires than the best diamond-fields ever discovered. But people are apt to forget it, and it becomes necessary for the Press to keep them supplied with well-authenticated instances of its power. Here is one I can vouch for. A day or two ago a Wanganui paper announced that I was going to the South Seas—where frosts and freezing works are unknown—to establish a dairy factory on cocoanut milk. And before the ink was dry on the paper my greatcoat was stolen from an hotel five-and-twenty miles away, by some thief who thought I could have no further use for it. Verily, the Press is a great institution. And Inspector Pardy and all his policemen have not been able to recover me that coat again. Mr. Ballance's one-policeman policy, is, I consider, a hideous failure.

I wouldn't for anything have lost that coat. It is an historical coat. Sir George Grey greatly admired it when he saw me with it on in the lobby of the House. I'm a good figure—think I shall charge Professor Dalton for setting off his clothing; wonder what he gives for lay figures. The G.P.C.—Great Promoter of Constitutions—said he was going to order one exactly like it; but he never means what he says. And the delightful old diplomatist said I looked so cosy and comfortable he really quite envied me—Pears' soap!

Many anecdotes of the old man have recently been retailed. The following, told to me by a brother pressman,

who had it from Vincent Pyke himself, is as good as any. It was at the close of the last Parliament; Vincent waddled down to bid the G.O.M. farewell.

"Good-bye, Sir George," said Pyke.

"Good-bye, Peyke," drawled Grey.

"Good-bye, once more, Sir George," responded the too exuberant Pyke, "and if we meet not again in this world we shall in the next."

"Hope not, Peyke, hope not," was the shaft twanged by the accomplished toxophilite, as he wrinkled his nose and scooted across the gangway before the demoralised "Peyke" could recover his breath. Pyke has not recovered it to this day.

The Grand Old Man evidently means to leave his friend Pyke in the Nether Chamber, while he takes a seat in the Upper House. Five minutes after he enters there, he will introduce a Bill to amend the constitution of that House. And there will be discord in Heaven over his Elective Governors' Bill. It matters not where Sir George Grey goes, wherever there's a Government he's agin it.

It is almost a pity Sir George does not elect to go to the other kingdom-come. With his one-man one-vote he would overturn the Government of Satan in one session—come to think of it, though, perhaps the unborn millions would be better off with Satan!

The Christchurch pressmen are the most gentlemanly fellows I met with on my trip, and I have to thank them for many courtesies extended to me during my brief sojourn in cathedral city—jolly dawgs!

Christchurch has a cathedral, with a very tall spire—at least it was very tall till an earthquake came along one day and shook its head off. The boss of it is Bishop Julius, a practical Christian and most popular prelate. A short, square-built, firm-jawed, clean-shaved gentleman, who smokes a dudeen and reads shilling shockers, "Ramblings by A. Tramp," and other light literature of that sort—the very antithesis of my lord Auckland. A-men!

Chapter VII.

On the Square—John Robert Godley—A Forgetful Surveyor—Some Great Public Benefactors—Something like a Statue—A-Spire-ing—We will go Poking the Pigeon Holes—Fish, Flesh, Fowl, Fruit—Canterbury Mutton—Spudville—Harbours Hopeless—Timaru Graphically Described by a Friend—Kaiapoi—Home, Sweet Home!

Cathedral Square is the hub of Christchurch. But Christchurch is not like Palmerston North—all square. The cathedral stands in the square, and Christchurch hangs round the square. Yet is not the city built on the square. To the stranger it seems laid out on cartwheel principles, and made up of naves and spokes—I generally found myself travelling up the wrong spoke when I took my walks abroad. There is a dead level sameness about the streets that is somewhat puzzling to one accustomed to the distinct individuality possessed by streets in the other three primary cities.

So pleased were the Christchurch people with the way their city was laid out, they erected a monument in the square—and facing the cathedral—to the founder, Mr. John

Robert Godley—it has been a godly city ever since. John Robert was a man who saw some inches further than the length of his nose, and made the square big enough to hold himself and the cathedral, so that the unborn millions should never have to pester the newspaper editor, of the day, with questions concerning the name and personal appearance of the great forefather of the city.

The surveyor who parcelled out Auckland forgot to make a square, and is consequently forgotten, as he deserves to be; but the misfortune of it is that Costley, McKelvie, Sir George Grey, "A Tramp, Esq.,"—and Boomerang—and the other great public benefactors will disappear from the minds of men, and never be heard of by the unborn millions for want of a square to place our images in—oh, the pity of it!

Great stars! what a splendiferous equestrian statue A. Tramp and Co. would make; Boomy sitting on his tail and clawing at the Southern Cross with his front toes; myself a-waving a cocked hat, and pointing towards "Where is Waiuku." Oh, the misfortune of it! My inkdom for a square. Friends, rum 'uns, citizens, country men, think of it; what an ornament!——

"Oh, square off that, and come down to business."

There's that chief editor of mine again. Whenever I get my Pegasus on the wing with a good flight of fancy, he is sure to interpose with his frivolous and absurd interjections, and spoil the fun.

Who plotted Auckland, anyhow? Some of our old identities ought to put it on record before they depart.

I felt like going up a-top of Christchurch steeple to obtain a panoramic view of the square and city, but finding I had to walk every step of the way there and back, I aspired no further, and concluded to defer the journey till they fixed up an electric lift—then I wouldn't mind paying threepence to ride that steeplechase.

In a corner of "the square" the post and telegraph offices are situated. Something less than a royal commission might sit here with advantage to the public. I will back them against anything in the Public Trust Office for stupidity, superciliousness, and carelessness in handling other people's property. In rambling up and down the country I am necessarily brought a good deal in contact with our public offices, more especially those of the Public Works and Postal Departments. Hitherto, I have scarcely fulfilled my duty to the public as a press representative in not giving greater publicity to my experiences and observations on their working and how the public are served by them. I may not, however, be so reticent in future. My Christchurch experience is about the last straw that sets me bucking. I can assure the public there is still plenty of room for reform and further retrenchment in these two popular departments of the Civil Service.

In its supplies of fish Christchurch is ahead of the seaport capitals. Fishmongers' shops are numerous; fresh fish is plentiful, in great variety, and the supply constant—not as with us, either a feast or a famine. Their "bonny fish and halesome farin" are not hawked about the streets, in the sun and dust, in offensively filthy wheelbarrows, by vociferating, villainously unclean, and repulsive-looking hawkers—the sight of the abomination would, completely, knock

Christchurch off its aristocratic perch. Their fishmongers are clean, tidy, respectable, and their shops sweet, cool, caller'—one may eat fish with confidence in Christchurch. Their fruit and poultry shops, also, are calculated to whet the appetite of the onlooker.

While I am on the food supply I may mention that the beef and beer are very indifferent, but the mutton is most excellent—try a "curly-tailed" chop, it is delicious. I had to give up beef altogether and confine myself to mutton—with occasionally a little tender turkey. Canterbury can't make beef, but it can grow mutton; what it grows on is a little mysterious to me.

Travelling, by rail, across the far-famed plains I saw no grass, at least not what we call grass—the green succulent herbage of the North; the grass there is the dry light-drab coloured tussock. The sheep feed on this, and drink great quantities of water.

The country is what you may call a dry and parched-up land, and water is scarce. What between the openness of their pasture and the distance to water, Mr. Sheep is kept pretty busy. Whether it is the tussock, the exercise, the air, or the water that gives the firmness and flavour to the Canterbury mutton, is what I cannot decide, but I incline to the opinion that it is the nutritive matter contained in water that makes its quality superior to our Northern mutton—tough, but true!

The two border, and breakwater, towns of Otago and Canterbury are Oamaru and Timaru. Oamaru is celebrated for its stone and its "spuds." This year I believe the potato-farmer had a bad time, and some abandoned their crops altogether to the landlord for his rent. They pay

from two to three pounds per acre per annum for the privilege of growing potatoes. The original price of the freehold was ten shillings per acre—somebody has had a good whack of the unearned increment here. Oamaru has a harbour, a harmless looking pot of a thing, but it will, I daresay, see the potato industry closed. The Hon. John Ballance is determined New Zealand shall not enter the Australian confederation, and in that case Oamaru will have little further use for its harbour; same with Timaru.

What the sand is doing for New Plymouth the shingle is doing for Timaru breakwater—rapidly smothering it. It is a race between nature and art, and unless art keeps moving nature will soon get ahead. We cannot make harbours, and then sit down and look at them. Nature is never still. Federation may enable us to provide the means to keep our artificial ports open; without it, our money and our harbours must speedily disappear in shingle-beds and sand-hills.

Feeling unequal to the task of describing Timaru, I proposed that a young friend of mine should do it as a practice lesson, and send it in under the *nom de plume* of "Minerva." For the first attempt it is very creditable. I have, however, taken the liberty of an editor—editors are always taking liberties with other people's "copy"—and embellished it with a few interpolations of my own, and, of course, utterly ruined the sense of it; but that is an editor's privilege, and the young beginner in journalism must learn to suffer without using swear words.

Thus "Minerva":—

"Many of your readers have, no doubt, seen the pretty little town of Timaru" [it is laid out on an old bullock-dray track] with its attractive breakwater and extensive back

country." [We admit the back country, but the handsome and intelligent librarian of the Timaru Mechanics' Institute is much more attractive than its breakwater—"Minerva" need not get jealous.] "Situated midway between Christchurch—'the city of the plains'"—[plains are feminine] "and Dunedin" [the city of the Jews], "it affords a pleasing resting place to the traveller who finds the journey to and from these cities too much to accomplish in the one day. He arrives, say, from the North" [that's where all the good fellows come from] "at 2.40 p.m., and in the first place is delighted with the picturesque station." [No, "Minerva," no, there is nothing picturesque about that station after one has lunched there—we nearly broke our editorial jaw on a hunk of tough beef.] "After refreshing the inner man he inquires what of interest is to be seen, and in reply is greeted with 'You must go to the breakwater.'" [Ah!] "The afternoon is exquisite" [hum]. "Sol beams brightly in a cloudless sky." [Dazzle mine eyes!] "The prospect seems pleasing, to-day is just a day to his mind," [we wish it were to-morrow, Mr. Björnsen!] "all sunny before and sunny behind" [heavens above! and we didn't observe it]; "so he turns as directed and wends his way to the main wharf. On nearing the end of this part of the breakwater he stands and gazes back on the town" [wants to smoke]; "as far as the eye can see the waves of the mighty Pacific lap the shore." [That's good on the mighty Pacific, but we see that a party of scientific snobs have obtained a new name for it, the Sea of Tasman, the Tasman Sea, which will be presently corrupted into Tasmanian Sea, and then the Vandemonians will fancy it belongs to them entirely.] "Far to the left lies Patiti Point, better known in old New Zealand history as Bloody Jack's Point." [We haven't got an old

New Zealand history by us, or we should turn it up and see who the sanguinary John was—see the point?] "Above this" [B.J.'s Point] "are the Caledonian Society's grounds." [Readers will be glad to know there is some Scotch leaven in Timaru.] "The eye travels on and the visitor is attracted by the sight of three large brick buildings." [Yes!] "They are the flourmills of the town, and send out the finest flour in New Zealand." [Gently, fair goddess, gently! All the money in the flourmills of Timaru, would not induce the proprietors of the NEW ZEALAND HERALD and AUCKLAND WEEKLY NEWS to insert such an advertisement in their reading columns. If the millers don't send you a ton of flour and a new helmet for a Christmas box they ought to be kicked—and we're the boy to do it—imagine us tucking up the bottom of our pantaloons, ready to wade in.] "The visitor, still looking towards the town, notes another wharf. This is the Moody Wharf. Beyond this again is a long rubble wall which stretches out towards the breakwater, thus forming a large basin where ships can anchor in safety." [Where the Curacoa anchored and shelled the town?] "Further on the visitor notices a long sandy beach, where the ripple of the waves is so slight as to be almost imperceptible. This, he is told, has been marked out for a bathing ground, and during the summer months it is a resort for hundreds--it is within such easy walking distance of the town. Next summer it is to be hoped more bathing machines will be placed there." [The pleasures of hope, ah, we!] "'What a great wave rose over there just now!' the visitor remarks. 'Oh! those are the Dashing Rocks,' he is informed. The sea dashes with tremendous force against those immense boulders, and it is a grand sight to see the voluminous waves break into spray. After the manner of Southey, they might be described as gathering and feathering, and whitening and

brightening, and hurrying and skurrying, and thundering and floundering, and grumbling and rumbling, and tumbling and clattering, and shattering and battering, recoiling, turmoiling, and toiling and boiling; sounds and motions for ever and ever are blending all at once and all o'er with a mighty uproar." [Did Southey say all that? Then he did not leave much "inging" for anyone else to do. *Taihoa!*] "Behind this picturesque point, far away in the distance, may be seen the refrigerating works, and also the houses of the engineers, which present a neat appearance." [A cold subject; press me closer, goddess dear! Do you know that the terrible frost we have had this season is all along of so many freezing works starting. At Wanganui they hang their carcases outside now to freeze.] "And now the visitor breaks forth into rapturous and enthusiastic expressions of delight." [No! did we, though? Wonder whose malt-cellar we were in last?] "'What a pretty back country you have,' he exclaims; and truly to-day the hills are lovely in their soaring grandeur and magnificent grace. Oh! meet nurse for a poetic child." [That's we.] "Their king, too, has deigned to show his lofty head and the visitor thoroughly appreciates the glimpse he gets Aorangi, the sky-piercer, 'so near and yet so far.'" [So far, so good.] "He has now been shown everything of interest that can be seen from this standpoint, and expresses himself delighted and grateful for a pleasant afternoon. Not forgetful of a promise to be shown the attractions of the town itself" [it holds only one for us], "he gives the right hand of fellowship to his Mentor." [Most gracious goddess, our heart! our heart! that's our soft spot. The other attractions you may please to send us will be handed to the chief, who still takes a kindly interest in Timaru. *Vale!*]

At Christchurch I had the pleasure of meeting an old acquaintance, Mr. Cullen, formerly a member of an Auckland soft-goods house. He is now manager of the Kaiapoi Woollen Company's business, and is, as far as I can judge, conducting it successfully. I visited the mills at Kaiapoi in company with a Yorkshire miller, who was on a tour of the colony, expecting to learn something about woollen goods—and I did. We had travelled round the 80 looms and squinted at the 250 Canterbury "plains," who may—after Southey—be described as sitting and standing, weaving and wefting, stitching and sewing, shuttling and scuttling, trimming and treadling, threading and throbbing, twisting and twining, tearing, and teasing, pouting and petting, singing and sighing, sobbing and smiling, laughing and languishing, nodding, tripping, chattering, screaming and shrieking—with equal vehemence at a mouse or an earthquake—bawling and bouncing, winning and winding, winking and waltzing, whispering, and wondering who the deuce we were. Like Bunthorne round the corner I can see 250 irate maidens "going for" me!—to kiss me and caress me. But I did not call them "plains," it was the Christchurch editor—rude and wild. They can give him the kicks, I'll take the ha'pence. My friend the Yorkshireman had examined all the cloth, smelt it, crumpled it, pulled it out between his fingers and thumb, rubbed it, stretched it, held it up to the light, stroked it, patted it, and put it down with a sigh that sounded something like A' ae 'oo'? Going through the wool-store Yorkshire kept ramming his hand into every open bale we passed, and pulling out fistfuls of wool, caressing and smoothing it down, and measuring its length, and rubbing his hands with it in a tender sort of way, and putting it reverently back into the bales again—with the same old sigh. I

remarked that he seemed to have a very affectionate regard for the snowy fleece, and asked what he thought of the cloth made from it.

"Look here, sir," he said, "for over twenty years I have run a woollen mill at home, three times the size of this one, and I never saw a pound of new wool in it, and have had a return of 25 per cent. for the capital invested. Make good cloth! Why, damn it, man, with such raw material as this they couldn't make a poor piece of cloth if they tried."

"Of what, then, do you make your cloth?" I wonderingly asked.

"Rags, sir; rags, clippings, devil-dust. I'll make you a knickerbocker tweed suit, as good-looking as anything in Christchurch, for three-and-sixpence."

"No, I'm knickerbockered if you do; no more English raiment for me. Scotch tweed, avaunt! *Vive* Kaiapoi! Local Industry—even to the umbrella!—for ever, and ever, *ake.*"

There is no stinking pride about a Yorkshireman when he meets a countryman abroad. All the Yorkshiremen in Kaiapoi had, as a matter of right, to shake hands with the home mill-owner. Some of them had worked for him, or their fathers had; some knew his mother, his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts—I left the "magpies" at it, and returned to Christchurch.

The peculiarity of the distance between Christchurch and Kaiapoi by rail is that it is 14 miles there and 13 miles back, on the same track — so sayeth the Railway Commissioners.

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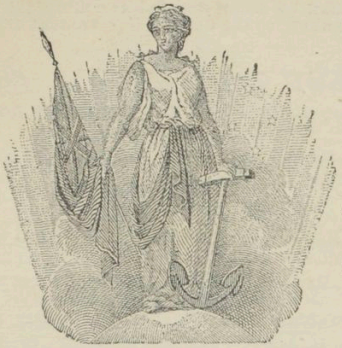

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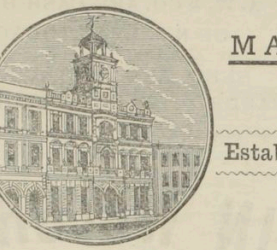

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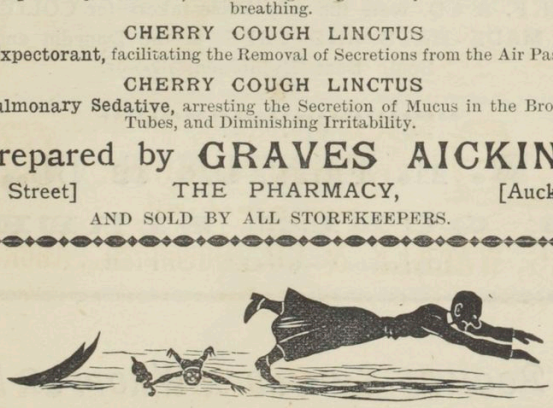

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