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Pioneering in Poverty Bay(N.Z.)

Two or three of the following chapters have already appeared in the *New Age*.

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PLATE I The Home Bush at Kiore.

Pioneering in Poverty Bay (N.Z.)

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Apologia Pro Literis Meis

"A TITLE is it? Let me think. ... What you want is, obviously, something neat and at the same time unusual, something that will not only catch the eye, but fit the facts. In short, to quote the immortal Birdofreedom Sawin, you need 'suthin combinin moril trewth with phrases such as strikes.'

"How about *I, I, Sir*, or better still, *ALL MY I and never a Betty Martin*?"

Thus jeered "my familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread," and Truth, who barbed the gibe, left It quivering in the flesh.

And what was there to be said in reply? I could only feebly contend that the book had to be about myself anyhow, and that not being a real writer I had lacked skill to make apparent, in spite of all, my essential modesty.

Then taking courage again, I exclaimed: I will not be put down, I will e'en brazen It out; and should one decry me for a swollen egoist, I will fling at him the following proposition and thereby blow up again my somewhat deflated self-esteem.

I will ask him this. If he who makes two blades of grass grow where, before him, grew but one, be accounted, as he admittedly is generally accounted, a great benefactor of mankind, what limit can be put to my own merits who have caused to sprout untellable millions of such, where aforetime was never a one?

But, joking apart, let me now ask, why do we people bother to write reminiscences anyway?

Psycho-analysts would probably assign as a reason, a not uncommon access of Exhibitionism in the aged—the occasional desire of old men to go naked. But that will hardly do, for we do not by any means wish to go as bare as all that. Reminiscences are not diaries and we do not, in them, often dare to emulate the nudity of our very delightful friend Mr. Pepys. Indeed, except by inadvertence, we not only seldom cast a clout, but are even tempted, when occasion offers, to take unto ourselves garments of glory.

So, then, in order that our self-respect may have peace, let us agree that our motives are as follows:

First, a reasonable desire, in us who are usually dumb, for some sort of self-expression; and secondly, a wish that our children may have, later, something of our own writing, whereby to remember us.

P. T. K.

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Afoot on the RunN.Z. 1900

The sight of that hill so sinful steep
Sets me a-sighing.
Yet I'm sure that beyond it dozens of sheep
Are busy dying.
And I doubt not, away by the river below,
The fence is gone;
And that cattle are out which shouldn't be so,
With the gate all wrong.
The wethers that ought to be ready to freeze,
Confound it, aren't.
The lambs I should count by their hundreds with ease
I somehow can't.
The Maoris who ought to be cutting the scrub,
Are off on the spree,
Oh, if anyone's bothered in earning his grub,
It's me,

But gold is the grass in the evening light
On the homestead hills,
And a haze of the finest sun dust bright
The Valley fills.
The great bush spurs in long array
Mysterious stand,
Where the hidden river winds away
To Fairy-land,

And gone are the bothers that worried me so,
Now Fairy-land's down, in the valley below.

IFirst Experiences

HATING, as a young man in the eighties, both the hideousness of our towns and the outlook and ideals of commercial life, and loathing alike the enforced confinement and everlasting worrying; detail of my job in a big business house, I was always dreaming of the delights of a free life, of building one's own hut on one's own land far away from the galling restraints of civilisation. That was some fifty years ago. Though I should still be unhappy without my own bit of land, and as uncomfortable in a house I had neither designed nor built, as in another man's coat and trousers, I have nowadays no sort of objection to having civilisation within easy reach.

But as I was then, when month after month came exciting letters from an elder brother, always a rolling stone, who had been learning sheep-farming in New Zealand and had just taken up 1,500 acres of land, I made no struggle to resist the temptation, but went out forthwith to join him.

I will not weary you with the details of the voyage out. Indeed, in my time, it was very bad form, in New Zealand, to discuss the matter at all. Everyone had been through it, and the recitation by the new arrival of the incidents of life aboard ship was usually too boring to be tolerated.

My ship was the first mail steamer that had ever sailed direct to New Zealand. She was only of 2,000 tons, with very poor accommodation, every inch of which was crawling with cockroaches; and the passengers, being nearly all new to travel, soon started quarrelling, so that before we were half-way they were standing in two

cliques, at daggers drawn. There was one Mark Tapley, however, who said: "I like this ship, she's the first boat I've ever been on where they strain all the cockroaches out of the soup before they bring it to table!" At the Cape we heard of the capture of the murderers of Lord Frederick Cavendish, which fixes the year. Though always a bad sailor, with no great love of the sea after I had once been on it, I have never since been half so glad to see the last of a ship as I was at saying goodbye to this one. Later, leaving a comparatively luxurious coasting steamer at Gisborne, we were taken aboard a very miniature tender and then transferred to a row-boat to take us over a sand-bar into the river.

It was in the quiet of very early morning after a rainy night, and 'everything was freshly green, and especially delightful after the weary sea. A high grass bank bounded the still water, crowned with a grove of Ngaio

Ngaio = *Myoporum laetum*

trees, with thatched native wharés

Wharé rhymes with foray.

behind, and as we rowed along there appeared above, standing out against the far blue of the bush range, the dignified figure of a stalwart Maori, draped in a scarlet blanket. It was the exact picture for my young mind. It is still before me, as clear as ever.

The fifteen-mile ride up to our section was a delight, along a narrow, winding track among open fern-covered hills, and the arrival at our "really own" land a delirious joy. The chosen homestead site was a twenty-acre bracken covered flat among steep hills of fern and bush, and bounded by a little river of rapids and clear deep pools. But, beyond the delight of ownership and the charming beauty of the place, there was not at first much other comfort. For my brother had had to be away from It for months, recovering from typhoid, and things were all anyway.

The teat was down and all the stores were in a little thatched storehouse of rough poles called a *whata*. My brother had been careful to make this high off the ground, some eight or nine feet indeed, but had forgotten the necessary rat-insulating tins, so that the flour and sugar had suffered a good deal. After spending some time with a pig-spear jabbing, from under, at the grey bellies of the depredators as they ran across the open pole floor, we climbed up and spent a none too restful night, with nothing but a blanket between us and these very uneven little rafters. Next day we had the tent up and a single sheet or "fly" to cook under, and things generally a little more comfortable. But we were pretty raw with regard to camp life, and did many things all wrong. For one thing, my brother insisted on crockery, until, carrying all the breakfast things out of the tent one morning in a big tin milk pan, he tripped up and broke every single one. After trying tin, which is vile to clean, we finally settled down to enamelled iron, trusting that swallowed chips off it would not hurt us,

Having fixed up a gate on the track to keep our horses from straying back, and done a few other immediately needed things about the camp, we should have at once begun to clear the bush and grass it for stock, Instead

PLATE II The old Homestead, Wai Mat a Valley

of that, we wasted most of the winter in building a quite unnecessarily solid and roomy hut of round timber and clay. The idea was magnificent, but it was not sheep-farming. Later on a younger brother arrived, accompanied by a great strong young fellow, a farmer's son, and with their help we soon finished the clay fort, as our neighbours called it.

There was, however, no thatch handy and no suitable timber for splitting shingles; so we obtained a big tarred tarpaulin, and that, tied securely on, remained our roof for two or three years. When there was a wild sou'-easter raging at night with a continuous torrent of rain, we were often obsessed with the fear that a corner might blow up and the rest follow, leaving us exposed in the dark to the howling downpour, amid the ruin of all our worldly goods; and though it held tight to the end, we had been years living in a well-roofed house before we ceased to take joy in the sound of heavy drops on galvanised iron.

There were great beams of round timber across our big hut, and for sleeping accommodation we laid a strong tarpaulin over them, fastened at the sides. When we went up to bed, the first in took up all the slack as he sank down between his two particular beams.

The next man regained some of this slack, incidentally rolling No. 1 dean over, and so to the end. And when one got up, he let down all the others with an awakening jerk. Then we nailed the tarpaulin along each beam and had peace, until one night the farmer's heavy son split his piece and fell headlong, and would have been hurt had there not been very luckily some bags of chaff beneath. Meanwhile, I myself had swung a hammock down below which was comfortable enough when once you were in, but needed a lot of blankets. The terrier was very disturbed one night, and stepping down to strike a light to see what the trouble was, I

found myself over ankle deep in cold water. We had forgotten to put a proper drain round the place. The earth floor was muddy and miserable for some days thereafter, and that little lesson was learnt for good and all. In the end each made himself a rough bedstead of poles and sacking, and went up aloft no more.

Wading the bouldery shallows on a frosty morning to fetch back the strayed horses from across the river was a chilly job. A rough pair of stilts made quite a sporting affair of it, as there was an elusive patch of clay somewhere in the stony ford, and if a stilt went into that, you were done.

As the months went on, we began to work in earnest, bush-felling, splitting posts, fencing, burning off and sowing fern, and what not.

We each took cooking week about. On Sunday the new cook generally spent his spare time cutting firewood and getting things in order. On weekdays he was allowed one hour ahead of the others home from work, and he was expected to have ready, by the time the rest of us were home, fried chops or some other hot meat, potatoes, and perhaps another vegetable, with a big billy of tea and a flap-jack or doughboy or some sort of pudding to follow—a flap-jack being a thick heavy pancake and a doughboy a dumpling. To be up to time, he had to be pretty smart and to have everything very well arranged, and as he often had to spend half his night baking bread, he was generally mighty glad when his week was up. If, however, he fancied himself at the cooking fire, he longed for a wet day. I remember a flaming reputation earned by the help of a timely sou'-easter and an old Soyer cookery-book, the masterpiece thus accomplished having been a real beefsteak pudding. I refused all flattering "encores"; I would not risk my halo. On the eve of another soaker, the carcass of a good wild sow had been brought in, and we had sausages—sausages complete in every way—hot sausages browning and sizzling in the pan! Think of it!

It was about then that I had pointed out to me a striking bit of evidence as to the existence of design in creation. It was a fact, I learnt, that in every pig there is a bit of spatulated bone exactly suited for use as a mustard-spoon.

We had all brought out from home a lot of unnecessary linen, and when this stock had all been used, some of the earlier discarded articles seemed clean enough to go on with for a bit. But the evil day could not be put off indefinitely, and the time came when there had to be proclaimed a general wash.

Firewood was sledged down to the riverside shingle, posts were driven in, all our pots, kettles and boilers were slung by wire hooks to a long pole over a mighty fire, and the work began. My own part of the job was to stand out in the river in a state of nature and rinse. There was a great pile of stuff to do and we were a whole day at it, but work as we would, the linen, though certainly rendered more wholesome, did not seem exactly white, and Reckitt only served to make blue streaks in it. My elder brother sat up most of the night starching his collars and ironing them with a steel splitting wedge.

He got them really stiff and even shiny, though they seemed badly to need another wash when he had done. For my own part I resigned from the Great Laundry Combine right away, and henceforth boiled up a coloured shirt once a week "on my own," and stowed the rest of my linen away.

We all certainly worked pretty hard, but the new life was most exhilarating, and none of us then had the slightest wish to go back to England.

After two or three years of this sort of life we had a fairly good wooden house built for us ([Plate II](#)), and my mother joining us with her youngest son, an era of reasonable comfort was begun.

We soon had our first sheep. on the place ([Plate III](#)), not many, not so many but that we could get to recognise a few of them individually. There was, for instance, the ewe that would take a standing hop over any fence we had, there was the "Dook" with his abnormal nose, and the old girl who, if she wanted to cross the river, would calmly jump into deep water and swim it, whereas it was often a big business to get a mob across a quite shallow ford. (Distinctive collective words for various live things are not much in use in the colonies. You refer to a drove of cattle or horses, a flock of sheep, a flight of ducks or a bevy of quail, as just a "mob")

My elder brother had a fine sense of humour, but it was intermittent, and sometimes deserted him altogether. We were trying to get back a ewe and lamb from the bottom of a deep gully into which they had strayed. A genial bushman had carried the lamb up the hill and held it there in full sight, while my brother tried to induce the weak mother to climb up after it. Finding this difficult, he, with the utmost seriousness, called out to Goodall in a loud and most earnest voice, "Will you *baa*, please?" The good man was so tickled that he let go the lamb and rolled on the grass in fits.

A handsome black-bearded kindly man was Goodall, a first-class bushman and an excellent fencer. With little if any formal education, but by no means unread, he had the charm of natural good manners and intelligence. Everyone liked and respected him up country, but he could not keep away from town—the irresistible longing came on him every few months. He ended by drowning himself in our river in a fit of d.t.

II Settling Down

WHEN, as time went on, by burning off fern and letting some small bush felling contracts, we had grass for some hundreds of sheep, a woolshed became necessary for shearing and storage of wool; so we set to work to erect one. We used for the heavy frame straight tree stems up to about a foot in diameter (with 1½-inch round pegs instead of mortices), and for the lighter parts, poles of various sizes, the only sawn timber in it being the floor and the weather-boards.

The timber we had—kahikatoa

Leptospermum scoparium.

or tree manuka—was so hard, that when some was sent to England, the consignee, finding holes, wrote for samples of the grub that had made them, hoping to get a hint as to tools suitable for working it; so it may be imagined that the work of boring holes for the big pegs was no joke.

A Scotch neighbour, whom I shall mention again later as a man of ability but no learning, happened to come by when the building was half up, and finding the whole thing wobble when he pushed it, did not hesitate to tell us that we were doing it all wrong, and that it must shortly collapse. New chums though we were, we did, however, possess some elementary knowledge of the rigidity of triangles, and our braces once pegged on, the same good man, with an undisguised astonishment that pleased us very much, was kind enough to admit that all was now as firm as a rock. As a matter of fact, we sheared our sheep in it below, and stored tons of wool in it above for many years,

There was another business to be undertaken. Even when we had only a few dozen sheep we were legally bound to dip them once a year to destroy parasites. So we fetched along one of our big tin-lined packing cases, filled it with the proper solution, and started to give each his bath. By the time we had actually lifted, in and out, two sheep, we realised that we had set ourselves very much too heavy a job, so we crammed the rest of the animals into a pen and poured the mixture over them. Next year we dug a long hole in the clay and made them swim through it, but that again was only a makeshift and a very dirty one; so then we had to make a real "dip" (Plate IV)—a great timber trough, some five feet deep and forty feet long, and after caulking the joints, to sink it in the ground.

PLATE III The Spring Crop

To one end of this trough the sheep, from a continually-filled pen, should follow each other close, should slide down a smooth boarded slope, plunge in headlong, and swim along to the other end. Here are small yards, from which will drain back into the trough most of the mixture of arsenic or carbolic with which the sheep's fleeces are saturated. To see that no animal escapes with a dry head, it is one man's job to stand over the dip with a crutch, shoving every sheep well under as he swims by.

In theory, as I said above, the sheep should follow each other in. In practice this happens only with young and unsophisticated sheep, and that only when managed by capable yard-hands. But once bit, twice shy, and in their second year there is more trouble and you must have a man hanging over the low-boarded fence by the entering slope to decide the sheep's mind for him, at the moment of hesitation, by starting him down the slippery slope with an emphatic shove.

But in the third year a lot of hard shoving is necessary even to get the sheep into the pen, and then, with broken nails, and hands getting fuller and fuller of thistle spines, you sometimes have to grab each individual old ewe, as best you can, neck and rear and shove her in by main force. And you have to see that there is not the slightest roughness or crack on the bottom or sides of this narrow boarded slide, as it is astonishing how little is required to give a hold to the hoof of a thoroughly recalcitrant old ewe.

This stubborn resistance to cleanliness on the part of the more experienced sheep worries and wearies each new sheep-farmer as he comes along, and many have been the deep-laid schemes to circumvent it.

One bright spirit constructed a sheep-wide alley with a floor of slats on canvas, something on the tube escalator principle, worked by a hand crank. You turned the handle and the sheep were carried happily along to their decreed dip in the delousing fluid. Some innocent young hoggets did actually go along all right. So, full of joyful anticipation, the inventor called his friends and his neighbours together to see the thing work, fetching in a large yard-full of grown sheep for the event.

It was a pretty bad fiasco. His mechanics were all right, but he had not made a study of ovine psychology.

Not only did the animals refuse with the utmost firmness to put a single hoof on the escalator floor, but when some were taken up and planted well ahead on it by main force, they could, and did, back out of it at a much quicker rate than that at which the inventor's crank could grind forward his moving floor.

Another idea was better, but even that did not deceive the victims more than once. The sheep, on this plan, are pushed into a good-sized pen, and when they are all in, a bolt is pulled and the whole thing sinks beneath the chemic wave, sheep and all.

Such a dip was built by a large runholder in Hawkes Bay, who after one or two preliminary trials invited a small party of the local sheep magnates to lunch and to admire.

To see exactly how the thing was made they all followed the owner on to the patent platform. A younger son, who was looking on, suddenly grasping the full gorgeousness of the opportunity, pulled the trigger handle, had one glorious glimpse of the result, and bolted for his life. For a week after that it was only his mother knew of his hiding-place; she managed to get food to him somehow. He still lives!

There was not much sheep work in the winter, the ewes lambing on the hills being left pretty much to themselves. Docking and ear-marking the lambs came on well in the spring, and in November began the great business of shearing.

We always employed Maoris for this work, who would each shear from eighty to one hundred sheep a day, and were generally very pleasant, jolly, fellows to do with. They don't mind hard work so long as it can be done in company and does not last too long, though I only knew one Maori who would tackle a season's axe-work.

My brother H. generally looked after the shearing, while my dogs and I fetched in and took back the sheep. Now and then the shed would get completely blocked with bales of wool owing to the shocking unreliability of the Irish drayman. H., not knowing where to turn for room, with Mulooly three days overdue, would be boiling over with rage and breathing forth threatenings and slaughter. At last the five-horse dray would come along, and H. would rush out to say to his face what he thought of the quite unperturbed and airily smiling driver. Time and again this happened, but never once did he succeed in getting home on him. With a couple of words Mulooly would turn his point and have him helpless with laughter. Unfortunately I do not remember exactly how, in any one case, it was done, as there only remains in the family one quotation from him, a fragment of one of his tales:

"An Oi hit him wan welt over d' head wid de greeps

Greeps=potato fork.

—and d' pig *wint*."

At a friend's woolshed two young fellows were turning the winch in the wool loft, hauling up the newly-pressed 3-cwt. bales. Work below being for a moment slack, a couple of the jolly Maori girls, who were employed to pick up the shorn fleeces, were induced to stand on the last pressed bale. When their heads appeared above the loft floor the sweating winders, feeling they were being unduly put upon, let go, incontinent. The bale and its burden came down with a run—without harm, but the noise and vibration of the crude old winch were tremendous—till, finally, the great iron handle flew off clean through the roof and far away out in the paddock, missing one of the winders by a hair's-breadth.

Ah me—these women!

It was from this same shed that there came a large grindstone, the discovery of which raised the indignant ire of the final wool purchaser in Bradford, who considered it a poor bargain at 1s. 6d. per lb. It had been used to keep down the wool in a half-filled bale during lunch-time, forgotten, and covered up by other fleeces.

Some years went by, and my elder brother having gone elsewhere, we three remaining brothers were still working on the old run, somewhat enlarged, when, while on a visit to England, the casual remark of an old friend put into my head the idea of forming a limited company, among my relatives and friends, to take up more land. So, after obtaining in the Colony all the evidence I could, and after working out the sheep business on paper, even to the third and fourth generation, so to speak, I went back Home again to see what could be done in that line. I did not much "cotton34" to the job. There is, for my taste, too strong a flavour of mendicancy in this business of "floating" one's self, and I have not the hide of a canvasser; though, as it turned out, I needed it with hardly any of the people with whom I had to do.

My gratitude is still great to those few who first trusted me; for, after all, in so far removed a business, it was, at any rate, at first, largely a matter of personal trust.

With such kind help the thing went through, the land was bought, and, later, twice as much again (13,000 acres in all), and after two or three years of bad luck it became, and has ever since remained, a considerable success.

The following chapters have to do, both with the earlier time and with the years when I was acting as the company's managing director in New Zealand.

III Poverty Bay

Captain Cook put in one day;

Water he sought and food.
The warlike Maoris said him nay.
Empty and dry he sailed away,
Mapping the place as "Poverty Bay,"
And the name it stuck, for good.

WHAT sort of country was this to which we had come?

To answer this question one must go rather far back; one must imagine the whole area to have been, in quite (geologically) modern times, a sheet of clayey sea deposit that had hardened into a sort of blue-grey rock easily disintegrated by weather into fertile earth.

Ages and ages of rain have gradually cut this soft rock into a system of streams running in very narrow deep valleys, the watersheds of which, often quite narrow ridges, wind about for many miles at heights varying from 500 to 1,500 feet.

Most of the country is exceedingly steep, but in patches here and there, and on some high ridges, where the original formation may have been harder, there is easier country, and here often still remains a great deal of the sterile silicate sand, blown out in time past by enormously super-heated steam from the volcanic region six score miles away. There was even a very slight sprinkling of this sand from the eruption of 1885, of which more anon.

The material brought down from all these gullies and valleys has filled up what was probably an inlet of the sea, and formed a rich flat delta some twenty-five miles by ten. Here the first settlers made their homes, ploughing up the land without much difficulty, and from this flat country fronting the sea they were, at the date of our arrival, only just beginning to adventure forth into the rough fern and bush ranges.

Now this back country was either an impenetrable jungle of high bracken, mixed in places with small trees and other growths (Plate V), or else it was so completely covered with forest of varying height that, except by climbing a tree on a sharp ridge, you could hardly ever get a view out over it (Plate V). But this effort was generally worth while, for spread out below you would be such a diversity of foliage, such a wonderful variety of glossy greenery as you would never by any chance see on this side of the world, varied here and there by a cluster of tree fern tops, a clump

PLATE IVIn

PLATE IVOutDipping Sheep

of the many-headed cabbage palms,

Cordyline Australis.

a dark pine outstanding from the valley bottom, or golden kowhai

Sophora tetraptera.

flowering on a windy ridge. Moreover, in the fine hot sunshine of one of our winter days, there would be nothing to tell you, looking out from your perch, that you were not in the midst of summer, for all the growth is evergreen.

Under this continuous leafy roof were no extremes of heat, cold or drought; it was a sort of cool, shaded garden-house, often abounding in a delightful variety of ferns, creeping ferns, big spreading ferns with eight-foot fronds, stag's horn ferns, filmy ferns, and three or four sorts of beautiful tree ferns. And here in this even temperature grew the seedling trees which could only live with such protection; in fact, most even of the grown trees needed it, for, having no tap-roots, few of these would flourish long, once you had opened their rooting grounds to the hot sun and drying wind.

In winter the cold air would settle down to the bottom of these narrow bush gullies, and sometimes, when looking down from above, one would see a sort of tide mark of browned tree fern fronds level all round their sides, where the frost had reached a few feet higher than usual. But we never had a frost except on a perfectly clear calm night, nor did we ever see snow on the ground except now and then for a few hours on the higher ranges. We often had long spells of perfect weather in our so-called winter. Some friends, who were camped on the coast hills fencing, told me that for eight days in succession, in that season, the sun had risen clear-cut from the far sea-edge.

In the more open country, especially along the ridges, there waved above the tall bracken the pale gold heads of the native pampas grass,

Cortaderia conspicua.

and I have often, when riding, been drenched with honey from the flower-stems of the hill flax

Phormium Hookeri.

which stand high above its great bunch of long and smoothly shining blades.

When into these narrow valleys, as would sometimes happen on a cold, still autumn night, there settled a heavy mist, our ride to work over the range next morning was often a glorious experience. Slowly climbing the zig-zag track we had cut, to the top of the high-cleared ridge, we would come almost suddenly out of the mist into the most brilliant sunshine, with rainbow circles in the heavily-dewed grass at our feet, and, below, a dead level floor of silvery mist filling the whole great valley, except where a few high points stood out as wooded islands.

Perhaps, emphasising as it were the strange lonely beauty of the scene, there would be a big hawk slowly circling, or you might hear a musical call from a far ridge, a wild bull taking back his harem to their green bush fastnesses. Sometimes, too, there would be a sort of Brocken spectre, our own shadow away below, imperfectly visible as a vague iridescent dial on the mist, a waved arm showing in it as an indistinct clock-hand.

But when this great still sea of cloud began to break up, when the blue and silver of the rapid river, the brilliant gold of the willows and the emerald grass gleamed in places through the thinning mist, and when its broken masses slowly drifted up the bush valleys below you, their ever-lessening fragments caught and torn by the tops of the scattered pines, there were minutes of beauty never to be forgotten, memories of delight to be carried with you to your dying day.

But I must be careful, for it was in somewhat of the above strain that a fresh and sappy young New Zealander was once holding forth, in a drought-stricken district of Australia to a sun-dried and despairing inhabitant. When there was room for a remark, the old Cornstalk weariedly interjected, "Ah, yes—there used to be scenery here, too—till the *goats* ate it!"

Though the brake-fern which covered a great extent of country in New Zealand is to all appearance identical with our bracken, it does not, there, turn the beautiful rich autumn brown that it does in England. On the contrary, the old fern remains strong and green till the new fronds push up through it in the spring. It varies in height from a foot, on very poor soil, to the height of your shoulder when riding, on an occasional rich river flat. The old frondage does not quickly rot but remains as a highly inflammable mass underneath. Three seasons' dead fern with a good dry wind will take a roaring fire through anything, and it is by such fires that all fern country is cleared.

In England, which has been for ages stocked, first with deer and then cattle, only that bracken has survived which is not only distasteful to stock, but will stand much continuous cutting. But in New Zealand, where they have never had any education by either game or stock, the innocent young fronds not only remain very palatable, but the parent plant becomes quickly discouraged if they are often devoured, so that if they are eaten down only two or three times in one year, the next season's stocking will often finish the business, and the grass seed you have sown will soon begin to form a satisfactory sward, always assuming that you are dealing with fern alone. For on light soils you have often something to contend with that is by no means so accommodating as bracken.

This is Manuka,

Leptospermum ericoides

a very stiff, straight, fine-leaved heather-like shrub, which no stock will touch, growing, in course of time to a height ten or twelve feet. It must have developed its characteristics, I think, in some past age, in a land subject to frequent sweeping fires, probably Australia, as it has evolved special means of survival under such conditions. The seed (the plant starts flowering when only a foot high) is enclosed in little fibrous green capsules, and often remains in them, I think, for several seasons. Then, when a fire comes through and kills all the scrub, the hard stem is left standing, and the little capsule, closely attached to it, having kept the fine seed unharmed, then opens and sheds it thick on the burnt ground beneath, where quickly germinating, it sends up another growth as thick as wheat. And even if you cut it down green, some of the seed will probably get into the sandy soil as the stuff dries and so escape the fire when you burn off.

It has pretty and very numerous small white flowers and a hillside of it in the spring is a fine sight to those who have not to deal with the wretched stuff. For myself, the problem of its extermination has kept me awake many a night.

Our district, when we came to it, was roadless, much of it quite impenetrable by horsemen, and extremely arduous for foot travel. The pioneer surveyors had a very hard time of it. They generally had to "hump" everything on their backs, including the heavy theodolites, across all sorts of frightful gullies and jungle tangles, and to depend on wild pork and an occasional pigeon to keep them alive. In the high poor country pigs

were often scarce, in which case the party had a very thin time.

I remember admiring the pluck of an old surveyor who had just had all his teeth out, and was starting out on a longish "far back" job armed with a sausage machine.

In hill country completely bush-covered, it was no easy thing to find a good road line, even though a one-in-twelve grade was allowed, and steeper ones sometimes winked at. You had to get a sight, if you could, at the next saddle in the ridge, approximate height and distance, and then with axe and slasher, cut trial grades to it along the gullybroken face of the range. And if you had not very thoroughly explored the district ahead, difficulties were very likely to arise I knew one bright genius, who, after laying off some fifteen miles of road, found himself up against a perfectly hopeless precipice. Report says that he sat down and cried, but I know that he gave up "field" work there and then, made a bee-line for home, and confined himself to office work for the rest of his life.

Gradually a few roads were made in our part of the back country, so that we could get our wool out on wheels instead of on packhorse, but most of them even yet are summer roads only, metal being almost unobtainable.

When Captain Cook tried to land here, the natives, well-to-do and independent on their excellent land, resisted him, and he came away without supplies. At a much poorer spot on his way north he was quite otherwise received. He named our place Poverty Bay, and the other, the Bay of Plenty!

As for Poverty Bay seen from a prospective settler's point of view, our friends in Hawkes Bay, where we first landed and made some stay, gave us no very encouraging reports.

The land was good enough, they told us, but the titles were mostly bad.

The place being difficult of access was fifty years behind the rest of the country in civilisation, and was the refuge of all the off-scourings of the colony, who sought to practise there, without social restraint, every kind of irregularity and even vice; the resort of bankrupts, drunkards and every kind of loose liver, and of lawyers of the very worst description, who preyed alike on the ignorance of the native and the innocence of the newcomer; in fact a little hell on earth, and no place at all for decent people.

As it turned out, we had a government title to our land, so that was all right. Nor did we find the people worse than elsewhere, though they certainly did drink. There were only enough queer and free characters to make things amusing, and though rascally lawyers were not scarce, decently honest ones were to be found. We certainly never regretted having adventured to the place, in the face of warnings given.

IV Acclimatisation

We have wrestled noon to noon
With the Pampas wild cardoon.
With the thistle, and the ti-tree, with the ragwort and the gorse,
We have hacked in wrath and ire
At the great sweet-scented briar.

But 'twas *Rubus fruticosus*
Rubus fruticosus (common blackberry).
that drove us off the course.

SETTLERS in a new country have all sorts of things to contend against, but for some of their worst troubles they have themselves, or their predecessors, to blame. There was a fine big variegated thistle, for instance, a handsome plant from South America, that some missionary obtained for his garden. It so took charge of the rich delta land, and grew so high and thick, that I have driven down one side of a flat country road without being able to get even a glimpse of a buggy coming up the other. However, the seeds were heavy and without parachutes, and being an annual, it was, in time, got under control.

Gorse, too, which people once tried for hedges, spread so rampantly, shooting its seeds well away from it on a hot day, that a mere hedge soon became a strip a hundred yards or more deep. When I was riding round a friend's run, he pointed out to me such a gorse cover, which he was having eradicated at great expense, with the following remark: "I have read that Linnæus, the great botanist, at his first sight of a field of gorse in flower burst into tears, I don't wonder."

The same friend had cut, on his property, miles of open drains, when someone introduced water-cress, which grew with such rapidity that it choked them all. He then planted willows which so shaded the drains as to settle the watercress trouble, but by and by he found that the repeated cutting of the masses of fast-growing pink

willow roots was costing him more than the cress clearing had done. I once saw caught a big trout whose holt had been under such willow roots—he was a bright pink all over!

You never quite know what a thing will do in that genial climate. A friend from New Zealand looking at my Surrey garden the other day, remarked that the common pink oxalis, growing sedately enough with me, was, with him, one of the worst weeds in his garden. He had to put the whole bed through a fine sieve to get rid of it.

Hundreds of rich acres were rendered useless by the common sweet-briar, which grows in huge bushes; but it does not send out suckers and is got rid of as follows: In wet weather, when the ground is soft, a team of bullocks is brought along with a huge chain which is looped round the bush. When bullocks start to pull, they do not strain and struggle like a horse, but slowly and deliberately they lean their great weight forward till the bush, with half a ton of earth to its roots, comes bodily out. It is then stowed aside to dry, and a match in the dry weather will finish the matter.

There was a curious gap in the aboriginal flora of the country, nothing having been developed to fill up the frequently devastated space between the normal level of the rapid streams and high flood mark. Some early settlers or missionaries, it is said, their sailing ship calling at St. Helena on the way out, broke off pieces of the weeping willow over Napoleon's tomb and planted them in their new home, where they grew luxuriantly and to a very large size. With these and other sorts of willows, with tall fescue grass in some places, and common mint in others, the bare spaces mentioned above are now pretty well filled up, and the former loose banks more or less permanently consolidated.

This riverside immigration was all to the good, but pessimists among the sheep-men usually live in a state of nervous apprehension as to some new weed or other that seems inclined to "take charge" and ruin them. Yellow rag-wort, pennyroyal, various thistles, among others, have all had their day as bogies, and have now taken their place as comparatively harmless weeds, only one imported vegetable growth still remaining, in some districts, a permanent menace to sheep farmers, and that is the common blackberry. But this blackberry business is very serious. With its spreading roots and suckers you cannot pull it up, body and breeks, as you can the sweet-briar—it grows pretty near all the year round—birds and mankind spread its seeds everywhere—digging it out is a hopeless job and, any way, ruinously expensive—and though goats might in time destroy it, you cannot fence goats in. So, in land that is too steep and broken to plough, blackberry is king, and the sheep are gradually crowded off. The matter is so serious that I understand the New Zealand Government offers something like £10,000 for a cure, which they do not seem to have much chance of obtaining. Of course, every precaution is taken to prevent its spread from the small infested districts, with the most stringent regulations and penalties, and these, backed by public feeling, will probably prove efficacious, though its eradication when it has really got well hold remains an unsolved problem.

In one district where the land is very light, the settlers, quite lately, whether from love of the beautiful or with ideas as to grouse in the future I know not, planted some heather. I have been told that it did so well that now it has been decided to spend a lot of money in eradicating every plant of it while such a process is, presumably, still possible. Having in mind the difficulty I had on a poor Surrey hill, in keeping my tennis lawn free from heather seedlings, I do not wonder at the settlers' resolution.

Introducing new animals to the country is just as risky. Everyone has heard of the rabbit pest. In our district, though it is free of these animals, you cannot be found with even a tame rabbit of any kind under penalty of £50, and there is a special tax levied to keep up a long rabbit-proof boundary fence, with watchers to patrol it, and also district inspectors. If any trace of rabbit is found, you have, under the most stringent laws, to employ professional rabbiters to get rid of the pest. Unfortunately, if only naturally, the very last thing some of these men desire is complete extermination. In fact, when the little beasts are scarce, actual invention of them is not entirely unknown. A friend of mine in another district, where the count was made by tails, happening one wet day to visit unexpectedly the men's quarters, found an old rabbit, with scissors and a few whole skins, happily engaged in *making* tails, a large heap of which lay before him on the floor.

Which brings to mind another incident. The authorities in two adjacent counties, interested in the destruction of hawks, paid for them, one by the head and the other by the claws, with the most satisfactory results to the shooters and poisoners.

Deer of several sorts were introduced years ago, and have done so well that I believe in time they will alter the whole nature of the forest, probably ruining much of its beauty and exterminating a good many varieties of native flora. They are even now a serious pest to many runholders.

The black Indian cricket somehow got to New Zealand, and soon did very serious damage. I have seen fields eaten to bare ground by them, and a collected grass-seed crop that was more crickets than grain. Then the Indian starling or mynah was introduced. As the numbers of this knowing bird very rapidly increased, the crickets as rapidly disappeared, but semi-wild turkeys no longer fattened in flocks on the runs, and even the wild pheasants became very noticeably scarcer, the ever-increasing keenly omnivorous mynahs starving them

out. And if you now go out with a gun, you are the centre of a moving ring of gently chattering mynahs, always just out of shot.

Stoats were put down to kill rabbits. Whether they did so or not I do not know, but they soon spread everywhere, and the wood hen, that cannot fly, then became, with other ground birds, increasingly rare, while larks and other European small, birds continued to swarm.

"Acclimatisation" is a very risky business.

VBush Felling

When in the evergreen shade is heard the axe of the bushman,
Down come the trees with a crash, fast the cleared acres increase.
In chattering terror wing off the Kaka, the Tui, the Morepork.
In silence the pigeon departs, and gone from his wallow's the boar.

HAVING written in the last chapter something as to the "breaking in" of fern land to grass, I now come to the question of the bush country.

The first thing you have to do, if you propose to clear an area of bush, is to get it surveyed into sections of, say, fifty or a hundred acres. If you wish to have every tree destroyed, the survey is a simple matter enough. But should you happen to be of those folk (regarded by the purely utilitarian as silly fools) who have some regard for beauty, you have a much more worrying job, the arranging as to the pieces of bush you do *not* want felled.

In doing this you have to keep in mind the following points:

You must, in the first place, leave nothing that will interfere in any way with the easy working of stock.

Then you must see that your reserves are in bush that is really worth keeping, and that they are so situated that no body of wind-driven flame from the great fire can possibly sweep through and destroy them.

Finally, because a licensed surveyor is not necessarily a man of taste and discretion in such matters, you will find that if this job is to be done well, you must explore, peg out, survey and map these bits of bush yourself. And this means a lot of hard scrambling and slasher work and careful manipulation of prismatic compass and chain measure.

This all done and mapped, and the acreage deducted from the area to be cleared, you let the felling, privately or by public tender, either to little partnerships of axemen, or to contractors who employ daymen, as the case may be, who all then soon begin to arrive on the scene of their winter labour.

But as new bush land is generally beyond the reach of roads, and as it would be quite impracticable for each small contractor to bring on the ground all the things he will from time to time require, it is imperative that the owner shall not only start a rough butchery, but also keep a general store, the stock of the latter mainly consisting, besides flour and sugar, of tea, tinned stuff, trousers, tools and tents, and Mr. Perry Davies' Vegetable Painkiller, this last fiery liquid being, one understood, very grateful to the throat, the day after the week in town before. At one stocktaking we had on our hands some very cheap and nasty blankets, apparently compounded of coarse shoddy and coconut matting. My storeman, who was a bit of a wag, had entered them on the stock list as so many "gaol rejects." But when I told my cook Lloyd, he said: "Why, bless you, sir, I knows that sort. We used to have 'em at sea. Them's dogswollenokms. Dogs' wool and oakum, sir"

When the various parties have arrived at the station, purchased whatever they were short of, and fixed up their camps, work begins. They first have to go through the section started on with slash hooks, cutting the smaller growths and especially all vines and creepers. When this work has been inspected and passed, axe work begins. The ground being always aslope, and often very steeply so, your bushman ([Plate VI](#)) will start at the lowest point, and selecting a certain group of trees he will "belly-scarf"

PLATE VIFelling Tawa

and "back-scarf" the lot, that is to say, he will cut about one-third through on both the lower and high sides. That done, he will set to work on a tree he has had his eye on as being suitably placed, and bigger than the others, and perhaps tied to them with vines. He will cut this tree carefully so that it will fall on some, at least, of the others. If this "drive," as it is termed, has been well managed, all the whole lot will come down together, the half-cut trunks loudly cracking as they give, and the great mass of branches all breaking up with immense fracas, the long-drawn crash being audible for miles.

Skilled labour, and by no means uninteresting, but a man must be in his prime and keep pretty fit to "stick it" for long, and he must be well fed. A good contractor will stoke up his men, every two hours or so, with as much bread and potatoes, fresh mutton and beef as they will hold, with jam, butter and tea ad lib.

There turned up one night a new arrival in the country asking for a job. He seemed willing, if rather simple, and when he was asked: "Can you fell bush?" he replied, "Oh yes, Ah can chop all right, but they do tell me here there's a bit of a *knack* in it." He was quite rightly so informed. The beginner will half kill himself taking sledgehammer strokes from the shoulder, whereas when all the arm and wrist muscles are rightly used, a much more effective sliding cut is obtained with considerably less expenditure of force.

A new hand, too, will chop all round a tree so that it can tumble over any way it likes, instead of cutting back and front only, leaving the uncut line *across* the direction in which he wants the tree to fall. I remember an old hand's scornful remark on a bit of bush I had myself felled. "They've had some bally new chum at work here; *pencil pointing* the trees like that."

A beginner would usually be puzzled to extract a broken axe helve from the head without tools. This is done by driving the edge of the blade well into the end of a small green log, to keep it cool and preserve its temper, while you burn out the handle in the fire.

There is one risk that all axemen must run, however experienced they may be, the risk of dead branches falling either from the tree they are at work on or from another as that goes over, there being often vines or creepers stretched from one to the other. But the danger, though ever present, is not very great.

The best gang of bushmen I ever had to do with were New Zealand born young fellows from a Danish settlement. They would work mightily all the week, and instead of resting the seventh day, they would be off cattle hunting miles away among the precipitous ranges, and after a whole day's rough and most arduous bush clambering, would come gaily up the long track to camp, "humping" on their backs the most surprising loads of good beef.

Theirs was an astonishing camp to come upon on a very wet day. The little tents were scattered about in the bush, well apart, and in each would be one of the "Scandies" practising, quite independent of everybody, his particular instrument of the Danish settlement brass band. Sometimes on a Sunday, when hunting was "off," the band would go upon a high ridge and play, in unison this time, and for the benefit of all camps within earshot; which was better. They were fine men these Danes. On their own land in the next province several of them had, one winter, felled adjoining small sections, and when the hot season was well advanced, it was high time to burn off. But there were some wooden cottages of other settlers to the probable leeward, and no one liked to take on himself the sole risk of burning one of these, or even of incompletely burning his neighbour's felled bush, should the fire not be a good one. As the stuff certainly had to be burned somehow, everyone was much worried till a bright idea occurred to one of them. He got some dry rotten wood and, quite unknown to anyone, spent some hours experimenting with a cheap reading lens. Satisfied as to the practicability of his idea, he that night fixed things up carefully and departed early next morning on business to the nearest town. When he returned the bush was all well burnt and no damage done.

These and other young New Zealanders, out to make a little money to put into their own small section of land, were the cream of the men.

On a neighbouring station one winter, there were three young men who overdid it. They used every hour of daylight and even turned out again to work whenever the moon was up. They made a good cheque, but two of them were dead within the year. "Bush whacking," as I said just now, is no child's play.

There were other men who would deny themselves every little camp luxury and work like devils for months and months, and then off they would go to town and spend the hard-earned proceeds in a week's boozing.

Sometimes they would hand over all their cash to a publican and settle themselves to drink and stand treat until he should tell them that it was all gone; then back to the bush again for another spell of hard slogging. But these short goes of hard drinking do not seem to do anything like the damage to a man's constitution that results from continuous soaking, as in the long working intervals, on nothing but tea, there is plenty of time for recovery.

I have never dissected one of these bushmen. I should expect, did I do so, to find their insides most thoroughly and efficiently *tanned*, for they like their drink strong. On Sunday a billy of water is boiled (a billy being a lidless paint-pot with a wire handle) and into it is put a handful or so of tea. All through the week it is replenished with tea and with water as required, till about Friday you will find, if the iridescent film with which it is covered does not put you off tasting it, that you get in its flavour really "something for your money,"

In inspecting this clearing work the main thing is to be sure that all vines and undergrowth are properly cut, and, secondly, that all trees are felled "clear of stumps" so that they shall not deep green. At what height the axe is used does not matter at all, the timber being of no value; waist—or even breast-high is usual—but sometimes when a big tree has outstanding buttresses, the axeman will, in a very few moments, cut two small deep holes in

it about shoulder high. He will then fix horizontally into these holes a couple of short poles, trimmed to fit, and lay a cross-pole or so between them. On this very doubtful-looking platform he will stand quite securely and cut the tree high up where the bole is of a more reasonable size. Trees, however, above a certain girth, which varies in different contracts according to the circumstances, are often left uncut, to rot standing after being killed by the fire.

VI Burning Off

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!—JAMES iii. 5.

With rush and crackle and ceaseless roar
The demon fire is free.
And the noble clouds that to heaven soar
Are the breath of his devilry.

FELLING should be finished by the end of Spring, and the impenetrable chaos of leafy branches and trunks (Plate VIIb) is left alone till all is thoroughly dried by the hot summer sun. Then, for the owner or responsible manager, comes the really anxious time. For there is a vast difference between a good clean burn, clearing nearly everything but the stumps and a few big logs, and a fiasco, with the fire wandering about, burning leaves and twigs only, in which case it will be years before the ground conies into proper grass. How we watched the weather! Was this breeze going to develop into a big parching Wester, or would it die down entirely after we were lit up and leave us wretchedly in the soup, a misery to ourselves and a laughingstock to our neighbours? Dare we risk it?

In lighting bush (Plate VIIa), too, you have to be very careful. You must never in any case go more than a few yards in, and you must always be very sure to leave open a good line of retreat, clear away to safety, for if a sudden change of wind comes, it is not only the speed of the pursuing flame and its suffocating breath that you have to reckon with, but the fact that lighted leaves and twigs will be dropped far ahead of you. No one who has not had considerable experience should be allowed anywhere near the job.

I once spent a whole day on foot in the hot sun burning off bush patches, with an eye now and then on some big distant smokes. I had climbed slowly home in the gathering dusk, tired with my long day's scramble, and nearly kippered with the smoke, when there came a ring on the telephone. A doctor I knew well had been helping at one of those still gleaming distant fires, had been caught by a change of wind, and was certainly burnt to death. To me, tired out and somewhat upset by the news, and vividly picturing to myself the horror of such a fate, there came out of the darkness the uncanny, long-drawn howl of a dog. For the one and only time in my life my mind was no more than that of a primeval man, and for one moment this howl was for me the hair-raising cry of a

PLATE VII Starting a "Burn"

PLATE VII Felled Bush Drying

disembodied spirit. You can read of, or imagine such a thing, but actually to feel it is at once a shocking and enlightening experience.

Calling to mind one of the last pieces of bush I had to do with, I remember, after two doubtful and anxious weeks of watching, a dry Wester seemed to be starting. "Now or never" was the decision, and my men raced off to start a line of fire from the windward side, a couple of miles away. The breeze held and increased, and climbing the ridge, I saw the first smoke rise and grow, and soon blot out all that side of the sky. This was a first-class fire; some four square miles of felled bush were cleared off in about three hours. I did not calculate the number of cubic miles of smoke sent into the air, but a ship coming down the coast reported, where it next put in, that there had been another volcanic eruption inland. And the sea was twenty-five miles from the run!

Our camp was down in a long green valley, nearly two miles from ridge to ridge, which was completely roofed with black smoke, the only light coming in from the mouth of what looked an enormous cave. The effect of this style of lighting on the landscape was extraordinary, and even quite ghastly in its dead greyness.

The spectacular part of a big bush, fire is limited to the five or six first acres, preferably on the slope and of the shape of a tilted-up saucer, with a stiff wind. Then you may get the real huge, crawling, leaping, roaring, red and purple horror of the thing, a sight that once seen you will never forget. But, after that, the smoke more and more hides all, and you only hear the great dull roar of it. But if you then ride a mile or two back and the wind is not too high, you may see that same smoke forming marvellous solid-looking masses clear cut against the deep blue New Zealand sky. Masses towering miles high, rounded masses of glistening white, and continuously bursting out from underneath, slow up-turning torrents of cream and brown, with now and then a great cave of smoky purple. That again is another unforgettable sight but rare and noble this time instead of devilish.

And when from well out in the green and silent country you see this sort of thing and know that everything is going right, you feel well paid for your months of trouble and anxiety, and at peace with all the world.

But you must not hug yourself too long, for there are sacks of grass seed to be packed out on the land ([Plate IXa](#)), and sown before the first rains, and there is no time to lose.

VII Sowing

Panting and hot and black with dirt

In a gully like a flue,
Leaving the briars half his shirt,
The sower struggles through.

SOWING fern country, where there has been a good deal of small scrub and varied growths, is a beast of a job. As it has to be done in hot weather, clothing is necessarily of the lightest, and so unyielding is the jungle of dry burnt branches and twisted creepers that what little raiment one does wear is soon in rags. But as each twig and every roping vine is covered with fine black charcoal, you are soon properly clad in a complete coat— of soot. You have to struggle through these burnt thickets, across almost precipitous slopes, with a great bag of seed swung awkwardly in front of you, the contents of which you must scatter very carefully and quickly with either or both hands, according to the ever-changing flaws of wind, while keeping whatever balance the gods will. And as if a coating of dust and ashes were not enough, you soon acquire in addition a layer of most uncomfortable fine grass seed all over you, and to top all, you are sometimes much too far up away from the river to get a swim when the day is over. Curiously enough, however, we found that although when we were near the river, and bathed frequently, the black stuck to us hard between whiles, yet when the water was out of reach for a day or two, the deposit could be dry-wiped off with ease. We found this fact interesting, but have so far founded on it no theory of hydropathic hygiene.

Bush land, well burnt ([Plate VIIIb](#)), is as much easier to sow than fern and scrub land, as half-burnt bush is harder. For in the latter you have to dive under, worry through or climb over a chaos of great trunks and branches, steadily sowing all the time, and you must often hazardously balance your progress along logs high in air across a gully, or lying over masses of other logs.

Maoris, being agile, careful, and good-tempered, are very good at this work, and we were glad indeed, when having become by actual experience masters of the job, we were able, on undertaking operations on a larger scale, to hand over to them its actual execution. For we loved it not at all.

The best bush land, well burnt, makes a magnificent seed-bed, as the coating of good

PLATE VII Early Morning

PLATE VII Sowing a Bush Burn

wood-ash lies on a rich, black friable loam that has been rooted over by generations of wild pigs. When on this surface is broadcasted, before the first autumn rain, a carefully adjusted mixture of turnip seed and sundry grasses and clovers, it is possible to get a crop of turnips the ensuing winter that will fatten many sheep to the acre.

And when the turnips are eaten off right into the ground, the seedling grasses will be found ready to stool out and take their place, forming rich and permanent pasturage.

VIII Fencing

O'er hill and dale there lies along,
The web they spin at Warring-ton;
A steely web of seven wire
To keep the sheep from their desire.
Their chief desire is still to stray
This web estoppeth them alway.

ONE very important matter in the economy of a new sheep station is the provision of fencing posts. In our first bush there were only two kinds of timber suitable for this purpose, the native laburnum, or kowhai,

Sophora tetraptera.

and the beautiful pine-like totara,

Podocarpus Mara.

and there was hardly enough even of these. There were, however, a good many old logs of one and the other in the river, and these we sawed off into lengths of about six feet and split into posts of suitable size, bursting open the log with powder and finishing work with mall and wedges. These logs were now and then quite under water; so we only tackled them in the hot weather when we could strip and get in. It would have been a curious sight for a chance passer-by two heads solemnly moving backward and forward on the surface of the water with nothing else visible, not even the connecting saw. The first time, however, that we stripped completely to the skin was the last, as the said skin, not to be outdone, soon began its preparation for coming off too, and we had a painful time of it. We had forgotten the sun.

We found some big dead logs also near the top of the range. The posts from these had to be dragged in little one-horse sledges that we made for the purpose, down about mile of so rough a track that we seldom made a trip without an upset or some other disaster. This mile brought us to the top of a cliff overhanging the river and from that cliff, when the thousand or so posts were stacked, we rigged a single wire right across to the opposite bank far away below, and driving two staples into each post started them down one after the other. We had to adjust the amount of belly on the wire so as to slacken the speed of the posts before reaching ground, and so great was the friction on the staples that they were mostly cut through by the time the bottom was reached, and the landing therefore was largely automatic.

Then we had to get them down the river.

First we tried tying them into small rafts with a man on each, but the wood was so waterlogged that they only just floated and drew too much water to get past the rapids, while, in the deeper parts, the unfortunate pilot, run round the little raft as he would, found the side he was on always under water. Then we pitched in all the rest of the posts, and following with poles to keep them from standing in the rapids, managed to get the lot downstream, about three-quarters of a mile to the homestead; but it was slow work. Having floated them safe into a backwater, we held a council of war, and praying that it would not rain, in which case we should lose the lot, we knocked off work for a day and made a punt.

Then we took a long wire, and laying the posts side by side in the shallow water, fastened each by one staple to the wire; and some poling the punt, as if for dear life, towing, and others wading at each rapid, hauling back on the tail, we managed for the most part to keep the long snake of timber from buckling and stranding, and as it was three miles of river bank we were fencing, to take off at intervals so many posts to the chain. At last the whole line was laid, and we were able to get home, weary, but very pleased with ourselves.

On the first night, as we all straggled in very wet, we found the good mother on the veranda with a sugar basin and a bottle of camphor, and to each was handed a wellsoaked lump. Next day great was the maternal triumph. "Never, boys, will you dare laugh at my camphor again. Not one of you, soaked though you all were, has caught the least cold." One mean wretch who quietly observed that he had omitted to swallow his portion, did not score much, being rated in good set terms as an ungrateful and utterly unworthy son.

Splitting logs is clean and pleasant work. You must, however, first learn to make the great wooden beetle or mall from the right kind of tree, and you must get hold of the knack of putting in its taper handle, and the way to fit its iron rings, so that when its face wears and burrs they shall not come off, but work back.

Sometimes it is difficult to get started on a log; your blow is dead and unpleasant, and the steel wedge jumps back out and falls. But once in, you feel a comfortable "give" with each stroke as you drive wedge after wedge along the opening crack, and still more when you enter the big wooden chock to keep the gap open

while you cut the long slivers with the axe. And as the two

sides fall dear apart, you see the clean red wood and smell the fresh pleasant scent of it.

It was said of the Highland shepherd in New Zealand, that he would rather work his dogs, getting in strayed sheep, every day for a month than get off his horse and mend a fence. But that was in the days before wire fencing had attained its present status, almost that of a fine art. Fences need comparatively little attention now.

The average fence is of seven or eight galvanised steel wires, the top wire being barbed and three foot six inches from the ground. In the best practice it will be in about quarter-mile lengths, the strain being taken by an earth anchor of timber or rock sunk at either end, and the wires tightened, both ways, by a little ratchet gear on each wire in the centre of the strain. The wooden posts are placed in the most exact line, and the tightness of the seven wires is so great when the fence is finished that, where there is a depression of only an inch or two, the post has to be firmly anchored down in one way or another or it will come up level at once. Such a fence ([Plate Xa](#)) has to be taken across gullies and up or along the steepest possible slopes, sometimes where every post hole must be sunk with a crowbar,

PLATE IX Packing out grass seed

PLATE IX Packing Wooi.

and it has to be everywhere and at all times perfectly sheep proof,

Fencing is quite highly skilled work. A good man in digging post holes, for instance, will bury his spade up to the handle in a hole the width of its blade and not much over fifteen inches broad, and go on making such holes all day without apparent effort. Let the reader take a spade and try this.

A most satisfactory proof of good work having been put into a fence occurred one dull day when I was away on a far ridge looking out for wild pigs, which are likely to be about in the open in such weather. It had been reported that a boar was thereabouts, who was suspected of having devoured some new-born lambs. I had had no luck, when suddenly a full-grown pig started from a thicket close by and went full bang at the fence. Now a New Zealand wild boar has a snout like the nozzle of a fire hose, and confidently expects that where-ever that snout goes, his wedge-shaped head and his two-inch leather-armoured shoulder can certainly follow; for with his weight and pace the momentum he acquires is very considerable.

But the expected did not happen in this case. The wires, being stapled on two swinging battens, held together and the whole weight of the charging animal being taken by the spring of the eighteen feet of fence, he was thrown back, snout over tail, into the thicket again, where a couple of bullets from my Colt repeating rifle put an end to his evil doings, before he had found out what had happened to him.

IX Stock

The Pharaohs to the shepherds said,
"What outer lands we place ye on,
There you shall make your home and bed,
You're an abomin-a-ti-on."
See Genesis xlv. 34.

I HAVE written of dogs and horses and pigs, but so far not on the sheep and cattle out of which I have had to make my living.

Whether it is because for so many generations they have not needed to use their wits, or because they are not allowed to live long enough to develop what few they have, I do not know, but sheep certainly seem to me rather brainless and stupid beasts, and I have never been able to take much interest in them. And there is the question of the possession of that none too common gift, an eye for stock, and I have none. In equine matters, for instance, an old Yorkshire friend of mine has only to "cast his eye" over a horse once, and he can recognise him anywhere to the end of the beast's life, whereas if I ride a horse for a week, I may have great difficulty in picking him out of a dozen driven in for saddling. I even went wrong with a horse so marked that I had thought I could never mistake him, and came home with someone else's fancy piebald, but that was partly the

stableman's fault.

This Yorkshireman had a first-class "eye for sheep" too. He had been engaged in town commercial life at Home, but though emigrating almost at middle age, he before long was quite a noted breeder of highclass Romney rams.

His son inherits his ability, and takes the greatest delight in recognising, in individuals of his flock, the characteristics of the various rams introduced many generations ago, every one of whose qualities and features he seems to have clearly in his mind. He, though a highly cultivated man, can spend hours and hours discussing the technicalities of sheep-breeding with old chaps who could never think or talk of anything else, while as for myself, I confess to a certain sympathy with Touchstone in his views on the question and also with the Egyptians, to whom every shepherd was an abomination. I consoled myself with the reflection that perhaps the next best thing to doing a thing well, is to know definitely that you never could do it, and to refrain from trying. "Breaking in" country and arranging a really workable

PLATE XFencing Burnt Fern Country

PLATE XThe Buckboard

sheep-run were jobs that I delighted in; but running a finished station year after year was not in my line at all.

The reference to Touchstone above, reminds me that there does not seem to have been, in Shakespeare's time, any sort of conscience among; sheep owners as to the soundness of the mutton they supplied. Said Antonio:

"I am the tainted wether of the flock, Meetest for death."

No New Zealand sheep farmer would talk like that. In fact the presence of a competent government Vet on the killing platform of every abattoir and freezing works would take all the sense out of his words if he did.

And as I have here wandered into a freezing works, it may interest my readers to know that as certain seamen are alluded to according to their jobs as Chips, Lamps or Pills, the name both in common and official use for the man who initiates the process of cleansing those parts of the sheep which salted down are ultimately used to cover sausages is "Guts," and to this name even when shouted at him he answers without heat. But should you see him at work you would understand that no mere verbal insult would be at all likely to offend him, ever.

Our country would not carry the picturesque, curly-horned merino sheep, from, which comes all the very fine wool—it needs above all, dry country, whether flat or mountainous; with us it suffers too badly from foot-rot to be of any use. From what species of mountain sheep the Merino is derived I know not, but its appearance, its wool, its habits and nerves are so distinct that if it has an ancestor in common with the ordinary long-wool sheep, he must be very far back.

The breed that has been found to suit our part best, a very much improved "Romney Marsh" coming originally from Kent, is a placid long-wooled animal that can stand an occasional wet season and makes good frozen mutton, which the merino does not.

Cattle did not directly pay us at all, as however good beef frozen may be, it cannot compete with meat that is only chilled. And it has not yet been found commercially possible to keep meat just at freezing point and no lower for so long a voyage.

But, with only sheep on a run, the grass in a good season grows into tussocks, and new grass coming up in a dead tussock is neglected by sheep and wasted, whereas a bullock will put his tongue round it and swallow the lot, leaving clean ground for fresh feed. So you may have land fully stocked with sheep and yet if you add some cattle, you, may be able to carry them, and even to add to your flock as well. We found Herefords the best breed, as they will range for feed far higher up the hills than short-horns, the latter having a tendency to keep near the stream at the bottom. I heard from a cattle owner of N.W. Australia that he had found exactly the same thing; even in flat country, the Herefords ranged out double as far as the others. Their ancestors, I suppose, must have had to travel far for their living in wild Wales.

XCadets

Some keen, some lazy, some knew everything,
Some stuck like Englishmen and came out top.
Two found the prospects so disheartening
That "A" turned parson, "B" he kept a shop.

A "*new chum*"
Pronounced "neweh'm."

in New Zealand is usually regarded by the old hands with an amused and kindly contempt. A queer beast he is to them; interesting too, in a way, for you never know how or what he is thinking, or what absurdity he may be up to next; and so, unless he puts on airs, a creature rather to be pitied and helped than to be kicked. This attitude of mind may, I think, be illustrated by a sentence from a letter I once saw, written by a native-born on his first visit to England: "It's most extraordinary, the whole bally shop seems chock-a-block with new chums." The writer meant by this term, people who have been all their lives so far removed from the bases of life, that they would be quite lost if they had to make a livelihood in any sort of direct contact with nature.

On a sheep farm it was quite usual for there to be one or two pupils or cadets who, to gain experience, would work for a year for their keep. They were usually young and fresh from the Old Country, and they naturally differed much, both in character and capabilities. There was, for instance, the cocksure type of youth who knew everything already. "D'ye think I never harnessed a horse before?" said to us one of this sort, and then put on the beast's collar back first and wrong way up. He knew, too, all there was to know about packhorses; so we sent him down the road to fetch up some stores. He took all day for a three hours' job, and only brought up half a load at that, but we all enjoyed seeing his return. The poor horse was so wound up on a sort of loose cocoon of straps and ropes that we wondered how ever he could have got along. We sent him to town on old Balaam, noted for his quiet unprovokable placidity, having first warned the boy to be very careful, as he was about to mount a horse of spirit. On his return we stood round in an admiring circle, asking him how he had got on. "Oh, he tried on his games with me all right," he said. "But at the first buck I clapped in the irons and let him know who was master, and I had no more trouble. You needn't think a fellow can't ride just because he happens to be a new chum."

Yet I am not quite sure whether it is not these self-confident asses who get their experience quickest, for the lessons they get must often be pretty painfully impressed on their minds.

But packhorse work is really no joke, for though it is fairly plain sailing, dealing with goods of standard size, such as coils of fencing wire, and bags of flour, you often have the devil and all of a job when it comes to mixed merchandise and household stuff, especially if your horses are new at it. The main load is then usually packed in two equally heavy sacks, one for each side of the horse, and all impracticable oddments must be so fixed as effectually to resist the extraordinary vigour with which everything does its level best to get loose and off. We ended by actually sewing things on.

Old pack-horses get pretty knowing. When it was a question, once, with professional packers, of getting a very big flat case of pictures through some miles of narrow bush track, "You needn't worry," they said, "we'll put it on old Maria, she'll manage it." I watched her, a bony chestnut, picking her way along the very narrow, boggy, rooty track, close-lined with tree-stems, the big case high in air on one side and sticking out several feet low down on the other. She had evidently often carried loads that jarred her when they hit things, for she never touched a single tree; she seemed to keep one eye glued on the lower side of that case all the time. But we had to train our own Marias.

To return to our cadets. Trainer, of quite another type, was one of our best, a strong willing chap, with plenty of commonsense, an enormous appetite, huge feet, and a certain amount of not quite unwoundable dignity. So, when they sent up to camp his new boots, "Trainer's tens," one on each side a special packhorse, he was a little hurt, nor was he amused by the boy's conundrum, "Why is Trainer like the Martini service rifle?" "Because he is a long, strong, clumsy thing with a very sharp 'twist' in his inside."

He had not been long with us when one night he felt his bed sharply pulled. Half dreaming of the practical jokes of school life, he reached out for the nearest missile and heaved it with all his force under the bed. It was only next day that he realised that what he had actually slung his boot at was an earthquake. Small earthquakes are not infrequent, and no one bothers much about them. It is, however, a trifle disconcerting, when sitting on the ground at lunch, to see as I once did, the trees round you distinctly sway backwards and forwards for several seconds, and a series of quick tides in a puddle is not a reassuring phenomenon.

A third boy we had always did his best. But there was a distinct hitch in his mental equipment, poor chap. He had had so moral a bringing-up that, if allowed, he would sit on his bunk for half-an-hour in the morning considering which boot it would be right for him to put on first; although when it came to such a thing as a job

of work, it was rarely possible for him to concentrate his thought on it for even a whole minute.

We were making a track up a bush gully, and I said to him: "You're quite right, Jephson, there really is a very pretty view from here. If I were you I would stand by and have a really good look at it, See how fine is the contrast where that brown bracken slope cuts against the great blue bush range beyond it, and note the way that branching cabbage tree stands out against the rushing river below." It was a false move on my part. He solemnly stuck in his spade and embarked on a comprehensive contemplation

PLATE XI Down the Coast

of the whole visible countryside, which, had it not been interrupted, would probably have gone on for hours. He was quite serious; was always so, in fact, as, indeed, I take it, are most lunatics.

Hard by the station a little railed enclosure, originally protecting a single eucalyptus on a lonely mound, had been christened "The Silent Tomb." "What's it called that for?" asked Jephson. "Oh, that's Perkins," we replied, "quite a decent chap he was, but rather useless—hardly worth his keep, in fact—so H. knocked him over the head with a spade and we planted him there." "But why is the big gum tree green while all the small ones round are almost blue?" was the next question, "Oh, well," he was told, "it also was blue when we planted it, but when its roots got down to Perkins, it had to go green; it couldn't help itself," Jephson, after seriously reflecting on these things, worked well for nearly three-quarters of an hour. He was, as I have said, a serious youth.

"Hi, Jephson!" shouted my peppery brother—at a crisis in sheep work at the yards—"dance round smart now and kick up a row; kick up a hell of a row, Jeph, quick!" Jephson's upbringing stood him in good stead, "I will not kick up a hell of a row," he, with great dignity, answered his exasperated boss, "but I will make a great noise." He once electrified the family by suddenly appearing and putting to them, in open-mouthed horror, this query: "What shall I do? I have swallowed a large fly?"

The poor chap seems to have brooded over the fact that we comparatively wicked people seemed to get along in our dally life more easily than he did, and when there arose some little bother or other over his kit, to have sought relief in putting his thoughts on paper. The following note was picked up in camp: "Boots too large, spurs too small." A concise statement of fact, to which was added the moral reflection, "All success seems to come from the Devil." With this distinct "score" on his part I leave him.

XI More Cadets

RESUMING my remarks on farm pupils, I come to the case of Billy Brown. He was a success, the life suiting him down to the ground. Almost the first we heard of this young man was the following sentence in a letter from a fond aunt at home. "Oh, how nice it will be, how very nice, for the dear boy to sit on the hills all day and watch the sheep." As a matter of fact, the dear boy's first job on the run was the plucking of wool off dead-and-gone ewes—ewes more than dead and very far gone—and the carrying home of a large sack of the greasy stinking stuff on the front of his saddle. And after that came lamb-docking, which is a very sanguineous business indeed. When the dear boy sent home a snapshot of himself, clothed in rags and blood, in the thick of this job, I received from female relatives, by return mail, sheets and sheets of indignation at our ungentlemanly and disgraceful treatment of the poor lad, who, however, remained quite happy and contented.

When he left us, he started a small run of his own, a very isolated place, "way back" in steep, roadless country. He was pretty lonely, his only neighbours being two rough, crusty old bachelors, each doing for himself in his little shanty a few miles off on either side.

Now living quite alone, as often as not, leads in time to insanity. There was the case, for instance, of a certain Scotch shepherd on a lonely out-station, who, when visited one Sunday, was found to have arrived at "fifthly, my brethren," in a sermon to his whole flock, which he had laboriously mustered and driven into the sheepyards for the good of their souls.

One day I met Brown. In town, radiating happiness from every inch of him. "Hullo, Billy, what's in the wind?" I asked, "Has that old aunt died, or what?" "No, no" said he, "but a bit of glorious good luck, all the same," and then, his voice rising to a high squeak of delight, he continued, "I had two of the worst neighbours you could possibly imagine, and they've *shot* each other!"

It was true. Old Mackintosh had got it into his head that Jenkins, over the range, was stealing some of his few sheep. "Did ye no hearr," he said to Brown, "did ye no hearr a quiet shot down in the gully the night?" The supposed grievance, nursed by the ageing bushman in his solitary, comfortless hut, was more than his brain could stand. He waited for Jenkins on a bush track and shot him dead. He seems then to have gone home and,

after a day or two of misery, and before the police arrived, to have blown out his own brains.

A sad enough tragedy, you will say. But it all depends on the point of view. To Brown, delighted at the bare possibility of getting civilised and companionable neighbours, it seemed almost high comedy, and those who have lived far back in the bush will hardly call him light-minded.

Andrews, another cadet, was a New Zealand product and very much "all there." He and I lived for months in a rough slab shanty, starting a new station away in the back bush. We slept on rough bunks and the bags of chaff we had for pillows made admirable nesting-places for mice. As our sleep was sound, it mattered little that they and their numerous progeny ran over us all night, nor did we much mind that there was never anything left of our candles in the morning but the wick. But one night, awakened suddenly by the striking of matches, I saw Andrews a-dance on the mud floor, slapping himself violently all over. A sounding thwack on his thigh finished the performance, as with a satisfied "Got him," he shook out a considerably flattened little rodent from his pyjamas.

The little beasts were getting altogether too intimate, and something had to be done; so next morning I rode to our nearest neighbours and begged a cat. I put her black ladyship into a sugar bag, with her head out of a small hole in it, and started back happily enough. She, however, objected, at the very top of her voice she objected, she objected every foot of those five miles home without one moment's intermission; none of your little pussy miaows, but a continuous scream of fright and hate. We put her in a box, and she was quiet till evenings when we took her out, fed her, and made much of her, and finally put her down on the floor. She walked slowly and observantly all round the hut until she came again to the big open fireplace, paused a moment, took a flying leap up the wide chimney and disappeared. No one ever saw her again. Then we got some kittens, and in due course the plague was stayed.

Oates was quite a good chap, too, what little there was of him. When first out riding, he was naturally nervous about starting down some of the steep slippery shoots we had to tackle in wet weather. "Dig in your spurs Titus, dig 'em in," was yelled back from the bottom, when his horse feeling the lack of urge, hesitated with him on the brink. His reply, in a sort of frightened falsetto. "I *have* done so," with all the emphasis on the "have," was long one of our favourite by-words.

He was very anxious to weigh himself against his boss who, to tell the truth, was not much bigger, so to satisfy him, we strolled down to the woolshed together. A small detour, however, having enabled me to pocket the two heaviest of our steel splitting wedges, the resulting figures were quite satisfactory.

There still remain the last two lines of some verses to this young man's eyebrow.

When reposing in peace in dignified ease
He was summoned with. "Otium come dig."

Then there were the brothers Knight, who not taking very kindly to work of any sort were quite naturally christened "The Knights of Labour." And that perhaps is about the lot.

XII Balaam & Co.

Hoof into deep wet mullock goes down—squish,
Its fellow, slow extracted, comes out—slosh.
Drives the big rain in one continuous swish,
And streams are coming through my mackin-tosh.

THE present writer is not a "horsey" man; he is not particularly fond of riding; he has no eye *for* a horse, and no specially good seat *on* one. The only riding he has ever thoroughly enjoyed was a season's fox hunting in England, years ago. Journey riding he has always abhorred, and he was delighted when the time came that he could give it up and use a car. Which confession, though it will doubtless shock the high caballero, is none the less true for that.

The more you have to do with horses, the less respect you have for their intelligence, which you find is mostly either simple instinct or acquired habit.

I once broke in a young horse myself and found the process by no means uninteresting. I had in the first place, very gently, very quietly and deliberately to handle the whole of one side of the beast, and when I had done

PLATE XIIThe Royal East Coast Mail

PLATE XIIWhere My Mail-Bags Went Out to Sea

this, and had quite got him over his nervous fright at my touch there I found that the same handling had all to be done again on the other side. It is difficult for a human creature to understand the working of so localised a psychology.

A kindly Australian station manager with whom I once spent a week, a man of exceptional intelligence, character and experience, who had spent his life in the saddle, told me that he had never been able to feel any sort of affection for any of his mounts but one, a mare. She, when he made his solitary bivouac, would browse round unhobbled while he cooked his damper, and later on would come and lie down as near him as she conveniently could. He must, too, have led a pretty arid sort of life, needing companionship, for he told me you could get a notion of the look of his inland sheep station by taking a little tin matchbox and putting it down in the middle of a large sheet of sand paper.

But, even if they have neither affection nor much intelligence, horses have certainly some curious powers. One day I wanted to reach a high point in the great sea of bush-covered ranges behind us, to which I knew a survey party had recently cleared a just practicable packhorse track. I followed this along the tree-covered ridges for several miles, very slowly, carefully observing every cut branch or blazed tree, and only with difficulty keeping the trail. Returning, however, my pony took every twist and turn at a fast jog without the slightest hesitation or a single mistake. It could not have been any *conscious* observation on the way out, as she could not have known we were to return by the same track, and besides, everything looks different coming the reverse way, so much so, that if it had been left to me, the return would have been as slow as the going out. I can only suppose that there is in these animals, when travelling, the very keenest, even if quite unconscious, habit of observation of every detail. Memory they certainly have fairly well developed. I always had a job to get my pony by a point in the track where, years before, I had for the first time fired a rifle off her back. It was, I remember, at a suddenly appearing wild heifer, and a near shave of a spill, but I got the beef.

Some horses exhibit a sort of low cunning, but never with anything in it of the kindly intelligence of the dog. I have known one spend hours worrying with a gate-fastening, and round the English New Forest where the ponies' wits are sharpened by chronic semi-starvation, the small holders sometimes have to protect their crops with two, or even three, fancy fastenings on one gate. I knew a pony in New Zealand to whom the whole country was open; he had pretty well mastered *all* the gates. But that, in him, was not generally considered an endearing trait.

And there was the ease of old Balaam, a strong, thick-set brown horse that we kept to lend, when necessary, to wild youngsters, to unbalancing, back-wrenching women, or to people we did not much like. We did not exactly love him, and never rode him if we could help it, but he certainly commanded our respect. For he would go his own pace, quite regardless of whip and spur, and he would come back to us in perfect order and condition every time.

He was with us at the first, when we had mighty little feed and no fences. To keep our horses, we had just put a very strong rough road gate where the track was a narrow cutting overhanging the river, but, knowing our Balaam, we did not even then feel very secure; so my brother "hid up" to watch. Presently, laboriously pounding along the track, followed by all the other horses, came our friend, his fore feet close hobbled and his big bell ringing at his neck.

Pulled up short by the new gate, he rose on his hind legs and pounded at the top of it with his hobbled fore feet, without effect. Then he actually plunged down the almost perpendicular thirty feet of thickly wooded bank, and after completely disappearing in the muddy rash of the flooded river, came to the surface, swam down a chain or two, scrambled out and, still close hobbled, pounded down the track toward our next neighbour's grass, many miles away.

Later on he had to pull a sort of low go-cart, a thing we had made ourselves, the first wheeled vehicle on our five-foot-wide hill track. It was not much of a cart, but for some things it was far better than packhorses. We made it in desperation after a younger brother, bettering his instructions, as he thought, not only put a hundred of flour on each side a horse, but a leaky tin of kerosene on the top.

Fetching up the first serious load of stores on this contraption, after one attempt at a steep slope out of a nasty creek, Balaam let it ran back with him into the little stream. A touch of the whip had no effect—it was a definite jib—he wasn't going on again any more. "Oh, very well, old chap," I said, "you *can* wait then. You can

stand there in the water till you are in a better mind." You see, I had the English mail on board, and he had nothing. So I settled myself very comfortably down in the grass with the long reins handy, and was soon deep in the news from home. Looking up after a bit, I saw one of Balaam's ears turn back and then the other; hearing nothing, he tried to see what was going on behind him, and began to shift his feet. I let him stand for about twenty minutes, before, pocketing my letters, I stood up, and slapping his side with the slack of the reins, shouted "*Get up.*" He got up. He took that steep place in three bounds, and never jibbed again, for he was an exception, was Balaam; he was not at all a fool, really.

Now as to the question of instinct. The ancestral horse, like the present zebra, was comparatively helpless against the big cats, once he was within their springing reach. Consequently the horses that survived were either the swiftest, or those that could take the biggest and suddenest sideways jump from danger, real or imagined. So when you are on a pony like my piebald, closely resembling the little horses so vigorously represented in the Crô-Magnon caves, you may expect *expayriences*.

I remember one canter at dusk, across a rich grass flat, spotted with great bushes of sweet-briar that scented all the warm evening air. Time after time my pony would see a giant leopard or sabre-toothed tiger crouching in a briar's dark shadow, and would spring clear, sideways, with the most disconcerting suddenness and energy; no mere "shy," but a life-saving leap. Mules, I am told, are even worse, especially at dusk.

The survival of a somewhat similar instinct is sometimes evident in the case of frightened sheep. Safety, for their remote ancestors, lay always in the high crags above, and I have had to contend, on more than one occasion, with a wild break-away of panic-stricken lambs, all climbing, with surprising vigour, the steepest hill handy. And our Romney Marsh sheep who for centuries have lived on flats, now, as evening comes, wend their way in single file, up across the great slopes to their nightly camping places high up on the ranges.

Another useful beast we had was Blackie, a big mare, with plenty of strength and the best possible temper, who, however, on wet ground slipped about like a camel. On a narrow clay razor-back one day her near feet slipped down one side and her off hoofs slid down the other. Not at all perturbed, she rested there on her belly quite comfortably reaching forward to browse on a tempting tussock of grass thus brought happily within reach. Another time, packing home the carcass of a wild boar we drove her down an exceedingly steep slope; but where any other horse would have put its four feet together and slid, Blackie preferred to roll, and as we looked down, we saw first the pig and then her legs, then pig, legs, pig, legs, pig, legs, till righting herself at the bottom, she very contentedly started grazing.

From time to time we had, of course, lots of other horses, but they did not have enough intelligence or marked individuality to make impression on my memory, whereas I have forgotten none of the dogs.

When it was the question of a journey-horse, the main requirements were, first, a fast walk and secondly, an easy canter—one never trotted. Sometimes it was all walking; sometimes not even that. In a wet season along a narrow bush track it might be a case of three legs standing while the fourth was pulled out of one deep pothole of black mud and deliberately planted in the next, and so on *da capo* with the other three. When things began to dry up a little, it not uncommonly happened that the hoof acting as a loose plunger in a foothole of liquid mud would send a long squirt of it all over the rider. Even in fine weather this sort of thing was muckily, maddeningly tedious, but in the wet it was deplorable beyond belief. But in New Zealand wet weather *is* wet and you generally keep out of it; and after all, horses have faults enough without my starting to blame them for the weather and the state of the roads. Talking of faults reminds me of a friend who bought a nag for a song at auction. Meeting the former owner, whom he knew, he said, "You might tell us now what's wrong with the beast."

"Well, as a matter of fact," was the reply, "there's nothing exactly what you could call *wrong* with that horse, but I don't mind admitting that he has two little faults. He's a perfect devil to catch, and when you *have* got him, he's no bloody good."

XIII On the Road

An horse is a vain thing for safety,
Psalm xxxiii. 17.

IN our rough country, as I have before explained, riding was often an extremely boring job, especially in a wet season and on a grassfed horse. I even endeavoured at times to lighten the passage of the slow, plodding miles by reading, but the effort was too trying to be long persisted in, though small volumes of Shakespeare were handy, and the *Spectator* was good print. The latter, which we received regularly, was sometimes very good fun. In one leading article, for instance, we were solemnly besought to remember that there *were* people so circumstanced in life that they were actually unable to wear a clean white shirt every day. But what pleased us most was this bit of wisdom: "When you wake up In the morning without a bright, happy craving for work, a

day's rest is Indicated." That phrase became a nuisance. When, stretching yourself, half-awake, at cold dull dawn, you were asked, "How's your bright, happy craving now, my boy?" it was only the anticipated bother of subsequent retrieval that stayed the ready boot.

Even in the matter-of-fact *Weekly Times* we sometimes found amusement. There was a case of fierce indigestion in Brazil, a man having been brought to the coast suffering from a violent explosion in the interior, believed to be dynamite, and there was an account of Mr. Asquith's second marriage, the hymn specially chosen by the bridegroom having been, we were told, "O God, our help in ages past," The *Sydney Bulletin*, too, in its wicked way, was often a source of joy. When in reply to an address of welcome, on his arrival at Sydney, as governor of New South Wales, the young Lord Beauchamp was so extraordinarily ill-advised as to quote Kipling on the birth-stain of the colony, this paper came out with a full page of amusing cartoons headed "Beauchamps Pills for Birth Marks." And one day, chancing on a torn sheet of the *Idler*, I came across Mr. Hoop-driver's interview with the park-keeper on Putney Heath, and was unhappy till, years after, I got the rest of the story.

Perhaps, however, the keenest joy I had from books in those days, alone in the back bush, came from some numbers of the *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, in which I revelled in

PLATE XIIThe Spanish Windlass

PLATE XIIIOn the Waikato River

the devastating fun that Huxley made of Gladstone, on that matter of the Gadarene swine.

But I was about to say, when I so easily slipped off that muddy bush track, that, riding being dull, as soon as we had anything that could be called a road I bought a buggy in its most rudimentary form, an American blackboard (Plate Xb), the body of which consists of a few boards merely, the seat alone being on springs. Then the new-made road was carried away, in two or three places, by a "cloud-burst," and various good neighbours, including my brother and the road engineer, all assured me that to get my trap down to the flat country, where I wanted to use it, was quite impossible. Thus encouraged, it was only human nature to have a try, so I stepped a twelve-foot mast on the above-mentioned floor boards, stayed it to the four axles, induced a hefty young cadet to come along with me, and started off. Here and there the road was only about two feet wide, having been undermined by the creek, and at these places I drove the buggy "from behind, I found it less exciting," while Barnes, with a rope to the top of the mast, climbed along the hillside above. Of course, only the horse and two wheels kept the track, the other wheels being out in space, but the trick worked all right, and I had, later, the pleasure of chaffing our so cocksure friends, who were puzzled to know how the thing had been so easily managed. But as three-quarters of an Inch of rain fell during those six miles we got sponge-wet, and our good neighbour below, an old Charleston blockade-runner, who had seen many funny things in his time, was quite at a loss to place the extraordinary turnout of wheels, mast, ropes, and nearly drowned men, that came spashing toward him across his paddock. But once reassured, he dried and fed us and put us up for the night as a matter of course.

The fun to be got out of driving single proved, however, to be rather limited in amount, although I do remember once standing on the seat, alone and knee-deep in a waste of salt water, the horse as well as the buggy having entirely disappeared. I was crossing a river mouth, and had struck an unexpected deep hole, but my big chestnut did not hold with drowning and got me out again somehow.

Barring two river mouths, one occasional quicksand, half a mile of bad rock, dangerous at high tide, and this coast was fine going (Plate XI). Horses would of themselves start a gay canter when you reached the hard sand beach, and even sheep-dogs, when working anywhere near, would sometimes leave the shepherd for the sheer delight of a wild scamper on it. Miles and miles of good beach, curving in from headland to headland with rarely a house or a human being in sight. Here and there a pair of red and black oyster-catchers running about, and now and then a flight of rather tame small gulls resting on the sand. In company with these there would often be a dozen or so of terns, the most graceful of all sea-birds. These lovely creatures were a little more timid, and as one came near, would rise repeatedly a few feet on their swallow-like wings, hover a moment, and then sink down again, before they could persuade the placid little gulls to come off with them.

Sometimes, right out at the edge of low tide, would be a happy fishing party of almost naked Maoris, silhouetted with their spears or nets against the still ultramarine of the quiet sea. Whether seen thus, or emerging from the black waters of a lake, against the deep greenery of its surrounding trees, or in fact anywhere among its natural setting, the rich red of the Maori skin always seems to me vastly more beautiful

than does the bleached tint of our own bodies.

A friend of mine was once so fishing with some Maoris, and as he stood in a big rock pool at low tide the long arm of an octopus shot up, and seizing his leg to the thigh, held him fast. He yelled to the nearest Maori, and was earnestly counselled not to move. "Keep still as a post," said the old native, "till I say go. Then give a quick shake and come out." My friend obeyed exactly, and when, after a full minute of most uncomfortable waiting, the word was given and he shook his leg, the horrid suckers dropped off and he bounded free. He left in that pool his taste for low-tide fishing.

But so smooth was the going on the long, hard sandy beaches, and so drowsy the strong salt air that after a few miles of this pleasant travel it became very difficult to keep awake, and indeed, always excepting the question of the tide, the struggle was hardly necessary. And it is to be noted with regard to this one exception that there were on this route no clock hours, all traffic, the inn meal-times, and the morning *réveille*, going strictly by the tides. For when the tide was up, there were places you could not pass, and where you might get miserably stuck for hours, and very possibly drenched.

Our mail came up this way (Plate XII [A](#) and [b](#)), and our leather postbag, having been carelessly chucked anyhow on the coach, was, one stormy day, washed out to sea by a chance wave. The Gisborne post-master was a very serious person, so, when calling him to account in the presence of his grinning clerks, I affected great indignation. "Supposing there is a letter from *her* in that drowned bag," I said, "a letter at last accepting me after all these years. Think of our two young lives ruined by your gross and inexcusable carelessness!"

These remarks must, I think, have rankled, for not long after, I, having endorsed a misdelivered letter, "Cannot the fellow read?" this person solemnly held forth to me on my highly reprehensible conduct, heavily explaining that it was his duty to protect his young men from insults of that sort. "Very well," I said, when he had done, "where is this young man whose feelings I have so outraged? Fetch him out and I will publicly apologise, here and now." But the young gentleman, as I had indeed foreseen, was not "having any." Not likely. So I evaporated.

Later on I changed my shafts for a pole. That was a bit better, especially when one put saddle-horses into harness for the first time, and wondered what would happen.

One hot Christmas time I had to do a long day's journey on a more than doubtful mountain road. I said to Barnes, "I am taking a spade and axe and ropes for this picnic, will you come?" Barnes, always a game bird, was unhesitatingly "on." All went well for many miles till we came to a long piece of hillside cutting, where no wheels had been for over a year, and thistles were doing remarkably well. Here driving needed all one's attention, but we managed all right until we came to one extra sturdy and prickly "Scotchman" growing six foot high in the middle of the narrow earth road. The pole-straps were long, and there was thus plenty of room for one of the pair to pass either side, but the inside horse suddenly funked it, and shying into the pole, shoved the other horse over the edge and fell after him down the slope, taking buggy and all in a general crash. Barnes and I, being always on the *qui vive*, came out in time on each side of the trap as if something had exploded under us, and standing on the forsaken road looked first at each other and then anxiously at the mix-up among the logs some twenty feet below. Strange to say, the horses were unhurt, and not even a strap broken, but we were for a moment puzzled how to put the buggy back again on the road. However, we soon got to work. We dug a very small hole in the road about four feet deep; cut a stout straight, six-foot log and stood it in the hole, and took a few turns round it with the rope. Then we so tied to it one end of a short horizontal pole, that, as one of us walked round with the other end, the upright log turned in its hole, and winding up the rope hauled the buckboard right up on to the track. This makeshift is, I believe, called a Spanish windlass, but neither of us had ever seen one before, and we were much delighted when we found that one man could do the winding while the other took snapshots of him.

A few miles further we came to an almost impossible place, and here Barnes got out, and I stood ready to jump. I had to. The whole caboodle went over again, and as this time the pole was smashed, we had to ride bare-back to our destination.

Another time I smashed a pole, when by myself, some twenty miles from home, though luckily I was near the little wharé of a friend of mine, the only habitation on that mountain road. He was away and the place locked up, but necessity knows no law, and I was short of tools. Having at last hunted out his old fire-wood axe, and having noted the exact position of certain oddments on his shelf inside, I managed to lever out the nails of his window frame, and climbing in obtained what I was after. Roughly trimming up a fence rail and bolting it to the broken pole-stump, I soon had everything more or less shipshape. Then, after leaving a letter of thanks to my friend and carefully replacing everything on the shelf as I found it, I climbed out, renailed the window frame, rehid the wood-axe and again took the road. My friend, the settler, on his return was very much perplexed as to how the burglary had been effected, but took the matter in excellent part.

Talking of burglary reminds me of a neighbour who lived in a clay wharé. When he left it he fastened his door, which was of calico stretched on the lightest of frames, with a huge iron padlock, trusting in the fear of

the law to protect his goods.

An old coach-driver was taking me out of town one night to an inn he kept on the coast. It was soon obvious that both his wife and himself had had quite as much as was good for them, and we covered the ground at a good round pace regardless of holes or stones. The last half-mile was a rough, steep, and narrow descent with a drop on one side almost sheer to the sea rocks below. As with gay yells, and the whip making pistol shots round his head, the old coach-driver crashed down this evil place at a hand gallop, to me, shivering with fright on the back seat, turned round the beaming red face of the good wife beside him, with these words: "Ah, Mishta Kenway, itsh poor 'art sh'never rejoishes, ain't it?"

PLATE XIVH— Takes The Reins

XIVFour-in-Hand

Oh the "rattle and stamp" of the horses four,
And the thrill of the pull of the rein!
Round headland and bay on the hard sea shore!
Ah! Would I were driving again.

AS I seemed to have exhausted what little excitement there was to be had from driving two horses, I obtained, and carefully studied, a book by an expert whip, and started a scratch team ([Plate XIV](#)). Now driving four horses is a business quite surprisingly different from driving two, and I set about it in a most delightful state of trepidation. For what is a simple matter enough with well-trained horses and grooms on good civilised roads, is quite another guess thing altogether alone on narrow mountain tracks, with any, old trap and ponies you may happen to have.

In the English way of driving you hold all four reins firm between the fingers of the left hand and "loop up" under your thumb the ones you wish to shorten for a turn, leaving your whip hand free to keep your nags always up to their bits and therefore guidable. When safe round, you lift your thumb and the reins are all square again. The inclination of the wheelers being often rather to cut a corner than to follow the leaders round, it is necessary when you are turning, say, to the left, to shorten the leaders' near rein and at the same time to keep a good pull on the wheelers' off rein. If you fail to do this latter, you may at any moment be overturned on the road or pulled off one of the narrow railless bridges into a deep gully.

I soon found that I had hit the right cure this time; the long journeys were never dull again. Whether the horses bolted along the beach, between the huge stink of a stranded whale and the deep sea, whether a leader got half-choked with a tight collar and went over the edge, whether a poler fell at a canter and, getting up as the buggy was dragged over him, sent me, in a fine parabolic curve, high into the distant fern, or whether the whole turnout went over the side, there was always something to occupy one's mind; and when nothing particular happened, there was still a sort of fearful joy in having this time at least got through safe.

There was not much style about the turnout except, absurdly enough, a proper coachhorn in a long basket. A high buggy had replaced the old buckboard, and the harness was so simple that you could just swing each set on to its proper horse and shut to the sheet-steel collar with a click. I had a footwheel brake of my own invention with which I could lock the back wheels in two seconds, and free them in one quarter that time.

As no other fellows in the district brightened their travel in this particular way, I was soon able to build up two considerable reputations, the second, I can only hope, as really undeserved as the first. I was thought to be quite a crack whip, and with even more certainty, a silly ass.

I once gave a lift home to a neighbouring head-shepherd, a dour man from the Border, who had no trace of the Highland gift of saying the pleasant thing, and who, as I happened to know, despised me pretty heartily. The road was narrow, very up and down, and full of turns ([Plate XV](#)). It is only in Sutherland that I have, on this side, seen anything like it. Thinking that I should like to frighten, or at least surprise, this good man, and having just then a team I could perfectly trust, I did the trip in some style, taking many of the wickedest places at a smart trot or even at a hand canter, with one leader out on the giddy edge or rubbing his nose round the rock-cutting as the case might be. Stewart never turned a hair, but kept a straight face and a shut mouth till, on setting him down, he made this grudging admission. "Aweel, I maun say this for ye. Ye *can* hannle a team." I can remember no remark that ever tickled my vanity more. For a moment I quite loved the man. I was young

then.

Where roads were unfenced, there were boundary gates to open, and these were an unmitigated nuisance, as I was, much more often than not, quite alone. To climb down, fix the reins in a specially-contrived clip, to open the gate and drive through, and then fix reins again while I shut it, took considerable time and used up a lot of temper. But there were some gates which just swung to of their own weight. These my leaders would push sharply open with their chests and then, with a little decisive smartness, one could get through before the gate swung back. There was some slight risk, but I never got caught.

I was nearly bowled out, however, on another occasion when, cantering by a Maori cultivation, half a dozen turkeys, flew across the leaders' noses. The scared ponies turned sharp off the road and straight up the open and very steep hillside. To turn there would have meant a certain smash, so the only thing to be done was to whip and yell and keep them going somehow until we reached a spot where the ridge widened, and where the struggling and panting team was by this time only too ready to stop. My mate, who had kept quite cool, here nipped out and took off the leaders, and between us we got the buggy turned round, and with the wheels locked and extreme gingerliness, to avoid an upset, down to the road again. A settler on a neighbouring hill, who saw the whole affair except its cause, took it to be "another silly freak of that four-horse chap."

A motoring man from Home called on me and I took him a drive. The horses bolted but the road was flat and straight, and by good luck entirely empty. The buggy was so light that locking the back wheels made little difference to our pace, and as the team was, I think, pulling mainly with the reins, the arms of both of us were absolutely numb and useless before, after a two-mile gallop, we managed at last to pull them up. As we stooped to recover the use of our muscles, my passenger remarked that in his opinion, "these beasts were geared up a darn sight too high for ordinary traffic."

Meeting a carter on one of the worst parts of our mountain road, I stopped to pass the time of day. He was perched high on his great load of heavy wool bales, driving the five big horses of his great wagon, a job which it would have scared me out of my wits to tackle. And yet he surprisingly opened the little conversation by saying that he would not drive *my* trap down that road for a hundred pounds. We agreed that we probably each knew his own trouble best.

My greatest admiration, however, was always for the old bullock-driver, now nearly extinct. In going round a sharp corner, up hill, he would stand inside the curve of his long team and, with his none too decorous voice and his long whip, so manage that the dead heavy weight of all his six yoke should fully tell. The first two yoke, say, beyond the corner, would be pulling straight, the remaining four yoke would be leaning heavily outwards, passing on and increasing round the curve the heavy pull of the leaders. It was almost like a rope strained round a pulley.

On one five-mile piece of by-road there was no cantering or trotting, it was all hillside cutting, and only "six foot in the solid" when new, a sort of narrow winding shelf you had to crawl along with the utmost care. Starting along this track one morning I had only done three or four miles when I came to a place where a "slip" had come down from above and nearly filled the road

PLATE XV The River Below

PLATE XV The Winding Road

—and me with no spade that day. I made shift, however, to clear away enough to give just a chance of getting by, took out some breakables I had on board and placed them in safety, hung my rope on to a handy stump and standing up in my place started the horses. It was touch and go, and we went. The near wheels ran too high, and she turned over to the right, down the steep slope and, to my horror, instead of just stepping off on the near bank, I had quite unexpectedly to jump into space on the offside. I landed a long way down, luckily on soft ground clear of the lake, and rolled away for all I was worth for fear of the buggy coming after me. But what continued to annoy and puzzle me was this. I had had it in my mind, against all sense, that in case of mishap I was going to be able to step calmly out on the hill, clear of danger, but of course there was never any possibility of my doing so. To compare little with great, I may say that I knew as much about jumping out of buggies as Admiral Tryon knew of manœuvring ships, and yet, like him, had made an unexplainable blunder. Two or three more such mistakes and one's self-confidence would have been gone for good. Happily there was no serious recurrence.

The team had not been quite pulled off the road and stood quietly, holding up the buggy until I was able to climb back and rope it to the above-mentioned stump. As they were well educated by this time, so that nothing

ever surprised them, they continued to stand quiet until I got the traces free, and then, the pole being in smithereens, we all went back home.

One winter's night, along this same road, came riding one of our more casual station hands, having doubtless in his pocket a small flask of whisky, the usual parting gift of the landlord of the coast inn where he had been on the spree. On his arrival his mates noticed that he was pretty wet, and he even remarked, when turning in, that there "wa shlot watter on track t'night." Next morning we found this was quite true, and that where there had been a seven-acre flat there was now a lake (the one I nearly jumped into), caused by a landslip having blocked the valley. Old Dick's horse, following the well-known track, had swum the lake, climbed a very awkward place out of it and had continued his way home without his rider having noticed anything unusual.

Driving four was my way of getting about for some years, till, when at Home in 1903, yielding to temptation, I bought a six-horse De Dion, and fetched it out with me. But what I did with that little car, and what that little car did with me, does not belong to this chapter.

I have done a lot of motoring since that date, but have never found anything in it half so exhilarating as the swing and go and clatter of a fresh team on a curly road.

XVA Car

*Now span and spick
Right on the tick
You pay your promised call.
Then you had luck
All daubed with muck
To reach the place at all.*

*Now in the car
Sans noise or jar
By nothing you're distraught.
Then, toil and sweat,
We'll ne'er forget!
But mot'ring was a sport.*

WHEN in England in 1903, as I have said, I bought, second-hand, a six-horse single-cylinder De Dion ear with two speeds and no reverse, and brought it out with me. With the exception of a steam locomobile which "drew" all its boiler tubes each time it went out, and so was generally kept in cotton wool at home, mine was the first car in the district, and for some considerable time the only one.

As every girl in the place wanted a ride, I became as popular with them as I was unpopular with the general public. With the former I certainly did risk my liberty, but my relations with the latter landed me almost at once in the police court—for furious driving. I besought the very solemn "beak" to come for a ride, so that he could see for himself how well under control the machine was, but, alas! he would not.

Peradventure he was wise, for once aboard the lugger, I should certainly have done my best to "put the fear of God into him." How true it is that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light! Deaf to all my blandishments, he brought the case to an end, and thus addressed the prisoner at the bar: "By a law just come into force, it is my duty to fix the extreme rate of speed allowable for traffic in this town. I fix it at ten miles an hour. You have clearly exceeded this rate, and I therefore fine you five shillings." Although I think it was as a rule rather the noise than the speed that scared these good folk, yet on the other hand the mere sight of one of the more harum-scarum of the settlers' daughters coming down the main street, apparently in full charge of the fearful thing, established more than once a general *saue qui peut*, although as a matter of fact, sitting alongside I retained full control of both brake and gears.

Driving up country, I came to be quite experienced in telling, at some distance from the movement of a horse's ears, how he was feeling and what he would be likely to do. I found the drivers, as a rule, very much more scared than the horses; it was, indeed, surprising how very quickly these latter got used to me. Not so, the people; I remember catching sight of a buggy-full on a quite distant skyline, and seeing it suddenly and

violently explode, at sight of me, shooting out its passengers in all directions. As one had frequently to stop the engine and walk some way ahead to lead, past the car, horses of timid women-kind, and as, in the narrow winding mountain roads, you had to be extremely careful lest you should meet a buggy suddenly at a corner, one's mileage rate was seldom high.

By care and good luck, though I was pretty badly hated by the nervous, I never killed a soul, nor, in fact, did I do any sort of damage.

I had kept the car at my house, some way up country, till rather late in the season, and I wanted to get it to town. But there was a mile and a half of quite impracticable mud before the metalled road could be reached, and I had only a pair of lively ponies, quite useless for a heavy pull. However, in the Colonies one does not readily allow oneself to feel done—there is some way of getting round almost any difficulty.

So after a little consideration I brought the ponies a feed, alongside the silent car, and then another while the engine was running, subsequently driving round and round their paddock till they were a little reconciled to me. A rough pole and swingle-tree combined, knocked together out of some scantling, was loosely attached to the car, the ponies put in, and we made a start, my cook Lloyd, full of excitement, sitting alongside. I had to steer the ponies with one hand and the car with the other. A whiplash would have been impossible to manage, so I had replaced it by a long light tapering stick of "thousand jacket," but what hand I had for that I cannot clearly remember.

Having, without mishap, driven out through the gate, there was a long descent to a stream, and out of it a much steeper slope up, which we should need all our power to tackle. Half way down I put her in gear, thereby starting the engine. Off went the scared ponies at a gallop up out of the creek and away along the winding hillside road as hard as they could go. I flung away the unneeded stick and devoted all my attention to keeping the car on the road. It was the most exciting bit of driving I ever had, but we did not come to grief. The combination of engine and automatically encouraged auxiliary horse power took us to the metal in excellent time. There we abandoned the pole, and sending the ponies back in charge of my highly delighted cook, I motored to town.

I was once taking out to her home a particularly charming elderly lady, when the car, having been stopped for a moment, refused to restart. I toiled and toiled at the handle, perspiring profusely, while the good lady, with that invaluable tactfulness which is, alas! so rare, looked deeply sympathetic, but said nothing. After about a quarter of an hour, however, there came to me, in a gentle silvery voice, the query, "Isn't the butter *come* yet?" and in the ensuing laughter the engine started.

And talking of tactful ladies, I recall, a little incident that took place in France in later years; Dame Crowdy, as she now is, had had some trouble with her car, and I was instructed by the Red Cross to take her round on her widely separated duties in mine. A tyre having burst, I did my best to replace it without wasting time, and was rewarded by my passenger with a full measure of appreciative compliment. A few days later another tyre went—a front one. Naturally I exerted myself to the utmost, and put in the spare rim well under any possible record time. Again pleasing acknowledgments were forthcoming as I took my seat, when, first to my utter disgust, and then to our intense joint amusement, I discovered that I had attended to the wrong wheel.

Motoring in these latter days is just a method of getting there, but at the time I am writing of it was emphatically a sport. You did, indeed, sometimes reach your destination, but rarely without mischance or adventure of one kind or another. There were two live axles on the back of my car which used periodically to wear out and drop off; the spring inlet valve was never right for long, plugs cracked daily; springs broke frequently, and I once had to drive fifty miles with half a fence post fixed in to replace one. The ignition was by dry battery, which on occasion I have had to replace by a row of domestic bell cells. And though it is a bit of a problem how to get on when your battery runs out in the middle of a long stretch of arid road, even that difficulty can be surmounted.

My gear change depended on the fulcrum of a certain lever being in its exact position. Oiling, owing to my ignorance, having been neglected, the thing seized and broke loose and I only just managed to crawl into a friend's station, twenty miles up country, before further movement became impossible. I am no engineer, but as there was no skilled help available, I had to do what I could, so I borrowed some fencing wire and running a twofold length of this from the gear to three separate points on the chassis, I carefully twisted each double stay to its right tension with a long nail until the gear was firmly and exactly fixed in its place, and then, crawling very stiffly from under, I drove to town full of pride and glory. For there is more joy in the car over one breakdown that is so mended, than over ninety and nine just gadgets which need no reparation.

My low-placed gear box hit a stone one day, and all the oil ran out. There was a little firm of blacksmith engineers in town, highly intelligent men, who had never before seen a motorcar, and with, whom I have spent many happy hours in investigation and repair. In this case it was a matter of soldering aluminium. They found a recipe for this somewhere, and we spent half the night together melting up assorted metals, and finally ran the mixture in. It stopped the leak and held all right, as long as I had the car, though I am told it could never have

actually united with the aluminium.

With so small an engine, and only two speeds, there were plenty of hills it was only possible to ascend by getting out and running alongside, with one hand on the steering wheel and the other pushing the car, a fine fat-reducing exercise in hot weather. Guiding the car out of a rut thus, from outside, on one very bad road, she came over too much and stopped with one wheel out in space and I myself tangled in fern and briars just below. This was, I think, the only really narrow shave of bodily damage I had in my New Zealand motoring. We dared not touch the car till we had her well roped to a passing dray.

The first time along any of the roads, one felt like an adventurous explorer, but there was one track that all the time held forth an urgent invitation, the 150-mile run to Napier, the next port. We knew there were a score of cars there by this time, and we feared that in spite of its repute of utter impracticability, some enterprising spirit might get through by this track before us. It was a case for axe and spade, for ropes, heavy block and tackle, and an anchor. This latter was made by amputating one spike of a pickaxe and flattening the other, and putting a ring in the top of the handle for a rope. The single fluke was driven into the road with the back of the axe. Furthermore, the undertaking meant the risk of smashing springs, the chance of being stranded many miles from anywhere, as the result of one of many likely happenings, and, in any case, a lot of very hard work. But all these considerations added to the fun of the thing, and my companion and I did get through, the proud first to do it.

We had to go in waist-deep clearing boulders out of creeks, to rush the rocky beds till the engine was drowned, and then to out tackle and haul on the kedge till we were black in the face, to get her through. We were stuck once in soft shingle with no holding ground for the anchor, and then the clutch fibre got wet. The result of this was that, to start the engine, you had to crawl under and slacken the adjuster, and then under again to tighten it before you could start the car. And up some of the bad hills this had to be done a dozen times!

The night came on, and we had to skirt unknown precipitous slopes on a narrow winding road, with only one miserable little headlight, and, later to make hair-raising reverse shots in the pitch dark, to get safe back on a great ravine bridge, on each of our several attempts to get up the steep slope off it. Thank goodness, when at last we succeeded, there was a pub and beds round the next corner, for we were nearly done.

A dozen years after, in 1917, I came through that same road with a Ford. All the creeks had been bridged, but twice I got hopelessly bogged, and was finally stranded with the understays so buckled that, steer how I would, the car first made for the bank, and then yawed towards the edge, and I had to stop.

But since then I am told that the road has been metalled and improved out of all knowledge, and two or three buses run through every day.

XV Sundry Dogs

They are all dead. They die so very soon,

These faithful folk, these tireless cheery friends.

They do their duty, morning, eve and noon,

Then all too suddenly their short life ends.

Yet live they still in thought; and in my mind

I still can hear them baying round the boar;

Or as we upward round the great spurs wind,

I wave them out to drive the sheep once more.

BEFORE the Institution, in New Zealand, of collie trials, when the voice was used, instead of the whistle, there was probably no job more trying to the temper than "working dogs." With an erring collie quite out of reach, the most good-natured man was apt, now and then, to lose his temper, and to shout. But as the mere fact of shouting tends to increase wrath, especially if the voice has to be strained, It was not very unusual for self-control to be quite lost, with results amusing enough to the onlooker.

One morning, on coming unnoticed round a corner on a hillside road, I saw a well-educated and usually mild neighbour, wildly shouting and waving his arms, his eye fixed on his dog far away up above, So looking,

PLATE XVI General Skobelev and a Friend

PLATE XVIA Captured Kingfisher Shows Fight

he ran bang into a gate-post. Full loaded with wrath as he already was, this proved the last straw; he stood off and cursed that post for a good whole minute. Then he saw me.

Seated on the veranda of our house, a good Quaker lady, newly from England, was, at first, a little taken aback by what on that first day she saw and heard. In full sight on the high bank across our little river stood another neighbour—a respectable Scot, working a young dog on the hill beyond. At a critical moment in his operations, this dog was told to race ahead and stop a breakaway of sheep. She was young and raw, and hesitated, while Sandy yelled to tear his throat. The puzzled collie misunderstood, and the sheep got away. Dancing mad with rage, the shepherd threw down his hat and stamped on it; then, having knelt solemnly down, he, at the top of his voice, tearfully besought the Almighty, immediately, and with the most ghastly torment, to put an end to the life of that sanguinary little bitch. My good mother, taken on her humorous side, was too convulsed with laughter to be horrified.

But with public competitions self-restraint became necessary, even if sometimes nearly impossible. Old McAlister, for instance, would have a dog up the hill, and work it up to a critical point. Then higher and higher would rise his Hieland voice, till with a bursting squeak out would come the inevitable oath, for which the whole watching crowd had been waiting, and poor Mac would have to retire disqualified and crestfallen amid the delighted laughter of his friends.

New Zealand sheep dogs are of all sizes, shapes, colours, and breeds, being selected purely for brains and stamina, and not at all for looks. They vary as much in personal character as they do in appearance. Take my own team, for instance. When clearing a hillside, and seeing a straggler to be fetched in, I would first call on Mattie, a pure-bred Scotch collie of the finest manners and appearance, but past her first youth. Up she would discreetly trot, and placing herself well above, would begin to remonstrate politely, and even appealingly. But it was an old ewe she had to deal with, with a young lamb and no intention of moving. Then it was the turn of Jake ([Plate XXV](#), bottom left), of whom more hereafter, and he goes up like a flash and does all he can, but even he, taught to avoid all brutality, cannot shift her. Standing by me is old Joe, tall, black and tan, more of a cattle drover than a sheep dog, and always to be depended on for noise. No sooner do I just whisper his name than he starts barking, and barks himself up the range at such a pace that the ewe is off before he reaches her. A most friendly and willing old chap was Joe, atoning with voice and power for what he lacked in brains. A sportsman, too, so fond of a gun that he barked every time I used my telescope, and before we lit the fuse for a log-splitting blast, had always to be held, lest he should risk his life, running along the trunk in eager anticipation of the glorious bang. But I have seen him put quite out of countenance. I shall never forget his look of amazed discomfiture, when he had picked himself up, after an old ram, taking him entirely unawares, had suddenly butted him, all any way, clean through a wire fence at the sheep yards.

One specialised canine rôle is that of the "leading dog." On a very narrow track, winding along steep and broken hillsides, you would meet him, pacing, slow and sedate, with the foremost of a couple of thousand sheep closely following, and he, most obviously, enjoying his high responsibility. A whistle from the drover, far away and quite out of sight, and he turns, head down, on the sheep, and the whole march is stopped. Another whistle and he resumes his steady pacing, the sheep following.

But returning to my own dogs; what joy, when six days I had laboured and done all my work, to take the whole pack a long day's ramble on the seventh; to force my way through a many year's growth of brakefern, the line of dogs sneezing in a cloud of pollen behind me; to wade up a creek, startling a big shag, who, vomiting live eels, would come back riverward over one's head; to be momentarily deluded by a grey duck with a hopelessly broken wing, who is presently seen high up in perfect flight; to wait, still and silent, till small heads appear one by one on the surface of the shallow pool—the ducklings who had, till then, been sitting like so many pebbles, safe under water, on the bottom. What delight, I say, to wander for miles in the trackless bush, keen for a shot at the big pigeon, or a rush after pig; to spend the day all chums together, Maori, who could scent and find the most distant pig; old Charlie, who would hold anything; Jake, who would sometimes spot a high-up sitting pigeon, and all the rest, all set on the same job, and all the lot of us understanding, helping, and appreciating each other; and, as the sun got low, to return, filthy and glorious, with a load of good pork, or a few brace of the very edible pearl grey birds.

Oh, you who keep wretched dogs in a town, in a seventh-storey flat, perhaps, how little do you understand what their life should be, and

PLATE XVII Mr. Blakeney The Photo handed to

the Police

PLATE XVII Wild Pork for Lloyd

the joy of their really co-operative companionship. And those of you, so urbanised and intellectualised as to affect to despise, even in your youth, all instincts inherited from savagery, what a lot of joy you miss! I am no longer young, and I do not regret that the lust of killing anything higher in nature than fish has departed from me, but the memory of those days fills me with delight even yet.

How clearly I remember one evening when some Maoris came down the range from the bush, their saddles loaded with the meat of a wild heifer they had killed, slices of which roasted on sticks at their camp fire were, as I recollect it, the finest beef I have ever tasted. They were full of the exploits of their young dog, who had made straight for the beast's nose, and held on, Such a dog! Big, yellow, heavy and low-set, with a foot-wide jowl, a stiffly up-curved trumpet of a tail, and a growl to frighten the life out of you, Money would not buy him then, but next year the Maoris came again, with sickles and flails, cutting and thrashing our grass for seed. Charlie had now to work so hard for them, pig-hunting, that being heavy, he got footsore. So, on leaving, they sold me, for a pound, the right of getting him from their deserted camp, from which he did not seem inclined to stir; by no means a fancy job, but much too good a chance to miss, Hearing the camp, I walked like Agag, delicately, Charlie's growls getting deeper and more bloodcurdling with every step I took. Then, as usual, when I want to make friends, I sat down on the ground close by, and talked; but Charlie's part of the conversation was deplorably bad, and I was so frightened by it, that it was a long time before I found pluck enough to get hold of him and lead him home. Unfortunately, the station was not at all to his liking; he was a camp dog, and said so, and he despised civilisation, and showed that, also, very clearly, He also despised all the other dogs and chewed some of them up. In fact, at the homestead he was a bad-mannered, rotten-tempered, supercilious, and disgruntled nuisance. But camp, camp in the bush, that was quite another pair of shoes. There, he was his better self, just one broad, yellow, smiling wriggle of delight, with never a growl about him; there, after being happily companionable with everyone all day, he would curl up for the night outside the tent wall, snuggling down as near me as ever he could get.

A good pig dog will keep a boar at bay until his boss comes up, and then darting in alongside the beast from behind, will hold him by an ear, or even, the back of the neck, keeping himself safe from the ripping upstroke of the tusks, while the man finishes the business. Old Charlie's fault was that he was too plucky. He would not wait, but would always go in on his own, even if quite alone. In the end he got himself killed that way.

Another of the pack was an Australian kangaroo dog, like a greyhound in shape, only very much bigger and more powerful, with shorter and stronger jaws. Deep tan was old Sin, with a black face. His father had been even bigger, a noted wild dog catcher, and was reported to have once seized a trembling stranger by the coat sleeve, to have led him up to his master's door, and to have held him there till approved. I was photographing one day, and my horse having broken away, I had to carry home the camera for a mile or so across the open grass country of a neighbour's run, where, as the cattle never saw anyone on foot, you had to be careful. A small herd of inquisitive beasts soon appeared, and came circling round us at a trot, nearer and nearer. When they were quite close I handed over the matter to Sin, who leapt at the job. A few seconds later, silhouetted on the skyline, I saw the last cow going her best, her tail absurdly straight out behind by reason of the great dog hanging back on it with all his weight.

A dear old stupid with no tact. Into the circle, round the wharé fire at night, would come Scotch Mattie, entering with that easy dignity and politeness which always assured her a welcome. But Sin's approach was different; he would first bang open the door, then he would hesitate and slowly shove his great black jowl round the door edge to reconnoitre, actually asking for the boot, which often came flying. With pigs he was a fool, too. He came out of one mêlée with a four-or-five-inch rip through his cheek. This had to be sewn up, and there was no one but me to do it. I got a small packing needle and, putting a good point on it, stood up the old boy on the veranda, against the house wall, and quakingly tackled the job. He actually let me use all my force to get the needle several times through his very tough hide, without offering to move an inch, only now and then giving a very small whine. Later on another boar finished him; he came round to me out of the straggle in a dense thicket, and died at my feet.

In the earliest days, before we had a wharé, when we lived in a tent piled with all our belongings, we were wakened one night by something between a hurricane and an earthquake. Crockery was breaking, pots and pans clashing, and general pandemonium raging.

Little Sorrow, the fox-terrier, on the prowl for food, had been caught by her nose in a rat-trap, and was running amok with it, till we got it off her. She was not much good, except to chase wekas, the running bush hens, though her strategy with pigs was often as effective as it was indelicate. I once saw a very large boar standing at bay in the open with most of the bigger dogs round him, and a terrible row going on. When Sorrow appeared, he seemed to find it best to sit down and repel attacks by pivoting on the rear.

Repentance was a collie pup. I was on our draught mare, when accidentally she put her heavy foot down on the little animal, and kept it there for some seconds. There was only a little rim of gelatinous pup left outside the edge of the great hoof—it was as if she had trod on a small half-filled rubber bottle—but into this rim must have run all his vitals. I nursed the whining remains all that night, but the pup was on his legs again next day. He was, however, later on, shot by an over-rash brother, also in a pig tussle,

Jake was a smooth-haired sheep dog, black turned up with white and lemon, with a fine frank smile, and a politely waving tail. He had character, and he was full of self-respect. Only once had I to beat him, and that but lightly, but had I not known his spirit and been careful, I should have been badly bitten. As it was, he did break the skin of the hand that held his fore paw, though, so grasped, a dog cannot or will not ever really bite. After that little disagreement, however, we always got along famously together. He was fast and keen on his work, and never so happy as when speeding along, half a mile up the range, to head and bring back scattering sheep, directed from afar by a whistle and a wave of the hand. Twice I have seen him frightened. We were fencing at the back of the run, had knocked off for lunch, and were seated on the low bed places each side of the tent, with the billy on the ground between us, when to the tent door came Jake, with his engaging smile, and the most ingratiating wave of his tail, and he was, of course, asked in, too. Carefully picking his way, he came along between us and had turned to sit down at the back of the tent, when, with a sudden blood-curdling yell, and one great bound, he was back over everything, outside and away, turning up at the five-mile-distant homestead very shortly afterwards. He had put his tail in an unseen pannikin of scalding tea, and of course had not the slightest idea what had got him.

His second fright was different and more interesting. Travelling in the far end of the district, at a foot's pace, Jake, who was on my left, saw the head of a sheep which was coming up to the road from below on my right. Then, as the sheep's neck showed longer, and abnormally longer still, Jake stared, first with startled surprise, and then in abject terror. With every hair on end, a low grunt replacing his usual clear staccato bark, he miserably crept along, his body bowed away from the inexplicable horror. He was a long time getting over it, and for miles he was grunting and looking back over his shoulder. The sheep he saw was in fact no sheep, but a white alpaca. It was said that the settler who was experimenting with these beasts got very little wool, and, in shearing that little off, was bitten, kicked, and spat on, the last with the best of aims and copiously.

Very human was Jake. I once saw him in the agonies of indecision. One morning, keen on his job, he started off with me for a day's mustering. But there was at the station a counter attraction, and when, on a hillside cutting, half a mile away, we came in full view of the homestead, his inability to make up his mind was quite painful to see. He raced back and he raced forth, and then, sitting down in the middle of the road, he raised his nose high in the air and howled to break your heart.

XVII Cattle Hunting

The brown bull bellows on the far hill-side;

Then hey boys ho for a run!

Then down we go, and up, and round, and carefully work wide,

Then creep for a shot with the gun!

The big beast falls on the fair green grass.

How's that, Billy, for a shot?

But we're feeling rather sorry who have brought this thing to pass

And wish that we had not.

IN those early days on the run, we stuck to our work. As we were young, strenuous exertion was no hardship, and we were working on our own land, so we went at it with a will. Except once, when we were out of our reckoning, we did not work on Sundays, but thinking one day a week quite enough to waste, we took no other holidays. And even Sundays, I myself, being too much of an "onaisy divvle" to loaf at home, spent in exploring the bush with dogs and gun.

But at Christmas it seemed only decent to have a day or two off, so Barnes and I thought we would see

what the country behind us was like. We had heard that some miles away, over the bush-range, there was a valley with open grass patches and wild cattle, and that by following surveyor's blazes it was possible to ride there, so getting together tent-fly, fry pan, axe, billy and blankets, and a few luxuries, of which the unaccustomed treat of fresh butter was the most valued, we stowed all on a packhorse and, followed by Charlie, the mongrel yellow mastiff, were soon on our way up the range. Slashing our track through scrub, through patches of "lawyer" or native briar, through the tangled cane-like supple-jack and what not, climbing in and out of steep gullies, traversing high razorback ridges, or splashing down streams, but always beneath the leafy roof of the bush, we arrived at last at a little open green flat by a stream.

Here, having blocked the track home with a rough pole fence, we turned loose our horses, pitched our simple camp, and boiled the tea billy. A rough meal finished, it was cool evening, so we took our rifles and glasses, and strolling a few hundred yards up an inviting cattle track, we were soon on a patch of nearly level ground carpeted with rich grass and clover.

And here let me explain that New Zealand has no indigenous mammals except a small black rat, so that there were originally in the bush no game tracks. The pig was indeed, introduced in recent times, and spread everywhere, but his tracks through the scrub are too low to be of any use, unless you go on all-fours; so getting about, especially in the thick scrub and bracken, was most arduous work. The presence of cattle, however, very soon improves matters; they wear and beat down tracks, and by eating or smashing down some of the smaller growths in the less wooded country, and by carrying seed, soon make patches of open grass and clover, of which in our district, at least, there were originally none.

This little look-out terrace was a bull's stamping ground, and there were others in sight up and down the stream. I can see that valley quite plainly now; I can smell the clover we lay in, and hear the hum of the bees, and can feel again the delightful thrill of expectancy with which we scanned the country in sight, and listened for a distant bellow. These cattle would have been of no account to a "pukka" sportsman, for though they had been feral for generations, and though in colour they seemed to be reverting a good deal to dun, they were still painfully domestic in appearance. But to us they were good enough "wild cattle." They were not easy to come across; they kept in the bush all day, and it was only in the cool of the evening that you might hear the big bull out on his stamping ground, pawing the earth and bellowing, and later perhaps get a glimpse of his harem.

The first time I ever caught sight of wild cattle, I had followed their tracks down a bush creek, getting more and more cautious, and more and more keen until I saw the fresh mud actually oozing into a hoof mark, and knew I was almost upon them. And when I found myself in the midst of a little scattered feeding herd, I was so excited that, my rifle muzzle vibrating whole inches, I clean missed four or five shots, and had to do my long trudge home beefless and heart-broken.

But to return to our evening look-out.

After a long wait we spotted something dark on a bit of rough open, a mile or more away on the other side of the valley. "Oh, it's only a bit of brown fern; but give us the glasses." It moved. "Hooray, it's a bull. I can see his horns." Cutting a long flax leaf

Phormium Hookeri.

for a leash to keep old Charlie from going after pigs, we tore off down the track across the stream, up from the thick scrub to the more open bush, whichever way we could best get through, panting and sweating, and wildly excited, hoping to get above and behind him. Then, coming out into the more open country, we took advantage of every bit of cover until we could plainly see the very formidable big brown beast below us, standing out in the open. Then, unmindful of its accustomed fierce kick, we loosed off the heavy Martini, slipping the big dog in case of a miss, and with another shot or so the business was finished. And then? Well, I own that for a moment there was just a little feeling of regret, and even shame. We had destroyed a fine animal who was having a happy time, and doing us no harm, and we had done it without any good excuse, for, though we took home his hide, we hardly wanted it, and his carcass was entirely wasted. But there was no denying that the watching and the spotting, and the long wild scramble round had been no end of fun. Bred in mankind for millions of years, I wonder if the lust of hunting will ever be eradicated. In all of us, except in womanly women, and effeminate men, it is still pretty powerful, especially in youth. But beside the joy of stalking there was the charm, to us more or less urbanised boys, of getting entirely away from humanity, and living for a time an almost purely savage life. And about killing *eatable* beef, wild pigs and bush pigeons,

PLATE XVIII A Bush Fireplace

PLATE XVIII Pair of Bellows

there was certainly no unpleasant after-thought. For bush beef is tiptop, and though I have often had to eat, when hard up, tough and rank wild boar, a bush sow in good condition is food for the gods—as different from tame pork as is Cheddar from chalk. And a bush pigeon, fed on the right berries, is, I maintain, the finest table bird on earth.

And how we slept that night in a bed of springy bracken a foot deep, under the stretched "fly," the last thing we heard being the pathetic demand of the little native owl

Spiloglaux, N.Z. Venatica.

for more pork, more pork-pork-pork-pork!

We returned more than once to that happy valley. Now it is all cleared and grassed and fenced, and I for one never want to see it again.

Years later I met some more wild cattle. Clad in blue dungarees, cotton shirt and light football boots, and carrying a handy slasher or cutlass, I started off on foot to spend the day exploring part of a new block of land we had taken up in the back country. A rapid drop of many hundred feet, a waded stream, and then a climb of a mile or two up a steepish ridge, brought me well into the heart of the bush. Then another rough descent, and I had reached a stream that I wanted to follow out to the main river. After boulder-jumping down this creek for some distance, I noticed signs of cattle, and continuing my way very quietly, I came, on rounding a sharp corner, upon a couple of calves, and stood stock still. The calves, who had never seen a human being, were much interested, and came slowly up to smell the strange new thing, and one even licked my coat. But my scent had been carried down the gully, and there were anxious danger calls from the mothers, which by and by the calves obeyed. Following them down stream, as the gully became narrower and narrower, and its sides more and more precipitous, I became a little thoughtful, for, said I to myself, if they have to turn back, these two scared and anxious mothers won't be likely to treat me with any particular ceremony. A little further on I could see we were coming to a fall or something, and could hear the cows close ahead, so, at a place where a huge fallen rock had left only the narrowest passage-way, I scrambled high up the precipitous side and waited events.

Presently, with the greatest caution, muzzles outstretched, and wild eyes staring everywhere but upwards, came the two cows, the calves following. Just as they reached the big rock I gave a yell, and they all jammed for some moments in the narrow neck before they got clear and away. Then I came down and went on my way, chuckling.

I had been particularly proud of the way my new football boots, thoroughly wet, had enabled me, jumping, to land safely on the slippery boulders, but soon my pride was no more. For the three leather discs underneath, on which came all the pressure, soon hurt like red-hot pennies under my foot soles, and the homeward miles were trudged in the acutest torment.

XVIII Skobby

Nearly trailing on the ground
Long brown locks hung all around
People, often thus misled,
Took Skobby's tail for Skobby's head.

General Skobelef ([Plate XVIa](#)) was a Russian retriever, with long brown curly hair, hanging nearly to the ground all round him, from nose to tail, so that you could hardly tell which end was which; a smallish thick-set dog with a determined will. You should have heard him swear, as he lugged by the neck a black swan as big as himself through the impeding reeds that edged the lake. And the remarks that came through his clenched teeth, as he tugged at the rein of a hesitating led horse, were often quite unprintable. You should have heard, too, the language of the good Maori woman, doing her washing by the pool side, when, having thrown her clean linen to rinse in the water, Skobby plunged in and dragged it out to her through the soft mud, and subsequently, with the utmost delight, retrieved all the sticks she threw in at him.

He always imagined that anything I had handled was mine, and that I needed it with me forthwith. Scrambling with difficulty along the steep face of a scrub-covered hill, making a trial grade for a road, I had firmly planted a sighting-sticky, and had forced my way to the next spur in order to sight back to it with my level, when, on looking round, I found that Skobby had worried out the rod and was at my heels with it; and all the work had to be done again.

I was walking down the town one morning with the most staid and solemn banker of the place, when I noticed people smiling. Looking round, I saw the General, marching with comic gravity close behind us, taking

up all the pathway with a new six-foot cornbroom across his jaws. He had run in and "pinched" it from a shop in which I had handled, but not bought it, shortly before. He had come into town that morning seated up beside me in my buggy, his long curls hanging down under a starched white baby's hat, won by him at a game of "find the ball" at a children's party. But he did not particularly care for town, and was much more at home in the country, especially when there was anything to hunt. How well I remember watching, from a ridge above, his eager careful following up of a very interesting scent, among the great stumps of some cleared country, till, coming round the end of a big log, he found himself suddenly face to face with a hefty great boar, the first he had ever seen. Was he scared? Not a bit of it. Did he turn tail? Not he. For now —(to adapt Goldsmith):

For now a wonder came to light
To prove our Skooby's breed.
The dog in nowise took to flight,
The boar it was that fled.

When first I had him he had already learnt that sheep were sacred animals, and so, nothing doubting, I let him come with me as I rode round the ewe paddocks in the spring. When he saw his first lamb, however, a totally new beast to him, he was after it, eyes out, and I had to be mighty smart to save its life. What had to happen next had its effect, and it was a chastened dog that walked sedately through the rest of that division, with his eyes discreetly on the track.

Later on we came on a black lamb. "Hooray," says Skobby, "no one's barred *this* beast," and with a rush he had it by the leg. This one also I secured just in time, and another licking put the little dog wise on that head too, and there was no further trouble. It was the making of such nice distinctions, however, that, in the end cost the poor chap his life. Near a native village he came across some lousy mongrel animals, which, used only as he was to our own decently-bred and well-conditioned flock, he did not recognise as sheep at all. He was quite justifiably shot by a Maori, at the moment when, with equally full justification, from his own point of view, he was happily chawing one of them up.

One day, before that sad event, I was showing a visitor round the place, and strolled with him down to the men's quarters to interview the cook. Whilst we were all standing round, Skobby struggled out of the adjacent thick scrub, proudly lugging his latest find. It was a large, heavy, deadly looking, partly skinned loaf that he laid before the assembled company. The miserable cook was put entirely out of countenance, not knowing where to look or what to say, while the shepherds, grinning with delight at his discomfiture, lavished endearments on Skobby. They had undergone one meal from that batch before the cook had thought best to make away with the lot.

XIX Tarawera

Boom!
The enormous sound
Came on the starlit silence of the night
And as the mighty wheel went thundering round
The earth was shaken—stopped, the morning light.

It was a still cloudless night in '85, a slight frost just stiffening the grass, and the clear New Zealand sky alight with big stars. From our sound sleep after a tiring day's work on the ran, we were suddenly awakened by an unusual noise. "One of those blanky dogs has got in the new tank," said a querulous and sleepy voice. There was a 200-gallon affair of sheet metal lying empty on its side. But as we really woke up, we found it more of a row than could come from the most resounding tin tank; we realised in fact that it was the biggest noise we had ever heard, or were likely again to hear. It was not like big guns, nor did it resemble thunder, it was more resonantly immense than either. It did not physically deafen or stun, but it was none the less mentally astounding for all that. We compared it, at the time, to the clanking rumble of some inconceivably huge machine.

Of course we were all outside in no time, and staring North-West. There was, however, nothing to see; the night was as clear and still, and the stars as bright as ever, and this still peace only intensified the awed wonder with which we listened to the prodigious volume of sound. It could be but one thing, we knew, though just

where, and how far off, we could only guess; and guess, in fact, we did to within a few miles. We were all wildly excited and interested, a little suppressed nervousness rather adding to the pleasure. But neither interest nor fear could keep us long out in the cold night, so we were soon all back to bed and most of us asleep. Later on, there was a pull and shove at my bed; it seemed to move several inches. Then followed frequent lesser jerks, while the local stillness came to an end in almost continuous lightning and thunder, violent wind and rain in torrents, the gigantic engine still grinding on. When I wakened up towards morning, the noise had ceased. I struck a match to see the time. "Watch must have stopped last night. Hulloo, you chaps, what's the time?" A sound of another match through the thin partition, and a reply. "Nearly nine." "Nonsense! Why, it's pitch dark, and it should be light at 7.30." "Mine says nine, too," came another voice. Then we guessed, and again guessed right. We were in the shadow of a huge dust cloud. As it became light, we even felt in the spouting for volcanic sand, but vainly, though we heard afterwards that a very slight sprinkling had fallen within two miles of us.

There were no telephones in those days, and it was not till late the next day that we heard from a casual visitor from the coast town of the blowing up of Mt. Tarawera, 120 miles away, of the villages swamped by hot mud, of the loss of life, and the destruction of the famous pink terraces.

It is held, I believe, that the immediate cause of the trouble was the breaking through of the waters of a lake into subterranean heat, causing the sudden generation of an enormous body of steam at immense pressure.

The hot spring district where this took place has its charms, but it would seem to some of us rather too chancy a place for a home. You never know there what's coming next. There was a big geyser, Waimunga, the show well of the world, which used to "throw up" at intervals, sending a huge mass of mud, stones, and water several hundreds of feet into the air. The Government having built, though at a respectful distance, a little hotel for the comfort of the sightseers, the geyser promptly went out of business, and was practically idle for a dozen years or more. One stormy, wet night in 1917, however, without any sort of warning, it blew out sideways in a quite unexpected direction, completely destroying the hotel, killing the couple in charge, and covering a great piece of country with white mud. When I motored over to look next day, it was all quiet again, except the blowing off of steam from a couple of fizzing fumeroles.

When Rotorua, the capital of the district, was incorporated, the following clause was inserted in its charter:

"The Council shall not be responsible for any loss, damage, or injury sustained by, or through any eruption, or caused by any thermal action or arising from the natural flow of hot water, steam or natural gas, or from any sudden subsidence, or break in the streets, caused by, or through any natural upheaval or other volcanic action within the town."

Give me *terra firma*.

XXA Tramp Royal

Joyous he was and merry. Paid his shot

With song and laughter as he went his round.

Had he no other virtues? He had not;

Yet passed no bogus cheque above a pound.

"How much are we to believe of that chap?" I asked.

"Exactly as much as you please," was the reply.

But the man in question was an amusing and companionable fellow, and we later entertained each other very happily for a fortnight. He had turned up one night, casually, as was the custom, but on foot, which was unusual, at a runholder's house, which I happened to be visiting on the other side of the Bay. My host and his brother, not knowing quite what to make of him, had kept him in the smoke-room apart from the family, and had found him good company. I did not make his acquaintance till bedtime, when, as we had to share the same room, we talked pleasantly for a long time of the people he had stayed with on his long tramp through the bush, and of certain settlers on whom he proposed to call further on.

Weeks later, having called at our family station and borrowed a pony of mine from my brother, he arrived up country. In those days you turned up unasked, unannounced, even quite unacquainted, and stayed till you wanted to go. Visitors were rare with me, and consequently welcome; and as it was a slack time on the run, we proceeded to yarn and sing and shoot, to do odd jobs, and to enjoy ourselves. I was papering my new quarters. The ends of the main room required in the centre very long strips, and the paper, of a bold design, had to be very carefully adjusted at the joints. When you see a skilled paper-hanger at work, how easy it all seems; but we were new at it. We would get one of those long strips properly trimmed and well pasted at the back, and have

started fixing it at the bottom. By the time we were on the ladder, and half way up, we would find it either out of plumb or out of register, and it would be necessary to begin again. When at last it seemed well on, nearly to the top, the whole length of limp wet paper—by this time pretty well pasted on both sides— would come flopping down all over the two of us, sometimes tearing softly in pieces in the general collapse. We stuck at it to a finish, but never in my life have I heard anyone swear like our dubious friend, during the messy and agitating progress of that work. He said he had been in the navy, and I was inclined to believe him. His story was that he had left the sea after being nearly killed in a boat expedition, pirate hunting on the China station, and he certainly had terrible wound scars on his body to show for it.

Navy or no, he had assuredly never been in the cavalry, for on a horse he was naught. I remember once when we were climbing up an exceedingly steep razor-back ridge, he, riding a big horse, found it impossible to hold on, and, wildly struggling, came off over the tail, in a thick murk of impassioned profanity, down, whop, at my horse's feet. Though a heavy man, he was unhurt, and soon quite calm again—he was never out of temper for more than half a minute. He never had to ride down that track in wet weather, as we often did, when our horses put all four feet together and slid the forty yards at one shoot, with a most unpleasant drop yawning on either side. (Plate XX.)

The papering finished, we went eeling in the rapid, bush-edged river, and he taught me to cook the big white-bellied river eels so that they became the most delicate fish I have ever tasted. He split and salted them, smoked them in an old tar drum, cut them in lengths, and grilled them in their skins. To make a long story short, after a fortnight of such delights, he borrowed a fiver, and went down to the little coast township for a couple of nights. Returning, much changed for the worse, rather maudlin and besotted, and not feeling quite so comfortable with me as before, he soon started off the way he had come to return my horse to my brother. He avoided our run, however, and went direct to Gisborne, our seaport. There, being recognised by a publican, he thought best to make no stay, but rode on out of the district, down the coast.

Reaching town the following week I heard all about this, and was advised to let well alone, as people would laugh at me, and my fine friend, and my lost fiver. "Don't care a tinker's damn for that," I said. "I've done nothing I'm ashamed of, and I want my pony back."

So they sent off on a great powerful charger a little trooper of the Mounted Constabulary, carrying a photo I had taken (Plate XVIIa), who in a couple of days overtook and identified the runaway and invited him to return.

Now little Tietripe, my piebald pony, had some good points; a good fast walk, for example, a not uncomfortable amble, and any quantity of spirit, but her gallop left all your longer "innards" tied in inextricable knots. The little trooper told me on his return that he had had to canter a good deal to make up time, and that this, for the pony, meant galloping, and continuous howls and curses and yells for mercy from poor Blakeney. So when I had attended court, and received back in good order my pony and saddle, I felt I was quite square with the absconder, and bore him no longer any sort of malice.

They appointed a man to defend him, who, looking through the indictment, at once pointed out that there was no such crime as therein particularised—"attempted larceny of a horse." Prisoner was forthwith discharged, and I went back to the club. Presently the police sergeant came along with an amended charge for me to sign. "Oh, no you don't," says I. "I've got my pony and saddle. I bear no grudge to Blakeney, whose company was worth my fiver, and I'm not going into your bally old court to be made a fool of for nothing; not likely. It's no longer my funeral. Now have a drink and get out of this."

From the publican who had recognised him, and from occasional stories chucklingly told me by people from other districts, I later on arrived at a pretty fair notion as to the way of life of my fortnight's companion.

Making himself very pleasant all round in one district, he would carefully treasure up any scraps of information he could casually come by as to the settlers in the next. When he moved on, these details, cleverly used, soon put him on easy terms with his surroundings, and so, changing from one place to another, he had lived on the country quite happily for years. His amusing company, when he kept off liquor, was usually well worth his keep, and he schemed neither to cheat nor rob, but only to live in peace. Never, as far as I could gather, had he ever cashed a bogus cheque for more than a pound, and that only in a case of urgent necessity. Very seldom did he leave any bitterness or real ill feeling behind him, and never at all in the minds of people with any sense of humour. Looking back to his stay with me, I could see that he had, in avoiding awkward subjects, the tact of a long-whiskered cat in the dark. I remember chaffing him as to the possibility of the police being on the lookout for him, and on other uncomfortable matters, but he always came out of such conversations quite unperturbed and smiling. He had picked up some information as to my own folk in England which he used with effect; how he could have got it I have never been able even to imagine.

By long practice he could judge character almost at first sight. On leaving Gisborne, he put up at a station where his hostess was a very sentimental lady. She told me later, with tears of sympathy in her eyes, that he had been looking at a picture in an illustrated paper of a garden party at Buckingham Palace, when he had suddenly risen and gone to the window, where she could see, she said, by his back and shoulders that he was convulsed

with emotion. He had seen, prominent in that distinguished throng, the figure of his brother, and family affection and the thought of his now so fallen state had quite mastered him! He was made very comfortable at that station!

Me he had pleased with a very subtle form of flattery. He put on no great airs; he was just a poor navy man, invalided out of the service, stony broke until should fall due the next instalment of his very meagre pension.

I would have given much to have known his real history, but I never learnt it.

In the South Island, some years before,

PLATE XIXLambs at Kioore Station

PLATE XIXAuthor as Architect

when times were bad, and most of the runholders eager to sell out, he had appeared in a rather out of the way district as Lord Something or other, Abney, let us say, and had put up at the best hotel. He managed somehow to fool the local bank manager, a cringing snob, and giving out that he wanted to buy a run, had a royal time of it. He was taken all over the country to lunches and dinners, and dances and country races galore, the bank manager often in subservient attendance. One day, when the wagonette pulled up, this man rushed forward before everyone with an "Allow me, my lord," to give him the help of his shoulder to descend. The echoes of that unfortunate remark pursued him for the rest of his life. But that is by the way.

This happy state of things had gone on for some time, when, feeling it could not last for ever, Lord Abney sent for the land-lord of the hotel. "Look here, Tompkins," he said. "I've been receiving a lot of hospitality round here lately, and it's getting time for me to do something in return. Arrange me a real first-class lunch for a large party of my friends on such a day, everything to be done as well as you can possibly do it." The hotel was agreeable, and spread itself to do him proud.

On the night before the great occasion he called the landlady and told her that he was rather out of sorts with all this social racket, and needed complete rest so as to be at his best next day. "Let me," he said, "have a perfectly quiet night. Don't let a soul come into my part of the house; let there be absolute silence here till I am called at eleven o'clock to-morrow."

When the guests came to town there was no Lord Abney, but a shepherd reported having met at dawn, ten miles out, someone very like him, footslogging towards the next district. In his big box were bricks.

And that bank manager had a very unhappy time.

XXIOf Cooks

Say, did your old boss beam, man,
The sourest guest look pleasant,
Called they a come-true dream, man,
Your kumara
Kumara=sweet potato.
and pheasant?

Can you from nothing fake, man,
Victuals for half a troop?
And can you really make, man,
Proper pukeko
Pukeko=swamp hen.
soup?

And can you cook wild pork, man,
Well—à la kopa Maori
Kopa Maori (pronounced copper mowry)=native hole-in-the-ground cooking.
?

And is it common talk, man,
That all your spuds come floury?

And does the welkin ring, man,
Yet louder still and louder,
When they your praises sing, man,
Anent your oyster chowder?

No? But your chance ain't dead, man,
You still can come out top.
Oh, *can* you bake good bread, man,
And *can* you grill a chop?

In New Zealand, where the material for good food is abundant, where there is excellent meat and butter, and a good climate and soil for vegetables, there is, alas, hardly a soul who can cook. Waking at seven in the morning in the country, in a wooden house where everything is audible, you will be aware of a loud sizzling. It is the great panful of excellent mutton chops, frying in plenty of fat. In half an hour the noise ceases, and you know that those chops will have been put in the oven to harden, while the billy is boiled. At eight, you breakfast off something that looks and tastes like rather greasy boot soles. Cooking chops is easier that way, and as few English know good victuals from bad, I suppose it does not matter much, but if a French housewife offered such food to her men, I shudder to think of what would happen. I remember a déjeuner with carters and pedlars in the Dordogne—but I digress—to your chops, O Israel.

The general standard of cooking being so low, it is not to be expected that the man who prepares the food on a station or in a camp will be an accomplished chef. He may be an old soldier, he may have been a sailorman, a drunken schoolmaster, a stoker, a tinker, or a tailor, he may have been of almost any trade in the wide world, but he will never have been a cook. And as it is rather a thankless, irritating job, this serving everybody at all hours of the day and night, the "Doctor," as he is called, unless of a naturally imperturbable good temper, is apt to become soured and cranky to the last degree.

My good neighbour, Hood, came to the conclusion, from long experience, that all station cooks were mad, and, when short of one, even applied to an asylum. For, said he, I shall in that way get to know in what particular way he is likely to break out, and shall be able, in that direction at least, to be on my guard.

One howling wet day, when no work could be done, and the shepherds were taking their time over breakfast, the crusty old cook, hot with indignation, shambled up to the owner's wharé with a big slice of bread. "D'yer see anything wrong with this, Mr. 'Ood?" Mr. 'Ood did not. "Well, if you'll believe me, sir," said the old man, gasping with insulted wrath, "the men are toastin' it, *toastin'* it, sir."

They are not all fools, though. A runholder I knew, on hearing complaints from some of the men, went down to interview his cook.

"Well, Sam," he said, "what's this I hear about the bread?"

"True, sir, all perfectly true; but I'm blowed if I know the reason of it, anyway. It's a fair puzzle to *me*." Then reaching aside into the bread bin, he fetched out a small bun, and holding it forth on the palm of his outstretched hand, he said in slow, sad astonishment, "You'd hardly believe it, sir, but that there little b——r weighs *fifteen pounds*".

My friend crumpled up and retreated.

It's nearly always the bread. A good loaf will cover a multitude of sins, but the baking of it, in camp, is none too easy. Not only have you, in the first place, to make your own yeast out of potatoes and hops, but the kneaded dough must be kept warm till it rises, which, in a draughty shack or tent, is not always a simple matter. (Even in a house it needs care; I remember my good mother's horror in finding it, on one occasion, well tucked up in the old woman-cook's warm bed.) Then there is the camp oven, a circular cast-iron affair with three

rudimentary legs and a convex lid, also of castiron. When partly filled with dough, this oven is stood on a bed of incandescent wood cinders, and more are shovelled on top of the lid. The renewal of these cinders above and below in exactly the right amounts, and for the correct time, needs, as I know to my sorrow, a lot of practice. One big loaf that I was responsible for in the early days was too solid for even our ravenous appetites, and was cast out. It withstood the weather and the attacks of wild animals for months, and was in the end, at least so I was told, carried off by the Maoris to use as a grindstone.

My station cook having relinquished his job, there appeared next day an active, cheery little man who had walked up fourteen muddy miles from the coast to replace him. (Plate XVIIIb.) Inquiries as to his competency were met with an affable but slightly pained surprise, and we were smilingly given to understand that cross-questioning was entirely unnecessary—that he had come up to *take the job*. And take the job he did, forthwith, and kept it for the rest of his life.

Brought up in a training ship, he had been a ship's steward, and had then taken up hotel and other work ashore. One night, when head waiter in a small town, the landlord consulted him about a dubious cheque, paid by a guest who was to catch the early express in the morning. "You leave it to me," said Lloyd. That night the hotel clock stopped for an hour, and when, in the morning, the whistle of the departing express synchronised with the doubted one's shaving, profuse apologies were forthcoming, but there was, very regrettably, no other train till after the bank opened.

This early training and varied experience had made Lloyd an uncommonly useful man; always happy, never idle for a moment, smart and absolutely reliable, with a very proper pride in doing well anything he undertook, he was indeed a treasure. By no means devoid of humour, he had a seaman's even-toned behind-your-hand way of speaking, that would sometimes, somehow, make a quite ordinary remark a thing of Pyecroftian delight. He was soon turned into a keen gardener, and he fell in love with my dog, Skobby, at first sight, but the crown of all his virtues was the fact that he could, and would grill chops—that he could, in fact, really cook.

All went well for a year or two, when I engaged a rather tactless head shepherd, too much inclined, in my absence, to lord it over Lloyd, so that relations between the two became uneasy, and then distinctly strained. The climax was reached when a valuable ram, having, through the carelessness of the shepherd, been left in the killing paddock, was innocently reduced to mutton by the cook. Lloyd reluctantly proposed to go.

Now, anyone with a genius for happiness is of high value if he do but sit down and radiate it, but when that man can and will *cook* into the bargain, he has to be retained at any cost. But how was it to be done? An idea dawned. Could he manage to hang on here till I built a house elsewhere? He quite enthusiastically could, and when later he moved away with me, and became my cook, butler, gardener, washerman, and general odd jobber, how my neighbour's wives all envied me him, and how they hated my remarks as to womenkind being quite unnecessary in a house! Why, even now our happy ménage comes in very useful, on occasion, to hold up before the present Management.

Things certainly did go very well with us. I admired and enjoyed Lloyd, and it came round to me that he had given out that never for the rest of his life would he work for anyone else, and never in all those eleven years did the least shadow of disagreement come between us—never but once.

Up country there is seldom any whisky; for one thing it is stuff that will not keep, and there are other reasons. Now Lloyd, like many another good man, needed occasionally a little excitement, and about every six months he took time off to go to town. He was never any the worse when he came back; maybe a trifle more warm-hearted and friendly, perhaps a shade more loquacious, but that was all.

But there had just returned with him, to do some work in the house, a rather lowdown plumber, also just off a spree. The weekly coach came by next day, and happening to see the driver get down and deposit something or other in the bushes, I took occasion to stroll round and investigate. Two bottles of whisky, so discovered, were destroyed without hesitation as absolute contraband. But the stern sense of rectitude that supported this action on my part did not prevent me feeling uncommonly mean, when I saw these two poor thirsty devils quartering the ground in every direction in search of the lost treasure. At last Lloyd came, and hesitatingly inquired of me, and I told him what I had done and why. After a painful pause, and with almost tearful solemnity, he said: "Well, sir—the bond that's kept us two together all these years is *busted*, sir." But it wasn't, for next morning he was nipping round with his housework and gardening as happy as ever.

I have been blessed in having many better men than myself working under me, on one job or another, but of all of them, "Mr. Lloyd down at Kenway's" has, I think, the warmest place in my memory.

XXII Arts and Crafts

A man we may find,
Who in power of mind
High above us quite awesomely stands;
Yet we're somehow consoled,
When later we're told,
He's no more than a fool with his hands.

BEFORE I left England, I put in three months with the family carpenter. He was a very intelligent man, and finding it much easier to teach an educated and eager youth than to cram knowledge down the reluctant throat of his one dull apprentice, he took a lot of trouble to teach me all he could in the various departments of his trade, not neglecting to impress on me the fact, that half the art of wood working depends on one's ability to keep a proper keen edge on one's tools. I was put on to all sorts of jobs, even to the extent of giving a severe shock to a family friend, who, calling in one day, found me planing the coffin of a just deceased mutual acquaintance.

This training in the use of tools was very valuable to me later. Never having acquired the art of loafing, wet weather in the old "mud fort" would have been a great trial, had there not always been something to be made, doors, windows, bedsteads and what not. Later on came the designing and execution of somewhat crude wood carvings, (Plate XVIII), and the planning out a wood and sheet-iron house (Plate XIX), that should be a little more interesting than the usual colonial packing case without being a meretricious sham. This house, the main reason for building which, as I have explained elsewhere, was the necessity of keeping a certain cook, was at first put up at a bend in the river near our original homestead, and later taken to pieces and carted over the range, some ten miles, and re-erected on a hill a few miles from Gisborne.

Our illiterate Scotch neighbour, mentioned elsewhere, though a thorough good chap, was by nature one of those who resent any attempt at even the simplest forms of art. His remark to another neighbour was: "Why on airth wasna an oidinar hoose guid enow for the mon?"

His attitude towards art in general, would, I think, have been well illustrated by the story of the Englishman who had to spend a night at Peebles. Walking out after dinner he inquired of the first inhabitant he met,

PLATE XX Where Blakeney Came off

PLATE XX Fresh Caught

as to the whereabouts of a playhouse, and was answered thus: "Mon, ye'll find no the-aytre he-yerr but the h——rr walks at eight,"

But to return to New Zealand. When I moved further up country in. charge of a larger run, I was much more alone, and so without plenty to do in slack times, in wet weather and at night, I should have been rather miserable.

An ordinary outdoor man cannot read all the hours of any one day, wet or fine, and though, as a matter of fact, besides bought volumes, I managed to read through pretty well all the books in the Gisborne Public Library, by no means a bad collection, other forms of recreation were needed.

Taking photos to send home occupied a good deal of my time, and was an interesting job, though the processes of developing and printing were rather messy.

Then learning, or rather trying to learn, the banjo and mandoline, and finding out what those taily black dots on the staff really meant, carried me often deep into the night.

Fully occupied with the station work, and these various recreations, I never felt lonely, and moreover, there was for Sundays, and slack fine days, the everlasting joy of gardening This taste my brothers and I had inherited. We none of us could live without a garden, though a much older half-brother was not so keen, and used to say he could only remember the names of two flowers, the high-drangea and the low-belia. Even my little manager's wharé far up country had to be brightly surrounded with its weedless flower patch as elsewhere.

With our glorious sunshine it was not very difficult to get fine colour results. For example: A long irregular drift of pale buff *Phlox Drummondii*, and another of clear salmon, and numerous plants of *Dianthus Heddwiggii* each a mass of big blooms; great bushes of antirrhinums blooming profusely for several years; gorgeous varieties of mesembryanthemum revelling on a sundried slope; Hunnemannia, clearest of all glowing

yellow—Callas ramping near the bath water drain—Cosmeas in bushes four feet high, and as thick, visible for miles. Behind these the rich glossy green bignonia, with its glare of scarlet trumpets; the big *Aralia papaver* with its great leaves showing white underneath; the scarlet flowering Eucalyptus, and the lusty Paulownia covered in due season with its mass of pale purple blue and many another fine flowering shrub. Near the coast, too, *Plumbago capensis* would stand the winter, several Passifloras and Tecomas and the great double orange bignonia would bloom freely. I have seen a Bougainvillia of an almost savage magenta, ramping in the vivid sunlight over the greywhite sun-bleached timbers of an old shed, as daringly glorious as anything you could imagine. Plants that needed cold, however, or that required much water, were difficult, and on the whole I think there is more pleasure to be had in gardening in England, if only because the long winter adds such a zest to the enjoyment of growth, when it does come. Here, also, there is a much greater choice of material for the garden artist.

To grow flowers, in fact to grow anything in your garden but pumpkins, cabbages and such-like, was of course regarded by the average colonial man as effeminate foolishness. Curiously enough, about the only fellow settler who took any interest in such things was a horse-racing Hebrew, with whom I had not expected to have anything in common. When I had my last and best garden, I had by chance to ask him to dinner, and he proved a delightful guest. Not only did he approve what I had already done, but he could see and appreciate what I was trying to do.

In "belly-gardening," as we vulgarly styled working for the kitchen, I never took much interest, but in the early days we naturally had to do a lot of it. We soon had magnificent apples and nectarines and apricots, and the succession of luscious peaches, from Xmas on, were most acceptable. A fine juicy peach when the weather is really hot is worth half a dozen in the cool autumn. But soon there came new blight after new blight, and whereas in the beginning we found peach trees growing wild all over the country, they can now only be made to bear well by the most scientific industry and careful precaution. Oranges grew well, though they were rather acid and thick skinned, but we soon had plenty of good lemons. We raised some huge plants of the cabbage kind in an old sheep-yard, and wondered what they were. An old Yorkshire neighbour informed us that they were either "coo-cobboges or ahbrahdes."

Hybrids.

They proved however, to be cauliflowers, and were so huge that one head made four big dishes.

By my talking so much of pastimes, I would not have you believe that a station manager's billet is a sinecure—it is not so by any means. For although, as soon as I had obtained a competent head shepherd, I did not do much actual sheep work, except to lend a hand at busy times, there was always plenty of other matters to be looked after.

Bush felling contracts had to be arranged for, the laying out of new fence lines had to be undertaken, and the fences inspected and measured, when completed. Roads and tracks had to be laid off, sheep yards had to be planned and erected, in fact there was no end to the things that had to be done, beside a lot of riding about from place to place.

And when my Company's second bush run was bought, twenty very rough miles away, my work was almost doubled, though I had a manager on each station.

As but an amateur surveyor, I was quite foolishly proud of one bit of work. With a little Abney level and an intolerable lot of scrambling, I had laid off six miles of grades in steep mountain country, along which line we made a three-foot riding track to the homestead. The county Engineer, in subsequently making a road of it, never had to go a yard off my grade. Amateurs are apt to be vain, but this made me even, vainglorious.

Although starting as Managing Director and Accountant-General of this Limited Co., I had never had any training in book-keeping, and though, as a matter of fact, I had had to develop some sort of a system to keep matters straight among my brothers, yet I did not even know exactly what "double-entry" meant. And when at the end of the first year, the officially appointed Auditor asked for my books and found there was a ledger, but nothing else, he was not a little flabbergasted. Discovering, however, on further investigation that there was not much wrong, and admitting that there was a certain sort of method in my madness, he passed the accounts, strongly recommending, however, for the future, the use of a journal!

The second new station was run for several years with entirely distinct accounts, and when we moved a bull, say, from one run to the other, I had eight separate entries to make, so until this clerk's work was, in course of time, deputed, I had, among other things, plenty of writing to do.

XXIII Neighbours

"Who is my neighbour?" asked the lawyer Jew,
But no one in our country asked that same.
To all, from each, the neighbour's meed was due,
They'd feed you first and then inquire your name.

THE good Mr McHardy, later to be mentioned in connection with the great Cheque Judgment, held a lot of valuable flat land adjoining a little coast township, and leaving it waste, thickly covered with rushes, ran all his stock on his hill country. These neglected acres were both an eyesore and a standing grievance to his smaller neighbours, who for their own and the township's sake, wanted the land either improved or sold.

At a concert in the little village hall, with McHardy in the chair, someone sang Burns' "Green Grow the Rashes O." There was frantic applause, and repeated and re-repeated encores, the fun greatly increased by the puzzled astonishment of the worthy chairman.

His good wife was a very estimable woman, with a notable directness of attack. I was entertaining both her and an Irish neighbour at my house, when, and after they had been insisting at some length on the disadvantages of my then single state, there was a longish pause in the conversation, broken by Mrs. McHardy with the remark that, "My daughter Maria has no sooteers as yet" Finding the room suddenly becoming warm, and catching a twinkle in the Irishwoman's eye, I answered an imaginary call from outside and got clear.

Their two grown-up sons were rather a by-word for pawky caution, especially in their quite ungrounded fear of being married against their will. When, for instance, a neighbour's daughter called, and John's mother asked him to come and talk to her, he replied with his slow drawl, in the girl's hearing, "No thank you, mother, I've my gun to clean." And another lively girl reported to her friends with great glee that when conversing with her for a few moments in front of the grandstand at the races, he had said, with a pause between each word, "I think we'd better be moving, people might be talking about us," At last he did take some sort of a calf's fancy for a girl at a party, and turned up next morning in front of her house with his bridle rein in one hand, and a paper bag of sweets held high in the other, and the words, "I'm John McHardy—where shall I put my horse?"

But the girl "was not having any." He and his brother James were burning off fern in the back country, and the wind had taken their fire through a great stretch of a neighbour's land. Some shepherds came by who, knowing with whom they had to deal, magnified the enormity of the damage done. "Which of you lit it?" they asked, with portentous seriousness. After a pause John miserably confessed, "Well, I suppose I struck the matches," adding eagerly, "but James *held my horse*"

I fancy it must have been one of these young men, who, limiting himself to one cigarette a day, cut it in three parts, and consumed one part after each meal, till he finally gave up smoking altogether, on the ground that he found himself becoming a slave to the habit.

But they were emphatically not typical young New Zealanders. And it should be added that the solid virtues of the Scotch have been of immense value to the Colony. These people can hardly be said to make the desert "blossom as the rose"—grass and kail being more in their line, but they certainly are exceedingly valuable settlers. For instance, the friend whose house I broke into (page 23) came out from Glasgow as a young man to escape from commercial life. He had, beside a love of reading, a fine physique, good brains, and great determination, but having hardly any money, he first worked for others until he had earned just enough for a possible start. He then took up a piece of the most disheartening, ungetatable, precipitous bush country, a block that would have daunted nearly anybody, and by sheer hard manual labour for years, living mostly by himself in his neat little hut, miles away from anybody, he pulled through, and is now independent, living near town, occupying much of his time in unpaid public work.

Talking of pulling through reminds me of a German peasant emigrant who, very many years ago, had had allotted to him a small patch of bush land in the Auckland district. He worked early and late, felling and splitting a great Kauri tree, and was met by my informant taking to a customer some of the resultant shingles, piled high on a sort of barrow. He himself was pushing, and harnessed in front were his wife and a goat. In later life he was very well-to-do.

There was also the Irish owner of a quite extensive neighbouring run who lived in a tumbledown homestead by the seashore. His wife was a keen gardener, and worked diligently at her flowers, the baby set down

PLATE XXIBlue Water From the Lake

in a big basket alongside. From that garden over a dip in the bignonia hedge, you saw the rich blue of the

Pacific in a setting of dark glossy green and vivid scarlet, or in spring-time with a spread of peach blossom as foreground, a sight for the gods.

But one summer a large whale got stranded just outside the said hedge, and the house for some time became uninhabitable. It was not, as a matter of fact, very habitable at any time, as it was much out of repair, with an owner who had a marked distaste for having anything properly mended. On a wet day all available pots and pans were arranged to catch the various streams from leaks in the roof, which made quite a cheerful little orchestra of drimplings against the deep roar of sea and storm outside.

Up over the good man's bed was an immense mass of black cobwebs. He would never let them be cleared off, as he said they trapped the mosquitoes.

On these kind and hospitable people I often called for a meal on my way down the coast. I remember that from my seat at their table I could usually see miniature horses most oddly parading the roof-tree of the adjacent barn, the horse-paddock being on a cliff a quarter of a mile away, exactly in the same line of sight.

One excellent neighbour, a fine great flaxenw-bearded fellow, of a well-known Somerset family, was a man of brains and character, and a charming host, but very absent-minded. He used to take a horse and ride away over his very steep-set run as far as the nature of the country would allow. He would then throw the rein over a stump, reaching home later on foot. Next morning he would take another mount and repeat the process, and it was only, so I heard, when he had come to the end of his rideable horses, and his saddles, that he would begin to wonder what had become of them, and send out to collect the broken-reined nags. He was in the capital once, on an important official deputation, and was walking up to Government House, when a colleague noticed that the shining correctitude of his get-up of topper and tails" was somewhat marred by a pair of loose carpet slippers. But the smart people, who, noting these and many other little lapses, took him for an easy "mark" in business matters, always found him, to their surprise, quite painfull "all there."

Another runholder near was a very different sort of man, the son of an Irish Melbourne brewer, who had been sent Home, and to Oxford, to have a polish put on him.

Strange to say, in spite of his nationality and his opportunities, he remained almost boorish to the end of his days. The purse-maker had failed again.

His sons, good-natured chaps with whom, however, I had little in common, once spread a quite unfounded, but, as it seemed to them, an absolutely devastating yarn about myself, to the effect that my head shepherd had "sent" me to town about some cattle, and that I had forgotten all about them, and come back with a new *plant*. What they did not realise, was that I should not have been at all ashamed, had the story been true. I never found bullocks very interesting, whereas they thought of little else.

Then there was also a Scotch-Italian neighbour, one of the kindest fellows going. He lived in rather native fashion with his Maori wife, and as likely as not chickens would come flying out of his parlour window as you rode up to his little house. His elder brother, a rather disreputable rolling stone, a' former Papal Zouave, once came to look him up when he was living "very rough" with a partner. The young man was out just then, and the visitor, on inspecting the somewhat rudimentary station arrangements, professed himself very much shocked by the general way of life of the partnership, and especially by the utter inadequacy of his brother's little bullrush hut.

"Not fit for a *pig* to live in," he exclaimed, as he bent double to enter. And then, "Howly Mary, Mother of God there *is* a pig," he shrieked in horror, backing sharply out, as, in the dim light, an old sow waddled towards him from under the bunk.

On the next run was a Clifton boy, who, after a cattle-hunting accident, had had a leg taken off at the hip, and who confessed that he could not now stand *more* than eight hours a day stockriding on his breakneck country.

A mixed lot these neighbours, but for the most part as good fellows as you would wish to meet.

XXIV Some Foreigners

To make a world each kin' o' man

Is wanted—else a botch.

We need the thrifty Chinaman,

We even need the Scotch.

SEEKING a shepherd's billet, a well-dressed blonde-bearded young man came up to me in town and addressed me, though he said he was a Hungarian, in quite excellent English. Seeing me look at him rather

doubtfully, he, with his very distinct and careful enunciation remarked, "You must not think, sir, that because I am very well educated I am therefore haughty." He was right, for though he turned out to be inefficient, he was never anything but perfectly affable.

But there were not many foreigners in the country. A settlement of excellent Danes there had been early on, and now and then, but not often, one came across a useful German. A stray Portuguese or so I have heard of, but they for the most part are not classed as white men in the Pacific. There were quite a number of Austrian subjects, of what race I do not know, who went about the country as pedlars. One of these started up our coast with all his merchandise on a pack-horse which was far too full of zeal. When driven on to the ferry punt, this overwilling beast walked straight on and over, and in, and finding no bottom, swam round back to land again in the salt water, not at all to the improvement of the poor man's stock in trade.

Though the immigration tax on them is, I believe, about £100 a head, there are a few Chinamen in every town, and very useful they are with their green-grocer's shops and eating houses. In Gisborne there were Luck Chang and Foo Chu, and between them was the big sign of A H. Budd, an Englishman. Naturally, but much to his disgust, he was everywhere spoken of as Ah Bud.

Down in Dunedin, which is almost entirely Scotch, a tender for some corporation contract was sent in over the signature James Macpherson. This was accepted without demur or inquiry, but the contract was actually, and very well, carried out by a certain Hang Hu, who was no fool, and quite alive to the local conditions.

Negroes were very rare, though we had for a week or two, working on one of the bush contracts, a darky stoker who had run away from a ship. He had left on foot and not being reported down the road, all hands turned out to search for him, as a new chum can easily get lost for good in the bush. He was found before he had been out three days, not at all put about by his position. But what then absolutely and entirely overcame him was the idea that anyone at all, let alone the whole countryside, should have thought for a moment of troubling about him. He felt in a new world, and was not quite himself again for days.

Concerning the more nearly allied tribes, I have already spoken of the value of the men from the north of Tweed. Those from the Island to the West we roughly divided into two classes. One, the more cultured individuals of which are the delight of one's life, at any rate when present with you, and the other consisting of those who, starting with pick and shovel, advanced as elsewhere; through the stages of police and public-houses, to do themselves permanently well in politics.

XXV Assorted Parsons

That he be minister, parson or priest,
Shan't count against him; not in the least.
We'll welcome and help him whenever we can,
For sure, after all, he's a sort of a man.

Having been brought up as a Quaker, it is almost impossible for the writer to take seriously, *qua* parson, any kind of priest, minister, professional preacher, or other religious medicine man. However fine a fellow he may be otherwise, the absurdity of his position, or rather pretension, always tickles irresistibly my sense of humour. So when riding down the track in the early days, I met the first black coat coming up to our little valley, I am afraid I did not feel particularly overjoyed, more especially when its contents, which were anything but pre-possessing, addressed me very solemnly thus: "My name is Mister McQuinney, and the service is advertised at half-past six." However, I told him how to get to our wharé, and that my brother was at home. He found it all right, and my brother welcomed him hospitably, as up country one always welcomes anybody, and set to work to do his best for him. There was no meat at the moment, so he boiled him a couple of eggs. These after trial were solemnly rejected, as were, with equally smileless seriousness, two more couples. The fact is, H. had found a nest and was going through the lot, in hopes.

This unco dour and dismal personage was an unsuccessful cobbler who had taken to expounding the scriptures, and was now some sort of lay preacher or improver. In the pulpit, I was told, he dwelt, to the exclusion of almost all else, on the horrors of hell, a special breed of fiery worms being his strong suit. He called later on, after the arrival of the family mother, but our usually so sweet tempered old collie, Mattie, whose young puppies were hard by, didn't at all like the look of him, and running up from behind, expressed her views, by giving him a least little ladylike nip in the leg. Much disconcerted, with a face as long as a fiddle, and almost weeping, he came up for sympathy to the lady of the house, who could hardly keep her countenance, as he pulled up his trouser to show the microscopic mark.

The next preacher to come up the Valley was little Dean X, who was, as it happened, a particularly decent chap, and as conscientious and outspoken "as they make 'em." The sort of man whose feelings you would naturally go some way to spare, by refraining from flaunting any really unessential difference of opinion.

But with the representatives of some of the other sects one did not always feel quite so much at home. Especially was there one type of over-breezy, extra-manly, super-hearty, condescending-to-your-uninstructed-weakness "minister" who, every time, gave occasion to the ungodly to blaspheme, and always raised the very devil in us outsiders. Quite early on, it had been decided among us to build a little assembly room near the centre of the very scattered settlement, to be used for various useful purposes during the week and which, on Sunday, was to be available for the use of the preachers of various denominations, who should arrange dates among themselves.

There was, near by, a little woman, of the salt, or shall I not rather say the sugar, of the earth, the not very young wife of a rarity a quite illiterate Scot. This man, a very able and quite well-to-do sheep farmer, who kept all his accounts in his head, lived with his wife in a mud-floored thatched cottape "but and ben" which she always kept 'in apple-pie order. She was as kind-hearted,

PLATE XXII Waikaremoana Bush

hardworking, and able a little woman as you would ever be likely to meet, and not in essentials at all narrow-minded, but she was completely puzzled by our refusal to christen the new room "The Gospel Hall." Thinking always the best of everyone she knew, she reckoned us all quite nice fellows. Then why, oh why not? It worried her dreadfully.

Two Quakers, not of course in any sense parsons, visited us at different times. One was a man of the utmost respectability, exemplified by his hiring a good buggy and pair to come up and see us, and culminating, alas and alas, in his assumption of a shiny top hat, That hat pretty definitely "put the lid" on *him*.

The other was that good man the late Joseph Neave of Sidney, whom I picked up on the road. He had started to walk the fifteen miles, carrying his little bag. It did not matter a tinker's damn whether you believed in this man's religion or not, you soon, believed in him. He was one of the very few genuinely thorough Christians I have ever met. He would give to them that asked of him, and from them that would borrow off him he never turned away. He would give, and not infrequently had given, his coat off his back to one more needy than himself, in fact he never considered his own well being at all. He not only loved his neighbour as himself, but much more.

And yet one saw, sadly enough, that had he schemed his life for that very purpose, he could not have shown more clearly the impossibility of any such unmitigated Christianity, as a plan of living, in this present wicked world. You can fancy, for instance, what a trial was such a man to his wife and family. For they, though also excellent folks, were not likewise saints.

Another Church of England parson rode up in the winter, when the road was one long quag. Some ladies of his Gisborne congregation were condoling with him on his return as to the miriness of the way. "Yees," he slowly minced, "Yees—but it was naice med." He was not exactly our style either.

I happened to be in Gisborne when Queen Victoria's Jubilee was being celebrated by a procession and the opening of a little public park with speeches.

The first orator was a pompous local soldier man, tall and heavy.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he roared, "you are probably not aware, the district can hardly be aware, that I" (striking his great chest) "that I have seen the Queen. And not only have I seen the Queen, but I have seen Napoleon's carriage at Madame Tussaud's!"

Then the Vicar held forth plain, sensible and short, with no flowers, followed by the Rev. B. F. Blight (his actual surname), a Wesleyan divine of the most cautious temperament. "The character of the Queen, my friends, is everything we could possibly wish—(a pause)—as far as we know."

Finally, Father Connolly, big, red and fat. He spoke for Ireland, and, refusing to be hampered by any such paltry things as facts, lied amply and beautifully right through. It was roses, roses, all the way, and such a success, that there was not a single black Protestant in the assembly that was not quite carried off his feet. Ah, my brethren, what a gift!

There were a few "fancy religions" about also. Mormon missionaries had come, but were not well received. Eddyites had not, I think, in my time appeared, but there was a little set of well-living folk who belonged to another American sect, the Seventh Day Adventists, and would do no work on Saturdays. I knew of a Seventh-day housemaid who, having a strictly Sabbatarian mistress, got the two days off each week. An able managing Scotchwoman, who had brought up a large family in the faith, sent a son to the States to be trained at one of their sectarian colleges. He came back quite fallen from grace. He said the whole thing was run by a

handful of Americans who made huge profits out of the worthless literature that all converts had to buy. This, story, true or not, proved a little unsettling to the faithful,

XXVITelephones

A scandal that you think should be
By all the wide world known?
In the dead o' the night just whisper it me
On the country telephone.

When telephones became a practicable proposition, "earth return single" wires were soon spread all over the country by private enterprise. There was no bother about way-leaves or rent. You said to your neighbour, "I should like to take a wire along such and such a fence through your place," and the request was never refused. The wire, single galvanised steel, was hung, always very slack, on light scantlings wired on to the fence posts, with private switch-boards at the small country stores. When, later, Government wires reached these stores, the question arose of some plan by which privately owned and maintained exchanges could be switched on to the Government system. The Post Office, of course, declared that it was beyond the power of human wisdom to compass any such adjustment. However, as the Home Secretary, Sir Joseph Ward, happened to be in the district just then, a small deputation met him in the back bar of a Gisborne "pub," and over drinks and cigars we laid our little plan before him.

The permanent head of the Post Office, also present, made all sorts of objections, but these were overruled seriatim, and he was then and there instructed to carry out our suggested arrangement.

Sir Joseph had his faults, but a love of red tape was not among them.

The thing worked without a hitch, and for all I know, does so still.

In some ways our easy-going private lines were wonderfully flexible and convenient; In the matter of getting down mobs of sheep to the Freezing Works, for instance, the gain was immense. I have often sat in my office in conference with the Freezing Works four miles away, the manager of one run thirty-five miles away, and of another, fifty miles away, and discussed all the details of carefully-timed deliveries exactly as if we were all in the same room together each hearing all that the others said. Concluding the same arrangement would have previously meant a week's hard journeying, with no certainty of things fitting in right after all.

On the other hand, induced currents were so generally prevalent that it was generally acknowledged that by far the best and cheapest way to advertise anything in our district was to tell it to someone on the telephone as a very particular secret.

XXVIITrout

Handle him tenderly as if you loved him.-Iz. Walton on baiting with worm.
The trout he swims in his wet, wet world,
And I walk dry in another;
Yet I cannot but feel as I'm winding my reel,
That he's truly my own little brother.

In the early nineties I was visiting a friend who had a station in Hawke's Bay. The river behind his homestead, the Maraetotara was a succession of clear deep pools broken by steep short rapids or falls. It had been noted of old for its immense eels, and now trout were said to be growing large in it, and, though no one could catch them, they were certainly there, as one night we were all suddenly in darkness owing to one big chap having jammed the turbine that actuated the dynamo.

This was the first chance I ever had of trying for trout, and it was not by any manner of means to be missed, so finding there was an old rod and line kicking about and even a hook or two, I was soon away up the river side with it, looking for bait, It was a cool, dull, very windy day, with no flying insects visible, not even a grasshopper, but by kicking over some dry cow-pads I soon found a large black Indian cricket, and fixing him carefully on, slung the line well out in the middle of a wind-swept pool. It seemed a forlorn sort of business,

but, oh, fullness of delight, at only the second cast I had him, a real great long brown trout. And with what almost hysterical anxiety did I run with him, once in my landing net, chains and chains up the bank, and away from the river, to be quite safe before I took him out of it! And how I walked back to the station with whole bands of music inside me, playing "See the Conquering Hero," as I brought in the first really properly caught trout they had had. He was something under a yard long, but I will only say as to his condition and weight that it was obvious that he must have been very hungry. But all hands had a taste of him, and to me, at any rate, he seemed quite eatable.

Many hours did I subsequently spend along that river, watching huge fat brutes swim round and round, gorging the live cicadas I chucked in, but turning away in disgust from those with gut attached, fished I never so wisely. I only landed one more, he also for good reason, indiscriminately hungry, but I was an enthusiast from that time on.

Our own beautiful mountain streams looked the very thing for trout, but none had yet been turned into them, and except for eels they were fishless. So when an offer of Government trout ova was made to us, it was accepted with enthusiasm. A pack-horse was sent down to the coast to meet the boat, and in due course the eggs arrived, about the size of peas, in well-packed, ice-cooled boxes. In the meantime we had knocked together a twelve-foot shallow trough a foot wide, dividing it into half a dozen sections, and having made a small dam in the creek we led a pipe therefrom to it so that a constant stream should flow right through. The eggs were then spread out on a layer of finely broken stone at the bottom of the trough, and carefully examined every day. A dead egg, turning as it does a dull white, becomes at once conspicuous among its almost transparent fellows, and must be immediately taken out. A small glass tube is used with the thumb kept tight on one end until the other is near the dead egg, which, on lifting the thumb, rushes up the tube without disturbing the others, and is safely removed when the thumb is replaced on the tube top.

PLATE XXII First Camp at Kiore

By and by an almost microscopic dark line emerged from the top of each egg, and gradually grew into a little fish comically anchored on an enormous stomach. Though, even when the stomachlike egg was absorbed, there was still enough invisible food in the water to keep the troutlings going for a time, yet it was soon necessary to give them more. Boiled liver was then mashed into a sort of milk with water and a little of it shaken in from time to time out of a pepper-pot. Then the liver was less and less finely divided and finally only minced, and not even cooked.

When about an inch and a half long, the fish were put into two deep trenches, supplied with water from the same stream, and their growth was then rapid but very uneven. A bold fish who rushed his food without hesitation would soon be three or four times as big as the more timid; therefore we had to keep the big ones by themselves to give the others a chance. Then came the day when, lifting the fish with a hand net into kerosene tins filled with weed and water, we carried them down to the river. Without weed to hide in, the trout would damage themselves in their fright, by butting their heads against the tin.

But all this trouble was in vain, for though one or two grown trout were very occasionally seen for some years, they never increased, and have now entirely disappeared. It is believed that in our soft rock formation, either the rivers get too hopelessly thick in the winter floods, and the trout die, or their non-increase is accounted for by the fact that the thinnest coating of mud or silt kills the ova at once. They need a clear winter stream and clean shingle to rest on, and with us there was seldom either.

On harder formations, however, trout, as is well known, have done extremely well, and as no private property in fishing rights is recognised in New Zealand, it is a fine place for the wandering angler. (Plate XX.)

Later on when from the far boundary of our district some fifty miles away, where the rock was harder, came reports that trout had been seen in the Ruakituri river above the Reinga falls, a young Scots friend and myself got on board the little De Dion car and started off to investigate.

We were hospitably received at a sheep station, and set ourselves, rather forlornly, to work rapid after rapid with the fly. To our great joy at last, about mid-day, we had one rise, and landed a half-pound trout, the first ever caught in the river. But the sky had been gradually clouding over, and as the low railless bridge, over the tearing rapid just above the falls, would be submerged should the river rise, we hastened aboard the car, and back to our little hotel, where my young friend spent most of the ensuing three days Sou'-Easter, strutting up and down the veranda practising on the landlord's bagpipes. To my mind this music always sounds best a little further up the glen, and I was not sorry when the weather changed.

At Waterville, in Ireland, I once had a day in a boat on a small lake with two gillies, and we got twenty-one pounds of small trout, and found it dull and monotonous work. Whereas, in New Zealand, I have come home rejoicing after a glorious afternoon's sport without a fish in my basket. It was water out of a great lake (Plate

XXI), perfectly clear, so clear as to be quite blue, tearing down over beds of great boulders. The fish, all in the full rush, but each behind a boulder, were in magnificent condition, from one and a half to two pounds. You had to fish up stream, and the fly came back so quick that it was tiring work, but when you got one hooked, it was some fun. My impression of that afternoon is that of having various large fish darting here, there and everywhere, and up and round my head, till they broke me one after the other. We did land them other days, before breakfast, and at any odd time, and they were splendid eating. Fried they were a little disappointing, but a Maori having showed us "another and a better way," we cut them into big steaks and crammed them into a billy with just enough water to boil them. They were then delicious, and as red as salmon.

Then we wound up the hill road a thousand feet or so, and came suddenly on Lake Waikaremoana surrounded by bush-covered hills with one great peak overhanging (Plates I and XXII). Here it was spinning from a boat, which you can hardly call sport.

But if when rowing slowly across a beautiful bay with the reflection of bush and mountain dark on the still water, you get a sudden tug, you may see something. Away behind the boat will come clean out of the dark still water perhaps more than once, a thing of beauty, a perfect shining shape, whose back is the darkest olive green, and all the rest of gleaming silver, sometimes just faintly marked with crimson. They ran large, these rainbows, my biggest being fourteen pounds. They were not wasted; we had them smoked, and took away a fifty-pound sack for our friends.

Much better, however, was the little river. I took the dingey and sculled across the head

PLATE XXIV Lake Waikaremoana

of the lake to it, with my rod butt between my feet, thus getting a five-pounder by the way.

I do not happen to be one of those people who can just stroll idly about and worship the "beauties of nature." I must, as a rule, be doing something, employed in some country pursuit or sport, or the said beauties do not seem properly to soak in.

The most vivid picture of English country that remains with me, in greens and browns, with fleeting shapes of fawny greys and a spot of scarlet, was bitten into my mind years ago, going hard, in a run with the Worcester. Hunting, whether fox or butterfly, exploring, even gardening, and above all fishing, are what I need to put me in touch with nature, and on that little river I think I felt more completely in harmony with her than ever in my life. The stream flowed in varying sparkling channels over nearly black rock. The great trees on either side formed a solemn arch high above it, while here and there on the rock-strewn banks stood big tree ferns, perfect in the windless air, while filmy ferns and others either humbly carpeted the ground, or covered it with great arching fronds, or left it altogether to climb vigorously up into the great spreading branches overhead.

Silence, solitude, quiet beauty and cheerful running water; what could a lover of nature want more? One thing. Trout. And behind each boulder, in every quick still run, and in every linn, exactly where a trout should rightly be, a fine trout was. Nor was he ever contemptuous of my fly, and though sometimes he only rose to show he was where he should be, enough of him but not too many came into my basket, for he would please, but would not sicken me. Each little trout that I missed laughed merrily, I fancied, as he shot away, and I seemed only to hear a gentle sigh of "*done* this time" from those that went into my basket. It was impossible to believe on such a day that they and I were not in harmony.

Alone on that stream, with no thought of before or after, I came as near the perfection of simple quiet happiness as ever in my life. I would not wish to visit it again. I should fear to damage a memory so perfect.

In another fishing expedition we slept at a little inn in an out-of-the-way corner of the country at the head of a deep rocky gorge of the Makuri river. The landlord had had to go to town, and his wife, a woman of no strength of character, was left in charge. The second night the local drinkers seemed to be having things all their own way, and the row was great. My mate and I were in a little bar parlour by ourselves and did not worry, nor when appealed to to enforce order did we feel that it was quite sufficiently our funeral for us to interfere. Half a dozen men were roaring drunk and the woman cook was on the stairs throwing plates at all comers.

But there was still Biddy, the Irish housemaid, to reckon with; she was a better man for the job than either of us. She put the silly landlady aside, she subdued the cook, she locked up the bar, she ran some of the men out, and those who were staying in the house she put to bed and took away their trousers, and when we ourselves turned in we found the house perfectly quiet and the housemaid half triumphant and half apologetic. Something like a girl was Biddy.

Gulls and shags were said to be destroying the trout in the Tuki Tuki river in Hawkes Bay, which winds about in a bed of shingle half a mile wide. A young sportsman from England, being at a loose end, took the job of patrolling this water with a gun, and pitched his tent handy to it. Returning one stormy evening, he and his

big long-wooled retriever, both wet to the skin, he found inches of water all round and in his tent, his bunk, raised on four stakes, being the only dry spot. For this haven, having stripped to the buff in the open, he made a dive in the gathering dusk, only to find that the retriever had got there first!

Returning to New Zealand in 1917 I fished on and around the great Taupo Lake. The weather was for the most part perfect, but the fish that year were small, 5 lb. being my heaviest. Most of the trout there were caught at the mouth of the river in the following way. You wade down it into the lake till the colour of the water warns you it is not safe to go further, and then you let out with the current about 40 yards of line with a very big fly at the end of it and just wait. And when you hook your fish you reel him in, and that is all there is "to it." Some men will contentedly do this day after day for weeks! If you do not worry about your basket, there is more fun along the clean white pebbly shore. Here you will sometimes see the tail or back fin of a feeding fish, and casting out to him is then cheery sport enough.

There was, too, a little bush-surrounded lakelet separated from the big water by a shingle bank and full of quarter-pound trout. I took the Ford there through a virgin track of rock and pool, with a load of Maori youngsters, and had great fun, the eldest paddling me round in an old dug-out. When we had caught enough, this boy split open the little fish and soon had them spitted on twigs in the ground, all round the fire we had made. I have never eaten a more delicious lunch. It was a most enjoyable expedition, especially when we twice stuck in the pools on the track and all hands were needed to haul the Ford through.

XXVIII Common Birds

The peli-can she loves her young;
The stork his father loves.
The woodcock's beak is very long,
And innocent are doves.

These lines, within an illustrative avian border, printed in red, on a small square of common calico, are a memory of early youth: a "Moral Pocket-handkerchief," I do not think they served to give any ornithological bent to my young mind; indeed, in later years they have more than once been used to switch off the conversation of the too serious bird-lover. For there are some, among these ornithologists who can be as boringly loquacious as the worst sinner among golfers and fishers. Moreover, the thorough-going bird man is liable at times to get quite out of touch with humanity. Even the great Hudson (on whose soul be peace) was occasionally quite unhuman.

As a boy I "kept" birds, of course, or rather the family did, as they were generally loose about the place. I remember discovering a grey-headed jackdaw, sagely perched on the rung of a "high chair," and sampling with his strong bill the apple-like red calves of my smallest brother, whose unexplained wild howls had brought about the investigation.

But the most delightful pet of my life was a long-eared owl, taken early from the nest, all claws and beak and cotton-wool. The house was in a Surrey wood, and Squeaky, when he had grown up, would spend the day in one of the shady near-by trees, and at dusk would come and fly round miaowing for his dinner. One night an unbelieving guest was invited out on the lawn to see the bird whose praises we had been singing. While he was gazing half scornfully in one direction, Squeaky, with his perfectly silent flight approaching from the other, decided that our guest's bald head was a very suitable alighting place. But he was not used to such smooth shininess and, scrabbling hard for a footing, succeeded, before he made off, in scratching belief into the brain of Thomas the doubter.

He once frightened a new maid almost out of her wits by sailing in through the open window and fixing his claws in her hair, just as she had put the light out and was getting into bed. His plumage was delightfully delicate and soft to the touch, and he was perfectly happy in one's hands, uttering a little purring chirrup of content as we held him. He had been taken too young to have been taught fear by the mother bird; he would play with our terrier, for instance, the two racing and flying together across the lawn, and this boldness probably led to his early destruction by some prowling cat or fox.

But all this does not seem to have much to do with Poverty Bay, to which it is quite time to return.

How vividly do I remember my first day in the New Zealand bush. My brother and I, having forced our way through fern and scrub to the top of the range, had miles and miles of untouched hill country in full view, with our boundary river winding round for several miles beneath us. All new and beautiful and wildly interesting.

Our object was to find the stream which was part of our back boundary. So, after a long scramble, we broke our way down to a stream that made its way out from the great tangle of bush gullies by little grassy flats that looked to us almost as if they had been specially planted with their fine assortment of beautiful evergreen shrubs and trees. Satisfied that this was the boundary we were looking for, and myself at least quite excited by my first sight of the footprints of wild pig and wild cattle, we strolled up from the little

PLATE XXV Sharpening the Axe

flats with their scattered trees into the unbroken growth of the hillside. It was medium-sized "open" bush just there with little undergrowth, so getting about was easy and pleasant, and from the complete roof of leafage, beginning some 20 or 30 feet up, came to us such a variety of musical calls and chatterings, that, though never a bird could we see, we pictured to ourselves the dozens of species that must be in the trees above us.

And what with the beauty of the bush, the tracks of game, and this unseen paradise of strange birds above us, I for one was in the seventh heaven of delights, both present and prospective.

But as for the birds, all the chorus probably came from just two species. A flock of kaka

Kaka=*Nestor meridionalis*.

would account for most of the chattering. He is a parrot, clothed in sombre brown, only relieved by some bright crimson under the wing. He lives like other parrots on what he can get, mainly, no doubt, berries, though the delicacy he most loves is a large soft white black-headed grub that bores into the softish wood of the stem of a certain tree-like shrub. The kaka seems to know by smell or hearing, or just by observation and common parrot-sense, exactly whereabout in the stem this grub is likely to be, and with the point of his beak well into the bark as a fulcrum, he works his sharp gouge-like lower mandible across the grain, taking out chip after chip till his dinner is reached.

The Maoris roast and eat these white grubs, and report them to be most delicious. We ourselves were quite content to take their word for it. But a friend of mine who, like Jorgen, was prepared to try anything once, and had indeed tried most things, was persuaded to accept one fresh-roasted caterpillar and even to raise it to his mouth. But it was no go; lifelong prejudice proved too strong and there was nothing doing.

Returning to the bird chorus, we afterwards found that most of the more musical and cheerful sounds must have come from the tui

Tui (pronounced Too EE)=*Prosthemadera* N.Z.

feeding in company on some berried tree. He is, except when very fat, about the size of a blackbird and of the same hue, save where at his throat two little white feathers hang down exactly as did the old style clerical bands. He has a fine range of musical notes, together with a considerable repertoire of sub-musical conversation, and when you shall see him holding forth to the world below, gesticulating with body and head in full predictorial style, you will understand at once why he is generally known as the parson-bird. Later, when constantly ranging the bush, I became very familiar with these jolly birds, and have listened for many an hour to their delightfully varied calls.

Moving about and peering up into the branches one day to spot one of the cheerful chorus, there came a sudden silence for a good minute. Then it became quite evident that they had been trying on their part to spot *me*, as I then heard, from above, enunciated with the most laughable distinctness, the following remark: "I cannot s-e-e-e the beggar," the middle word being a long high musical note and the rest merely conversational.

Not so often, one heard the long-drawn note of the kokako,

Kokako=*Collœas cinerea*

a well-mannered little crow, coal black save for two purple cheeks. He goes in pairs and seems to slide rather than hop through the thick-set branches. His call in the silent woods had an enchantment all its own, though the only simile I can give is that of the slow swing of a highly melodious gate.

The bush pigeon

Hemiphaga N.Z. N.Z.

is seldom audible, save when the loud beat of his wings tells of his taking flight. He is larger than our wood pigeon, slate-coloured, with a burnished neck and big white breast, and having had for ages no enemies to scare him, he would, had his food not been mainly in the tree tops, already have far advanced toward the obese defence-lessness of that other great pigeon, the do-do. As it is, instead of slipping out one side of the copse while you are only thinking of approaching the other, as would our home bird, he will let you shoot one of his mates from the same high tree, and after a little flap round, return to his meal there.

A most excellent bird to eat, too, whether roast, stewed, or in a pie, and spitch-cocked, a first-class breakfast for a hungry man.

Though pigeon shooting was often mere pot hunting, it was sometimes a very delightful way of spending a solitary afternoon. Picture to yourself a clear river of pools and rapids winding, now between steep slopes of shining greenery and again by small levels where are scattered pyramidal pine-like trees, bushy-topped trees with shining leaves, many-headed palm-like trees, feathery trees, all sorts of trees, but all evergreen and all possessing a shining exuberance of permanent beauty never seen in this colder climate; and above them as you gaze up a sky to which our midsummer heaven is but the blue of milk and water.

Pigeons have come down from the main bush to feed on the red berries of the white pine.

Kahikatea=*Podocarpus dacrydioides*.

Very high up they are, but having spent some time peering skywards, you at last spot a white breast on a lofty bough. Then you make yourself comfortable for a steady shot, knowing that any sort of hit with your little rook rifle means a certain kill.

You are alone, you can take your time, there is no competition, and your bag does not matter; you have sufficient occupation to prevent you having to stare at the scene, and the beauty you absorb without effort remains to you a perpetual delight.

Coming now to the more truly "game" birds, the first is the pheasant which has been thoroughly naturalised. As, however, we never in those days had properly trained "smell dogs," we found shooting them in the rough scrub valleys very arduous work.

Native quail,

Coturnix N.Z.

though small, flew straight and hard. Californian quail were larger, but most of the bevy usually whizzed up the nearest tree, after one shot, and remained invisible. But an old cock Californian quail perched on the top of a post and calling to his harem below was always a joy to hear and to see, with his charmingly cocky little crest, and his head enamelled in cream and green.

There were duck and teal, too, in the river. The common grey duck

Anas superciliosa.

I have known to build in a tree some 20 feet from the ground. Before the young were fledged, in fact when they could only just have been hatched, mother duck stood on a near-by branch and called them across. Out they all came, one after the other, helter skelter, and dropped down into the unknown, little balls of yellow fluff, wildly beating their featherless wings. At the bottom they lay for a moment, half stunned, then scuttled off down the bank to the old bird, who was, by this time, calling from the river pool below.

In every little bit of marshy land lives the long-legged swamp hen or pukeko,

Pukeko=*Porphyrio melanotus*.

black and blue, with a red crown and a little white jerky tail. He is doubly unfortunate in that his "get-away" is awkward and slow and that the soup he yields is excellent.

The wood-hen, or weka,

Weka—*Gallirallus Australis*.

on the other hand, about the size of a small domestic fowl, cannot fly at all, but is a very nimble runner, using its wings to steady itself in its quick dodging turns. It is not edible.

Standing deep in a reedy swamp with his long lance-like bill pointed skywards, the big bittern

Botaurus melanotus.

was very hard to distinguish from his surroundings, but in reality he was a magnificent chap, with long sage green legs and a ruffed neck, the whole featherage a lovely harmony of fawns and browns.

The native Kingfisher

Sauropatis sanctus vagans.

(Plate XIVB) is a trifle larger than our own, with almost as brilliant a back but with a light fawn, instead of a fulvous breast, and with quite similar nesting habits. He by no means confines himself to an entirely fish diet; in fact, from my veranda I have often seen seven or eight of these birds in a row, perched on consecutive fence stakes, keenly on the watch for a moving worm or other prey in the surrounding grass.

Everywhere, circling vulture-like in the open, you may see the big hen-harrier-like hawk,

Circus Drummondi.

a rather clumsy and not at all attractive bird. But there is another much more exciting to watch, the N.Z. sparrow-hawk,

Nesierax N.Z.

rather rare with us. One day, as I lay on my back resting, in a dip of the high grassy ridge, one of these little falcons came sweeping over the hill, within three feet of my upturned face, glaring at me with his fierce eyes as he clutched close his just-caught prey, a little yellowhammer. Why the near sight of this fierce little chap gave me the keen pleasure it did I cannot quite say, but I love all these real hunting hawks, from the peregrine downward.

Big black cormorants,
Carbo Steadi.
 intent on eels, followed up the streams far inland, as also did the much handsomer white-throated shag.
Phalacrocorax melanoleucos.
 They sometimes had their nesting communities in big trees overhanging the water.
 Among the smaller birds there was, flying close round you in the bush, a charming little tit-like bird, the fantail,
Kokori mako=*Rhipidura flabellifera*.
 hawking for small flies.
 On a low branch I have seen fed by a still smaller pair of birds the progeny of a little cuckoo
Lamprococcyx lucida.
 which rejoices in a barred breast and a little plaintive reduplicated wail.
 On the high poor ridges you may hear, sounding his charming note, the little greenish bell bird,
Kakariki=*Anthornis melanura*.
 and where the manuka scrub has grown up into a crop of tall close-standing line-props, poorly feathered at top, you may see a large grey robin
Muscicapa longipipes.
 with big eyes of liquid black, a melancholy, almost ghost-like bird.
 And with the little green and scarlet parra-keet,
Cyandramphus N.Z.
 living in the richer bush, perhaps I had better end the list. I have known up in the bush a trout-fishing carpenter on whom, at the time, there happened to be no flies, to make, in desperation, lures from the feathers of this last-mentioned little bird, by the help of which, to his own great surprise, he was able to fill his Sunday holiday basket.
 It is sad to think that many of the more interesting New Zealand birds, owing in some few cases to the introduction of rats and cats and stoats, but more often to the clearing of many of the big bush areas, are becoming much rarer.

XXIX The Maoris

We fought these people, and had the fighting been man to man with no great backing of civilisation behind either side, it is not at all likely we should ever have beaten them. They were brave and honourable as fighting men, and many of them of very considerable ability and sturdy character, and during the last sixty years of peace they have kept the respect and even the affection of all good Englishmen. (Plate XXVI.)
 I felt warmed to the heart when I heard that the only approach to anything like a mutiny in the New Zealand contingent in the war took place when some ignorant person, a British officer, slighted or insulted "one of our Maories."
 On my voyage out to New Zealand in '17 there was on board a little group of New Zealand soldiers invalided home, among them a rather dark-skinned Maori. We were delayed coaling at Newport News and every-one went ashore. The officers arranged among themselves that their brown colleague should always have two of them with him every

PLATE XXVI

PLATE XXVI Some of Our Maoris

minute of the time he was on shore, in case of any misunderstanding or unpleasantness.
 You will gather from these things that the colour question in New Zealand does not amount to very much. The Maori is a gentleman and could not be servile if he tried. Neither his company at meals in hotels nor his society in other public places is shunned; he is quite as likely to be sought after, for he is often both humorous and sociable, and I remember well that the best bred English ladies in our district agreed among themselves that a certain well-educated half-caste of our acquaintance was in the full and highest sense of the word the finest lady in the "Bay."
 There is a self-respect, an un-selfconsciousness, a social aplomb about a well-born Maori, that can only

have come from an ancestry, which, if occasionally cannibal, was essentially "gentle."

Though often very bright as a schoolboy, I am not sure whether the average Maori's brain goes on developing as long as does that of the European, and he certainly has not the acquisitiveness of the latter, his lust for getting on. "Having food and raiment" he is accustomed to be "therewith content." And this very Christian frame of mind does not tend to raise the Maoris in the social scale of our most unchristian lands.

Of course there are all sorts of Maoris. I call to mind a half-caste whose father was Irish and who inherited humour and powers of oratory from both his parents. He began by interpreting with astonishing ability, as I have been told, at the Native Land Court, and though he never really *did* anything in his whole life, talked so well that he talked himself into a high political position and a title.

When running for Parliament in our parts, he drank freely with everyone and never, I am told, went to bed sober, but he succeeded, nevertheless, in capturing the whole of our prohibition vote. It was the first time women had voted, and he was, in those days, a very personable man. Drunk or sober, he was a very pleasant fellow, who probably had not an enemy in the world.

Talking one day to someone who was Interested in native education, I asked:

"What becomes of the Maori boys that you put through your colleges?"

"They *all* go to gaol, sir," was the reply, a humorous answer containing, however, some grains of truth. My friend went on to explain that up country, where hard cash was almost unknown, and the payment of wages, like every other money transaction, carried through by the writing of cheques, the bright young Maori, not having received any Instruction In the orthodox or any other Credit System, reasons thus: The boss writes his name on a special form and you take it to the store and get a saddle or a gun for it. Why should not I, now I can write so well, do the same? And when he gets out of gaol, neither his native friends nor ourselves, fully understanding the matter, think any the worse of him. He has probably done his little time among quite human people, decently treated, and almost unguarded, away in the wilderness, engaged in the honourable and useful business of planting trees, but the puppy has not been entirely happy and will not make a second meal on that particular soap.

In the little township at the mouth of our river was a general store, an inn, a horse-ferry, a school-house and; living on his adjoining run, a very respectable lowland Scottish farmer, Mr. McHardy the magistrate.

Now the local patriotism, not to call It the narrow parochialism, of such little places Is known to everyone in the country, and our most worthy and well-meaning, though by no means brilliant magistrate, having by chance put this feeling into a sort of epigram, his fame spread abroad like wildfire, a delightful naïve judgment of his being quoted in every paper throughout the Australasian colonies, to his extreme consternation. It was this way:

Eru Parata wrote an unorthodox cheque, obtained for it, at the above-mentioned store, a bridle, baccy, and so on; and later was run in. In the newspaper of our seaport, a day's journey down the coast, the case was reported as follows:

"His worship adjudged the prisoner very clearly guilty of having forged the cheque, but decided to let him off with a caution on the ground that he had spent the money In the district."

"I said nothing of the sort," complained the good Beak to me later in woe and indignation. "I stated that obviously the silly boy did not really know the wrong he was doing, or he would not openly have cashed the cheque here under our very noses. He did not deserve gaol at all. May the Power above everlastingly damn that reporter!"

The leading man among our shearers, who were all Maoris, was a fine big brawny fellow, handsome and jolly. He was, we understood, very popular and highly respected among his people, a preacher and a pillar of the church, further up the coast.

Rewi had, not very long before, been sent down to the richer and earlier settled district to raise money for building a new tabernacle for his fellow parishioners. With his pleasant way, his probably quite genuine religious enthusiasm, and his good record, he succeeded in collecting from the rich descendants of the early missionaries in that province quite a considerable sum of money. Returning with this, he had to wait a day in Napier for the steamer north. The races happening to be "on," he blessed his luck and hurried out to them. Good fortune, however, did not further attend him, he lost, tried again and again unsuccessfully, and before he had left the course, he had "blued the lot."

"Blurry bad luck, indeed," he said to himself, but, a previous booking of his passage saving him from being completely stranded, he journeyed unperturbed, and even quite complacent, back to his waiting tribe.

When he reached his village, the little community, though a trifle disappointed, received him in the most friendly way; there was kindly condolence, but never a word of blame He had not, in fact, done anything blameworthy, nothing but what any one of them would have thought it quite natural to do, placed as he had been, "Misfortune," they reasoned, "may overtake any man. Let us hope for better luck next time."

XXA Last Flicker, 1889

For the savagest raid
Excuse may be made,
And you e'en can be pardoned by law;
But good feeling you lack
If you try to come back
And feast, where you murdered before.

"No end of a row in town," said a returning brother as with saddle on one arm he slipped off the bridle with the other hand, and let his horse loose at the gate. "They say Te Kooti is coming through the Motu Bush, and that he's got to be stopped. Seems a real tip-top rumpus. Sorry I had to come away."

Let us here go back a little.

Towards the end of the native troubles, there was on our side a fine upstanding wellbred Maori, Te Kooti by name, who by some official folly was, as I have always understood, quite unjustly accused of treachery, and banished with other chiefs to the Chatham Islands. (Plate XXVII.) Now your high-class Maori is not the man to take this sort of thing lying down, and our friend being very able and a natural leader, was probably about as hard to do with as were some of our best men in the German prisons, and it was not very long before he, with a small party, had contrived to seize a schooner and had compelled the white skipper to take them back to New Zealand.

Once landed, they had no trouble in disappearing into the complete safety of the "King Country," an extensive area of trackless and precipitous bush, well inland, where still lived, in old-time native fashion, the more recalcitrant remnant of the subdued Maoris. These people had managed to manufacture for themselves, mainly from the missionary-taught Old Testament, an extraordinary compost of religious rites and ceremonies, among which the use of loud chants, punctuated with double shouts or groans, had given them the name by which they were commonly known: "The Hau Haus." Here Te Kooti soon got together a formidable war party, and in the year 1868, he suddenly descended on the scattered outlying settlements of Poverty Bay. He kept exactly, so I have been informed, to the accepted rules of gentlemanly Maori warfare; he tortured no one, he violated no women, but just killed all the white people he came across, of whatever age or sex, and burnt their places. He then retired into the impenetrable fastnesses of the bush with the pain of his wounded honour at last assuaged.

All the Government could do was to declare him an outlaw, and he lived in retirement as such for many years. The centre of the King Country was then, and may still be, as suitable a place for complete retirement as can well be imagined. Cluny's forest eyrie in the Highlands could only have been but as Fleet Street to it.

Then having been pardoned he returned to a more comfortable life among his well-to-do adherents in the Bay of Plenty.

That brings me to the date of my tale.

The row in the district increased. People whose relatives had been massacred, swore they would shoot this murderer on sight and were most horribly discommoded by the fear that they might indeed have to make good their word. Jack Desplin, a most respectable young settler, the happily mislaid baby of a family otherwise completely wiped out in '68, went round raving pretty well off his head. And even the more sober and unconcerned agreed that such a visit the circumstances being what they were, it would be more than indecent to allow And then the beginnings of actual fear

PLATE XXVII Te Kooti [*From a painting 220*]

began to be in evidence. What about our local Hau Haus? Could we tell in what force they really were, and how they would behave? Were we not all likely to be massacred in our beds? And the panic grew and grew and grew.

Finally the Prime Minister had to come up post haste from Wellington. He took charge with a cool head. Jack Desplin claimed the right of first hearing. To the Premier's amicable reply was added, sotto voce: "Have that man put under temporary restraint at once somehow."

But whatever the Dictator really thought, something evidently had to be done, and his attention was

directed by everybody to the East Coast Huzzars. This was a very small troop of mounted volunteers, gorgeously arrayed in purple and gold, whose one military exploit so far had been the accidentally marking for life, with blue spots, the face of one of its members, our excellent town tailor. This was done at close quarters, with blank cartridge, in a very festive after-dinner "camp surprise." A small body I say, but ready, aye, ready to the last man!

This little troop then was ordered to enrol a few more members and prepare for active service.

Now nothing could have kept my impetuous elder brother out of a job like this. He had no suitable horse, but he borrowed mine. Having no rifle he took my treasured sporting Martini, and being a fine figure of a man, he was taken on at once. The rest of us thought it best "to abide by the stuff" and the women-kind, and keeping our remaining guns by our bunks, and many dogs loose, we did not feel in much danger.

The rendezvous was at Te Karaka, thirty miles up country. Signs of a certain nervousness in one or two of the more showy huzzars did not escape the notice of the harder cases, who held up the horrible danger of the expedition so unrelentingly before them, that many heart-breaking scenes took place at their partings with wives and sweethearts. Nor was whisky entirely absent. Wills, too, were freely made, on any old scrap of paper. I have one by me yet, subsequently proved perfectly good, having been made on active service, the only unsatisfactory thing about it being that there were no assets.

But in truth, had there been any danger whatever, there would certainly have been a very great deal. Through fifty miles of precipitous bush ranges, winding in and out of steep gullies—graded across long precipitous slopes—wound a single horse track. Properly to have covered an advance along such a track would have entailed a pace of hours to the mile; for except where landslips had left bare precipices, every bit of the surface, even the very steepest slopes, were thick with more or less tangled vegetation. A score of agile Maoris, well led, with shot guns and what food they could carry, could have held up the expedition at any one of a hundred places, and have wiped it out at their leisure.

As it turned out, the only really terrifying thing that happened was the experience of an old New Zealand born friend of mine, whose only possible fear of any fight would have been that of missing it. He was mounted on a well-bred horse that went mad. It could not stand the slow pace of the single column, and for half a mile at a time would caracole on its hind legs on the edge of almost certain death. Nothing would have altered the colour of my friend's stiff black hair, but he admitted having undergone then the most terrible frights of his life.

Well, the expedition being launched, we in the country could do nothing but await the event. But, riding to town next day, I had a pleasure I would not have missed for anything. From 100 miles up the coast came that old warrior Major Ropata, with a following of his faithful Ngatiporous, grizzled old chaps, some of them, who had fought in the Maori war, clothed all anyway with anything, some riding with bare feet in string stirrups, but each with his shot gun, and all tearing hell-for-leather through town, determined not to miss the chance of yet another "scrap" with their hereditary foes.

"Barbarous," you will say. But surely very human, and my heart went out to these old boys. It was good old sporting war, in which those fought who wanted to, and mainly for the fun of it.

In the course of a day or two, the expedition was out in the open country, near Opotiki, and having learned from some much astonished settlers the whereabouts of their mark, the eager force was quietly deployed into a wide surrounding circle, while the Captain, with the Civil Official and a small guard, marched up to the little native hamlet.

There they found their man reclining in the largest hut with a couple of cronies, happily at work on a basket of fine ripe peaches. He was unutterably surprised and puzzled at their coming, and later, when he had got the hang of things, enormously amused.

Never had he had the least intention of coming to Gisborne. Never had he been even asked to do so. It was a long way, too, and he was old and heavy.

It was a difficult situation for the Civil Official to meet with that dignity which his backing of more or less uniformed troops seemed to demand. All he could do he did. After telling the smiling old savage that in case he should at any time think of coming through to Gisborne, he was to remember that the prime minister would definitely insist that he "really mustn't," he politely left him to the rest of the peaches.

"Then they rode back"—no that's not it—"The Coast Huzzars with full five score of men, dashed through the bush, and then leaked back again."

I was up on the pub veranda to see their return parade. Everyone felt that the situation was most annoying, and the "saving of face" none too easy. So the "Civil Power" was made the scapegoat, and fullheartedly abused to the general satisfaction, on full parade. Captain Summer, the commandant, burly and bearded, on a big horse, distinguished himself by feats of magnificent and brazen-throated oratory. What the military arm, unrestrained, would really have done I could not quite gather—there were pictures on one's mind of Te Kooti brought back in triumph bound to a horse's tail—or more economically, just his head at the Captain's saddlebow. Any way, suppressed steam was blown off in great quantity, and quite harmlessly, and the land had thenceforth peace.

My elder brother having returned me my horse, hopelessly foundered, and my beautifully finished rifle, that the sergeant had told him to clean, ruined with coarse sandpaper, I rode slowly home, cheered by the thought that even poor, poor humble I had had my little share in my country's defence.

They were sadly fooled these good men. But let us remember that they were the fathers of our Anzacs and would doubtless have fought as well as they, had there been occasion. Let me tell you of a real scare in another colony.

An old friend who was usually so extraordinarily taciturn that about a dozen words a day got him through life quite nicely, once in the course of a long ride we had together, opened out to me as to some of his experiences.

He had ridden as one of Shepstone's little guard into the very heart of the magnificent assemblage of the Zulu Impis, in all their glory. He had been at Rorke's Drift soon after the fight there, and had seen the tents and torn wagon sheets flapping loose in the wind above our still unapproachable dead, on the miserable hill of Islandwana. There was not a wasted word; every terse phrase bit in. But among the things he told me, what impressed me most was this. He was living on a sheep farm with relations, up at the back of Natal, all labour, even the housework, being done by Kaffirs. The settlers knew for certain that if the Zulus came down, their own servants must and would slaughter them and their families to save their own skins. Yet nothing could be done. They dared not make the slightest change. They could not move closer together in their rambling houses, they could not move a single gun from its place in the gun room. They had to appear absolutely fearless before dozens of keen and ever-watchful eyes, and the strain was very great. The men who died at Rorke's Drift saved them.

XXXI The Pacific

Now where did our friends the Maoris come from, and what is the history of their race? The latest theory, founded on physical characteristics, language, and various other evidence is, baldly stated, this:

They are of Aryan origin—were in Japan before even the Ainus, and in an extremely remote past spread thence South, by chains of islands, into the Pacific, where at that time there were, it is almost certain, great areas of dry land. Over a huge extent of scattered islands in the Pacific as far East as Easter Island, there was, broadly speaking, only one language, and one culture: and it is contended that this could not possibly have been so, had there not been one great mother-land, to nurse, so to speak, this language and this culture, to a fixed and lasting maturity.

Then it is further believed, on very good evidence, that in the course of time, this continent, or collection of great islands, sank beneath the waves, gradually perhaps, for the most part, but certainly in some cases suddenly. There is good reason to believe that some of this now lost land was actually seen by Juan Fernandez in 1576, and by John Davies in 1687, but when later the bulk of the Pacific was explored by Europeans, its inhabitants, in some cases well on the way to degeneration and decay, were only the scattered remnants of a once great and powerful race.

Those interested in this subject should read that very fascinating book, "The Riddle of the Pacific," by Prof. Macmillan Brown, the man who has solved the problem as to origin of the great statues of Easter Island.

Of these remnants the Maoris were the sturdiest and most virile, and though for a time their numbers became less and less, the tide turned some years ago, and they are now steadily, if slowly, increasing.

There are many remains of huge stone work in the Pacific beside the monumental mausoleum of Easter Island. There is a megalithic sea fortress in the Carolines, many square miles in extent, a sort of Pacific Venice intersected with canals; these great works in each case testifying to a former very large population and a centralised civilisation. There was even developed a form of script which has not yet, however, been deciphered. You come across curious things in the Pacific. A little chief of no importance, on a small island, has canoes coming over hundreds of miles of sea, from much larger Islands, to pay him annual tribute. The senders do it because they would fear the advent of earthquake and disaster did they not. It is evident from this that the little chief's dominion was once great and powerful, and that it must have been so for a very long time to have finally developed a political necessity into a religious rite,

It is fairly certain that the great Papuan war canoes even reached South America, as not only has a Maori stone club been found in a tomb in Ecuador, but there exist, on the Peruvian coast, the remnants of a fortified port with great paved slides for the hauling up of big canoes, and there are Peruvian traditions bearing on the matter.

With such facts to deal with, the whole question of the original consolidation of this Pacific Civilisation and its ruin by the subsidence of the land, is a problem of fascinating interest. And, in considering it, speculation, carried further and further back into the past, asks questions as yet unanswered:

Was the tale told to Plato by the Egyptian priests founded on hard fact, as were so many legends? Was there really a Continent of Atlantis? Did it also subside, and were the wonderful drawings which one has seen in the caves of Les Eyzies and elsewhere, the work of the first refugees from this submerging land, say, 25,000 years ago? Did other enforced migrants, driven later westward, carry to Yucatan the culture which built the Maya temples and wrought the beautiful ornaments of gold and jade, found in the great sacrificial well? And did the Maya culture ever by any chance extend to Peru, where it might perhaps have come in contact with the other great primitive civilisation whose Continent was also in its turn to be submerged?

Wild imaginings? Perhaps. But when we hear the wail of the would-be discoverer that the world is getting smaller day by day, that all of its surface is known, and nothing on it is left to be found out, let us point out to him these vast areas in the realm of time, crying out for arduous investigation, and bid him work and hold his peace.

For that there is much that *can* be known is certain.

XXXII New Zealanders

People at Home are often very hazy about Australasian geography. I remember finding in my evil youth perfectly receptive ground in the minds of two young ladies, school teachers, too, for an account of the frequent visibility of the Australian coast from Wellington, and the departure thence of a Sidney ferry boat, every half-hour. The actual distance is something towards 2,000 miles.

And you must never make the mistake of calling a New Zealander an Australian. He has the pride of his small and entirely different country, a country differing widely not only in flora, fauna, climate and aborigines, but also in its present inhabitants.

The early settlers in New Zealand were, taking them all together, of an exceptionally high class, and among them were many men of culture and great intelligence, who have left their mark on its social life. And for years the difficulty of reaching so distant a spot discouraged the emigration thither of all but the more earnest and determined settlers. Moreover, those who have come have mostly been absorbed by the wholesome country life, and had not, in my time, at any rate, formed pools of poverty and degradation in great towns.

In the country there was singularly little difference in the actual style of living between the big run-holder and the man of only a few acres; the one, from whatever class he had originally come, had either himself begun in a small way, or had been actually employed on a sheep station; so he had much in common with the other, and there was really no very distinct class line of any kind. If a man was by nature a gentleman, it was not very long before he took his place with his natural equals, and if a cad, his inclinations, in the absence of definite class restraint, soon led him to consort, for the most part, with his kind.

The fact that nearly all children attended the Government public schools also helped to form a fairly homogeneous society.

In Australia there was, on the other hand, as I am informed, a social gulf between the big sheep men and the small settlers with opposed interests and much resultant bitterness. Then the life of an up-country Australian, owing to the vast distances and the more extreme climate, must often be far more arduous, adventurous, and full of hardship than that of an average New Zealander, and in very great contrast, too, with the life of the numbers who are crowded in their own great towns.

Therefore it is not to be wondered at that, while in Australia character seems rather to run to extremes, in New Zealand it keeps more to the happy mean.

An Australian may be a splendid type of adventurous Englishman, a man whom no odds and no hardships can daunt or even distress, brave even to a fault, insistently independent, and submissive only to such discipline as he and his equals have approved. Or he may be a man of very different sort, one who perchance has hardly ever been out of the town, and who, though his merits may mainly consist of being Australian born, is sometimes not conspicuously modest in proclaiming them.

Of course, there are bad and good in New Zealand, too, but perhaps not quite so bad, and it may even be, though here I hesitate, not quite so good. The classes are more welded together with a pretty high average of education, manners, and character.

During the war I was always on the look out here, among folk who did not know that I had any interest in the matter, to get independent opinions on the New Zealand contingent, and I heard from people in civil and military life, and from individuals of all classes who had come in contact with them, nothing but a chorus of praise without one jarring note. So unanimous was this praise that I felt quite uncomfortable on their behalf, remembering the words, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" Are they perhaps even *too* mild and good? I said to myself. But my personal knowledge of some of these young men nipped that thought in the bud.

New Zealanders, as a rule, speak very good English. So also does the average Australian. But there are among the latter those who do not. For there are Australians and Austrians. And there is the Sydney lingo, which is debased Whitechapel with a sort of twang super-added. I have heard it well characterised as "Cockney off a tin plate."

A story goes about that at a Sydney garden party, a daughter of the house, handing round cake and fruit, addressed thus a young man who had chosen the latter. "Naow, you'd better have some kyke. Oi myde it myself, yeaow can have the gripes afterwards" The thing is catching, especially by children, and creeps about horribly; the victim, when grown up, being quite incurable, though usually entirely unaware of his lamentable state. It is even noticeable to some small extent in New Zealand, but does not there meet with much encouragement.

In the matter of drinking the young Colonial is much more sensible than were many of his emigrant forbears. Thirty or forty years ago you had, in order to survive, either to be teetotal or to have the constitution of a hippopotamus in a whisky river to stand without damage the fast recurring glasses that it was socially imperative to drink, when meeting friends in town, and on all sorts of other occasions. But there has been a vast improvement since then.

This Britain of the Southern Sea is a beautiful country, with a delightful climate or climates; it is an eminently healthful new dwelling-place for our race, and its inhabitants, who are almost entirely from the British Isles, do their mother's land the highest credit. The Government is quite reasonably good as governments go, and roads and railways are fast rendering all parts fairly accessible. The country has to my mind only two serious drawbacks. In the first place, it is so far off, that you feel when there, too entirely "out of the movement" of things at Home. (If it could only be towed round to somewhere near the Canaries, now, what a paradise it would then be!) Secondly, however fair the landscape may be, there is but seldom any human interest in it, save now and then the sight of a Maori or pre-Maori fort; and, barring a little highly conventionalised Maori carving, there is no human work of any constructive beauty to be found.

But modern science is every day shortening the estranging distance, and it is to be hoped that in the course of time some sort of art will appear.

Meanwhile it is a community of kindly hospitable folk, not yet enslaved by the tyranny of modern industrialism; a people inclined, perhaps a little overmuch, to idealise the Old Country, with whom, as an Island Nation, they have so much in common, but otherwise, from the general mix-up of classes and of emigrants from all parts of the United Kingdom, very open-minded to new ideas, and able and ready to look boldly forward, facing the future with the utmost confidence.

XXXIII Some Reflections

Life in a new country is in itself an education.

While, on the one hand, the absence of so much on which you have hitherto depended, teaches you self-reliance, and leads you, after a time, to think you can get round any difficulty and tackle any job with success, yet, lest a state of undue conceit should supervene, it is borne in on your mind to what an enormous extent you are still dependent on the knowledge and power acquired by the race in the age-long growth of civilisation. Where would you be, for instance, to take only simple and concrete things, without your rifle, the temper of your axe blade, or your box of matches, even if you leave out of consideration the organised material power at your back?

Another valuable result of this life is that, when once a man has really had, for some length of time, to do everything for himself, it is easier for him, on his return to civilisation, to realise how many things are done there for him by others, and to be reasonably considerate to those who do them.

To my mind it would be an excellent thing if all young men could go through a few years of such pioneering, preferably entirely "on their own," and where there is no subject race. What an enormous help it would be, for instance, towards humanising the average schoolmaster!

As, in his first chapter, the writer stated that what had had a good deal to do with his leaving the Old Country was a dissatisfaction with the standards and ideals of ordinary commercial life, it may be not entirely out of place to set forth here, how his twenty years in the Colony have affected his attitude on such matters, even if in so doing he may seem a little prolix.

New Zealand had the reputation at one time of being rather a Socialist country, but it was never really so. In the writer's time, at any rate, it would have been better described as a land mainly inhabited by very individualistic growers of wool and meat, with holdings of from a few acres upwards. The farms or runs were, in nine cases out of ten, freehold, with capital usually obtained on mortgage for a fixed term of years. As there was seldom any difficulty in renewing mortgages for another term, the sheepfarmer so long as he paid his

interest, was a free man with no one above him that he had to consider. And these hard-working people of all classes, with their employees, were the people who really mattered, the people who made New Zealand. But, on the coast, were the inhabitants of various not very large towns who lived by supplying the settlers with imported goods, by freezing their mutton, and by shipping both it and the wool clip.

Now and again the working men in these towns, however highly paid, would strike for even more. The people of all conditions up country would then say, "No, you don't. You asphalters have a darned sight better time, better food, better pay, and more amusements than most of us have, and you think you have us at your mercy. But you shan't squeeze us beyond reason. We will come and get our stuff away ourselves." And all classes of the free country democracy would come into town, kill the sheep at the freezing works, and load the ships at the wharf, until matters were reasonably arranged.

At that time there was always plenty to do for those who would work, and every prospect of their being able to acquire a house, and even land of their own. Anything like destitution was entirely unknown, for the modern "Industrial System" had hardly touched New Zealand. There were no negroes nor any servile class; so all and every kind of work was honourable.

A good couple, who wished to send their son to New Zealand with the writer, boggled badly at a clause in the form of Agreement submitted to them. It was to the effect that in no case was the boy to refuse to clean out the pigsties. Not till they had very ruefully signed the paper, was it explained to them that pigs were not kept, nor likely to be kept, but that the clause had been inserted in order that it might be clearly understood, that, in New Zealand, no sort of honest work was considered *infra dig.* or degrading.

And there was this further charm in our way of life; there was no cut-throat competition; in fact there was not, rightly speaking, any commercial rivalry at all. Newcomers only competed with us, and that to an infinitely small extent, in the markets of the world, and so were generally warmly welcomed as helping with road matters, and increasing the social amenities of the district. Furthermore, there was no need for continual bargaining and chaffering. Wool was commonly disposed of at the London auction sales, and the private sale of store stock was usually a short and simple matter, with a local auction to fall back on if necessary. Fat sheep and cattle, if there were no offers at ruling rates in the Colony, were frozen and sent to London.

In fact, New Zealand run-holding is an occupation in which there is really no temptation to try and overreach your neighbour—you can work as hard as you like at it, and remain a gentleman.

These things being so, the writer, who was brought up as a Gladstonian Radical, beginning to feel that it was not such a bad world after all, soon mellowed into something very like a Conservative. But as a matter of fact, politics in the country districts were not much concerned with principles. It was a question, when voting, of what the candidate, if elected, would be likely to do for the district in the way of Government grants for roads, bridges, railway, or harbour—that, and that only. For apart from these matters, the country on a whole was doing pretty well, and there was very little call for new legislation of any kind.

I think it was only once that I attended a political meeting of any kind in New Zealand. It was in this wise.

A runholder in the district, a cultivated man and a delightful host, had been exceedingly kind to us when we first came out, and had in fact seen to it, among other things, that my brother should not even consider the purchase of any but good land with a sound title. He was able and well informed and a fine speaker, but he had a weakness, and it was on the good sense of his steady old mare that he generally had to rely, to get him safe home at night along bad roads and through the big river.

Now from a distance another fine man, also a good speaker, was coming to Gisborne to encourage those of his political way of thinking (though, by the by, I cannot quite remember what that way was), and it was up to our people to arrange some sort of a reception. And when I reached town one morning an informal deputation waited on me and put this case.

"We have had several political evenings of late in this town," they said, "and they have all turned out so shockingly 'wet' that the party here is getting a bad reputation. We are determined to have this one respectable, and to that end will allow nothing much stronger than claret. But what is sticking us is this: our president (my above-mentioned friend) is the only man possible for the chair, and he has unfortunately at this moment come to town, and you know what coming to town means for him. We want him kept right till the meeting, and you are the only man who can possibly do it."

Moved by their solicitations I dashed across to the Masonic Bar and found my friend just ordering his first whisky. Having rather timorously (as being much the younger man) and as discreetly as might be, put the case to him, he, having drunk his own glass, smilingly agreed to my proposals, and we spent a very pleasant day together, on tea, at my house some five miles out. Then I took him in, and to the astonishment of the meeting and to my no small pride planted him dead sober in the chair, and mild convivialities then began.

But all this scheming resulted in a dead failure. Our ready and witty chairman was that night a "dud," as cold as charity, as glum as a goby, as melancholy as a bandicoot on a burnt ridge, and it was not till, as I afterwards heard, one or two surreptitious whiskies had been administered that he thawed into his ordinary self.

The meeting itself, however, was, in the matter of the desired respectability, quite a success, though the more heartfelt applause only came at the end, when the charming guest of the evening, the late Mr. Herries, at the end of his last speech, boggled at the word statistics.

In New Zealand, as I have said before, Politics might be taken pretty lightly, but when, before the war, the writer returned to live in England that frame of mind became no longer possible for him, for no thoughtful man could have believed, even then, that things were all right in this country, and what any such saw and heard could hardly have failed to fill him with melancholy and even horror. The writer, like many another person of good intent, joined the Fabian Society, only to see very shortly that the Collectivist Socialism it advocated could only intensify the disease. Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour, all seemed to him equally sterile in policy. No hope, no intelligent suggestion of a cure in any of them, and his vote, which he ceased ever to cast, a mere derision. And this latter so much the more as it was borne in on his mind, that even the very phrase "to put a party into power" was nonsense. To believe that the British Government really governs is to trust in a fallacy; it can move neither hand nor foot without the consent of the small group of cosmopolitan financiers (now largely American), who control money and credit.

And he further reflected. If this country is *necessarily* a place of slavery for nearly all, and a very hell for the poor, there seem but two courses to choose from. Either to refuse to think and "to eat, drink, and be merry"; or if such oblivion be impossible, to "curse God and die." But hereabouts there came hope.

It was seen there was no such necessity. The clear way out had been discovered. It was quite possible for the country to resume the usurped control of money and credit-to set the economic machine going again in such a way that all classes should participate in the resultant wealth. But as this is no place for economic propaganda,

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the writer will conclude by pointing out that whereas in New Zealand it seemed to some of us, so controlled were we by long habit, almost a sin to go for what we really needed, instead of voting on party lines, yet it was common sense. And the same common sense should now lead us here, to give all our support to anyone who will do his utmost to bring about immediate public inquiry into the vitally important question of the control of finance.

PLATE I "So Long"

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