A PARSON'S TRAMPS

BY THE REV. OSCAR BLUNDELL

Late Minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, New Plymouth

EXPERIENCES OF BUSH AND MOUNTAIN

"Crossing of Little Barrier Island," "My First Ascent of Mount Egmont," "Ice-bound on Mount Egmont."

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St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,

New Plymouth.

Rev. W. J. Comrie .....

Dear Mr Comrie

Please find herewith a copy of a booklet entitled "A Parson's Tramps," just published as a memorial to the late Rev. Oscar Blundell.

The booklet contains a description of Mr. Blundell's tramps over the Little Barrier Island, the ascent of Mount Egmont, and icebound on Mount Egmont.

As stated in the preface "the stories showed the spirit of the writer better than anything else, and have been published by friends as a memorial to a very lovable man."

The late gentleman, who met his death so tragically on Mount Egmont a few weeks ago, wielded a facile pen, and his descriptive articles on his experiences are well worth reading and preserving—apart from the fact that the money derived from the sale of the booklet is to be handed to his widow.

The Booklet Committee earnestly solicit your hearty co-operation and support.

Further copies will be promptly forwarded on application.

On behalf of the Booklet Committee,

MRS. W. N. EWING,
President Ladies' Guild.

A. S. BROOKER,
Hon. Secretary,
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

Price of Booklet, 2/6 per Copy.

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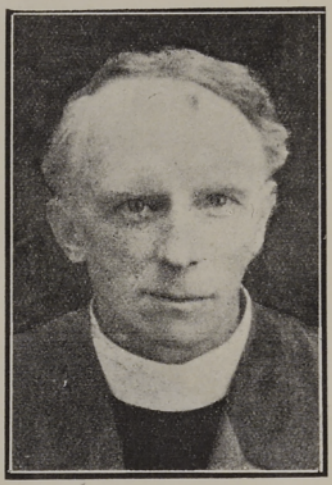

THE REV. O. BLUNDELL.
1873—1925.

FOREWORD

THE REV. ARTHUR OSCAR BLUNDELL was born on January 20, 1873, and educated at Mill Hill School, London. He came to New Zealand with his parents 37 years ago and held ministerial charges at Warkworth, Te Aroha, and New Plymouth. Mr. Blundell was a skilled astronomer and botanist and an enthusiastic mountaineer. At 52 years of age he seemed to have a long period of useful work still before him, but this was not to be.

On Monday, November 9, 1925, Mr. Blundell started out with a friend, Mr. H. C. Morgan, for a tramp over the ranges north of Mt. Egmont. The friends climbed up the rough bed of the Kiri stream and spent the first night in a clearing as intended. Next day they pushed on with the idea of reaching the North Egmont House. The weather was wet with a cold wind blowing off the snow and they had hard work as they pushed their way through the scrub, until early in the afternoon they struck the Bell's Falls track about six miles from the house. Though weary they pushed on, but when two miles had been covered Mr. Blundell collapsed and became delirious. Food and stimulant proved useless and Mr. Morgan went on to the house for help after having made his companion as comfortable as possible with the sleeping bags. Guide Haldane returned with two others, but found Mr. Blundell too exhausted to make any effort, so he went back and telephoned to Inglewood, whence Constable Longbottom and half-a-dozen helpers came. They reached Mr. Blundell at 9 o'clock, but the difficulties of carrying a stretcher along the broken track on the mountain side and through the scrub were so great that they did not reach the house till 5 a.m. and Mr. Blundell had passed away soon after midnight.

Shortly before his death Mr. Blundell had published two or three stories of his experiences and these have been reprinted in more permanent form by friends as a memorial to a very lovable man. Better than anything else could they show the spirit of the writer.

Thanks are due to "The Outlook" and "Four Square" for the use of the articles.

THE FIRST CROSSING OF LITTLE BARRIER ISLAND

"What is that boldly conspicuous island out there?" asked the new minister of Mahurangi, during his first ride up the coast of the Hauraki Gulf. "That," replied his companion, "is Little Barrier, or as the Maoris call it, Hauturu. No one has ever succeeded in crossing it.

During his three years' journeyings in his wide parish, the minister frequently heard the same remark passed by one or another of the people of the coast, and the thought sometimes arose in his mind that some day he would like to discover if any sufficient reason existed for the commonly accepted notion as to the impracticability of traversing Hauturu from one side to the other. That a bush-clad island, only about four miles in diameter, however rugged, could not be crossed by experienced and capable climbers, seemed sufficiently strange to warrant investigation.

Hauturu lies about 15 miles from the mainland, and, seen at that distance, many of its remarkable features lie hidden. With its forest-crowned heights lifted more than 2000 feet above the sea, its presents a commanding appearance, and is, with the exception of Cape Colville on the Coromandel Peninsula, the highest eminence in the entire region of the Hauraki Gulf. Some 30 years ago the island was declared a sanctuary for New Zealand native birds, and a caretaker was appointed to prevent unauthorised persons from landing and interfering with the bush or its feathered inhabitants. The popular belief in the impossibility of anyone crossing Hauturu was found to be borne out by those who have written about the island. In the fifth Pacific School Reader, for example, the following passage occurs: "Although it is only four and a-half miles long and three miles and three-quarters wide, no human being has ever crossed it. This is accounted for by its extremely rough, rugged, and wooded character."

On several occasions during his residence in that northern region, the minister had opportunities of visiting the island, for the Government caretaker and his wife were members of his flock, and, for him, most happy memories cling around those occasions, when he landed amidst those wild and wonderful surroundings and enjoyed Christian intercourse with his isolated friends.

It was during those happy visits that acquaintance was gained with the extraordinary rugged character of this island sanctuary. On the occasion of his first visit, the minister met with a young man who, in company with a previous caretaker, had once been lost for five days and nights upon the island. They had essayed to walk round the rocky coast, but finding that on the northern side the cliffs rise sheer from deep water, they turned back and climbed up into the bush. Being without experience, however, they soon got lost, and came very near to perishing amidst the dense forest and wild gorges of the interior.

During more than one of his earlier visits to Hauturu, the minister climbed the forest track which has been cut to the summit of the island. From that lofty position he enjoyed the sensation of looking down into the profound verdure-clad gorges and out over the wide gulf, which lay like a blue plain at his feet, while up from the green wilderness below came the blythe notes of tui and bell-bird, and the harsh call of the kaka. A thousand feet below the steep green slopes the tops of great kauri trees could be seen, dwarfed by the distance to the appearance of bushes, and the flooding sunlight fell upon the wild and beautiful landscape, intensifying its multitudinous shades of yellow, brown, and green. From that commanding situation it could be clearly realised that to cross the island, if it were to be accomplished at all, would mean much strenuous toil, and a careful selection of the direction to be taken. Many of the narrow ridges ended in sheer precipices, and the bottoms of the tortuous gorges were broken in a number of instances by vertical escarpments which no traveller might pass. From these visits, however, there developed a fixed opinion in the observer's mind that a way to cross the island could be found in the direction running from the south-west side, where the caretaker's house is situated, to the north-east extremity, which is known as Pohutukawa Point.

It was not until some years had passed, however, that an opportunity presented itself of putting the theory into practice; but at last, in the month of January, 1916, the chance of a holiday visit to the island was forthcoming, and as guests of the caretaker and his good wife, three kindred spirits made the voyage from the mainland, imbued with the desire to discover a route across the wild gorges of Hauturu. Landing places at the island are very few in number, and none of them can be safely negotiated except in calm weather. There are no smooth beaches; the accessible portions of the shore-line being composed of piled-up wave-worn boulders, which in stormy weather rumble like thunder as they are displaced by the inrush of the waves. The party of three had waited for some days with friends at Leigh on the mainland in the hope that a strong south-west wind which was blowing would abate, and render possible a landing at the island. On a certain morning at dawn, supposing, like certain earlier voyagers mentioned in Acts xxvii, that they had obtained their purpose, a start was made for the distant beautiful isle. Before they reached it, however, the wind again began to blow hard from the south-west, and by the time their small vessel had drawn near to her destination any landing upon the homestead side of the island had become quite impossible. The sailing master decided, therefore, to run round to the eastern side and attempt to land the visitors there, but the high seas followed round the coast, and it was not until the yacht had passed Pohutukawa Point, on the north-east extremity, that calm water was found under the shelter of a gigantic cliff. There the anchor was dropped, and it was decided to wait until the gale had blown itself out, and the voyagers could return to the landing-place at the homestead on the opposite side of the island.

The spot where that yacht lay at anchor is a remarkable one. Pohutukawa Point is formed by a vast landslide or subsidence, which, in some past age, has fallen into the sea, leaving a tall, gable-ended cliff, some 1000 feet in height, which is crowned with overhanging trees. The point itself, composed of the rocky detritus which has descended, now supports a luxuriant forest of pohutukawa trees (hence its name) some 60 acres in extent. Down at the water's edge lie great masses of piled-up rocks, where, during north-easterly storms, the onrushing waves burst into thunder. On the occasion mentioned,

however, it being the leeward side of the island, the sea was sufficiently calm to enable the voyagers to effect a landing upon the rocks by means of the yacht's dinghy skilfully handled by her owner.

While seated upon one of the masses of rock by the edge of the pohutukawa forest, and gazing upward at the tall, bush-crowned cliff, it was noticed that a narrow strip of small trees and shrubs extended from the lower ground right up to near the top of the cliff, and it occurred to the leader of the party that, with the assistance of that narrow belt of growth, it would be possible to scale the great rampart which towered above them. The thought then came that if that initial obstacle were surmounted, the proposed transit across the island might be accomplished. For were they not then situated at the precise spot which it was desired and expected to reach from the homestead? And there they were with at least a prospect of attaining the object, and with no necessity for making the return journey when the crossing should be accomplished. "Nothing venture, nothing win"; so without more ado two of the party proceeded to investigate the narrow strip of vegetation, and found that, though approaching the perpendicular, the ascent was rendered possible enough by reason of the hold to be secured upon the existing growth. Satisfied as to this, a return was made to the yacht, and preparations for the expedition were put in hand forthwith. After consultation, it was agreed that two of the party should undertake the proposed expedition across the island, while the third member should make for the homestead by way of the coast, a longer, but far surer route than that to be attempted by the two explorers. This plan, in as far as the third member was concerned, did not require to be followed as events turned out, for the wind died away, and the owner of the yacht was able to take him on board and land him at the homestead within a few hours after the two adventurers had started.

Preparations for the land journey were completed before nightfall. Sufficient food for two days was packed; an oilskin and blankets provided, also about 30 fathoms of strong rope. Among other things a pocket compass was taken as an indispensable adjunct to the equipment. The one thing lacking was any sufficiently large receptacle in which to carry water, the only available vessel being a small bottle, holding about half a pint,

which was filled from the water tank on the yacht. Water is scarce on Hauturu during the summer time, being only found at the bottom of some of the profound gorges, but, for people with bush experience, there are other means of quenching thirst when in the forest, so it was expected that the disadvantage of a short supply of water would, to some extent, be overcome. It should be said here that no matches were taken. On the high ridges and elsewhere on Hauturu, the bush in summer time gets dry as tinder, and to avoid all risks of fire, the resolution was wisely made to carry no means of kindling any. The bush on the island is so excessively dense that, if once a fire started, no hope could be entertained of escaping from it.

To facilitate departure at dawn the next morning members of the expedition camped on shore, sleeping securely beneath the spreading branches of a great pohutukawa tree, while the stars twinkled above and the night birds called across the wilderness. Before retiring, God's Word of comfort and promised protection was read, and prayer offered for safe guidance through the trackless and unknown region to be penetrated.

Astir before the feathered minstrels of the woods commenced their morning chorus, the explorers ate a hasty breakfast, fastened on their packs, and, with the earliest dawn, called farewell to their friends on the yacht and commenced to scramble over the mass of jumbled rocks which lay at the foot of the great cliff.

Arrived at the bottom of the narrow strip of bush which had been inspected the previous afternoon, the two explorers fairly entered upon their self-imposed task, and, at exactly 5 a.m., commenced that precipitous climb, not without some questioning as to how long it would be before they emerged from the forest once more. Four miles does not seem a great distance, but there are miles and miles, and those on Hauturu are exceptionally difficult to traverse. Progress, even where the ground is fairly level, is exceedingly slow there owing to the dense nature of the undergrowth, and, besides that, it is far from being possible to follow anything even approximating to a straight line, by reason of the various obstacles which present themselves. To reach the top of the cliff and climb upward until the crest of the ridge was surmounted occupied rather more than two hours. It was

then found that the ridge trended in the desired direction and appeared likely to lead towards the central part of the island.

At some period in the geological history of Hauturu erosive action has made great progress. Streams of water have cut deep down into the very heart of the mountain, and it appears likely that but for the preservation effected by the vegetation, which now clothes the entire island as with a rich mantle, a great portion of what remains as almost vertical-sided ridges would long since have disappeared. Centuries of vegetable growth, however, have clothed those knife-edged ridges not only with a wealth of living plants, but with a great thickness of rootlets and semi-decayed matter. On the crests of the ridges, in many places, a sharpened pole can be thrust down into the dry, spongy covering to a depth of eight feet before the sandstone is reached. So narrow are these ridges that the two explorers found it impossible to walk side by side, and by merely turning the head they could obtain glimpses down the steep slope on either side through openings in the dense vegetation. Every now and then, as they forced their way through the thick undergrowth, a high barrier to the progress would come into view. A tree, which had taken root on one side of the ridge had, by reason of wind pressure, bent right over to and grown down the opposite side, with the result that its bowed trunk had become covered with a dense growth of young trees, astelia, and flax plants, the whole being permeated by a tangle of supplejack and the clinging stems of the climbing lycopodium fern, called manga-manga by the Maoris. To cross such obstacles as these, which were quite commonly met with and were often 15 feet in height, was no light task, but occasionally it was discovered that a short cut could be taken by crawling underneath the semi-prostrate trunk, though it was somewhat of a tight squeeze, especially with the impedimenta carried by the explorers. Fortunately for both they were men of moderate-sized frame. Strenuous as was their undertaking, and slow their progress, the task was lightened by the deep interest taken by both in the extreme beauty of these virgin heights. On every hand were presented objects of interest to botanist and ornithologist; the knowledge, too, that they were the first to penetrate into these solitudes, and the hope of ultimately succeeding in their task buoyed up their spirits amazingly.

The ridge they had first ascended led, as was expected, towards the centre of the island, but, as events proved, it did not reach there. After forcing their way along its narrow and ever-ascending edge for several hours, the explorers found themselves at the summit of a lofty and densely-wooded peak, from which they were able to obtain their first unobstructed view of the neighbouring gorges. From the peak on which they stood, the spur fell away, almost perpendicularly, for many hundreds of feet, and between them and the next ridge lay a vast gorge running down to the northern coast on the right hand and to the eastern on the left. Right before them the opposite ridge rose to a towering bush-clad peak, far higher than the one whereon the observers stood, and it presented a most picturesque appearance standing out boldly aganst the clear blue of the sky. About due south, that is to say to the left of their position, the travellers noted that the opposing ridge dipped in the form of a hollow which lay almost level with their own position. It was decided to reach this in as direct a line as possible across the intervening gorge, and their first big descent commenced. The long hours of strenuous effort had made both members of the expedition very thirsty, and their limited supply of water soon became exhausted. It was hoped, however, that at the bottom of the gorge a stream would be found, so it was with a sense of quite keen expectation that the downward direction was followed. But even descent is not easy on Hauturu, and only after an entire hour had been expended in forcing a passage through the tangled undergrowth did the explorers gain the rocky defile which lay at the bottom of the gorge.

Into this they descended with the help of their rope, only to find that the rugged watercourse was quite dry, so their hopes of being able to quench their thirst vanished into thin air. As food cannot be taken under such droughty conditions, it became imperative that water should be discovered before attempting to scale the opposite side of the gorge. In searching for the precious fluid the two heated and thirsty men descended the exceedingly steep and rugged watercourse for a long distance. Many declivities met with were only passed with the help of the trusty rope, and it was with thankful hearts indeed that at length, when far down the gorge, a pool of clear, cold water was discovered. While memory

lasts, the two wanderers will recall with pleasure that very remarkable spot in the hidden fastnesses of Hauturu. The water-hole at which they rested and refreshed themselves lay near to the edge of an immense depression in the gorge. Perpendicular rocks, crowned with greenery, towered up on either hand, and all further progress in the direction of the sea was effectually barred by the great precipice, over which, in times of much rain, the swollen stream must leap fully 500 feet. Far below them the tops of trees could be seen, and the course of the gorge could be traced among them right down to the sea, a mile further on. But by this time the day was wearing away, and it became necessary to find some suitable place to sleep. It was decided, therefore, to endeavour to reach the spur which had been seen from above and find a camping ground for the night. With bodies much refreshed, and hope undimmed, packs were once more shouldered, and the steep ascent commenced. So steep was it that, while holding on to the helpful scrub, the leader could look straight down upon the crown of his companion's hat as he followed close behind.

For an hour and a-half the two adventurers toiled upward as upon a vast scrub-clad wall, until, at a point where the side of the gorge sloped far more gently, they entered a grove of majestic kauri trees. There, as the shades of evening were gathering, they decided to camp for the night. A small level spot of ground between two particularly stately kauris was selected as the best place to make a bed, and that was soon prepared. Cutting away with their knives the dense astelia which covered the ground, and having procured a quantity of the yielding springy stems of manga-manga fern, the weary explorers spread upon them their oilskin and blankets, and, after thanksgiving and prayer, lay down in most welcome repose. High above them, like giant guardians, towered those two grand, columnar trunks, each reaching upward for seventy feet or more without a single branch, and then sending out two wide crowns of mighty limbs and green foliage, through which the breezes whispered. Soon night fell over the trackless forest; the stars looked down upon the two wanderers, and sounds unheard by day began to disturb the silence of the wilderness. For Hauturu is the nightly home of myriads of sea-birds, which come in clouds from distant waters and make night hideous with their clamour. They never arrive until

after dark and depart before the dawn, and they are restless during their stay as the waves among which they seek their daily food. Sleep in such company is barely possible, be the traveller never so weary, but a little before dawn the flocks of petrels, gulls and terns departed for their watery haunts; a great silence fell, and for one sweet hour the two wanderers slept. With dawn another and very different sound arose. The forest aisles rang again to the blythe notes of countless tuis, bellbirds, and warblers. The exulting cry of the long-tailed cuckoo, the bush robin's lovely notes, and the sweet twittering of bush canaries were all blended in chorus. All Nature seemed to be voicing the praises of the Great Creator in gladsome song.

With thankful hearts the explorers rose from their restful couch and, after worship and breakfast, pressed forward on their "climbing way." Before 6 a.m. they gained the crest of the ridge and followed it onward and upward, continually forcing a passage through the green, pathless wilderness. The hollow on the ridge, which had been noted on the previous day, was reached in due course, but the way became more and more difficult, thirst again assailed the travellers, and to alleviate it they were glad to have recourse to the sap of rata vines and the succulent tips of immature supplejacks. These proved poor substitutes for the water craved for, but they served to remove the actual pain of thirst.

After some hours of very toilsome but interesting travelling, a distant view was obtained through an opening among the trees of the summit of the island, crowned with its trigonometrical staff, and earnestly the explorers hoped that the ridge they were traversing would lead them to it and not end suddenly in another vast gorge. Higher and higher they climbed until they were able to feel confident that they were following the right spur and had really discovered the way across the island.

Before noon they had reached a lofty peak which lies not more than 50 feet or so lower than the island's summit, and from it they were able to obtain a magnificent view over a great part of the island. Gazing behind them, the travellers could see by what a strangely winding way they had come along the steep and narrow ridge, and marvelled at the extremely rugged nature of the region traversed. They saw, too, that before them lay much

more of the same class of country, and discovered that it would be a mistake to follow any further the ridge they were upon. For, while it could be seen eventually to connect where they stood with the still distant summit of the island, it ran in such a tortuous, winding manner and was so densely clothed with wind-clipped scrub that a very long time would be taken in traversing it. Moreover, the ridge was so exceedingly narrow that at one point it was cut right through by a deep and narrow ravine. It was decided, therefore, to cross the gorge on their left and try to reach the track which runs from the summit to the homestead. That particular gorge is fifteen hundred feet deep, and is, in fact, the largest on the island.

While descending, the explorers passed through a most beautiful grove of nikau palm trees, and rested for a little while beneath their shade. Scores of these graceful trees stood all around, their drooping green branches waving gently in the breeze. No human being till then had beheld their loveliness, and the memory of it all will last, a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.

The passage over the great gorge occupied several hours, and very thankful were the explorers to find abundance of water in its rocky bottom. When the further side was scaled, the ridge was found to run down towards the southern coast, and it was decided to follow it. Late in the afternoon the leader climbed a tree, and from its branches discerned that the gorge on their right hand ran down to the coast at a point not very far from the homestead.

Taking a slanting direction, therefore, the two now weary travellers descended, but by the time they had forced their way to the bottom the sun had set and the light was rapidly failing. Believing that, by forcing their pace, they would be able to reach the coast before dark, the packs, which now seemed much heavier than they had felt earlier in the expedition, were abandoned, and thus relieved, down the rocky defile, over prostrate logs, and through masses of fallen branches the wanderers urged their way. As night fell, however, their progress became ever slower, until, at last, they could proceed no further, utter darkness shutting them in. With regret they realised that another night would have to be passed in the forest. Both men were very weary, and as

their blankets had been abandoned, matters felt rather depressing. But, even then, help and shelter were forthcoming. Gazing upward, the leader could just discern, against the overcast sky, the dim outline of a leaning tree, and, climbing out of the creek-bed, the benighted travellers felt their way to this providential shelter, and crouched under it, worn out with their sixteen hours' toilsome march. Again the noisy seabirds disturbed the wanderers with their clamour, and, with nothing but the bare ground to lie upon, the night passed uncomfortably enough. Dawn came, however, and, with its light the remaining distance to the coast was soon traversed. At 5.15 a.m. the exulting explorers, both looking rather haggard and considerably scratched and bruised, stood upon the rocky shore not far from the homestead, and gave three hearty cheers. Hauturu was crossed at last!

A cordial welcome by their kind host and hostess and the congratulations of the third member of the party, who had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of his companions, went far towards making up for the severity of the explorers' toil and privations. A day's rest quite restored their strength, and to the present day they carry most pleasant memories of their successful undertaking.

The following passage occurs in the diary kept by the leader of the expedition, and was written while the impressions of the journey were fresh in mind: "Very happy and content were we; glad to have undertaken and successfully accomplished the difficult venture. In days to come we shall see again in imagination those wild and profound gorges; the overshadowing foliage; the stately kauris on the lonely spur where we lay on our rough but welcome bed; the knife-edged ridges with their clinging, obstructing wealth of vegetation; and shall remember the enshrouding darkness which at night time fell over the mysterious forest; hear again the unearthly cries and cackles of the restless seabirds and the strange whispering overhead. Certainly we shall not forget that night beneath the leaning tawa tree when, added to our utter weariness of body and spirit there came the grim suggestion of sickness or accident; nor the enfolding blackness of the night, which seemed, in our abnormal state of mind, to swallow us and bid us abandon hope. But, in remembering this last, we shall think also of the word of promise given: 'He shall give His angels charge over

thee to keep thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy foot against a stone,' and shall remember that the dawn broke, the forest songsters pealed forth their notes of praise, and the fears and shadows fled away."

Note.—Since the foregoing account of the crossing of Hauturu was written, the author learns with deep regret of the death of his companion in travel, Mr. A. H. Elkin, of Papatoetoe. On the occasion recorded, Mr. Elkin proved himself a splendid mate for such an undertaking. Well does the author remember how, at the break of day in the wild forest, his friend quoted with deep feeling the words:—

> So shall it be at last in that bright morning,
> When the soul waketh, and life's shadows flee;
> Oh, in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
> Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with Thee.

Now he has made the greater "crossing," and is with the Saviour he loved.

MY FIRST ASCENT OF MOUNT EGMONT

There are a number of mountains in this Dominion which are of greater altitude than Mt. Egmont, and many which are more difficult to climb; but its isolated position, its close proximity to the sea, and the remarkable symmetry of its form render it distinguished, if not unique among the snow-capped giants of our land. Raised, during an age long ago, by the prodigious power of volcanic forces, it lifts its tall peak 8240 feet above the level of the sea. So beautiful is its form when viewed from a distance that few could gaze upon it without a feeling of delight or even reverence. To see it on some bright, clear winter's day, when its upper portion, above the forest zone, is draped in purest white—to see it towering high against the blue background of the sky, like some vast tent for the Almighty; or, when the lower slopes are wrapped in clouds, to see the gigantic yet shapely cone raised high above, as if it hung suspended in the blue of Heaven, is to feel the truth of the saying, "a thing of beauty is a joy for ever." From the lower slopes, where the North mountain-house is built, one can stand at night and see that mighty cone projected above as if among the stars, which seem to cluster round its snowy summit and adorn it with gems of light.

Even so, the present writer saw it when he rose at 2 a.m. one morning in March, 1920, with a view to determining whether the conditions were suitable for making an ascent to see the sun-rise from the mountain's summit.

It was a morning to remember. Two and a half hours before dawn; the sky cloudless; the air still; the wide, forest-clad lower slopes dark and silent. Flooding land and sea with pale light, the waning moon hung high above, and the great white peak of the mountain towered, star girt, towards the sky.

Preparations, in the hope of such a morning, had been made the previous evening, so it only remained to don clothes and a light haversack, put on a pair of well-spiked boots, take alpen-stock in hand, and step quietly out of the low window of the bedroom.

There were few guests at the mountain-house at that time, and only one who wanted intensely to see the daylight dawn from the far heights of Egmont, so there was nothing for it but to go alone.

For a mile beyond the mountain-house the track runs through the sub-alpine forest and scrub, and very weird and oppressively silent it seemed to pass along it at that early hour; now in a patch of moonlight where it stole through an opening in the trees above, and now groping in intense darkness where the leafy canopy excluded every ray. And the silence! It was remarkable. To stand still for a moment was to hear nothing but the heart beating in the breast and the blood coursing through its channels in the head. That strange silence did not cease when the forest was passed and the alpine meadow zone was reached. It lay upon the great mountain slopes like a spell; so vast a hush that one felt like an intruder into the secret mysteries of Nature, and almost expected to see sights not of earth, unlawful for mortals to behold.

The present writer is not given to hallucinations nor is he credulous beyond reason, yet, upon those mountain slopes, amidst that great silence and in full knowledge that no human being was within miles of the place, he was singularly conscious that he was not alone. Had a visible company of persons been present he could not have felt less so.

> And on thro' the universe boundless
> Our thoughts go lightning shod,
> Some call it "Imagination,"
> But others call it God.

And so, beneath the dim light of the waning moon and the stars, alone yet not alone, the upward path was pursued, until the point was reached where the mountaineer must leave the beaten track and tread the thick mossy carpet of the alpine meadow. There was just sufficient light to see where to avoid the numerous outcrops of lava rock, and to discover the right direction over the rugged surface. Every here and there the star-like flowers of helichrysum and white masses of euphrasia and other alpine species could be detected, but the general aspect of the locality was gloomy and no sign of dawn, even in the east could be seen.

Slowly but continuously pressing onward, the moss zone was surmounted and, just before 5 a.m., the 7000 feet level was attained. Far away in the eastern sky appeared a large star of a deep blood-red colour. It was the planet Venus, its reflected sunlight so absorbed by the immense depth of atmosphere through which it was seen, that only the red rays reached the eye. And then, along the eastern horizon, a pale, silvery light appeared; the stars became dim and gradually disappeared; surrounding objects grew more distinct and over all the vast expanse of the mountain the morning light softly dawned.

At a more rapid pace than had been possible in the semi-darkness, the ascent was continued. All around spread the bare rocks and scoria of the mountain cone, interspersed with white drifts of the previous winter's snows. A light but keen breeze arose and two thousand feet below, a sea of cloud began to form with great rapidity. As it rose no higher, however, no danger was to be faced from it. The rapidly forming clouds on Mt. Egmont constitute one of the greatest perils to climbers, for it is extremely difficult to discover the right direction when shrouded in the dense mist.

Six a.m. saw the explorer standing upon the rocky, broken rim of the crater which lies just below the summit of the mountain. The crater is full of ice and is about an acre in extent. By this time the cloud-sea, already mentioned, had extended over the entire region within view. No part of the land or the sea could be seen, with the single exception of the upper portion of Mt. Ruapehu, 80 miles away. To the observer it appeared as if he stood upon some wonderful island, the clear, blue dome of heaven overhead, a vast white sea of rolling clouds 2000 feet beneath his feet.

As he stood looking at the pure white ice within the broken walls of the crater, suddenly it turned a lovely rose pink, and wheeling round towards the east, he saw that the rim of the rising sun was just appearing above the distant verge of the cloud-sea.

How immensely far away it appeared with such an enlarged horizon! Our ordinary range of vision is about twelve or fifteen miles, but from that lofty eminence the horizon extended for at least one hundred.

The sun, as it rose, was like a globe of glorious red fire and its light instantly changed the whole wide expanse of cloud into a vast sea of rose colour. The snow-drifts, the ice in the crater, the entire cloud-sea took on a glory indescribable.

Quickly crossing the ice-filled crater, a climb of about 200 feet placed the delighted observer upon the very summit of the mountain. He can never forget the thrill, the exhilaration of that experience. He seemed to be standing in some strange region of unearthly splendour; bathed in a light and in an atmosphere unknown to mortals; situated 2000 feet above a boundless sea of rosy light and completely removed from the world of ordinary things. But most astounding thing of all, because unlooked for; stretching westward upon the surface of the rosy cloud-sea, lay a prodigious cone-shaped pathway of dull grey colour, so clear-cut as to appear stable, extending its gradually tapering length to the extreme limit of the far horizon. To the eye it appeared to be perfectly level; a noble highway to the gates of the west. It was the immense shadow cone of Egmont, projected by the rays of the rising sun to a distance so extreme that the mind felt enthralled by the contemplation of it. Compared with the distance to which that shadow's apex reached, the summit of Mt. Ruapehu, eighty miles away, appeared quite clear. To beings in the heavenly realms, such sights may constantly give joy, but only on rare occasions can it be given to mortals to revel in the delight of such an experience. In the presence of that glory the soul could only humbly worship Him of whom the splendour on the mountain's summit was but a faint reflexion: the God "who dwells in light unapproachable; whom no man has seen nor can see."

A reminder soon came that the watcher must descend. Sordid, mundane things such as the need of breakfast and the fact that he had left his coat where he started to climb, intruded themselves upon his enraptured thoughts. The keen air, unnoticed during the climb, soon made it evident that there could be no building of tabernacles nor feeling it good to be there much longer. One last long look at that glorious prospect, the like of which might never again be seen in this life, and the long, steep, downward journey was commenced. Suddenly, in the surface of the cloud-sea far below, a

huge rift appeared and through it a portion of the wide surface. Taranaki could be seen: the outlines of fields; the winding roadways, plantations of trees and the busy haunts of men, all dimly showing in the grey morning light beneath the clouds.

Fifteen minutes of rapid descent, and the surface of cloud was reached. A last upward look at the bright blue dome above; the sunlit peak and all the splendour, and then raw, driving mist; dim restricted vision; a contrast so great that it was almost depressing. Those conditions continued for perhaps 1500 feet, and then the belt of cloud was passed, and beyond it lay the dull, grey morning of the lower world; the wide expanses where men live; the place for duty and service; the world God so loves and to which, from the realms of glory, the Saviour came seeking to save that which was lost.

ICE-BOUND ON MOUNT EGMONT

The province of Taranaki, in the North Island of New Zealand, possesses a majestic sentinel in the shape of a towering extinct volcanic cone, from which the province takes its name, and which the great navigator, Captain Cook, called Mount Egmont. Rising from sea level to a height of 8240 feet, this remarkable mountain dominates land and sea over a wide area, and in clear weather its snow-clad peak can be seen over a large portion of the North Island.

Although of such considerable height and being clothed at its summit with perpetual snow, Mount Egmont is not very difficult to climb. Very large numbers of people of both sexes ascend it every year, and only in 1922 a plucky youth, whom accident compels to walk on crutches, was a member of a party which successfully made the ascent. Few mountains which attain to such an altitude as Egmont afford anything like as easy or as safe climbing. Nevertheless, the great mountain has claimed many victims and, though so beautiful and attractive, is sometimes treacherous. Dense and confusing mists creep over those vast slopes, and icy blizzards spring into being, and woe betide the mountaineer who is so luckless as to be caught among the ice-bound ridges and rocky gorges by either of these dangers.

Early in 1922 a climber was so ill-advised as to separate himself from his companions when the summit had been obtained. All alone he descended by a self-chosen way and, though more than a hundred men made search for him for many days, and though traces of his wanderings were discovered at various points, the unfortunate man has never since been seen. His body lies hidden from human sight in one of the innumerable chasms which deeply score the mountain slopes, or amidst the dense undergrowth of the lower forest region.

Up to a height of about 3500 feet Mount Egmont is clothed with magnificent primeval forest. A public reserve of 75,000 acres, which contains the mountain and its encircling forests, has been set apart by the New Zealand Government as a National Park. The circular boun-

dary of this reserve is known as the radius line. In bygone days the whole of the province of Taranaki was covered with heavy forest, but most of this has been swept away by axe and fire, and hundreds of thousands of acres are now covered with English grasses supporting innumerable dairy herds. Many towns of greater or less importance have sprung up all round the mountain, which stands overlooking a region abounding in prosperity, and which possesses a growing population.

Above the forest line on the mountain slope is a zone of exceedingly dense scrub, composed of a great variety of evergreens; and above this grow wind-blown tussock grasses which, at a still higher altitude, give place to thick carpets of moss dotted over with lovely alpine plants. At about 6000 feet all vegetation ceases, and only huge outcrops of volcanic lava, rocky gorges, and steep scoria slopes appear. In winter time all this higher region is covered with a deep coat of snow, which freezes hard and remains in the deep gorges for the greater part of the year. Just below the summit is the extinct crater which is always full of ice. It is about an acre in extent, and varies in depth according to the temperature and the time of year. To the south of the main peak of the mountain is a secondary volcanic cone, some 6000 feet in height, known as Fantham's Peak. It is regarded by geologists as having been formed by a volcanic outburst at some later period than when the greater cone was built up. Within the reserve several accommodation houses and shelter huts have been erected. The Tahurangi hostel on the northern side of the mountain is a spacious and comfortable establishment, and is approached by a good motor road winding up from the radius line. Another excellent hostel is situated close to Dawson's Falls on the south-eastern slope, and there are two other less pretentious houses at which visitors require to perform their own cooking and other domestic matters. Well-made tracks between the various houses have been formed, and most delightful walks can be enjoyed amidst superb scenery and with the full benefit of the exhilarating mountain air.

It was on May 15, 1923, that a party of four experienced climbers, consisting of Miss Cameron and her brother, Mr. C. Cameron, the guide, Mr. Arthur Upson, and the present writer, commenced an expedition which

very nearly ended in disaster, and will never be forgotten by those who took part in it. Our design was to walk from the Tahu-rangi hostel right round the mountain at an average altitude of 4500 feet; that is to say, somewhat above the region of forest and scrub; employing the regular tracks where possible, and varying, as to the height of our course, from the uppermost edge of the forest to well above the snow-line. It was intended to cover about sixteen miles on the first day, spending the night at Ka-hui hut, which is erected upon the western slope of Egmont. From there, on the second day it was expected to reach the Dawson's Falls hostel across a practically untrodden region, much broken by deep gorges and frequent smaller gullies. The remainder of the journey back to Tahu-rangi would be along an excellent track. The distance to be covered extends over 40 miles, but, as things turned out, a somewhat longer journey had to be made. Guide Upson, who has a long experience on the mountain to his credit, and has stood on its lofty summit no less than 128 times, had once accomplished the proposed undertaking, but that was in summer time when no ice was encountered. On the occasion to be related the snow upon the mountain lay thickly upon the higher slopes, and the snow-line reached down to about 4200 feet.

On the morning of May 15, therefore, we started away from the comfort and hospitality of Tahu-rangi, with rucksacks, rope, and ice-axes, and in fine spirits for our undertaking. Friends and visitors waved us a cordial farewell, the weather was good, and all appeared most favourable for the task. Tahu-rangi is situated about a mile from the upper limit of the forest region at 3100 feet above sea-level, and it requires half-an-hour's climbing through most charming sub-alpine forest to reach the more level track which is cut across the mountain slope, and which extends as far as the Ka-hui hut on the western side. Nothing eventful occurred on the first day out; the 16 miles of mountain upland were successfully covered, and the glorious scenery of rolling forest, far-spreading grass lands, and sapphire sea filled our hearts with delight. Walking at 4000 feet on a bright May morning is unlike the same exercise taken at ordinary levels. Amidst the spacious scenery of the mountain gorges, breathing deeply of its pure and invigorating atmosphere, steps seem lighter, the heart younger, and

not even the weight of a loaded rucksack can quell desire for rapid movement.

Ka-hui hut, which overlooks 25 miles of forest and farm land and a far wider expanse of the western sea, was reached during the afternoon, and a comfortable evening, beside a roaring fire of logs, was succeeded by a few hours' sleep, preparatory to the strenuous work we knew lay before us. Ka-hui hut is 3400 feet above sea-level, and to reach the Dawson's Falls hostel, which lies at nearly the same level, it became necessary for us to first ascend to 7000 feet in order to pass a precipitous ridge. Close to the Ka-hui hut lies the great Okahu gorge, a vast canyon several hundreds of feet in depth and having vertical sides at most points, and this had to be passed before we could begin the ascent. By means of the trees which grow upon the side of the gorge at a spot just below the hut, we found it possible to get to the bottom, but the opposite side is a vertical cliff of hard scoria, 400 feet in height, so, to gain the farther edge of the canyon, we had to ascend the torrent which careers along the bottom, until, after a rough journey of two miles, we arrived at a spot where it is possible to scale the other side. This being at length accomplished, and a passage being forced through a stretch of wiry evergreen scrub, we reached the zone of alpine meadow with its springy moss carpet and lovely flowering plants. There the vegetation was encased in ice and hoar frost, for, as we had left Ka-hui hut at dawn, it was still very early in the day and the sun had not yet appeared over the shoulder of the mountain. After a brief rest, we pressed on until the snow-line was passed and we commenced to tread the white slopes of the great mountain at an altitude of 5000 feet. The day was perfect, not a cloud was to be seen, and the air seemed mild, considering the height we had attained and the lateness of the season. When the 7000 feet level was reached we were able to see the whole of the south-western slope of the mountain, with its many ridges and depressions, which we had to traverse before descending to Dawson's Falls on the further side of the mountain. The distance did not appear very great, and the prospects of reaching our destination before nightfall appeared quite brilliant. Little did we think of what lay before us.

From the great height we had attained the view was wonderful. So clear was the atmosphere that the mountains of Nelson province in the South Island could be seen with great distinctness. Relieved by their blue foothills, the white peaks, though more than 160 miles away, looked very lovely, and the vast expanse of sea and land intervening made a most impressive sight. At our feet the wild gorges and primeval forest stretched down to the radius line, and beyond lay the wide grazing area of Taranaki, with towns and homesteads dotting its green surface. Just above us the dazzling white peak of Egmont stood out against the blue sky, and all around lay the vast icefields glittering as though sown with diamonds.

From our position to the place where it was intended to descend to Dawson's Falls a downward slant for about 1000 feet had to be made in crossing the south-western slope. Roped together, we proceeded to cut steps on the ice, which lay at an angle of 60 degrees. Progress was rapid, all things considered, the ice being easy to cut, and by midday we were more than half-way across the wide slope. The winds had here wrought strange conjuring upon the white surface, giving it the appearance of being covered with feathers of ice, each of whch was from three to four inches long.

Usually over the far heights of the mountain an impressive silence reigns. Sounds from the busy haunts of men do not penetrate to those sublime altitudes, and the mountaineer is sensible of a vast unbroken hush as if Nature retired there for silent meditation. But on this particular occasion, the usual quiet was broken by a musical tinkling as of myriads of pieces of broken glass falling. It was caused by the ice "feathers" breaking off as the temperature rose, and being hurled down the steep slope. With every breath of wind multitudes of these particles broke away and went scurrying downwards, making fairy music as they travelled over the rough icy surface.

As the day wore on and we began to approach the southern side of the mountain, the ice became much harder and our progress grew correspondingly slow. Steps, which earlier in our passage could have been cut at the rate of three or four to the minute, now required several minutes to form each one. Some anxiety was

occasioned by one of the party accidentally dropping his ice-axe, and we saw it flying down the white slope, lost beyond hope of recovery. It gave us some idea of what it would mean if a slip were made on that keen surface. How swiftly and suddenly would the luckless one be dashed into eternity on the rocky ridges 3000 feet below.

With our progress in step-cutting so greatly retarded, it was not until after sunset that we arrived at the last of the many gullies which we had to cross before reaching our objective. But, alas, that final depression was a far more formidable affair than any of the previous ones had been. The whole of its nearer side was perpendicular, and of too great a depth for us to negotiate. Our guide, however, expected that we could get into the gully at a point about 1000 feet lower down the slope. As we descended, we discovered that this was a mistake, for the ice-covered cliff below us got taller the farther we went, a most tantalising situation, for the spot we wished to reach on the other side of this gorge looked very near, not more than a hundred yards distant, and yet it was as impossible of attainment as if it were a hundred miles away. Night was now upon us, and as we were much too far advanced to think of returning, and as we could not proceed in the direction we wished, there was nothing for it but to keep as cheerful as possible and to toil on downwards. Shelter there was none, fuel there was none, and our thermos flask had long since parted with its contents. Our only hope of keeping reasonably warm was by cutting steps and pushing onward. Fortunately the night was perfect, as the day had been, and under the extraordinary brilliant starlight it was comparatively easy to continue our slow and tedious work.

The present writer has not infrequently passed a night in the open, but not before under such extraordinary conditions. Our little party of four was perched all night on that ice-bound ridge, more than 6000 feet above sea-level, while with painful slowness we descended by means of steps cut in the frozen surface. Providentially the night, as has been stated, was serene and clear, and as long as we kept moving, the cold, while penetrating, was not altogether unbearable. So slow was our progress, however, that had there been much wind we must have perished in that exposed position. At the high altitude we had attained the night sky was marvellous. Stars,

which no unaided eye can see from ordinary levels, flashed out clearly in countless numbers. It was possible there to see members of the celestial host quite a magnitude fainter than can ordinarily be seen. Scarcely less wonderful were the earth lights, which flashed to us from various sources. There were the lights from five different towns, numerous lamps shone out from distant country homes, the head lights of motor-cars traversing roads 20 or more miles away, and one bright gleam, which appeared at intervals of a minute, flashed across the sea from the lighthouse on Cape Farewell, no less than 150 miles distant.

By four o'clock in the morning we had descended to perhaps 5000 feet. Our worthy guide worked like a Trojan at cutting steps in the ice, being relieved in turn by the other male members of the party. Dawn was to be expected soon after 5 o'clock, and as a keen wind had risen by 4.15, we decided to take advantage of such shelter as a near-by ice-coated rock afforded. We were shivering terribly with cold, but managed, by pressing close together, to endure it as cheerfully as possible until dawn broke over the neighbouring shoulder of Fantham's Peak.

With daylight we saw that our only hope lay in getting down to the snowline with what speed we could. But only those who have had experience in alpine climbing can realise what excessively slow work it is cutting steps down 3000 feet of steep ice-covered slope. We laboured unremittingly, but by midday had covered less than half of the distance. By this time we were all beginning to feel the strain, and, having nothing left to drink, we were unable to take food in any sufficient quantity.

It was at this time that we came very near to suffering disaster. Mr. Cameron had climbed to a neighbouring ridge in order to discover the best route to be pursued and, while descending to rejoin the rest of the party, suddenly he slipped on the glassy surface. Like an arrow from a bow he shot downwards, causing us to feel paralysed with dread. Then, with a mighty sense of relief, we saw him drive the spike of his ice-axe into the slope and hold on. But for that skilful act, our companion had been quickly dashed to death on the rocks thousands of feet below. In a little while he regained his position in our line and reported that there was nothing to prevent us from reaching the snow-line in the direction we were

taking. On through the afternoon we toiled, suffering much from thirst, and with a growing sense of failing strength. The weather, too, became threatening. Masses of cloud, displaying weird and lurid colouring, gathered over the distant sea; a strange gusty wind blew fitfully down from the heights above us. Masses of broken ice, from cornices overhanging the cliffs near the mountain's summit, came hurtling past us. Short periods of perfect calm were interspersed with wild bursts of wind carrying clouds of ice particles before them. These powerful gusts ever and anon rushed upon us with a roar, and hurled pieces of ice in thousands over us.

As evening fell, and we got into a zone where a higher temperature obtained, patches of partially melted ice were met with. Where these existed we were able to glissade for short distances. This, while it greatly added to our speed, caused us to get very wet, which condition was increased by the half-melted drift which the fierce wind showered upon us from time to time. Darkness had fallen for more than an hour before we arrived at the snow-line, and a strange and weird place it looked under the circumstances. Huge snow-drifts stood out with startling clearness amidst rocky gorges of inky blackness. The wind howled past, piercing our shivering frames like a knife. Shelter there appeared to be none, for the depressions among the rocks lay in line with the downhill sweep of the biting gale, and things began to look very serious indeed. One or two of the party began to experience such hallucinations as are common to exhausted travellers. Imaginary huts and even people were reported as appearing amidst the snowdrifts, and it required much self-control to avoid attemptng to reach such vain hopes of comfort and assistance. For perhaps an hour we stumbled over the rugged ground, searching every rock and hollow for some shelter from the benumbing wind and icy drift, but in vain; and then, suddenly, as we were on the verge of despair, we came upon a dark and narrow rift cut deeply into the scoria rock and lying, strange to say, right athwart the mountain slope, so that the wind was blowing across it. The next problem was how to get down into it. We could see that it was narrow, not more than eight or nine feet wide, but inside it was as black as Erebus, and its depth we could not guess at. A neighbouring snowdrift offered a solution, however, and the present writer broke from it a large piece

and dropped it into the dark rift at our feet. To our great joy we saw it rest upon the bottom not very far down. At once our brave guide began to descend by means of the rope, which the two other men held, and as soon as he reached the bottom reported that our lives were saved; for not only did the ravine afford shelter from the blast, but a pool of water lay at the bottom, so our raging thirst could be relieved.

All this time the young lady of the party, Miss Cameron, had maintained a cheerfulness and courage of a truly heroic nature. Her feet were badly frostbitten, and for thirty-six hours she had been roped to the guide; yet never for one moment was she otherwise than bright and helpful, thoughtful for others, and devoid of any expression of complaint or distress. As the guide has frequently said since, if our noble young companion had broken down or lost heart, we must all have perished amidst those icy surroundings. To her steadfast endurance and courage under a merciful Providence we owe our lives. It is not easy to adequately describe our experiences during that second night of our enforced sojourn amidst the snows of Egmont. Having joined the guide at the bottom of the dark ravine, we all very gratefully quenched our painful thirst at the pool which lay there. We then found that the side down which we had scrambled overhung somewhat, and that we were well sheltered from the pitiless gale which roared overhead. Huge rocks blocked the chasm above, while just below it appeared to drop down to profound depth. Our matches had become damp, and it was with difficulty that we struck one, and were enabled to hurriedly observe these particulars of our strange position. We were still far above the zone of vegetation, so there was nothing to make a fire with; we had to content ourselves with huddling together in our saturated garments and endeavour to create such warmth as would keep us alive. It was not easy, for there was barely room for the four of us under the sheltering bank, and we suffered much from cramp and from the hardness of our rocky bed. To add to the discomfort, rain began to fall, and the surface water dripped upon us from the rocks overhead. We ate some of our remaining food, drank from the ice-cold pool, and cheered each other up as well as we could, thankful that we had escaped the certain death which dwelt in those fearful gusts of wind which still swept over the ice.

It was about 8 p.m. when we entered our gloomy but providential shelter, and we lay in darkness and discomfort until 5 a.m., when the pale dawn began to reveal to use the outlines of the surrounding rocks. Scrambling out of our cramped position we made two very impressive dscoveries, which went far towards filling us with a sense of gratitude for the gracious protection we had evidently received. At one single spot in all the length of the narrow ravine was it possible for us to enter it, and that was the spot to which, in the utter darkness of that wild night, we had been led. The other discovery quite humbled us and caused us to stand in thankful silence. The pool of water, at which we had so eagerly drunk in our great need, had entirely disappeared into the loose scoria! It must have been soaking away even when we arrived, but we were permitted to benefit by it before it all vanished into the ground.

As soon as we had climbed out of our rugged resting place, we walked about for a while to restore circulation, and meanwhile took stock of our position. The storm and rain had passed, and the day promised to be fair, but between us and safety lay many miles of trackless wilderness. We still stood some 4000 feet above the sea, and from our high station we could see over forest and gorges right down to the radius line, beyond which the houses of settlers could be detected.

It was decided to enter the same gorge which, at its precipitous upper end, had prevented us from reaching our original objective, and follow it down to the edge of the forest; this evidently being the shortest cut to safety. The task was a hard one. Soon after reaching the rocky bottom of the great gorge and having travelled downward for half-a-mile, we came to the top of a high waterfall, and were obliged to climb out again and to make a wide detour through the dense and tough sub-alpine scrub. Slowly and painfully we forced our way through this, and eventually struck the gorge lower down. Thereafter we were able to follow its rugged course right through the forest region, either wading in the swift, cold stream which tumbles over the rocks or, where the water proved too deep, threading our way beneath the giant trees of the forest. It was 3 p.m. before we reached the radius line, and an hour later we arrived at the home of Mr. G. Afflick, who was only less surprised to see us than we were glad to see him. Several cups of hot tea

put new life into our frames, and we thankfully pressed on to the village of Awatuna, where we were able to establish telephone communication with our friends. Never shall we forget the great kindness of the post-master and his gracious lady, nor that extended to us by a Mr. and Mrs. Benson, who received three of our number under their hospitable roof for the night. Let all who would thoroughly appreciate the comfort of a roaring fire and the luxury of a warm bed first spend, as we had done, two nights on the icy ridges of a lofty mountain without warmth or proper shelter.

The only real sufferer from the expedition was Miss Cameron, who had to spend many weeks in hospital as a result of frostbite. She, however, with the other members of the party, expresses nothing but satisfaction with the undertaking, and hopes to try again to circumvent the great mountain at some future date. For Guide Upson no praise can be too high. Entirely dependable, careful and capable, at no moment through that trying experience did he prove less than a tower of strength to the party, the members of which will ever remember him with the most grateful feelings.

P-32