My Early Days

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EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908327-97-3

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908330-93-5

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: My early days

Author: Tripp, Ellen Shephard

Published: Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch, N.Z., 1929-1920

ELLEN SHEPHARD HARPER—AGED 21

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Ellen Shephard Tripp

THE following simple narrative of my childhood in England and experiences during the early days of the Canterbury Settlement in New Zealand, I have written at the request of my children, thinking that, in years to come, it may be of interest to them and to old friends.

To begin I must go back a few generations when in 1754 Edmund Harper married Susannah Strachey. Their son, Tristram, married Mary, daughter of Adam Jellicoe and Elizabeth Chitty, and became in the year 1804, the parents of my father, Henry John Chitty Harper. (The famous Lawyer, Joseph Chitty, was a cousin.)

My Father married, December 12th, 1829, Emily, daughter of Charles Wooldridge (a Solicitor, living in Winchester) and his wife Kezia, née Weddell. I was their third daughter, and was born on the 11th December, 1834, at Willowbrook, a house standing on the borders of Slough and Eton. My Father at that time being Chaplain, I was baptized in the Chapel of Eton College. My Godparents were an Uncle, Leonard Wooldridge; a cousin, Miss Jellicoe (afterwards Mrs Malthy); and Aunt Harriet Shephard (Father's sister).

We lived in Eton until 1840, when my Father was given the living of Stratfield Mortimer, in Berkshire. There was a good roomy vicarage, which enabled him to take pupils,—very necessary, as at that time we were eleven in family, and by the year 1847 there were nine sons and six daughters.

Mortimer was a pretty home in a good neighbourhood;—the parish joined Stratfield-Saye, the Duke of Wellington's estate. We constantly saw the famous old Duke, and he sometimes let us go into his garden and eat the strawberries. I remember, once when we were children, we were waiting at Mortimer railway station to see Queen Victoria's train pass—the Duke was amongst the crowd, and when my small sister Sarah (now Mrs

Percy Cox) cried with the cold, he came and rubbed her hands to warm them, which of course, much impressed the rest of us.

Looking back to the many acts of kindness received from neighbours, being driven to church in Lady Hunter's yellow coach remains in my memory as a great treat. Sir Claudius Hunter was our Squire, and with kindly thought for the needs of my Father's large family, he gave instructions that, when he died, instead of the usual cheap material it was then the custom to use, the church was to be hung with the best black cloth, which after the funeral was to be presented to the Vicar. My brothers had many Eton jackets, and years after, in New Zealand, we still wore riding habits made from this cloth.

We lived at Mortimer for sixteen years until 1856, when my father was made first Bishop of Christchurch, New Zealand. He was consecrated on August 10th in the chapel at Lambeth.

Two years previously, my brothers Leonard and Charlie had gone to the Colony with my Father's old school friend, Bishop Selwyn. The rest of the family, Father, Mother, and ten children, left for New Zealand in the sailing vessel *Egmont*, of 787 tons, on the 10th September, 1856, leaving my two brothers, George and Paul, at Eton. Bishop Wilberforce (known as "Soapy Sam") came to see us off. A very fine old man and a great friend of the family, and who had confirmed me earlier.

We had a splendid passage, and landed in Lyttelton on December 23rd. Bishop Selwyn, the Rev. L. Williams (afterwards Bishop of Waiapu), and our brother Leonard, met us; Charlie at the time being ill in Auckland and unable to travel. On arrival we attended a thanksgiving service, held in the Emigration Barracks, after which we went back to the ship to pack, and then Bishop Selwyn took us all on board his little schooner, *The Southern Cross*, which we were told had been given for the use of the Melanesian Mission by Miss Charlotte Yonge, the authoress, out of the proceeds of her book, "The Daisy Chain."

We finally landed on Christmas Eve, and walked over the Port Hills by the Bridle Track, 1,000 feet high, as the road to Sumner had not been cut. We girls each carried small bundles containing our best bonnets and finery, to appear in next day. My Mother and Janet,

—*Photo by Dr. Barker.*

BISHOP HARPER—1859

by Dr Barker.

OLD ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH AND BELL

CHRISTCHURCH, 1856

Photo from Sketch by Dr. Barker.

VIEW FROM WORCESTER STREET BRIDGE, CHRISTCHURCH, 1915

the youngest girl (now Mrs Tom Douglas), aged ten, rode the same horse, led by Mr. Willock; my father, Bishop Selwyn, Mr. Williams and my brothers walked, pushing and pulling a hand-cart on which was our bedding, etc. On arrival at the Cookson's, Heathcote Valley, we were given, I so well remember, a delightful lunch of strawberries and cream, and then were driven into Christchurch by Archdeacon Mathias, and Mr. Fitzgerald, the first Superintendent of Canterbury. The Archdeacon took some of the party, and Mr. Fitzgerald drove Father, Mother, Emily, Mary and myself, in a wonderful dog-cart of his own make, with enormous wheels like a spring dray and which he called his "Circulating Medium"—he drove a tandem of unbroken horses and the road was very rough. But, in spite of all, we arrived safely, and were deposited at a small cottage in Cambridge Terrace which was to be our future home. (The house is still standing next to the Public Library 1915.) Our new neighbours had been most kind and thoughtful, and had supplied our kitchen with flour, sugar, bacon, and mutton, in fact, every necessary.

Christchurch then consisted of a few odd houses; part of the present Colombo and Cashel Streets; old St. Michael's Church; a few shops; one bridge across the Avon, near the Royal Hotel; and a very shaky footbridge near our house,—the rest, just wooden pegs where future streets were to be. A few miles away was the homestead of Mr. and Mrs. Deans, who had arrived some years before the Canterbury Settlement was founded.

On Christmas Day we were ready early, in our best clothes. I remember my sister Rosa and myself wearing buff-coloured dresses with three flounces, and little black silk capes, and close-fitting straw bonnets trimmed with forget-me-nots. We assembled at Mrs. Jacobs', and from there Bishop Selwyn marshalled us in pairs to St. Michael's,—we were followed by the Bishop and Clergy, who were to inaugurate my Father. All the country-side had come to Christchurch for the ceremony, Charles Tripp and Barton Acland all the eighty miles from Mt. Peel. The former, my future husband, noticed me coming into church, holding a small brother's hand (Walter, afterwards Dean of Christchurch), who behaved very badly!

After the service and lunch we were very tired and hot, so went and sat among the flax (8 ft. high) on the banks of the river, and were much amused at the way

the people of Christchurch came and stared at us, new arrivals being a great novelty.

Our house being very small, when visitors came to see my Father, some of us had to go out to the hospitable neighbours to make room. Three of us slept in an attic bedroom which we reached by a step ladder. On beams over the beds our saddles hung, and on top of them our ball dresses, pinned up in sheets.

Christchurch was a delightful settlement, and we were fortunate in having such friends as the Gressons, Barkers, Bowens, Wilsons, Westenras, Studholmes, Fitzgeralds, and many other charming people. The two years I lived there were full of fun, and we young people enjoyed life thoroughly, picnics, riding parties, and, every fortnight, dances, either in the Royal Hotel or in private Houses. We often walked through mud wearing our brother's top-boots, and to the first dance at Halswell (Mr. John Bealey's) we went in a bullock dray.

My sisters met Mr. Tripp before I did, and often spoke of him and his good dancing, etc. When at last we were introduced a very short time elapsed before we became engaged. Of course he had to return to his sheep-run in South Canterbury, in those days a week's ride from Christchurch; and during our eleven months' engagement he was only able to be in Christchurch three or four times for a few days. How well I remember our walks together, where the Domain is now—then only flax and rough tussocks,—not very private for lovers. Mary and Charles Blakiston were also engaged, and we sisters were so much alike at that time, amusing mistakes often happened.

Charles George Tripp, who was a son of Rev. Charles Tripp, D.D., Rector of Silverton, Devon, had arrived with his friend John Barton Acland in Canterbury on the 4th of January, 1855, and had worked as cadet to Mr. Burke in North Canterbury—the following September he undertook to drive a bullock dray 100 miles to Raincliff. On the journey they found the Rangitata in flood, so camped on the banks for some days—during that time Mr. Tripp made enquiries as to the capacity of the hill country near and was told it was only fit for wild pigs to live on—he thought sheep would probably live there also and with characteristic enterprise, on returning to Christchurch these two young men, Barton Acland, and Charles Tripp, decided to take up about 100,000 acres, which amount

ATTIC BEDROOM. SKETCHED BY E. S. TRIPP, 1656

they doubled during the next two years (this tract of country is now divided into Mt. Somers, Mt. Possession, Mt. Peel and Orari Gorge runs).

On May, 1856, they both camped in a tent at the foot of Mt. Peel and for six months they lived entirely on wild pork and wekas—they built a small hut and one of their first jobs was to burn many miles of scrub and fern, and my husband often spoke of the wonderful sight of these fires on the slopes of the mountain by night.

Life for these two young men was full of romance, and the intense interest of the pioneer work appealed to them both. Dr. and Mrs Moorhouse were their only neighbours near the hills, and towards the sea there were then only two houses, Mr. Hayhurst at Ashburton, and the Chapmans at Rangitata.

Not long after a curious coincidence happened, Bishop Selwyn, riding across Canterbury Plains, met these two young men, and told them he found the enormous diocese in his charge was too large for one man, and he wished to get up a petition for a Bishop to have charge of the South Island, and that his school friend Harper was the man for the work. Both Mr. Acland and Mr. Tripp were among the first to sign this petition, and as they both afterwards married the new Bishop's daughters, they often said, "We imported our wives."

Mary had become engaged some months before, which gave time to send to England for her things, but my trousseau was a very simple affair; my father, going to Wellington about that time, bought me three dresses,—a white muslin with pink sprays on it, a black and white striped thin silk, with blue silk flounces, and a brown barége, unmade; a riding habit was made in Christchurch, and I had one pair of boots and one pair of shoes. Everything else I made myself,—rather different to the trousseau of a girl of the present day,—and I know I had to buy boots a few months after my marriage, the rough country walking soon wearing out anything but the strongest.

Our wedding day was the 23rd September, 1858, Mary and Charles Blakiston being married the same day. My wedding gown of white silk and the bridesmaids' white tarleton and little straw bonnets trimmed with ribbon, were all bought at Miss Skillikorn's general stores, also the wedding ring. Though my future husband had a

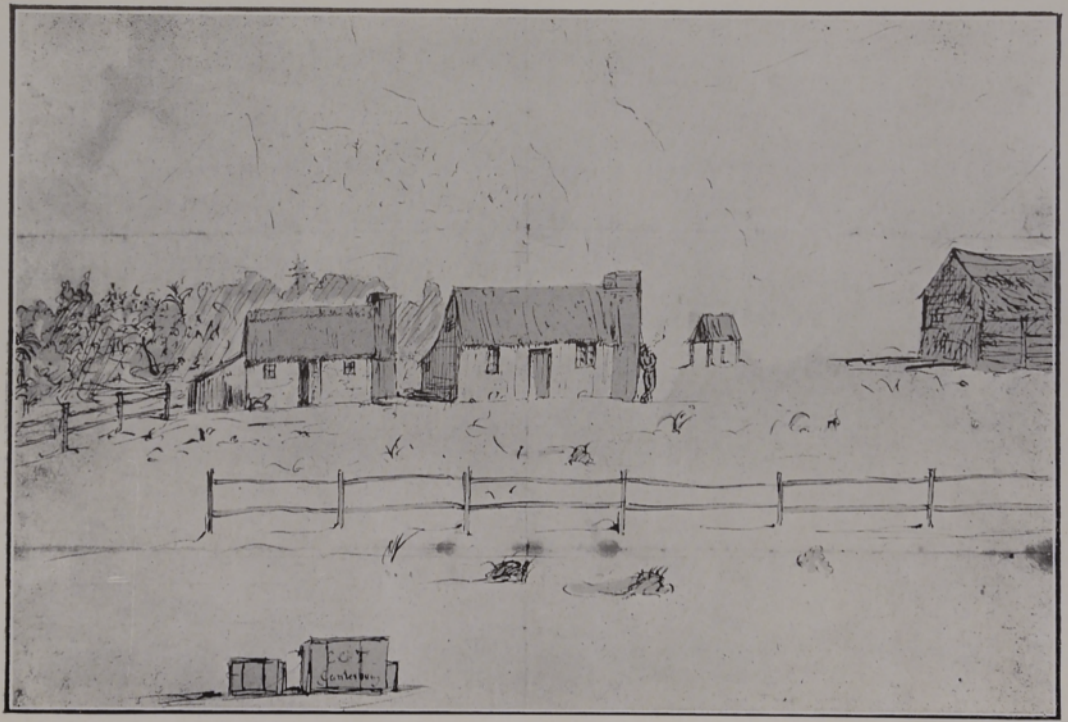
large property, ready money was not plentiful, and he always said he had to borrow £8 for wedding expenses, and I only had eight shillings of my own.

I had to come down the step ladder from our bedroom backwards in my wedding finery, and Mary's room downstairs was so small that she stood on her bed to be dressed. We walked to St. Michael's and both couples returned from church together in a new omnibus, the only other vehicle being a hansom cab without wheels, so not much use. Old Mrs. Westenra made us pretty little bouquets of white primroses, these and a bunch of gorse being the only flowers to be had.

We went to Akaroa for our honeymoon, riding the first day to Sumner, and staying there until the 25th then to Lyttelton, and by a little steamer to Pigeon Bay. We walked to the Head of the Bay, where we stayed the night, spending most of the day eating delicious oysters off the rocks. From there we started for Akaroa, but lost our way in the bush, not reaching our destination until 8 p.m., a number of people having come some way to search for us. We had a delightful week, amongst lovely scenery and such nice people who entertained us with picnics, etc. I always remember Wainui as a very beautiful spot. On October 2nd, we arrived back in Christchurch, and the same hour the Blakistons appeared (they had been at Weedons), which in those days of no mails was curious as we neither knew each other's plans.

After a week with my people, on October 27th, we began our journey on horseback to our future home at Mt. Peel; the first day brought us to Parlby's accommodation house, on the Selwyn; then we stayed with Mr. Chapman, Rakaia, for two or three days; the next day's ride took us to Hayhurst's at Ashburton, and the following day we reached Shepherd's Bush (Dr. Ben Moorhouse's).

From there we crossed the Rangitata, and soon arrived at our home, a little newly built cottage, consisting of a small sitting-room, a bedroom, a lean-to behind divided into kitchen and servant's room, and two small verandah rooms, 8ft. by 7ft. each. Mr. Tripp had purchased six chairs from a ship, and as most people only had boxes to sit on in their houses, we thought we were very grand; we also had a piano, which was one of the first to be brought to Canterbury, and must have been a good one, as it is still in use after many vicissitudes. In 1867,



SKETCH BY C. G. TRIPP, SHOWING BUILDINGS AT MT. PEEL, BEFORE HIS MARRIAGE, 1858

—*Photo by Dr. Barker.*

OUR FIRST HOUSE, MT. PEEL 1861

PRESENT HOUSE BELONGING TO HON. J. B. ACLAND, 1890

—*Photo by Dr. Barker.*

GROUP AT BISHOP'S COURT, 1860

we were moving house and when crossing the Orari River, the dray broke down, and the piano had to remain on the shingle bed for six weeks, covered with a tarpaulin, as the stream rose too high for it to be brought over. Another time, after a fire, it was on a verandah for six winter months, with blankets over it. Years after, it travelled to Richmond, in the Mackenzie Country; since then to Silverton; and now is in Timaru, used by my grandchildren; so its life has been a useful one.

To return to my first year at Mt. Peel—My husband, being very energetic and full of enterprise in his work, was very busy, and out most of the day from a very early hour, so, of course, at first I was very lonely, and as, unluckily, the first maid we had was very uncongenial to talk to, I used sometimes to be afraid I should forget my own language, and so set myself to learn the whole of Keble's Christian Year, and read the few books that my husband had brought from England, among them a life of Livingstone, and a History of India, over and over again. I was thankful when Mrs. Smith (the wife of one of our men) came to cook for the station hands; she was a very kind, and wonderfully strong woman, able to work like a man, digging, fencing, etc., and enjoyed teaching her little children and taking them for walks. After a few months the Smiths moved to Orari Gorge, which run they had on terms, and the Chapmans took their place as married couple.

I was afraid to walk far from home alone, as wild pigs were numerous. I remember a great deal of damage had been done by a wild boar, which the men were trying to find, and one day a friend, Parson Andrew, a very clever, but eccentric man, who was staying with us, and on Sunday holding a service in a tent, suddenly, in the middle of his sermon, shouted, "There goes the pig", and the whole congregation disappeared from the tent, led by the parson to give chase. Whether it was caught or not I forget.

An interesting neighbour, Samuel Butler, and afterwards the celebrated author of "Erewhon," then owned the Mesopotamia run, up the gorge of the Rangitata, and was a constant visitor during our life at Mt. Peel, and afterwards at Mt. Somers. His was a peculiar nature, and full of wild theories. My husband enjoyed talking to him, but I thought his views very upsetting, and we did not like it when he tried to convert our

maid to his ideas. He played the piano beautifully and would do so for hours, which was a delightful treat so far away from any pleasures of that kind.

After four months at Mt. Peel, we rode to Christchurch, and stayed there six weeks. On our return journey we spent some days with Mrs Fereday, near Selwyn, who gave me a present of silver save-alls which I still have. We were caught in a storm near the Hinds, and Mr. Rogers kindly took us in, and turned out of his own bedroom for me,—it was a lean-to with clay floor, straw in bunks, red blankets, but nothing to wash in, so I suppose he had always used the river for the purpose. We reached Mt. Peel the next day, very glad to get safely home.

The following January, Leonard and Rosa (afterwards Mrs. Maling) rode from Christchurch to stay with us. When leaving the town it was a fine morning, and my brother was sure he could find his way, guided by the mountains, and did not take a compass; but later a mist covered everything, and after wandering about until 10 p.m. without finding the homestead they had meant to reach at 5 o'clock, they decided to sleep, if possible, among the wet tussocks. After arranging the saddles as pillows, Leonard made Rosa put on a flannel shirt of his own over her habit, and with a rug she had in her swag over both of them, they rested as best they could. About 4 a.m. Rosa heard dogs barking, and woke Leonard, who went to see where the sound came from and found Mr. Aylmer's house only half a mile away. Mrs Aylmer was alone, but they managed to rouse her, and she kindly called to them to come in, and after explaining to Leonard, who had been there before, where to find food, insisted on my sister sharing her room for the rest of the night. The next day they were able to continue their journey as the weather had cleared.

Rosa was with me at Mt. Peel for some time, luckily, as my husband was obliged to go to Christchurch on business, and be away five weeks. Of course, the intense loneliness was much worse for her than for me, and to pass the time we made a thick mattress of grass that we could sit on, on the verandah, and read the few dry books we possessed; Rosa always remembers "Paley's Natural Theology" and the surroundings she read it in, and how constantly we were watching the river bank

—Photo by Dr. Barker

MR. AND MRS. TRIPP 1861

opposite the house, hoping to see a human figure on the horizon; and oh, how often we looked at the clock and wondered how to pass the day!

Later on, my eldest sister Emily came, also my brother Herbert. During their visit my first child was born, on October 1st, 1859. My Mother, who did not realize the lonely back country life, had never told me a special nurse was required, but good Mrs. Chapman looked after me, and I was fortunate in having a clever man like Dr. Moorhouse.

In those days we had to make do with all sorts of contrivances, and no glass bottle being available, I remember making my child's first feeding bottle out of a tin, which I bent into shape, and the finger of a kid glove, and until the baby Howard was a year old, he lived chiefly on water gruel and arrowroot. My Father arrived a few days after the child's birth, on his way to the Bluff with Canon Stack, and on his return journey he christened his first grandchild, on All Saints' Day, the godparents being Emily and Barton Acland, who had just become engaged to be married, and Henry (afterwards Archdeacon of Westland).

Early in January, 1860, we drove to Christchurch, my husband, baby and I, in a cart with no springs, Miss Moorhouse (the late Mrs Barnie Rhodes) riding beside us. We wished to be present at the wedding of Emily and Barton, also of Sarah and Percy Cox,—the second double wedding in the family. After the family festivities, Rosa returned with us to Mt. Peel; we took a long time on the journey, as our cart stuck several times in the flooded rivers, and it took three hours to cross the Ashburton. The Aclands came South soon after, and lived in a small hut behind our cottage, and had their meals with us, but they were not there very long, as they decided to go to England that year. Before they left we decided it was best to dissolve partnership, and Barton and Charles drew lots; Mt. Peel falling to the former, and Orari Gorge to us; and as we were to live later at Mt. Somers, we let the other run to Robert Smith, on terms, for some time, and afterwards put Mr. Hudson (son of the "Railway King") in as Manager.

Janet was the next of the sisters to pay me a visit, and while with us had a very severe illness, and Mother came from Christchurch to help nurse her. Our little house was indeed full, and to make room for my

Mother, we hung as a curtain a red blanket over part of our sitting-room, and then the bed had to be against the door,—such a tiny space that she could not make her bed until the door was shut and the rest had all retired for the night.

Amongst our men, we had working for us an Australian black, "Andy," who was a very well-known character. He had, before coming to us, been mail carrier between Timaru and Christchurch, running at a quick trot all the way, and would do anything for a glass of rum, which he was always given at the end of his journey. After many times falling into the hands of the police, through intemperance, he got into the habit of running straight to the prison, where he was locked up until ready to leave with the mail next morning. Andy was very good with children, and on Sundays, if he thought I was tired, would take Howard, aged one year, away for hours, carrying food and taking the greatest care of the child, who loved him; and I felt perfectly happy if Andy had charge. He was most useful in the house, too, and would make toys very cleverly for the children. As with many natives, his tracking powers were wonderful. I remember an instance, when on a very cold wet day, a man came to the station who had lost a letter on his way across the trackless plains from Ashburton and had been obliged to swim, on horseback, the Rangitata River. Andy heard of the loss, and immediately started off, saying, "Me find letter." He swam the river where the horseman had crossed, picked up the track on the Shepherd's Bush side, and went off over the tussock plain, found the letter near the Hinds, and was back at Mt. Peel in less than four hours, and, of course was given the rum he had bargained for before starting.

Another time Mr. Tripp was anxious a letter should reach Christchurch as early as possible, the rivers were in flood, but Andy offered to take it; he left at sunrise on foot, and, in spite of, to most men, uncrossable rivers, he arrived in Christchurch and was in his usual abode (the prison) before dark. He was an invaluable man, but, unfortunately, when under the influence of drink behaved like a madman. One day, because my husband had refused to let him have more of his favourite rum, Andy threatened to kill him. The only thing to do (as we did not want him shut up) was to send him back to Australia. There poor Andy came to a tragic end; he

went back to Swan River, where he had lived as a child, and soon afterwards killed the man who had murdered his mother. He was tried, and hanged for it, which seemed a very hard sentence, as he had great provocation, and we and all his friends were most indignant about it. This must have been about the year 1862, as he had been some years in New Zealand, having come as servant to Sir George Grey.

In February, 1861, the year before poor Andy left us, we were on our way to Christchurch, and had an awful journey, which I shall never forget, and how very thankful I was to have Rosa with me. In the only accommodation house then in Ashburton I felt very ill, and spent a miserable night, having damp sheets on the bed, in a small room leading out of the kitchen, in which, until early morning, were a number of very rough, noisy men. However, in spite of feeling the journey would never end, we arrived safely at Bishopscourt, and there, on March 24th., a little daughter was born. When he heard of the new arrival, faithful Andy ran all the way from Mt. Peel (80 miles) "to see new baby"! When she was six weeks old, and Howard 19 months, we travelled home, to find rivers again high, and the Rakaia took us nearly three hours to cross, as a boat had to be sent for, and while waiting for it, I and the children sat sheltered by flax bushes from the tearing nor-wester. After crossing we came to our kind friends, the Chapmans, and rested there a week; we also spent a night at Mr. Thompson's, on the Hinds.

The following October I had a great adventure. As we had decided to leave Mt. Peel and make our home at Mt. Somers, we wished to say good-bye to the Moorhouses, and tried to cross the river by boat, when in flood. On reaching mid-stream, my husband, Jim Pithie, and Chapman, who were rowing, felt they had no power against the rapids, so returned to the shore, but when they jumped out with the rope, the force of the stream pulled it from their hands, and off I went alone, down three rapids, travelling four miles in about twenty minutes, my terrified husband and the two men running as fast as they could on the bank. Luckily, the boat slowed down near an island, and I managed with the one remaining oar to work with it until I got near enough to the shore to get out (the water was above my waist), and safely landed; while some men on horseback, who

saw what had happened, were able to gallop along and report to my husband that I was safe. My fear of wild pigs, which I thought were there, was almost as bad as the terror of drowning so I quickly climbed a tree, and gradually took off my clothes, drying them one by one in the bright sunshine. I was four hours on the island, and cheered by the Misses Moorhouse sitting on the bank opposite; even at that distance, I felt they were company, and that help would be sent.

In the meantime Dr. Moorhouse with a team of bullocks, that was some distance away, had to drag his boat from a sort of back water, where it had been used for sheep dipping, and his man Huffy had at once to set to work to make two oars; when these were finished the Doctor and Huffy rowed across for me, having great difficulty in avoiding being upset just near the island, where the river was very swift. If they had not been able to come for me Black Andy had offered to swim over and carry me on his back; which I must say I was thankful did not happen.

My husband was at Shepherd's Bush, having ridden at a great pace round by the ferry, five miles further down; poor man, he did look so ghastly from anxiety, and had suffered more than I had. Dr. Moorhouse would not let me talk at all, he was afraid of the effects of the shock, and insisted on my going to bed, after having a strong glass of whisky and water. I had a bad headache and sickness, which soon passed off, leaving no ill effects; but ever since I have disliked rivers, and crossing when at all discoloured.

We moved to Mt. Somers in November, only living there eleven months, when it was sold to my brother-in-law, Percy Cox. I had never cared for the place and always felt over-shadowed by the mountain, which depressed me, so I was glad when it was sold and we were able to go to England.

Sailing in the s.s. *Gottenburg* (458 tons), on the 11th of October, 1862, for Melbourne, we took fourteen days to reach our port. On landing we went into rooms in Retreat Villa, Acland Street, St. Kilda, in there my second son was born. I found the heat very trying, but I was fortunate in having near me my husband's cousins, Mrs William Upton Tripp and her daughters, a remarkably clever, interesting family, with whom we became great friends. Mrs Tripp (née Leigh) with her husband

had arrived in Melbourne in the early days of the gold rush, when Melbourne was composed chiefly of tents. Mr. Tripp was a lawyer, but his business not being very successful, his wife had a girl's school, the first of the sort in Melbourne, which she managed wonderfully, it is still spoken of with admiration, and was afterwards carried on by her daughters as Toorak College, and has been a great influence for good in the young colony.

My brother Charlie, who was travelling with us, joined my husband for a few weeks' trip to Tasmania and on December 17th, we all sailed for England in *The Norfolk*, with Capt. Tonkin, and had a passage of 72 days, considered in those days very quick. There were many pleasant people on board, amongst others a Mr. Macready, of whom I have grateful remembrances, he was so good to my little girl (Girlie, as she was called). We landed at Weymouth in an open boat, and went from there to Silverton, near Exeter, the home of Dr. Tripp, my father-in-law, who, during his son's eight years absence had become blind, and it was a great shock to my husband to find that at first his father did not recognise him, and also could not believe his stories of success. So my husband wrote to New Zealand, and sold the Orari Gorge run, just to prove the truth of his statements; but he again bought it, after two years, from his cousin, John Enys.

We arrived in England about the time of the arrival in London of Princess Alexandra, to be married to the Prince of Wales; my husband and brother were able to go to town to see the wonderful illuminations, and getting separated in the crowd, tried the Colonial "Coo-ee," and soon found each other.

After thirteen months at Silverton, we both went to London for some weeks; also to Mortimer, and stayed with many old friends—anyone coming from New Zealand was considered wonderful in those days, and I was amused to find many expected my children to be black. Villagers in Silverton still remember a lecture my husband gave on the Colony. He showed them a blue serge shirt he had worked in during his first six months, when he and Barton Acland, slept in a tent at Mt. Peel. His enthusiasm persuaded three young men from Silverton to return with us, namely, George Hammond, who is now Churchwarden in Woodbury, and who married Eva Dean, nurse to my eighth child;

Hopkins, who became a butcher in Christchurch; and Jim Radford, a mason, who, after working for us for many year, lives now in Temuka;—the latter was married to Betsy Chapman, and the wedding took place in the stockyard of a cottage at Orari Gorge; Katie, my second daughter, being bridesmaid, Radford had been very good to her and had often looked after her as a tiny child.

But I must go back two years, when we left England in February, 1864, by the Shaw Savill sailing vessel *Ivanhoe*, Captain E. Dunn. Before leaving Silverton, Mr. Tripp had arranged (as he was travelling with three small children) to take a cow, and luckily had a written agreement with the Company that the animal should be put on board at the London Docks. On arrival at Plymouth we found this had not been done, and he at once telegraphed,—very indignant at the broken contract,—"Will stay at hotel your expense until cow put on board." The ship was delayed, and the cow, which afterwards saved many lives, was put on the *Ivanhoe*.

But troubles were only beginning, as directly we left Plymouth, a passenger, who had paid a pound for the passage of his dog, found that, by the Captain's orders, the poor thing was thrown over-board. It was no use doing anything, so my husband advised the man to wait until New Zealand was reached, and then go to law. We had a number of prize Spanish fowls also on board, and after a few days the Captain had the necks of all the cocks wrung, because their crowing in the morning awoke him. We soon saw that he was drinking heavily, and the ship in a shocking condition; the pigs, being allowed in the saloon at night, very soon causing fever. The Captain at times was quite mad with drink, and would have good food thrown overboard before us, while sitting on deck, while that which came to table was seldom good to eat and in very small quantities. There was plenty of good sugar on board, but we were only allowed almost black stuff, except when sometimes the second mate gave us a little white sugar; and we had some we had brought from England with us, it made the Captain very angry, if I shared with the other ladies at table. One day twenty-eight passengers were expected to dine off one sheep's head, and Mr. Charles Eneys would often come to table, and, seeing how little there was for the women and children, would walk away, eating nothing himself. Once the meat was quite bad and my husband was so

—*Photo by Dr. Barker.*

ORARI GORGE STATION 1864

angry, he took it to the Captain's cabin and asked him if it was fit to eat, which made him furious, as his own meals were served in his cabin whenever the food was not good. Luckily he had the cow well cared for, as the Doctor had advised him to drink milk. Being a splendid animal, and good milker, I was able to take milk every day to the poor typhoid patients in the steerage. We were also very grateful to old Dr. Tripp for the stores he had given us, such as port wine, champagne, white sugar, and also quantities of strong beef jelly, a present from Sir Thomas Acland, which he had especially made for us at Killerton; these comforts meant everything to those who were ill, but for all we could do, twenty-six died of starvation and typhoid. A passenger, Mr. Williams, lost his wife, and I took charge of her four little children:—My eldest child was delirious for three weeks; and the nurse was very ill for some time, also George Hammond, so those that were well were very busy and anxious.

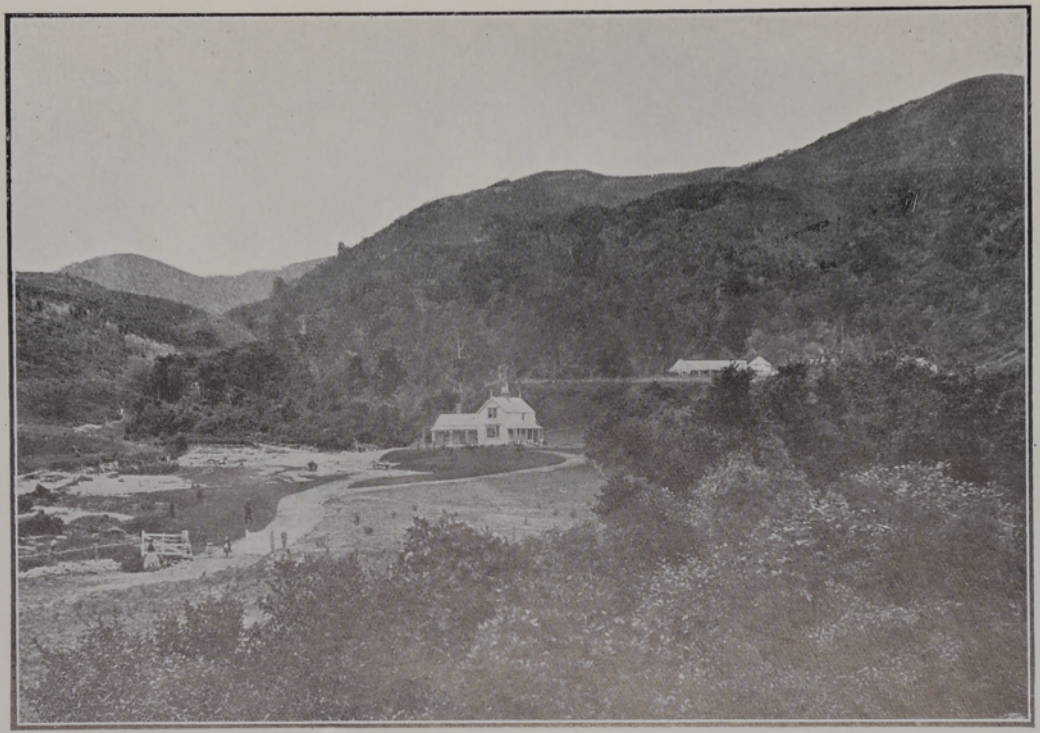
We were nearly wrecked on the Crozets, and after such a trying time, it was with great thankfulness we sighted New Zealand, on June 11th, but, to our horror, the Captain declared Timaru was Lyttelton, and making for it, was going direct for the rocks. My husband got desperate, as he knew the coast and the great danger, and said, if the Captain was not put in irons, he would shoot him, before he would see women and children drowned by a madman. So this man, who had all our lives in his hands, was drugged and got below, and the first mate being also intoxicated, the second mate took command, and brought us safely to Lyttelton, where to our distress, but quite rightly, we were put in quarantine for three weeks. When Dr. Donald, the health officer, came on board and saw the state of the ship, he turned up his trousers, the dirt was so terrible.

Mr. Tripp, who had been a barrister before leaving England, had, during the voyage, written all that the Captain had done—complaints covering fourteen sheets of foolscap paper. The day after landing he was summoned, first, for causing the death of the dog, and for that offence fined £20, and many other cases were to follow, but, on leaving the court that day, he shook his fist at my husband, saying "You are at the bottom of this" and went off into Lyttelton, where, after drinking brandy, he fell off the pier and was drowned. The

trouble and suffering he caused were so appalling that one could not be surprised, when Mr. Tripp came to Bishopscourt with the news, that Mr. Enys who had nearly starved himself so as to leave food for others, exclaimed, "I could dance on that man's grave!" It was a dreadful ending to our wretched voyage.

We stayed at Bishopscourt for a month, then moved into a small house in Worcester Street, where, on August 24th, our second daughter was born. We lived there two years, and then decided to go to Orari Gorge, the run which, except for two years, during our visit to England, had belonged to us since 1855, and where a four-roomed cottage had been built for the Manager, which is still part of the present house. We added some larger rooms, and, on September 23rd, 1866, we arrived from Christchurch, in a waggonette which had been the first express to run between Christchurch and Sumner, it was still existing in 1910, and was sold at the Orari Gorge Clearing Sale for ten shillings, causing great interest and amusement as so many looked upon it as an old friend from its long use.

To return to our arrival at the Station; John Irvine had been the driver, and our party consisted of Mr. Tripp, myself, four children and nurse, also the cat. We found the drays with luggage had broken down, so the first night we slept on matting, using as covering the very few blankets already in the house. 1867 was the year of the bad snow storm, which Lady Barker describes in her "Station Life in New Zealand," and the day before was so warm the children and nurse had been sitting out of doors. When the storm was at its worst, on August 6th, our third daughter was born. That was a season of events, as the following February what has always been spoken of as "The Flood" occurred, and at the end of the two days' hard rain, the creek running through our newly made garden overflowed its banks, and at ten p.m. the water was up to the nursery window, and we had to leave the house and carry the children to the men's whare, on higher ground, where kind Mrs. McLean (she and her husband were working for us) took me and the baby into her room, and the rest slept on bunks. The next day we beheld a great scene of desolation, the house standing in a bed of boulders and shingle, everything, including a new fowl-house and the



—*Photo by Dr. Barker.*

ORARI GORGE—1868

—*Photo by Dr. Barker.*

MRS. TRIPP AND TWO ELDEST CHILDREN, 1867

garden, washed away. Afterwards Mr. Tripp had to build a concrete wall to keep the creek in its place.

The making of a new home was a keen interest to my husband and myself, and his great energy and forethought resulted in many improvements and much planting, of which future generations will reap the benefit. The hard work and democratic ways of a colony always appealed to him, and his interest in all subjects connected with Church or State in Canterbury, and his thorough enjoyment of life in a young country, enabled him to help many others through the ups and downs which came to us all.

Three more children were born at Orari Gorge, and I was forunate in having as governess for nine years, Miss Jane Andrews, a splendid woman, and like a second mother to my children, to whose goodness and affection we owe a great deal.

There were near neighbours, but we soon became very friendly with all who lived in the district—at Peel Forest Mr. and Mrs. Jollie and the two Misses Cooper; the Alfred Coxes at Raukapuka, Angus Macdonalds at Waitui; our Vicar, Parson Brown, who lived in Geraldine, and Dr. Rayner, twenty miles away, at Temuka.

Capt. Clogstoun owned Four Peaks Run, and William Macdonald was at Orari. Mr Hewlings and his Maori wife lived in a little bark hut on the main street in Geraldine—a picturesque little place, and only destroyed by fire a few years ago. There was no road to Geraldine until 1872, in the meantime we drove gaily across the tussocks, and about once a month were able to attend service at St. Mary's. The Rev. James Preston came about 1869, and the parish he took charge of then reached from the Rangitata to Mt. Cook—a distance of over 120 miles. Luckily he was a good horseman, as he had many exciting experiences in swollen rivers and quicksands. He held services wherever he could get a few people together, in wool-sheds, public houses, and any building available, and was a great favourite. He used to tell us how, at a temperance meeting in Geraldine, when the movement first began, he was unexpectedly asked to speak; but, as he said, he knew little about the subject, as his only experience of hotels had been on his long rides, when directly he left one in the morning his one wish was to reach another before dark, so he could scarcely speak against them; which remarks caused amusement, but did

not help the Temperance party. It was a great loss to us all when, after twenty-eight years in the parish, Mr. Preston died suddenly, when fishing with some friends on the bank of the Rangitata, a simple broad-minded man, beloved and mourned by all denominations.

Dr. Fish came to the district about the same time as the Prestons, and both families were very intimate with us. Mrs. Fish and the Doctor were both very clever, cultured, and musical. We spent many happy hours together. Not long after our arrival at Orari Gorge the two Misses Cooper married,—the eldest to Mr. Mellish and the youngest to Mr. Slack. The wedding of the latter took place in the Peel Forest drawing room.

She lived afterwards at Woodside, and until her death was a great friend of mine and a most amusing companion. Then Selby Tancred bought Raukapuka, and again we had a charming neighbour in his wife, who was a grand-daughter of Felicia Hemans, the poetess. Their children and ours were of the same ages, and were good friends as long as they stayed in the district.

Woodbury, or Waihi Bush, consisted of Flatman's Store on the north bank of the Waihi river (where Mr. Burdon now lives). Webb and Penny's sawmill was in the bush opposite, a mile from the present store, and a few other settlers. The hotel owned by Bird stood halfway between Geraldine and Woodbury. A few years later Sir Thomas Tancred, who lived a short time at Peel Forest, purchased Flatman's Store, with the land now owned by Messrs. Burdon, Turton, Barker, Major Spencer and many others. The Tancreds a party of six, stayed with us while moving house, and during their visit most of them, and all my eight children, developed measles. In spite of being ill, the "Measley" holidays were always looked back to as a time of joy, the Tancreds being so entertaining and giving much pleasure arranging charades, etc., among those who were convalescent.

After Flatman's store had been added to for them to live in it was a most quaint building,—one large room, and many small ones all round, "like Brussels sprouts," we used to say.

Very eccentric but charming people, there are many stories told of them. Sir Thomas, who was like a picture of one of the Apostles, with his snow-white hair and beard, was a quick tempered and very short-sighted man, and one evening mistook a sunflower for a man looking

FROM GARDEN GATE—1913

ORARI GORGE—1913

CHARLES GEORGE TRIPP—1889

in at the window, and fired his gun at it. Another time he saw, what he thought was a swagger, creeping round the garden, and went towards the figure, which he saw move slightly when he called, but would not go away; he rushed at it and hit out with his stick; but afterwards found it to be a skirt of Lady Tancred's, hanging on a clothes-line, he had torn it in half.

Sir Thomas read the Church service in the village schoolroom, and often chose sermons written for the East End of London, and quite unsuitable in New Zealand. Being deaf, he raised his voice in the wrong part of a sentence, making the words often most ridiculous, and members of the congregation had often to leave the room to prevent laughing aloud. Sometimes the money-bag could not be found, and after much hunting and whispering amongst her family, Lady Tancred would lend her glove, which, being a very untidy person, was generally in so many holes, the fingers had to be held to prevent the money falling out.

They lived at Waihi for some years, and then the old people sold their property to their son Clement, and came to us for a fortnight, meaning to go home to pack each day. The visit spread out for five months. Every day they drove off with a quiet old horse, but never seemed to get their work finished. At last we heard the reason; a shepherd told my husband he often saw them on the road, Sir Thomas, Lady Tancred, and the horse,—all three sound asleep; so no wonder the packing took some months.

Lady Tancred was most good-natured, and very musical, and even in her old age had a wonderful voice. She would play by the hour, on a comb, for the children to dance to. She was also a great gardener, and could dig like a man, constantly losing and finding the beautiful rings she wore on her ungloved hands. We were very sorry to lose such original neighbours, when they left for the North Island. Before that date St. Thomas's Church was built in Woodbury, on land given by Mr Flatman, and opened October, 1879, generous help being given by our old friends; the building cost £346, the altar was the gift of Sir Thomas Tancred, the East window from Mr. A. Somerville, the Font from Mr. Wills, and all the neighbourhood helped with gifts. Mr. Joseph Deans, who lived in the village, was the builder, and his family gave most of the fine trees now in the ground. One gift

deserves special mention,—the Communion plate presented by Miss Brown, daughter of a former Vicar of Geraldine, as to do so she was obliged to sell her most valued possession,—her riding horse. There is at present in the Church a piece of work done by my Mother in 1844; it was originally the centrepiece of an altar frontal for the Church at Mortimer, in Berkshire, and when we left to come to New Zealand, it was brought out, and for many years used in Christ's College Chapel; but when a new one was given there, I was asked if Woodbury could find a place for it, and we now use the work as a dossal, and so far both silk and velvet are good.

The first Sunday after the Church was consecrated, with my daughter's help, I began Sunday School an hour before service. As our horse, Tommy by name, was very slow, it meant leaving home punctually at 9 a.m., the horse was tied up to a rail outside the Church grounds, and after some years of this training, if left by the post he knew, the patient animal stood for two hours every Sunday (doubtless thinking he was tied) as if put by another post after a short time he turned round and went trotting home.

The district about the year 1879 was altering very much, and the land often changing hands. My husband took a very active part in all public matters, he was a member of the Vestry, and for ten years chairman of the County Council and member of the Mt. Peel Road Board, and only the distance and time he would have been obliged to be from home, prevented him standing as he was constantly being urged to for the Provincial Council and Diocesan Synod in Christchurch.

This brings me to a date after which new neighbours came to the district,—a change from the real early days of South Canterbury, with its life of great simplicity and often hardships but a time of many happy days, and the forming of life-long friendships.

Orari Gorge, 1915.

ELLEN SHEPHARD TRIPP—1906

EXTRACT FROM THE "CHRISTCHURCH EVENING NEWS," DECEMBER 16TH, ANNIVERSARY DAY, 1916.

One is specially reminded of these early settlers who laid the foundations of Canterbury's prosperity by the death this week of Mrs. Charles George Tripp, a member of that family whose descendants are to be found all over Canterbury and in most parts of the dominion. She bore both before and after her marriage a well-known name and her home at Orari Gorge was for a generation or more a household word throughout Canterbury for the hospitality to be found there by all who visited it. Mrs. Tripp's life covered a very large portion of the period that has elapsed since Canterbury was first settled. She landed here two days before Christmas, 62 years ago, being then twenty-two years of age, she married Mr. Tripp two years later and fifty years ago last September she and her husband went to live at Orari Gorge which Mr. Tripp had owned since 1855. And for fifty years Mrs. Tripp lived there, undergoing hardships and inconveniences, such as few but the wives of early settlers can realise, but bearing all with cheerfulness and a quiet courage which at times was not far from heroism. In her last days she did what we wish more of the founders of the province had done—she wrote, for private circulation an account of her early days as girl, wife and mother.

We have been privileged to read it, and can testify that in that slim little volume lies more of the true romance of life than is found in most novels. Apart from its interest to all who love Canterbury and reverence its early settlers, it is of historical value, for it is to such records that the future historian of New Zealand must go for the human interest that will lighten his pages. The book deals with the writer's life up to 1879 a date which ended "the real early days of South Canterbury with its life of great simplicity, often hardships, but a time of many happy days and the forming of lifelong friendships."

It is the lives and works of such people that Anniversary Day really commemorates. . . . .

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