

# WANGANUI

From 1856

To 1929



BY

J. P. BELCHER

14 Belcher, J. P.  
Wanganui

WITH  
HIS IMPRESSIONS  
1857



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C. BURNETT'S IMPRESSIONS

IN 1857

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C. BURNETT'S IMPRESSIONS

IN 1857

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## PREFACE



**I**N this book I have refrained from making any unpleasant remarks about any citizen, old or new, and, if not correct in all dates, I trust readers will forgive as they are nearly all from memory during the last sixty years.

THE WRITER.

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## WANGANUI—1856 to 1929

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HAVE been asked by many friends, old and young, to write some reminiscences of Wanganui. I have "Early Wanganui," from the time the first boat crossed the bar in 1837, but as that is too old to interest the people of to-day, I will begin from 1871, being the date the Wanganui Town Bridge was opened.

The bridge was originally built for a river in France, but found its way to Wanganui. It was erected by a friend of my family, Mr. Henry McNeil, in 1869, at a cost of about £30,000. Great rejoicings took place on the occasion of the opening. Governor Sir G. F. Bowen opened the bridge on November 28th, 1871.

There was a toll that was kept up for eleven years; pedestrians one penny, all stock at per head. The first man to take the toll was Mr. George Ross, and the first man to ride over on horseback was Mr. Tom Jones, and, for fun, he rode his horse backwards. The first real test was when Mr. W. H. Watt had 500 head of cattle driven over it by John Holly.

A short time after the bridge was opened, the town was excited by the first tragedy. A man named Crossing was supposed to have eloped from Melbourne with his niece. He bought a farm up the Brunswick Line, and after a time they heard that the detectives were after them, so they came to town and walked over the bridge to the deep water, about three chains from Campbell Town, as it was called in those days, and both jumped over into the river and were drowned. Mr. W. Davis, a well-known resident of Durie Hill, saw them taken from the water.

Campbell Town was named after Mr. Campbell, who kept the Post Office and store, just at the approach of the bridge. Close to the bridge there was a saddler's shop, kept by Mr. A. Dallas, and further along other buildings. At the end of No. 2 Line there were saleyards and the public pound, but as the river bank kept falling away they were taken down and the pound was removed opposite, at the end of No. 2 Line.

About 1870 Major Durie was the R.M. then, and lived at Durie Glen, now called Durie Vale. The Major had a family of seven daughters, two sons, himself and Mrs. Durie, all paying toll. Lady Nolan, now of Auckland, and the late Mrs. Brewer, of Waitotara, are two of his daughters.

The old Red Lion Hotel, which was burnt down, was kept by Mr. W. Coombes, and the principle livery stables were at the back kept by Mr. C. Gordon. About 1873 Mr. Gordon removed all his plant over to the back of Chadwick's auction mart in Campbell Place. There was an entrance to the stable from Ridgway Street and Campbell Place and the coaches left there for up and down the coast.

They started from Atkinson's Hotel, which stood at the corner where the Native Land Court now stands. Considerable business was done round there at that time. Sir James Fergusson, father of our present Governor, was Governor of the Colony at this time, and the first time he came down the coast was when travelling was done principally on horseback. I was young and smart with horses then, and I was asked if I would take a horse for the Governor, as far as Turakina, as he and his aide-de-camp were riding through to Wellington. A Mr. Cowern went with me, and I think the rivers were in flood, as we were at Turakina ten days before we got word that they had left Wanganui. We met them at the hotel, Sir James and I exchanged horses, shook hands, and parted, and they went on to Bulls, and we returned to Wanganui. Mr. Cowern was afterwards the well-known auctioneer at Patea.

The principal place of business was Taylor and Watts, which was next to Frankish Bros. A wharf ran out where the Loan and Mercantile building now stands. The barque "Malay," from London, can be seen in a picture at the Museum moored at the end of the wharf. She arrived about 1875 from London.

Mr. W. H. Watt was Mayor of the town in 1881, and for supplying the town with water from the Westmere Lake and for many other good acts, a memorial fountain was erected to his memory between the Post Office and the Rutland Hotel; but as the traffic increased it was removed to Cook's Gardens where it now stands with the following inscription:—

Honour to whom honour is due.

Memorial Fountain.

Erected by the people of Wanganui in honour of William Hogg Watt, Esq., Mayor of the Borough, whose munificent gift to the town, the Westmere Lake, for water supply, will ever be gratefully remembered.

1881.

Later Mr. W. H. Watt became the first M.P. for Wanganui.

The first Presbyterian Minister in Wanganui was the Rev. David Hogg. During his term of office he rode a tame bullock with bags over his back and flax stirrups to Turakina to open the first church. Mr. Sandy McGregor led the bullock. Mr. Hogg told the people it was the only "horse" he could get. After Mr. Hogg, the next Minister was Rev. Elmsly, then Rev. James Treadwell.

The other ministers were: Church of England, Mr. T. I. Tudor; Roman Catholic, Father Kirk, a very popular man. What was called the new Wesleyan Church stood in the Avenue and the Minister was the Rev. J. J. Berry. The next was the Rev. Rainsford Bavin, father of the present Premier of New South Wales. The Premier, if not born in Wanganui, was a very young lad when he came here, as it was in 1874.

The first auctioneer I remember was Mr. Arthur Beauchamp, father of Sir Harold Beauchamp. He had an auction mart just below H. I. Jones'. Mr. Beauchamp had the gift of talking and could knock anything down from a bag of chaff to a sheep station.

Before the abolition of the Provinces in 1875 Mr. Beauchamp put up for Member for Marlborough, and at the last meeting he spoke from 8 p.m. till 12 p.m., four hours, and nearly all the people went to sleep. The late Mr. Albert Barns was assistant for Mr. Beauchamp. Afterwards he launched out with the late Mr. Thomas Higgie, under the title of "Barns and Higgie," as auctioneers, a business they carried on successfully for several years. I heard Mr. Beauchamp died in Christchurch some years ago. The other auctioneers were Mr. J. Chadwick, Mr. Finimore and Mr. F. R. Jackson.



The Post Office in 1870 was a one-storey building, with a little verandah facing up the Avenue; the next was a two-storey building and then the present one was built. One of the staff of the telegraph department, Mr. W. F. Gordon, who was a splendid character artist, could sketch anyone in a few minutes. Mr. Gordon was billed to draw three well-known citizens in three minutes in the old theatre. They were Mr. P. A. Chavannes, Mr. John Walker and Mr. J. W. Robinson. Before each face was finished the audience called out their names. Mr. Gordon is now Government draughtsman at New Plymouth.

The first doctors that I remember were Drs. Earle, Tripe and Mussen.

In 1871 the lawyers were: Mr. C. H. Borlase, Mr. Andrew Duncan, Mr. F. M. Betts, Mr. M. V. Hodge, Mr. H. B. Roberts, Mr. S. T. Fitzherbert. The late Judge Sim was born and educated in Wanganui, and was articled to Mr. C. H. Borlase.

Later well-known solicitors were Mr. W. H. Barnicoat, Mr. Gifford Marshall, Mr. Con Burnett, Mr. James Watt, Mr. Geo. Hutchison, ex-M.P., Mr. Cook, Mr. Tom Allison.

Mr. H. B. Roberts died in 1873 at his office, which was just below H. I. Jones, and was buried on his own property about two miles up the No. 2 Line. I was one of many who walked to his funeral. Mr. Roberts was well-known as "Bogo" Roberts. He was a very peculiar man; he had a trap door in his kitchen that led to a tunnel which took you into a deep gully at the back of the house. The tunnel is there now, but the house has gone. The tunnel was supposed to be for safety's sake in case the Maoris attacked the house. It was reported that he made some good No. 2 Line whisky, and I think now that the report may have been true, for one day when I was walking into town Mr. Roberts was working in his garden; I called in and asked him if he was coming to town as I had some money to collect at his office. He would not come in that day and he would not go into the house to write a note for me to get the money, but he gave me his diamond ring off his finger and said, "If you leave this with the clerk he will give you the money." When I got to the office the clerk said, "That is the boss' ring?" I said, "Yes, I have to leave it with you." So he gave me the money. The clerk was Mr. Walter Symes who was afterwards M.P. for Egmont.



About 1869 Mr. F. R. Jackson, Mr. William Brewer and Mr. C. Durie, had a boiling down plant at Sedgbrook and carts went about selling legs of mutton for one shilling each. The people used to buy them, salt them, and smoke them, and call them mutton hams, and were very good eating.

Mr. Roberts had an idea of boiling sheep down himself, and calling the extract "Pabulum Vitae." I have seen testimonials from Dr. Earle and Dr. Mussen as to the good qualities of the extract, but a report got about that he bought a dead horse or two and that settled "Pabulum Vitae." The papers printed some verses about it afterwards, but I can only remember one line: "And he tried to poison himself with 'Pabulum Vitae.'"

The first time Mr. Roberts came to Wanganui he walked from Wellington, and coming along the ninety-mile beach, between Paikakariki and the mouth of the Rangitikei River, he came to a big sandy mound. He decided to have a rest, but when he sat down he went backwards into the carcase of a dead whale. (Believe it if you like).

#### HOTELS.

Hotels there were plenty, the Rutland being always the leader. I think the present building is the fifth building on the corner and the following, I believe, is a correct list of the proprietors for the past seventy years. They were Messrs Russell, Speed, Geo. Howe, Chavannes, Frank Evans, A. J. Parsons, G. B. Denny, C. J. McCarthy, Sullivan, P. A. Herman, Mrs. Scott, Messrs F. C. Faber, T. J. Lawless, G. McDonald, S. Leonard Parsons, Le Suer, Rivers, Gibbons, Nixon, S. Leonard Parsons.

At the corner of Wilson Street, and the Quay was the Ship Hotel, and a jetty ran out from there and there was a ferry over to Putiki where numbers of cattle were shipped to Onehunga and the West Coast. The hotel was burnt down and the section is vacant to this day. A Mr. Littlewood was the proprietor. Coming along the Quay in Trafalgar Place was the Customs House Hotel, kept by Frank Ledbury, who was the first to introduce a bowling alley; then Mr. H. Morrow's Criterion Hotel; the next was the York Hotel, afterwards called the Steam Packet, then Foster's. At the corner where Foster's now stands was a little tobacconist shop kept by J. Villiers; at the back James Hindley had a billiard-room. He was so short tempered when he missed an easy shot that he would blame the cue, throw it on the floor and jump on it.

A few doors from the Steam Packet was the Prince of Wales Hotel, and at the corner, where the Federal stands, was the Railway Hotel. Coming up the Market Square, and where the Public Trust Office now stands, was the Wanganui Hotel, and opposite where the Native Land Court stands was Atkinson's Hotel. Where the Cosmopolitan Club stands was the Empire Hotel and opposite, where the "Chronicle" Office stands, was the Phoenix. The Pier Hotel, now known as McCarthy's Hotel, was opposite the railway station. The Albion, the Provincial, the Victoria (now known as Chavannes), the Imperial, and the St. John complete, I think, the total number of hotels in Wanganui.

### ROYAL MAIL.

The Royal Mail Steamer "Tuhua" was built and launched at Murray's Foundry in 1885. She was intended for the river service and was on the river for about six years. Although built by a company, the project was a failure. In trying to negotiate the Motoa Rapids she failed and became a total wreck. Her remnants may be seen at the island to the present day.

### NEW ZEALAND LAND LAWS.

In 1889 I met an American, one Colonel Ballingall, and a very nice man; he was travelling on business and pleasure combined. We met in the train coming from New Plymouth and we chatted nearly all the way to Wanganui. He said New Zealand was a fine country and he was not afraid of the trains running off the island. But what seemed strange to him was our land laws. When I said, "What is wrong with them?" he said, "Well, you let a farm to a man and if he does not pay the rent you put the bailiff in and turn him out. We don't do that in my country. I own three farms; they are all let on thirds, whatever the farm produces in the twelve months I get one third, that is my rent." When I asked what they did if the farmer was not a competent man, he said he just got notice to leave by a certain date, and someone else came along. "So you see we live and let live in my country." I thought it seemed a fair thing. Colonel Ballingall was also the owner of a newspaper. When we arrived in Wanganui I took him to Mr. James Duigan's house and introduced him. He spent the evening with Mr. Duigan and a few days afterwards Mr. Duigan had long accounts in the "Herald" or "Chronicle" of the visit.

## SOMETHING FOR MOTOR CAR OWNERS TO THINK OVER.

Mrs. Chavannes, mother of the well-known Mr. Charles Chavannes, was visiting her daughter, Mrs. Johnston, at Waitotara. Mr. Johnston asked me if I would drive Mrs. Chavannes in to the Rutland Hotel. He gave me a light buggy and a strong mare. We started after lunch and got as far as Okehu Gorge and got stuck in the middle of the road. Mrs. Chavannes had to get out in the mud, climb up the bank to the wire fence and get along the best way she could while I got the mare going again. We got as far as Kai Iwi that night and to the Rutland next day about 1 p.m.

It was quite a common thing to see carts stuck in the mud along the Westmere road before reaching Goat Valley. Mr. Charley Chavannes can bare me out in this respect, as he drove Cobb and Co.'s coach through to New Plymouth about 1876.

In 1874 I was in the employ of Mr. J. Chadwick, auctioneer, and we had horse sales every Saturday opposite the mart where Thompson, Lewis and Co. now stands. The following year I went into partnership with his son, under the name of "Chadwick and Belcher, produce merchants, etc."

My first experience in a law court was:—We bought about six bags of maize from the up-river natives who camped on the Market Square. They brought the maize to the mart and when I paid them they refused to take empty sacks for them and wanted to empty the corn on to the floor. It ended in my having to fight four of them—three after knocking one out. A day or two later I got a summons for striking one aboriginal native with my clenched fist and doing him bodily harm. When a case was called in those days it was necessary to have a native interpreter; the interpreter was Mr. John Stevens, M.P., who lived at Bulls, and having to ride thirty miles he did not arrive in time, so the case was adjourned and has not been called yet. This happened in 1875.

### SPORTING.

#### WANGANUI JOCKEY CLUB.

They raced horses in Greece and Rome 648 years before the birth of Christ; they have been racing ever since then. They raced horses in Wanganui before I was born. In 1861, on November 7th and 8th, there was a meeting, and a Mr. Henry Stokes was hon. secretary and the following gentlemen



were on the committee: Major Trafford, W. Watt, J. Alexander, Captain Macgrath, Dr. Gibson, Lieut. Lewis (65th Regiment), J. Trewick (judge), John Cameron. The horses in those days went a long way in a long time.

After the Imperial troops left the club was in "Queer Street" and to reorganise the club and make a fresh start Mr. J. Chadwick called a public meeting. It was held in Atkinson's Hotel on December 8th, 1874. Mr. J. P. Watt was chairman, and Mr. Walter Symes was elected hon. secretary pro tem. At the next meeting Mr. F. R. Jackson was elected and Mr. Lewis Chaldecott (brother to Mr. B. Chaldecott of this town) was his right hand man. There were about twenty-two at the first meeting and all have passed away but Mr. J. Chadwick ("Spectator") and myself. Mr. J. P. Watt was the last chairman of the old club and the last to die of those who were at the first meeting. Mr. Jackson held the position for twenty-five years and brought the club up to one of the best in the Dominion. See memorial on the Wanganui Jockey Club course.

The late Mr. Shafto Harrison and his son, Mr. Henry Harrison, were men who rendered great service to clean racing in the early days.

Mr. Ewen Campbell, the now president, was in England at that time, but was back in time to see the first cup in 1875. I don't think Mr. Jackson or Mr. Campbell ever put as much as a twopenny stamp on a racehorse.

The first cup after the reorganisation, in 1875, was won by "True Blue," ridden by myself, and his full brother, "The Peer" was second. The distance was  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles. The following year I won again on "Opawa." In 1880 it was decided to make a splash and have a £1000 cup, and all the sporting farmers were asked to subscribe. This was to bring outsiders here to see our lovely country and to encourage them to settle here. The cup was won by "Betrayed," with "Hornby" second and "Souker" third.

The first Derby, in 1877, was won by a little bay mare named "Queen of the Vale," owned and trained by Mr. John Powdrell, of Kakaramea, and was ridden by myself.

In the evening at Atkinson's Hotel, where all the sports congregated, Mr. Powdrell wanted to know how much he was in my debt for winning the Derby. I said, "Nothing." I



was only too pleased to ride the first Derby winner, but he insisted on my taking a cheque for £10. Before closing time I think the cheque had melted nearly all away.

I also won the Derby with "Odd Tricks" in 1882, in partnership with Major Morse, and again with "Tongariro" in 1887, and with this horse there is a tale. He was owned by Mr. T. Mason, of Hawera, and was trained by G. Newsham. Mr. Mason asked me what I thought of his chance for the Derby. I told him he had a good outside chance, and when I brought him down from Hawera Mr. F. R. Jackson, who lived at Royston House on the river bank, kindly let me have the use of his stable. On the morning of the Derby I got up early to give him a little exercise and I was surprised to find the door of the loose box open and the horse gone as I supposed, but to my surprise he was standing in the box. He could have gone back to Hawera if he liked or any other place. Later in the day he won the Derby and paid a dividend of £17 2s.

I bought "Tongariro" after the Derby and the following spring I entered him for six races at two meetings (Island Bay and the Hutt). He won five and was just beaten for the sixth by a mare called "Rumour." He afterwards broke down running in the Taranaki Cup. After a long spell he was beaten by a head for the Spring Handicap at Hastings by "Tirailleur," the best three-year-old in New Zealand that year as he went on to Christchurch and won the New Zealand Cup. After I sold "Tongariro" I trained Mr. J. Paul's horses, and with one or two of my own won nine thousand pounds when the stakes were about half of what they are to-day. The first lad I had in my employ in 1882 was James Hickey who was five stone four pounds. I was training "Odd Trick" for the Derby then, and he bolted five miles with Hickey before he stopped him. Hickey grew so fast after he left me that he began riding over hurdle and steeplechase courses, and when Mr. Spencer Gollan bought "Moifaa" he went home to England and trained him and won the Liverpool Grand National Steeplechase—the greatest race in the world. I heard the success turned his brain and that he died in a mental home.

George Colello was a six-stoner while he was in my employ. Mr. S. Gollan offered me £30 to let him go to Christchurch to ride "Tirailleur" in the New Zealand Cup. He won and Mr. Gollan won a lot of money betting. Getting the money late in the day and the steamer leaving for Wellington, Mr. Gollan put about £900 in his hatbox and locked it and left it on the boat at Wellington. The box and money went on to

Sydney. Mr. Gollan got the Union Steamship Company to cable for the box to be returned and in due time the box and money arrived just as it was left in the cabin. (A very lucky man.)

George Price, now one of the leading trainers in Australia, was five stone when he was in my employ. After being with me for about five years and learning to ride races he turned out one of the best in the Dominion, and I think the last cup he won for me was the Napier Cup on "Fakir." Since starting as a trainer in Sydney he has trained the winners of Sydney and Melbourne Cups, two of the most valuable races this side of the line. I wish him luck as he was always reliable and steady.

One of the best lads to come to me was Walter Raynor, who trains Mr. G. Currie's horses, and Mr. Currie could not find a more reliable man in the Dominion. My advice to Mr. Currie is: "Stick to a reliable man."

Frank Lind was another six-stoner and as game as his father, Mr. David Lind, who rode in a hurdle race with Mr. Joe Haywood sixty years ago. Frank is a chip off the old block and good luck to Frank. He made "Civility" speedy.

### THE TOTALISATOR.

The totalisator was introduced about fifty years ago and the first one on the Wanganui course was a little one placed against the fence in front of the grand stand by Hill and Poole. The rules were very simple, just "Pay out on first horse past the post."

We all know the Maoris are all fond of the sport and are as cute as the pakeha. One smart Maori got a hurdle horse and told his rider to jump the first hurdle in front of the grand stand, run round all the others and come in first. When he was told he would be disqualified he said, "Never mind squalify, kapai totali."

Two Maoris got a dark horse and decided to get a big dividend, so a trial was arranged at twelve o'clock when all were at dinner, but the only stop watch they could get was an octagon clock. One was the starter and the other time-keeper. The horse was started, but the time-keeper put the clock down at the winning post and when the starter asked what the time was he said, "Oh! Har-past twelve." That was the private trial.

## NOVEL RACE.

During the time I was in partnership with Mr. Chadwick there was a race meeting at Wangaehu at the back of the hotel, and we raced a horse called "Satelite" there. There was a novel race and the novelty I will never forget. A Mr. Flygers asked me if I would ride his horse, "The Fox" in the novel race of £5. The conditions were, I think, nailed on a post and were that every rider had to have a lighted cigar and if it went out he was disqualified, and there was a hurdle to jump at the bottom of the straight. They put me on the horse in a three pound saddle and no breast plate, and before we got to the hurdle the saddle slipped so far back that I was on his hips. The horse jumped the hurdle and I jumped in front of the saddle and held the saddle with one hand and the reins with the other and won the race, but as I don't smoke the wind kept the cigar alight. But, oh! I was full of smoke and had to run to the river to try to expel the smoke. I then decided no more smoking and novel races for me. Mr. Charlie Chevannes rode in that race. It was in 1875.

From 1875 to 1929 I have never missed seeing the Wanganui Cup run—fifty-four times; I think it is a record.

Mr. John Ballance, of whom more anon, bred and raced "Lock Neigh;" he afterwards sold him to Mr. Dan O'Brian who changed his name to "Fish-hook" and he turned out one of the best in New Zealand.

Sir William Fox was a contemporary of Mr. Ballance. He was member for the adjoining electorate of Rangitikei and was four times Premier of New Zealand. He was also a sport as he rode races at Petone. A good story is told of him when there was a coach accident at the Devil's Elbow on the Turakina Hill, about twelve miles from Wanganui. He was one of numerous passengers. When the accident occurred word was immediately sent to the Wangaehu Hotel, kept by Mr. John McDonald, who always had a horse in his stable. The genial John immediately saddled and mounted his hack, and, having placed a bottle of brandy in his pocket set off for the scene of the accident. Now, it must be borne in mind that Sir William was a prohibitionist and supposed to be a staunch teetotaller. However, when he saw the brandy he hastily secured it and, drawing the cork, liberally helped himself. When his fellow passengers asked for their turn they had to wait until Sir William's thirst was quenched, which was not until the greater part of the contents had disappeared down his throat.



This is something like the story told of one of Wanganui's oldest settlers who was renowned for his prodigious appetite. After a rather severe illness and while convalescing his wife thought she would make him a few apple dumplings. The youngest son, seeing his mother making them asked her to make him one, to which she agreed. When dinner time arrived dad duly demolished a leg of mutton with a plentiful supply of cabbage and potatoes. Then came thirteen dumplings. The boy, feeling hungry, asked his mother for his dumpling. When told to ask his dad, the boy rushed to him and asked for it. The dad, having already scoffed twelve and was starting on the thirteenth, met him with the answer, "Run away and play my boy, your daddy's sick."

About 1870, Mr. John Pawson had the principal butcher's shop, next to where the Bank of New South Wales now stands, and one Christmas he killed a fat bullock and advertised it to be given away to the poor of Wanganui so that they could have a good old English Christmas dinner; but to his surprise he only had one application for a joint. How many would he have to-day?

The following is a copy of one of the first Maori programmes, and is well worth reading:—

COME! COME! COME! NOTICE TO ALL.

This notice is to all friends in the East, in the West, in the North, in the South.

OH, FRIENDS LISTEN!

Horse races will be held at OKOROIRE.

These races will be run under the patronage of the King of Maori people.

STEWARDS OF THE RACES:

Chairman: Te Wheoro and his friends.

Judge: Te Tahunna and his friends.

Starter: Te Harihari and his friends.

Clerk of the Course: P. Wanihi and Te Amaru.

Clerk of Scales: Te Kamanomano.

Handicapper: Tom Pepa and his wife.

Treasurer: The Rev. Hori Wirihani.

Secretary: Mrs. Harihari.

RULES OF THESE RACES.

1.—Men owning horses and wishing to enter them must deposit money in the hands of the secretary.



- 2.—Don't bring any drink to these races.
- 3.—Men who have taken much drink will not be allowed on this course. If any man disobey this rule he will bring the whip of the club down upon him.
- 4.—No girls will be allowed to ride as jockeys in these races.
- 5.—Jockeys must wear trousers in all events.
- 6.—No jockey must knock any other jockey off his horse or touch the reins of any other jockey or strike any other jockey with his whip during a race, or strike any other horse other than his own, or swear at or threaten any other jockey.
- 7.—Any jockey breaking these rules will be driven from the course if he does not pay twenty shillings to the treasurer.
- 8.—You must not change the name of the horse. You must not suppress the fact of a win at any other race meeting. You can be expelled or fined not more than 50s. if you break this rule.
- 9.—Persons allowed to see these races must not say rude words to the stewards, or swear at jockeys who do not win, or otherwise behave improperly.

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Since writing the first part of these reminiscences I find it will be more interesting to the people of Wanganui to add Mr. C. Burnett's impressions just as he wrote them himself.

Mr. Burnett sailed from Gravesend, where I was born, just two years after I left as a child.

# WANGANUI IN 1856

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## FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS OF A NEW ARRIVAL.

BY C. BURNETT.

On the morning of the 1st December, 1856, we crossed the bar and entered the Wanganui River in the little topsail schooner called the Tyne, the property of the well-known firm of Taylor and Watt, and at that time commanded by Mr. David Bell, our well known and highly respected townsman, long since retired from a seafaring life. A little wharf ran out in front of the establishment of the above firm, covering a portion of the site of the present Mercantile and Loan Company's Buildings, and there our little craft hauled up after quite an eventful passage of four days from Wellington, or, as the place was generally called in those days, Port Nick. Our little vessel was full of passengers, and the deck was loaded up with goods in a way that Samuel Plimsoll, had he been on board, would have decidedly objected to; nevertheless we had a passage characterized by many elements of enjoyment, and if we did not leave its side with regret, we always looked back to our passage in her with satisfaction. Amongst her passengers were the Rev. George Stannard, at that time attached to the Wesleyan Mission Station at Kai Iwi, who gave us very full and valuable information about this district. The late Mr. King, a solicitor for many years in Wellington, and father-in-law of the late Lieutenant Weymes, was another passenger, there being in all from thirty to forty of us on board. As was always the case then, and as is often the case now, all the world turned out to see the new arrivals and welcome back old faces. What all the world thought of us is hard to say; but very, very very strange indeed were the feelings with which our little party stepped ashore, after a long and eventful passage from Gravesend to Wanganui of 183 days. On the first day of June, just after the great illumination and other peace rejoicings that heralded the fall of Sebastopol and the close of the Crimean War, we sailed down the Thames, passing in our course, as I well remember,

the hull of the Great Eastern, then in the hands of Messrs Scott, Russell and Co., the builders, and now, on the 1st of December, the last knot had been run, the log book closed, and the stern realities of colonization found face to face. To us, accustomed only to great cities and the beautiful green lanes of Old England, Wanganui had all the charm of novelty that Gulliver must be supposed to have felt when he stepped upon the flying island of Raputa, or surveyed the miniature shores of Lilliput. Circumstances having diverted us from our original destination, which was the south part of the other island, whither our minds had hitherto been diverted and our reading and enquiries directed, we were struck with peculiar force with the singular condition of things that we found in Wanganui. The mixture of military display and barbaric ascendancy, of old soldiers and old whalers, of Highland shepherds and Lowland farmers, of a sprinkling of almost all the nationalities of the world, with here and there a few English settlers, combined to make up a polyglot nondescript outlandish condition of things that took us by surprise. Nay, more; we were almost filled with consternation. But the die was cast. It had taken us 183 days to reach this place, this Ultima Thule, this Erewhon, this Baar-sheba, this Alsatia, this apparently last resource of the rag tag and bobtail of the human family. This was to be the Utopia of our hopes, was it? And to realize the fond anticipations of arcadian and pastoral bliss that had cheered the long watches of our protracted journey! Yes! the die was cast, and so must be our anchor without further consideration. As we stepped on the wharf, "Anything," we were told at once by a friendly adviser generally to our party, who was evidently taking our measure with a view to future operations, "Anything from a needle to an anchor can be procured at that establishment," and he waved his hand with the aplomb of an auctioneer, which he afterwards proved to be, in the direction of what were known then and for many long years afterwards as "The Stores" par excellence fronting the wharf. Alas! we were firmly and safely anchored, so that we never tested the resources of the omnium gatherum indicated on that score; but we soon found that there was much, from a small plaid box of vestas at 4d. upwards, that we had never seen under any one roof before at such prices. Oatmeal 6d. per lb., currants 1s. 8d. per lb., orange and lemon peel 4s. per lb., raisins about 1s. 2d. per lb., sweets 3d. per ounce. The coming of Christmas perhaps had raised the prices of these articles. A red herring, 4d.; a penny pepper box, 1s. The only prices that did not surprise us were, bread 1s. 2d. the



quartern loaf, butter 1s. per lb., and bacon the same price, cheese was 1s. 6d. per lb. Of all articles of consumption during the last forty or fifty years perhaps none has altered so little in price as bacon. The prices of these three articles, namely, bread, butter, and bacon, were much the same as we had lately paid of them during the war time in England, where we had paid for bread 1s. the quartern, butter from 1s. to 1s. 4d, and bacon 11d. per pound. Tea and sugar were reasonable, as also was tobacco. The only things comparatively cheap, and that remains the same to this day, are the lowest fee that a lawyer charges, and the price of a nobbler. We had been told that the lawyers went about with six and eightpence tattooed all over their faces in New Zealand, and, if such a practice obtained at all, it would certainly have been found in Wanganui; but we thought what a very curious idea Sydney Smith must have had of the Antipodes, to suppose that Antipodean law must necessarily be of the same market price as that of Chancery Lane or Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Notwithstanding, however, the high prices of most of these articles we paid them cheerfully, making up our minds there and then that we would take it out of Wanganui on our own account before long. To say the truth, the place resembled in its business aspects a sutlers' camp, where everybody is making all he can at once without any regard to commercial principles. High profits and high interest were the rule, and where these prevail it may safely be deduced that the security is low. And, indeed, little better than a sutlers' camp the town remained for many long years afterwards, as the sequel will abundantly show. Leaving the wharf to look for lodgings, we found the sun very hot and the streets exceedingly dusty, but beyond these very patent facts our first observations did not extend. What we then more particularly wanted was a place in which to put ourselves and our belongings; and not till honest John Toole, formerly private in H.M. 65th Reg., but now landed proprietor, bacon curer, and general storekeeper, provided us with a small clay walled dwelling house and an outhouse to match for our manifold goods, did we feel free to look around. Many amusing anecdotes were told us by our landlord of local notabilities and events, and one incident in particular has clung to my memory from the sad fate of the person concerned. The late Mr. Hewitt, who was killed by the natives in 1865, near Wanganui, outside his verandah, was spoken of as a gentleman of rare qualities but reckless character, and it was stated that he would go about with his pockets full of sovereigns, as if they were coppers,



frequently dropping them about, and that on one occasion he let fall a pocket full of them all over our landlord's shop. There was no danger, however, save from the chinks in the floor, of that we were satisfied; and if I were told that Mr. Hewitt gave one apiece to the young Tooles for picking the money up I could readily believe it, for not more reckless of his gold could he have been than he, nine years afterwards, proved to be of his own life.

Looking around us from our new home the more we looked the more we wondered. It was Christmas, yet the sun was in the zenith, and the north wind brought no chill. The ground we trod was white like chalk, but porous as a sponge. The stones floated down on the tide like corks, and the carts went over the crisp snow-like soil with a sepulchral rumble. We observed cracks in the walls and chimneys, and were promptly told how "The sure and firm set earth" that Mac-Beth apostrophized as the very symbol of stability, was in these parts liable to rock for days together, like the great deep whose swelling bosom we had so lately left. Listening to these not very comforting assurances, we looked up and saw grimly frowning above us the stockades and block-houses, guarded by red-coated sentries, and angry looking big guns pointing their muzzles in every direction at prospective foes. Below us, on the river side, dozens of curious nondescript tents and uncouth looking canoes were visible. Round about them were hundreds of dusky aborigines, strangely tattooed, and clothed in the most unconventional and hybrid manner in native and European garb, assembled for the purpose of selling their up-river produce and enjoying themselves on Pakeha fare, consisting for the most part of bread, gingerbeer, or lemon syrup, for in those days it was against the law to supply a native with intoxicating drink of any kind. Notwithstanding a vague feeling of uncomfortable dread that filled us at this sight, so unaccustomed to our eyes, a feeling somewhat warranted from the indications afforded by the fortress above us, we were filled with never failing pleasure at the fantastic scenes of life that this camp displayed. We were comparatively fresh from the pristine glories of the Great Sydenham Crystal Palace, where all had been done that art could do to make the distant both as to time and space seem near, and to concentrate, as it were, all the wonders of the past and present; but for once in our experience the real thing outdid all our expectations. We found, too, that the comforts of life were to be found, at least many of them, plentiful and cheap in this camp; and while we enjoyed the

amusing and interesting scene, we could at very small cost supply our home with abundance of good things, many of which in our less favoured home climate had been quite beyond the reach of our everyday life. Firewood in abundance first attracted our attention piled up in neatly packed stacks. Then yellow and green baskets made of natixe flax, filled with potatoes covered neatly with the familiar bracken, were piled up in long rows, while a swarthy man of business in a red or blue blanket, and nothing else whatever, unless perhaps a few feathers in his hair, displayed beneath the blanket folds a steelyard balance, a slate suspended from a string, with pencil and sponge also pendent in the same way, all ready to do your marketing in the most business-like and correct form. Fish in plentiful supplies, including the large and tender schnapper, the smaller and less luscious but very useful kaiwai, eels, and hapuka, the first of New Zealand fishes as a marketable fish, frequently were seen; and in their season the delicate pipis and glittering whitebait were freely and cheaply offered. Onions, pumpkins, gourds, marrows, cucumbers (large yellow ones and very plentiful), apples of many superior kinds, mixed however with a great many very poor ones, wild cherries, plums, quinces, melons of different sorts, grapes, and honey, were sold in large quantities. Plentiful and cheap these things all seemed to us; and new-comers were able to turn their old clothes and faded finery to account in barter for them. Very laughable it would be to see the comic results of some of these negotiations, and we were in particular much amused at selling an old black bell-topper to a grave-looking, much-tattooed old native, for a kit of peaches. Putting the hat on his head, he drew up his tall form, clothed in a European shirt (rather short—quite a “cutty sark” in fact, that had once been white) and little else, he clapped down his hand on his newly-acquired potai, and exclaimed with much satisfaction that he was “All the same as the Missionary.”

But the mention of peaches brings back some of the pleasantest recollections of all. Peaches, peaches, everywhere!—good and cheap. We made pies and puddings, preserves and stews. We eat them out of the baskets, and (sliced up and sugared) with bread and butter. We made wine with the juice, judiciously fortified with spirits; and lastly we strung them up in the sun and dried them for winter, planting some of the stones in the sure hope of a speedy harvest of our own. As shewing how the condition of things has changed through the metalling of the streets, I recollect that

our dried patches always required a great deal of washing to free them from the almost impalpable pumice dust that used to envelop the town on windy days. Oh! but those piping days of peaches! Alas, to think that they are all gone! The present generation do not know what they have lost in the blight that has come over this useful tree. Then the natives had pigs. Such pigs! High in the bone and low in the flesh, as they were generally described; otherwise known as regular Captain Cooks. But the porkers always found purchasers. They also had wheat and Indian corn, and, lastly, flour. Some of the flour brought down from Pipiriki, one of the many places where there were excellent mills at that time, was beautifully white, and in every respect of the best quality. In addition to these articles of everyday use, the natives brought kits, mats, carved weapons, fish hooks, and a great variety of curiosities and ornaments for sale at very reasonable prices, the native cloaks in particular being very suitable articles for sending to friends as specimens of native work; and the first consignment of curiosities we sent to the old folks at Home included a very handsome article of the kind.

Looking at the principal features of the town as presented to us during the first month or so after our arrival, the following impressions are the most vivid. Beginning at the wharf where we landed, conspicuous in front stood Taylor and Watt's old establishment, since destroyed by fire, but at that time, and for long afterwards the principal place of business between Wellington and New Plymouth. Next came the general store and bakery of the late Thomas Waters, which stood and was the source of a very flourishing business at the corner of the Quay and Victoria Avenue, where Thain's hardware store now stands. A little above stood the residence of the late Mr. Thos. Garner, a low mud-walled high-roofed comfortable place, like a Devonshire farm house, with the Post Office located in a little room behind presided over by the late Rev. Mr. Woon of the Wesleyan Church. Mrs. Thomas Garner, a grand old English dame of the old school, was a notable character in her time, and in conjunction with the "little Doctor," as the late Dr. Rees was called, performed many and timely charitable works, and in fact constituted the only benevolent society that the place possessed or required. The little Dr. was so called to distinguish him from his brother the late Dr. Joseph Rees, a larger though by no means a greater man, a great authority on sanitary matters, and much given, as many people are in small communities, to writing didactic letters to the papers in an ex cathedra manner on



subjects which he deemed himself competent to discuss. His brother is best known to the present generation as the donor of the "Rees Bequest," a noble gift to our town that will hand down the giver's name to posterity in a very honourable and effective manner. Next to Mrs. Garner's (I say Mrs Garner's because that lady was the presiding genius of that hospitable establishment over which she ruled with firm but kindly sway), stood another private house, a type of those places referred to by "Silver Pen," now of San Francisco, but better known to the people of Wanganui as Mrs. Corlett, in a clever skit beginning:—

"Who lived in groups of twos and threes,  
In cottages amongst the trees,  
And drank and smoked quite at their ease?"

The Officers."

being a snug little shrub enclosed villa where Lieutenant Weymes of jovial and convivial memory lived in connubial bliss, till, all too soon, he heard the last bugle and went to join the great majority. The next place that I remember was on the site of the present Post Office, where our much respected townspeople Mr. and Mrs. Davis kept a busy establishment consisting of a store, a school, and a circulating library, much resorted to by the sentimental young ladies of the period. A little further up dwelt Colonel Patience, an old bachelor, whose death at a very advanced age was lately recorded in the Home papers. Very proud was the Colonel of the karaka trees in front of his house, two of which are still standing and maintaining a struggling existence on a vacant section next to Kirkwood's photographic studio. In front of this karaka grove was a large patch of mint, and there we used often to go when green peas were in season, or a tender piece of nicely browned mutton suggested the gipuant addition of mint sauce. A little further up, Victoria Avenue began to expand almost into the country, and must have resembled, according to all accounts, the roads that General Wade is said to have found in the Highlands. However that may be, my recollection is that we generally had to wade through that part of the Avenue fronting the Roman Catholic Church and the site of the present Convent, and the spot below the drill hall was known, out of compliment to Father Pesant, the Roman Catholic clergyman, and a dear old Frenchman of pious memory, as Parlez vous Francais plump in the mud Monsieur carner, and was generally avoided in wet weather; the only way of getting over the road being the way lately copied by the Manawatu Railway Company when they had to go over



the Ruahine Range—we went round it. Along the Avenue on the south side, from the Colonel's residence to the sand hill where the Wesleyan Church now stands, were a few straggling cottages. From this sandhill, looking beyond, St. John's Bush was still a thing in reality, and had a profusion of nice trees and native vegetation, the Great North Western Road, that now tears up the side, not being then made or even formed. The only buildings visible between this sandhill and the bush were the late Thomas Scrivener's little farm house and the Parsonage and school of the Industrial School Estate, then occupied by the Rev. C. H. Nicholls, an ingenious man, well suited for the position he occupied as principal of an Industrial School. A little wind-mill stood on the ground near the present College Chapel which gave a lively aspect to the scene, and testified to the activity and conscientiousness of the trustees of the estate.

One notable recollection I have of this place is of a bull that used to go in harness with as much, and indeed more, docility than an old donkey. Many a time have I seen the Rev. gentleman's children riding on its back through the town, as unconcerned as though the proper functions of a bull were to promenade the public streets with youngsters like a maid-servant. Crossing over to the other side of the Avenue and coming back to the river we first passed the common school, an institution of provincial origin, and of which the people seemed very proud in those days as offering education free, or practically so, to every child in the place. Next came the Presbyterian Church, whose minister, the late Rev. David Hogg, a talented preacher, had the largest congregation in the district. If anybody is curious to know what this church was like, let him inspect the church of that ilk on No. 2 Line of road, the first one I mean, on the left hand side, near the English Church. This is almost an exact copy of the old church, and contains the veritable old pulpit and seats formerly used therein. A little further down, on the site of the present church of St. Patrick's, stood the old Catholic Church, quite an imposing edifice in those days, and much more correct in taste than the present one. Below the Catholic Church, and on or about the site of the present English Church school room, stood the ugliest little church that it is possible to conceive. Yet this unpainted barn-like structure, with its little square tower, was, without doubt, the Church of the Parish. This, at least, was the thought suggested by the ancient looking gravestones, the hawthorn hedge, the trees, and shrubs, that indicated the old-world-like God's acre, bringing forcibly

to mind the pathetic lines from Grey's Elegy:—

“Beneath yon straggling elm, that yew tree's shade,  
Where swells the turf in many a billowy heap;  
Each in his narrow bed for ever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.”

There is always something touching in the surroundings of the “Old Parish Church,” and to this day I never pass an old church yard in pensive mood without emotions in which sentiment and pathos are strangely mingled with a feeling that is almost devotional.

Next came the old Rutland Hotel, the third deep from the present hotel of that name, and at that time kept by the late Mr. James Speed, whose hostelrie it was at that time, and the premier position has been maintained ever since, the first house of accommodation in the district. Where Hallenstein's clothing establishment now stands there was a wheelwright and blacksmith's establishment, kept by Messrs Bett and Hood. To get a lively idea of the kind of place this now busy and important corner was at that time, I recommend the reader to go and stand at the corner of Ridgway Street and St. Hill Street, and look at Mr. Peter Ballantine's present wheelwright shop and yard, and there the observer will see what Hallenstein's corner looked like in 1856, for at that time the business of the town was almost confined to that part of the town, which of late years has been comparatively deserted, namely, Taupo Quay. Speaking of Mr. Peter Ballantine I cannot refrain from retailing a very indelible first impression made by his capital talent for singing humorous songs, “Glasgow Fair” and “Fine him forty shillings and take him away,” a digger's song, brought together the humours of the old world and the new, and made Peter's singing of a character that took immensely in this very cosmopolitan town.

Next came Mr. John Hurley's bakery, a busy place, where a variety of industries were carried on, afterwards taken up by some new arrivals, who are said to have done very well with them indeed. A description of this place will give a very vivid idea of the locality. The shop, a mere shanty, long and low, had evidently at first been built upon the level of the street, but as the wind and rain hollowed out Victoria Avenue into a gully, which must have been at one time nearly 25 feet below the original level, step after step had to be added so as to allow of access from the road to the level of the shop. At the time I first knew it there were five or six shops, and many

an old whaler, "half seas over," have I seen disappear at night from the door of the shop, head first into the pitch dark street, from the bottom of which rather strong language would be heard, sounding in the distance like the smothered mutterings from the bottomless pit. Being accustomed to tumbling down hatchways, however, these worthy descendants of the old Norse gods probably soon got over their falls. After passing two or three shops, amongst which was the boot-makers' establishment of our much respected townspeople, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hurley, came the residence of the late Dr. Robinson, surgeon in H.M. 65th Regiment, situated somewhere about where the bank of New Zealand now stands, but set back from the road with spreading willow trees in front. Great characters were the stout doctor and his portly lady, the daughter of an Irish baronet, and in every respect a consequential, albeit sometimes rather too demonstrative a person, and their two pretty little daughters Zoe and Shanty. If the mention of these two names do not stir the recollections of the old identities of Wanganui I do not know what will. These little ladies, both strangely beautiful, lively as squirrels, the pets of the officers, the life of the Avenue, ruled with the despotic sway of spoilt children over the nondescript domestic establishment of natives and grenadiers, which their equally, in her way, imperious mother, and their easy-going father, kept up in a style that is only to be equalled in the pages of Lover or of Lever, in their tales of Irish life. One of the doctor's domestics, a native boy, having stolen a bundle of cigars from a neighbouring shop, I caught him, having been used to thieves at home, and called him a thief. Soon after, he brought up his mistress, who was very indignant that such an epithet should be used in connection with one of the people of her house. "But," I said, hugging the fact that I had caught him flagrante delicto, "I caught him in the act." "That does not matter," said the indignant twain, "one swallow does not make a summer, and stealing one bundle of cigars does not make a thief." This reply "knocked me all of a heap," to use a common phrase, and I could only account for such a reply by assuming that the morality of this cosmopolitan community was of a kind quite different from that to which I had been accustomed.

Next came the auction mart of the late Mr. Thomas Powell, a gentleman of the old school, a keen and careful man of business, and probably the best chairman of a public meeting south of the line. This is saying a good deal, for the public meetings then were very different from and more difficult to



manage than those of the present day. As the late Rev. Richard Taylor wrote to the Chronicle after a meeting had taken place in Wanganui, which resembled in its unruliness a Pandemonium, or at least a revel of the old Norse gods, the meeting in town was that of "savage gentlemen," while the large meeting of natives, held at about the same time at Putiki, he described as a meeting of "gentlemen savages." Mr. Powell's method of putting amendments was quite different from that followed of late years here. He used to take as many amendments to a motion as were seconded, and then proceed to put the last first, and so on seriatim till, if necessary, he fell back upon the original motion. This is strictly logical, and highly convenient. It is logical, because, having all the views of the meeting before you at once, if one was carried the rest necessarily fell to the ground. It is convenient, because all the views are before the meeting when the voting begins. Under the present system the meeting is always perplexed, because most people do not understand that when the amendment is carried it becomes the substantive motion, and may have amendments immediately proposed to it. Most people never grasp this method, but are able to see clearly how to vote when all the views are laid before them. If No. one speaker proposes to build a wooden house, and No. two speaker moves as an amendment to build an iron house, under our present system the proposal to erect an iron house would be put before discussing the merits of brick, stone, concrete, or any other material, and, if carried, put again, when another amendment may be put proposing to build a brick house;—that is to say the meeting proceeds at once to consider whether it should upset its own determination. If the amendment is lost, then, under our present system, a fresh amendment may be put and the merits of stone discussed. If, however, as is very probable, the proposition to build with brick is carried because the meeting is decidedly opposed to iron, then the proposal to build with brick is carried because the meeting is decidedly opposed to iron, then the proposal to build with brick becomes the main question and subject to be upset in the same illogical way as the previous proposal to build with iron. The practical difficulty is, that as each vote is taken, the meeting is in the dark as to whether the view of the question immediately before it is the best view or not. Speakers often get over the difficulty by declaring what they are going to propose, and by various irregular means the different views of the members of the meeting are shown; but commend me to a plan that allows the laying before the meeting in a row, so to speak, all the plans to be proposed. Thus when the merits



respectively of wood, iron, brick, stone, cement, etc., have been discussed, then as the different propositions are submitted to the meeting, it is clear to each member which material he should vote for, and the first proposition that is carried necessarily overthrows once and for ever all the rest. The reader must pardon this digression which I have almost unconsciously made in thinking of the glorious uproarious public meetings that the name of the worthy gentleman, whose memory I have recalled, brings to my mind.

Finally, where Paul's drapery establishment now stands, there was a little house occupied by the late Mr. Stokes, the first editor of the Wanganui Chronicle, surrounded by a high hawthorn hedge. The location of the office of the paper was not obtrusive, the Chronicle was only a weekly, if I were inclined to be malicious I might say it was rather a weakly one, and escaped my attention, indeed it was some time before the fact of there being a paper became patent to us at all. The price was sixpence.

Almost the only other business locality apart from the Avenue at that time, was the Quay, which, indeed, was almost the only business part of any importance. At the extreme end, on the site of the Ship Hotel, stood the old Commercial Hotel, kept by the late Mr. George Roberts, a pushing man of the early type. In front of the hotel ran out a small wharf where all the traffic to the other side of the river concentrated, the river bank road not having been then made, for here was the ferry. The late Mr. James Montgomery, a genial warm hearted Scotchman, plied the ferry-boat, and kept the store on the Putiki side, where he sold a variety of goods to the natives. There was one other hotel, afterwards burnt down, which stood where the Occidental now stands, kept at that time by Mr. John Kells. Messrs Beaven and Woon had a general store on the Quay, near the Market Place, and, close by, the late Mr. James Broughton, a thorough going Englishman, who was the leading auctioneer of the period, as an old Chronicle of the day will show, and ready to knock anything down in a thoroughly business-like manner. Lastly, I recollect two places of business in Ridgway Street, the first being a busy general store at the foot of the Rutland Hill, where the grocery of Mr. J. L. Stevenson now stands, kept by Mr. William Kells, who must have done a large business both with the soldiers and the natives in the long low building that was, comparatively, only recently removed. On the opposite corner, where Messrs Cummins and Sharpe are now located,

stood the only hardware shop, kept by Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, a thrifty old couple, who must have made a deal of money out of their little store.

The only butcher's shop in the place was kept by Mr. Garner, above mentioned, and was situated on the Quay, as I recollect, behind where Hatrick's store now stands, and was close to the "Lock-up," a small wooden cell, that two or three sturdy fellows might have shouldered and carried off like Jack in the Green on the first of May. All the good wives looked forward, I'm sure they did, to going a marketing to Mr. Garner's, and this gallant knight of the knife used to dispense his "cracks and jokes and wanton wiles" thick and fast from about eight to ten in the forenoon, when wives and maids tramped down for their meat, with their kits, baskets, and dishes; for at that time no tradesman sent things round to your house as is now done, except as a favour on some special occasion.

This survey, imperfect of course, as it is only the first impressions that I propose to give, and not an exhaustive description of the town, would not be complete without a passing allusion to the surrounding country. We explored up the river and introduced ourselves to Captain Smith, whose enterprise in that direction, being a pushing and wealthy man, had made for himself quite a name in those days. We viewed his lands and buildings, his paddocks and fields of grain, his stock and improvements of all kinds, and sympathised with him in his misfortunes. We learned a lesson, too, from his experience that time has only deepened the force of, namely, that whether you begin with thirty thousand pounds, or like village settlers, you are paid for working on your own property, there can be no return from virgin land for some years after it is first taken in hand. The late Captain Smith, a retired sea captain, was a genial warm-hearted sailor, with whose memory is mingled, however, some traces of eccentricity, which serve to flavour many an anecdote that is told of his early doings on the banks of the Wanganui River. An old Highlander, who recently

died in the hospital here, McNaughton by name, formerly a servant in the household of Mr. Lockhart—and personally well acquainted with Sir Walter Scott,—a man full of anecdote as well of old world celebrities as of the new, came out from Home with the Captain and used to tell me with much unctiousness how he had a long ladder placed against his tallest chimney, up which, from sheer force of habit, I suppose, he would "Masthead" his troublesome and disobedient farm servants.

One of the weaknesses of our host we found to be iron houses imported from England. We were freely offered the use of one of these, situated in a romantic spot near the river, if we would only shoo-hoy off the cattle from a field of corn hard by. Not caring to live in an oven and scare away cows, we declined the office of scarecrows with thanks. No, not while matches sold for fourpence a box would we take the office of scarecrows and shoo-hoy away the cows, and the sequel showed the wisdom of our determination, for we soon beat the record,—I afterwards sold one day an empty plaid match-box for fourpence. This kind of thing was better than farming new land.

Up the Brunswick Line we fell in with the "Canadian Settlement," settlers who had left the more sterile lands and inclement skies of Nova Scotia in a brig, which they specially chartered for the purpose, to settle in this more favoured land. One of the most conspicuous of these enterprising and excellent settlers, who have left their marks deep in our little history, was the late Mr. George H. Cunnabell, a teetotaller of the first water, one that would have adorned the tents of Recab the son of Jonadab had he lived in those patriarchal days, and in all seriousness a very worthy moral reformer and a jovial man into the bargain. Hard by the "Canadians," as they were generally called, we made the acquaintance of Mr. Goodson, a rare example of activity and perseverance, who remembered Waterloo like yesterday, and, even now, comes up to town from his now distant farm at Hawera, with a frequency and an activity that makes him a marvel to all and Scattered up and down in this valley were found the thriving

Up the No. 2 Line of road we visited the beautiful Fordell property even at that early date a model of Lowland farm neatness and tilth. Very shortly after this time the pleasant farm house so conspicuous from the railway line at the top of the Matarawa (or, as it should be spelt, "Mataraua") Valley side cutting, now occupied by Mr. Henry Sarjeant, was built, and was for many years one of the best known places in the district. Sad it is to think that all the old hospitable faces that used to beam so kindly, and with such a hearty welcome upon their numerous acquaintances and visitors, should be laid low or departed from us, and scattered over other parts of the Colony. Down in the Mataraua Valley a pleasing scene of rural progress was found. A neat school occupied a central spot, where forty children at least were taught by the late Mr. Charles Mungo Harkness, a relative of the celebrated African traveller Mungo Park, and whose truly poetic nature, combined with his early and melancholy fate have made his



memory green in the eyes of those who intimately knew him. homesteads and prospering lands of some of the best settlers of the West Coast. Far and wide have the families reared in this secluded valley, who one time wended their unwilling way to its threshold, are most of them anxious mothers and fathers—some of them venerable grandparents now,—and no tiny footsteps lightly tread the old school-ground. The school has disappeared; the children spread themselves over the colony, but the whole West Coast of our island bears testimony to the useful lessons learnt on the little farms well tilled of the beautiful, and at that time delightfully secluded, vale of the Mataraua. Sometimes as I travel on the railroad through this still charming valley, I look at the Okoia Cheese Factory, and the Brick and Tile Works, and the gaunt dead trees, and mentally quote what Ruskin has so forcibly said: “Railroads are to me the loathesomest forms of devilry now extant—animated and deliberate earthquakes, destructive of all wise social habits or possible natural beauty—carriages of damned souls on the ridges of their own graves.” At one spot in particular I peer out and recall the pretty sentiment of the old song, so popular when I was a boy:—

“Oh, don’t you remember the old village school,  
 And the master so kind and so true;  
 And the sweet little nook by the clear running brook,  
 Where we gathered the flowers as they grew.”

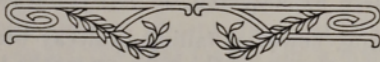
No building, however, falling to decay bears out the language of the next verse of the song, or marks the scene of this old recollection, for, finding the school no longer wanted where it was, some of the thrifty people of this locality went one fine morning and carted it up to the top of the hill on a bullock dray.

But here I must, all unwilling, come to an end. Looking back through the long vista of years recollections crowd thickly in my mind, and it is by no means for lack of materials that I lay down my pen, but because the exigencies of time and space oblige me to bring this chapter to a close. One other first impression, however, I must recall. Walking by the side of the river in the early evening we heard for the first time:—

“The vesper bell so softly stealing  
 O’er the waters soft and clear”

from the little Native Church then under the ministry of the late Rev. Richard Taylor, whose name I have mentioned

above. The sweet sound of the bell fell like a solace on our ears, jaded as we were with the conflicting uncertainties of our situation, and ravished us with its sweetness. Hundreds of times since have I listened with delight to its peaceful monotone, but never without bringing back, with a vividness sometimes even painful, as such memories must ever be, the first impressions of Wanganui.



## WANGANUI IN 1929

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The City of Wanganui is built on the banks of the river of that name and is about four miles from the sea coast. It occupies a large flat and is surrounded by hills on all sides, the only exception being that on the seaward side. From the hill, known as Durie Hill, on the south and that known as St. John's on the north can be obtained excellent views of the city, views which cannot help impressing one of its beauty. At the head of the river there are three mountains in close proximity to one another the names of them being "Ruapehu," "Tongariro" and "Ngaruhoe." The river rises at Mount Tongariro and wends its way through the most beautiful scenery imaginable down to the sea, a distance of a little under 200 miles. There are innumerable rapids which, when encountered, enhances its beauty. Small steam boats ply between the city and a point about 100 miles above it. These are used to carry the mail to and from settlers on or near the river and also passengers and produce. The river itself is world-famed for its scenic beauty and is justly named the Rhine of New Zealand. During the proper season of the year tourists from all parts of the world use it extensively and one and all seem to be satisfied that it is one of the sites of the world that should never be missed. Upon the river there are three excellent iron bridges. First of all there is the Town Bridge, already referred to in this book; then the Dublin Street Bridge about two miles above it. This one is used by the electric trams, by passengers, and by stock and is truly a fine structure. Then the Railway Bridge, about four miles from the Town Bridge. All these bridges bear testimony to the good work put into them by those responsible for their erection, having withstood for years the floods which periodically come down the river. On the seaward side of the Town Bridge there is erected the most extensive and up-to-date freezing works in New Zealand. Here thousands of heads of all stock are annually slaughtered, frozen, and sent to the English market. The company has its own lighters and loads the big Home boats which anchor in the roadstead. Then at Castlecliff, the suburb at the river mouth, the public abattoir is built and in operation. Here too are many large



and commodious wool stores and the Harbour Board's office. Not only do the big liners take hundreds of thousands of carcasses of meat from this port, but also an enormous amount of wool, hides, skins, butter, cheese, tallow and other products. All this testifies to this city's prosperity. The main drawback to its complete success is the want of a good harbour. Could this be obtained there is no doubt whatever that Wanganui would be the foremost city in the Dominion, surrounded as it is by the very best land even up to the city boundaries. I have not hitherto mentioned the town wharf as there are only a few small coastal steamers which come that far, boats the tonnage of which would be only 600 or 700. At Castlecliff boats of 6000 or 7000 tons can and do berth, the cargo being principally railed from there to the city. A great feature of Wanganui is its water supply. The principal service is at present the Council's reservoir at Okehu, a distance of about 20 miles from the Post Office. This is supplemented by the Westmere and Virginia Lakes in close proximity to the city. Then there is the never failing river which could be made use of at very little expense. All this means plenty of pressure in case of need and the city has a Fire Brigade which knows how to use it to advantage. Durie Hill, on the south side, being of such a height, had to have special means of getting a supply. This was done by erecting a water tower on the highest hill near by. The tower itself adds to the beauty of the town and can be seen for miles around. In the city itself there are public buildings well worthy of mention. There is the Sarjeant Art Gallery, a beautiful building erected from money left for that purpose by the late Mr. Henry Serjeant. Then there is the Alexander Museum in close proximity. This was built from money left for that purpose by the late Miss Elizabeth Alexander. Both these buildings derived their names from their respective donors. The contents of each are well worth spending several hours over as they compare favourably with anything of the kind in the Dominion. The late Mr. S. H. Drew was the founder of a fine museum. Miss Alexander's bequest included a large sum to build a Jubilee Library and which will no doubt be built at an early date.

Wanganui is particularly well endowed with beauty spots. First I will mention the Racecourse. This has been converted from a sand waste into one of the most delightful places in the city. The course itself is just one mile round and all level and beautifully turfed. Even in the worst weather the course is such that racing may be indulged in.

Postponement of races is never heard of here. The grandstands and all conveniences, including the electric totalisator, are all thoroughly up-to-date. There is a miniature artificial lake in the grandstand enclosure over which there is a most imposing little bridge. On the far side is the tea kiosk, an imposing structure. Upon the lake itself there are numerous wild ducks, black and white swans, Paradise ducks and others. Most of these, having been hatched there, are perfectly tame and will feed from the hand. On the beautiful grounds surrounding it there are all sorts of rare and beautiful shrubs and flowering plants. Strutting proudly about the grounds, quite oblivious of the busy scene around, may be seen the lordly peacock with his wives, Japanese, Chinese, and other rare specimens of beautiful birds not forgetting pheasants, partridges, etc. The course itself is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, in the Dominion. and the races held there (three meetings of two days each in the year) are always eagerly looked forward to not only locally but by sports from every part of the Dominion.

Next I will mention the gardens on the bank of Lake Virginia, about two miles from the Post Office. These are well worth an inspection and make ideal picnicking grounds. The lake itself is a sanctuary for wild birds and there innumerable wild ducks and black and white swans may be seen calmly and majestically swimming on the beautiful waters.

Cook's Gardens is another beautiful health resort. Here there is a fine cricket pitch, football ground, and banked up cycle racing track. There is a fine grandstand, but finer still is the natural grandstand which rises in terraces from the playing grounds. It is here that most of the public receptions are held when the weather is fine enough and a better place could not be found anywhere for such a purpose. Here, too, may be seen the Watt Memorial Fountain referred to earlier in this book, and also the War Memorial erected to the memory of the brave men from this district who fell in the South African (Boer) War. It consists of a plain marble Cleopatra's Needle and stands in a prominent part of the grounds.

Then there is Spriggens Park, better known to the old identities as the Recreation Grounds. Here there are a spacious grandstand and football ground, which are certainly the best in New Zealand. The entrance gates to these grounds are of an imposing nature and were the gift of Mr. George Spriggens of this city.

On Queen's Park may be seen a War Memorial erected by the people of Wanganui to the memory of those who fell in the Great War, which commenced in 1914 and ended in 1918. Another memorial erected is on Durie Hill, overlooking the city. This was erected by the people of the city and district. It is a most imposing structure, built of rough stone, and is of such a height that it can be seen for miles around on a bright day. The view from its summit is all that can be desired. The Queen's Park memorial was built on the site of Rutland Block House which was pulled down in 1883. It is now recognised a great mistake was made when this old historic stockade was demolished. The late Mr. Con. Burnett made a great effort to retain the old building but the then council, under Mayor Laird, decided that the place must go. It was to this stockade that residents took shelter during the troubled times of the Maori War.

On St. John's Hill there is another beautiful recreation ground, known as Victoria Park, which commands a magnificent view of the city. This is used for football, cricket, tennis, hockey, croquet, etc., and is supplied with all necessary buildings for such purposes.

Moutoa Gardens, formerly known as the Market Square, is a place of special interest. It is immediately in front of the Court House and is beautifully kept, being well supplied with shrubs and flowers of all varieties. The turf is always kept in perfect order and is, beyond doubt, a real beauty spot. Diverging for one moment I cannot help passing a remark about the Court House. It is a wooden building more than fifty years old, used by the Supreme Court which holds quarterly sittings, the Magistrate's Court, and the Police Court. The building itself is a disgrace to the city and would certainly be out of place in a small town one-tenth the size of Wanganui. More than one Supreme Court Judge has remarked that it should not be deemed arson in the eye of the law if some person should send it up in smoke. Reverting to the gardens. It was here where the purchase of the present site of this beautiful city was completed by signing the necessary papers and handing over the consideration which consisted of a few blankets and other odds and ends to the Natives. Here also may be seen a fine monument erected to the memory of the late Honourable John Ballance. The monument is of Aberdeen granite, surmounted by a life-sized figure of the late gentleman in white marble. Whoever the sculptor was he has performed his work faithfully and well, as the figure shows a true representation and certainly is life-like.



It bears the simple inscription: "John Ballance, Statesman." It is a pity the date at least is not added, but it is not too late to do this now. I might here state that John Ballance was at the time of his death, and for some time prior thereto, the idol of the majority of electors of the then town of Wanganui. There is a handsome monument of beautiful Irish granite erected over his grave in the Wanganui old cemetery which bears the inscription: "John Ballance, Prime Minister of this Colony. Born in Glenavy, County Antrim, Ireland, March 27th, 1829. Died in Wellington April 27th, 1893. To live in the hearts of those we love is not to die." In the same grounds (Moutoa Gardens) may be seen a handsome marble monument, surmounted by the figure of a weeping woman, which bears the following inscription: "To the memory of those brave men who fell at Moutoa, 14 May, 1864, in defence of law and order against fanaticism and barbarism. This monument is erected by the Province of Wellington, 1st September, 1865. Isaac Earl Featherston, Superintendent." The name of the sixteen natives who fell are inscribed. It must be borne in mind that this was one of the battles during the Maori War which was fought between the friendly natives on the one side and the Hauhaus on the other. This was a most important victory, as had the Hauhaus won, they would have continued their journey down the river to Wanganui. It is hard to realise what would have happened had they done so. Close to this is a splendid monument of Aberdeen granite, surmounted by a life-sized figure of Major Kemp in white marble. This bears the following inscription: "In conjunction with his sister, Hikiki I. Te Rangi, a chieftainess of several tribes, this monument is raised by a grateful country in affectionate remembrance of Major Kemp, high born Maori Chief, brave soldier, and staunch ally of the N.Z. Government during the troublous times of the Maori rebellion against British authority, 1865-67, who after gallantly serving his Queen and Country in the field in the interests of law and order, died covered with military honour at Putiki, April 15th, 1898; aged 74 years. Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord. Matt. 25-21." This monument is of special interest to both old and young of both Pakeha and Maori races, as it has beautifully inscribed on metal plates matters of general history of certain happenings in the Maori War, such as the storming of Te Kooti's pa at Pourere, October 3rd, 1859; Battle of Woturoa, November 6th, 1866; night march and surprise on Pungarehu, October 6th, 1866; with Major Poata at Mapa Maraetahi, March 13th, 1870; extract from "Defenders of N.Z.;" eulogy from Sir Walter Buller. I must not forget

to mention the sword of honour presented by Her Majesty Queen Victoria to the late Major Kemp of which he was so justly proud. On all fitting occasions he would be seen in his officer's uniform wearing this emblem. It would be a great pity if it should be lost. Its whereabouts I do not know, but the museum would be a fitting place to deposit it for safe keeping and would always be a subject of interest to old and young of both races. Another monument in the same grounds is the Maori War Memorial. This is a beautiful structure built of shell rock surmounted by the white marble figure of a soldier standing at ease. It bears the following inscription: "1914-1918. This memorial was erected by the Maori people of the Whanganui district to commemorate the Great War during which Maori soldiers for the first time in history went overseas in active service as a complete Maori unit. On the battlefields of Gallipoli, France and Flanders, they added to the traditions of their race. Along the far-flung battle line they fought side by side with the Home and overseas forces for God, King and Empire. With the immortal dead of all allied forces they made the supreme sacrifice that liberty, justice, and goodwill might be preserved throughout the world." Here follow the names, concluding with the following eulogy: "They shall not grow old as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we shall remember them." There are four corner stones, in each of which there is a casket containing soil from each of the battlefields on which they fought, namely, Gallipoli, France, Belgium and Egypt. This is surely unique in the way of memorials.

The last of the memorials to which I shall refer is the one erected to the memory of those who fell in the Maori War. This is a fine structure of stone with marble slabs for the names and surmounted by a sleeping lion. This is the work of Mr. George Sheriff, a very old citizen, who has proved he is not only an able artist in oil paintings, but also a sculptor of no mean ability. It is to be seen at the foot of the steps leading to the Sarjeant Art Gallery and forms a fitting sentinel to it. The late Mr. C. Burnett took a very prominent part in the building of the memorial.

There are several other places belonging to the city, but these, so far, have not had much attention bestowed on them. Among these may be mentioned Gordon Park, a natural bush about four miles from the Post Office; Matipo Park, another natural bush, about the same distance away; Peat Park in the city; Lorenzo Park at Gonville suburbs; and London Park at

Castlecliff suburb. Matipo Park was a gift from a local company, known as the Matipo Syndicate; Peat Park, the gift of the late Mr. David Peat; and Lorenzo Park, the gift of the late Mr. Nicholas Meuli.

### SWIMMING BATHS.

Besides the beautiful river where swimming may be indulged in for the greater part of the year and the sea beach at Castlecliff there are two public swimming baths in the city proper and one at Gonville suburb. Each of these has a caretaker, and, after a swim one may have a hot water bath or cold showed or both.

### MANUFACTORIES.

There is a soap works near Castlecliff which manufactures all kinds of soap. The products from these works are of the very best and would compare favourably with those from any part of the world. They find a ready market, not only locally, but all over the Dominion and even outside it. Then there are extensive chemical fertilizer works where, amongst other products, special manures for all crops are manufactured. To show the magnitude of these works it is sufficient to say they are capable of supplying the whole of New Zealand with all manures, etc., required and also export large quantities. The woollen mills are also extensive and it is generally conceded that the quality of the goods manufactured such as tweeds, rugs, blankets, etc., cannot be surpassed in any part of the globe.

### SPORTS GROUNDS.

There are innumerable bowling greens, cricket pitches, lawn tennis courts, football grounds, croquet lawns—in fact all that the sporting heart desires, and all are so well looked after that they are a credit to the powers that be.

The city itself is well supplied with gas and electricity, and runs electric trams and motor buses in all directions for the convenience of the public. The buildings are good and substantial, some being three stories high and one four. All the principal business places are built of brick, stone or cement. The picture-goers are well catered for, there being five theatres, besides the Opera House.

As to the streets and footpaths, they are wide and well formed, the principal street being Victoria Avenue, a wide and well kept thoroughfare over a mile in length and perfectly straight, running almost due north and south, with nice wide



footpaths on either side. For about half the length of the street there are large plane trees on either side which, during the summer months, certainly beautify that portion of the city. The lesser streets are also adorned with trees of different varieties, such as the Australian Flowering Gum Tree. When in bloom they certainly look a picture and add considerably to the beauty of the city. What a contrast to the look of the place at the time of which Mr. Burnett writes.

In those days there were very few houses (if such they could be called), and the European population all told (exclusive of the soldiers, of course) would barely number 100. Now there is a population of over 25,000 and it is still growing. The only drawback, as said before, is the want of a good harbour, which it is to be hoped will be obtained before many years expire. What with the rich land surrounding the city, and the many industries working at full pressure, there can be no reason whatever why this city should not be the first of the Dominion instead of the fifth.

This city is beyond doubt the centre of education in the Dominion. First of all there is the Wanganui Collegiate School, less than one mile from the Post Office. The buildings are built of brick and cover acres of ground. It has its own neat and comfortable chapel, also built of brick, and ample grounds surrounding it for the indulgence of all classes of sport. It is built on part of what is known as the Industrial School Estate. This estate absorbs a vast area of the city proper and is largely built upon for residential and other purposes. The rents from these, together with the fees from the boarders and day pupils are far more than sufficient to pay all expenses. The pupils come from all parts of the Dominion as their parents recognise they could not receive better education and treatment anywhere else. From this college have emerged some of the cleverest men in this vast universe. They are to be met in all parts of the globe holding the highest positions and deservedly so. Only recently an Old Boys' Club, consisting of about fifty members, has been formed in London for the purpose of meeting annually and keeping old memories alive. This college can also claim to have produced some of the greatest athletes. Among these may be specially mentioned our worthy medico's son. I refer to Dr. E. E. Porritt. His son is now also a duly qualified medical practitioner. This gentleman holds the proud distinction of being one of England's select to represent that country at the Olympic games—a distinction which falls to the lot of very few.

It will be of interest to mention here that the Sculling Championship of the World was brought to Wanganui by our popular townsman William Webb, who, in his several contests, proved himself a fine oarsman.

The Wanganui College can accommodate several hundreds of boarders and day scholars.

Then there is the Girls' College, a commodious building in the heart of the city. Here, too, the pupils are so well catered for that their future career is assured. As in the Boys' College, pupils come from all parts of the Dominion. Commodious as this building is, it has been found necessary to enlarge upon it, and with that end in view the trustees have purchased several acres of land on the river bank, immediately over the Dublin Street Bridge, whereon to erect buildings thoroughly up-to-date. The site is an ideal one, and the grounds can, at very little expense, be made most charming. I understand the trustees are to commence building, etc., almost immediately.

The Convent is another institute which is a credit to the city. It is presided over by the most intellectual nuns. After leaving this institution, pupils are well-fitted to take up any position and fill it with credit to themselves and to those who taught them. The building itself is an imposing structure, built upon a large area of ground. It is entirely of brick and has its own neat chapel, built also of brick. The site is certainly one of the best in the city, commanding as it does a sublime view of the river, the surrounding country, and of the roadstead.

There is also a splendid building known as the preparatory school. This is to prepare pupils to enter the College.

Then the Technical School where pupils of both sexes may be instructed in all arts and crafts.

The Infants' School is also a fine building of brick where the little ones are prepared for instruction in higher education. There are several boys' and girls' high schools presided over by highly intellectual teachers, so that it will be seen Wanganui is well catered for so far as education is concerned.

The Wanganui Public Hospital is a fine building built of brick upon a prominent site a little over a mile from the Post Office. About the time of its erection there was a great controversy as to whether the material should be of brick or wood, it being the opinion of some that, the foundation being

a levelled sandhill, brick would not stand against a severe earthquake. Those in favour of brick prevailed, and rightly so, as there have been several 'quakes since its erection but no damage has resulted. The hospital is divided into a number of wards which take their names from the donors of generous gifts in the nature of money. Large and all as it is, it is frequently taxed to its uttermost with patients from town and country. There is an isolated ward for patients suffering from contagious or infectious diseases, also a commodious building for the accommodation of the nurses. There are sufficient duly qualified sisters and nurses assisted by probationers to ensure attention to all patients both day and night. There are also two duly qualified medical practitioners resident on the premises. The hospital is governed by a board elected by the people of the city and the surrounding districts. The old hospital was a wooden structure standing upon about five acres of ground, five minutes' walk from the Post Office. After the erection of the new one the old one was burnt down by the authority of the board in order to destroy all germs. The grounds were then cut up into building sites and now may be seen there several comfortable and commodious residences which, with other properties of the board, bring in a good rental. This puts the institution in the position of being almost, if not entirely, self-supporting. The charge per patient per day is nine shillings, which includes food, medicine, medical and nurses' attention. The inscription on the foundation stone is as follows:—"This stone was laid by the Hon. R. J. Seddon, Premier of N.Z., on March 14th, 1895. Members of Hospital Board: A. J. Parsons (chairman), W. Bamber, J. Laird, E. N. Liffiton, G. W. MacLean, W. E. Morgan, E. Newman, W. Ritchie, A. Simpson, R. K. Simpson, A. C. Ritchie (secretary); A. Atkins, F.R.I.R.A. (architect); Russell and Bignell (contractors)."

There are several private hospitals which are largely used by the wealthier class of patients. The charges are from £5 5s. to £7 7s. per week, exclusive of medical attendance, medicine, luxuries, etc., which bring them up to about £10 10s. per week.

For children there is the Karitane Home, a property left by the late Mr. J. T. Stewart for that purpose. Also the Plunket nursery for maternity cases.

Having said so much about the city, I feel sure it will be of interest to a great many of my readers if I refer briefly to one or two country places in close proximity to the town.



First of all there is the beautiful home of Mr. G. F. Moore, about twenty miles distant. The home itself is ideal and is supplied with every possible convenience for comfort. To attempt to describe it without filling a small book would be futile. The home is known as Bushy Park, and is not only famed throughout the Dominion, but all over the universe. Here may be seen what might well be called the home of the Hereford cattle. Mr. Moore, and his father before him, has built up such a herd of these cattle that has become famed throughout the world. It has been truly said that they cannot be surpassed, if equalled, in any part of the globe. As in his home, so with these cattle. Their comfort has been looked to quite as much as that of the owner. Everything possible which would conduce to this end has been attended to. The grounds about the homestead are a marvel, but more marvelous still are the lands belonging to it. These lands for richness will more than compare favourably with any to be found under the sun. The hospitality of the owner is of world-wide renown. To appreciate it one must experience it. No deserving one is ever refused succour. Mr. Moore also breeds thoroughbred horses, and has bred some real good ones; but he seems to make more of a hobby of cattle.

The stud farm known as "Koatanui," belonging to Mr. G. M. Currie, is well worthy of a visit. Here everything possible to imagine for the breeding and rearing of thoroughbred horses may be seen. Nothing is spared in the way of price. From this stud have emerged some of the fastest horses ever seen in the Australasian colonies. Deservedly so as Mr. Currie spares no expense in importing sires and dams from England. He not only breeds for sale, but places his sires at the services of breeders. Furthermore, he races horses of his own breeding on an extensive scale, with a vast amount of success. The stables and paddocks are of the very best. This farm is within 20 miles of the city.

Much the same can be said of Mr. John Donald's stud farm at Westmere, about five miles distant. Mr. Donald, however, is comparatively new at this business. He has made a good start by securing the best of sires and dams, and, during his short career as a studmaster, has been remarkably successful. May he still go on succeeding.

In conclusion I would like to say that if I have given my readers any interesting information, be it ever so little, my object will have been achieved, especially if the rising generation will in any way benefit by it.

First of all there is the beautiful home of Mr. G. V. Moore about twenty miles distant. The home itself is ideal and is supplied with every possible convenience for comfort. To attempt to describe it without filling a small book would be futile. The home is known as Husky Park and is not only named throughout the Dominion but all over the universe. Here may be seen what might well be called the home of the future. Mr. Moore and his father before him had built up such a herd of their cattle that has become famous throughout the world. It has been truly said that they cannot be surpassed in quality in any part of the globe. In his home, so with their cattle. Their comfort has been pushed to quite as high a level as that of the owner. Everything possible which would conduce to this end has been attended to. The grounds about the house are a marvel, but more particularly with the lands belonging to it. These lands for the most part will grow their crops favourably with any to be found under the sun. The hospitality of the owner is of world-wide repute. To appreciate it one must experience it. No history of our country is ever written without Mr. Moore and his

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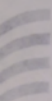
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