



On the Waikato at Aiamuri

Heaton C. Peart, Wellington

How frequently it is we overhear a perfervid eulogy on the scenic wonders of a far-away land. It is noticeable also the deep interest of the listeners, the avidity with which they drink in the word-picturing; sometimes good, often poor and inaccurate. A special privilege seems to have been accorded the sight-seer; that of learning more of the country visited, in a few days, than the natives have acquired in years.

Far fields, too, are ever the greenest! Many are there, very many indeed, who appear to consider a thing for which they have not paid, is of little or no value; hence, are blind to the beauties surrounding them. They are apt to ignore the unsurpassable pictures, etched and painted, under their very eyes by the greatest of artists—Nature. Only the other day, a new arrival to New Zealand, enraptured at the magnificent panorama before him, remarked upon it. Had he spoken of the cañons of Colorado, the Yosemite Valley, Hawaii, how different would have been his reception! The reply he got was thoughtless, if, perhaps, typical: "Yes, I suppose it is beautiful, but I see it daily!"

Not a case of familiarity and contempt; rather, one of the disinclination of self-advertisement.

LET me attempt (I say attempt advisedly) to describe the scene: it is beyond pen-power to do ade-

quate justice to the scenic beauty.

Long blue distances, replete in every tone of that colour; a background of purple mountains, the tallest peaks barbed in the white fires of snow. Seductively undulating pasture-lands of emerald, dotted with drowsing, browsing cattle and sheep. The road, a gray ribbon, meandered round the hill-side, past yawning chasms, overlooked verdant gorges that breathed mauve mists over a crooning crystal stream. Far away, a solitary cloud, waylorn, strayed across a sun-flecked ridge, strewing prismatic rainbows in its path. The roadside was studded with flame-coloured nasturtiums; dusted with the virginal gold of buttercups; sprayed by the fairy silver of clover; the banks of the cutting lighted

in the scented chrome of broome, the ruddy gold of gorse; starred with clematis and white convolvulus. A hidden huia trilled its mellow lute; a skylark, floating in the sun-kissed blue dome of space, flooded the earth with divine minstrelsy.

And—"I see it daily!"

THERE is a trait common to the Anglo-Saxon that makes him shy of advertisement. Yet it is the same trait—one to be encouraged rather than otherwise—that has given the insatiable thirst for adventure and travel. It may have become a vanity; yet, a pardonable one. It produced the compelling, dominating urge that sent our forefathers venturing across the Seven Seas; gave birth to that virility that

met with, and overcame, every danger and obstacle in their way. It has laid the firm foundations of the greatest empire the world has yet known. The bones of our blood-kinsmen mount guard upon every shore: Egypt, Rome, Greece—these were but as ephemeral empires, sinking into insignificance before that of ours.

To every land its beauty and its charm! New Zealand has received her full share. Why not proudly acknowledge ourselves before the face of the whole world, and not wait for discovery by visitors and tourists? Why wait for them to come to us haphazard? Why not compel their advent. America films and boasts her "Valley of a Thousand Smokes." Are they anything more wonderful than our own gifts from Nature?

WHEN the exigencies of Empire, and living, draw us away from Home, it is then that we remember, and knowledge awakens within us. Sub-consciously the brain has registered, has filed away for future reference, as it were, what we were in ignorance of at the moment. It is through the rose-tinted lenses of memory's glass we, at last, see our Homeland truthfully; as we really saw it, though unaware at the time that we so saw it. Sir Walter Scott wrote, inspiredly, for he was not travelled:

*Continued on page 10*

## Pro Patria

*Do we appreciate Our Heritage?*

*In this inspiring article the writer of these "Fortunate Isles"; and emphasises the deplorable fact that so shy in making them known over- New Zealanders often fail to ap-peal, that it is left to tourists and pre-ciate the many and varied charms visitors to discover our wonderland.*

