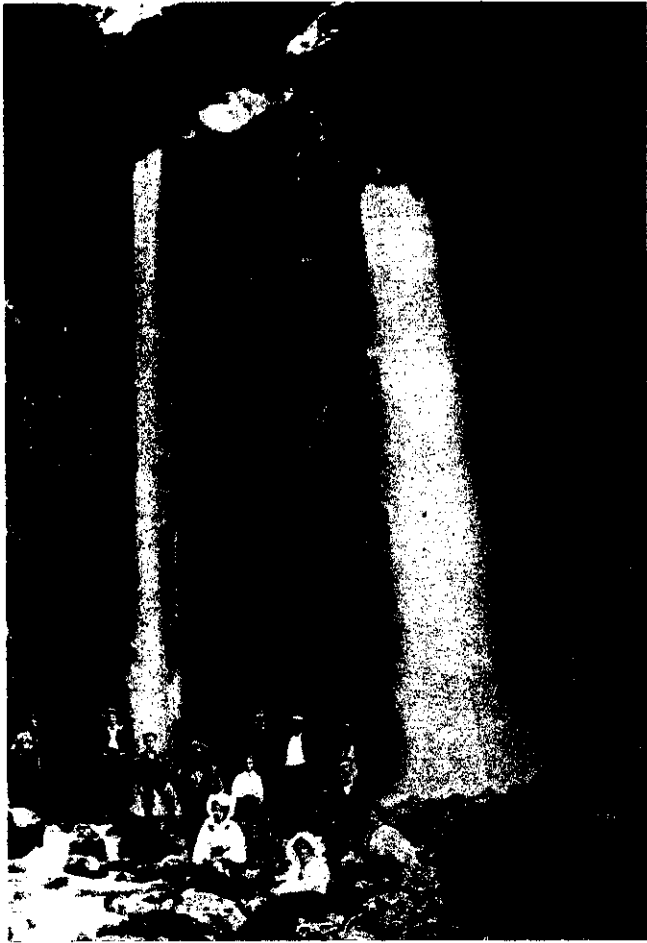


THE MANAIA MOUNTAIN HOUSE.

The photograph which we reproduce gives a very good idea of this, the latest and most accessible place of resort on the slopes of Mount Egmont. It is situated about halfway up Phantom Peak, the rocky summit of which towers above the house, to the left of the main peak. A good metalled road of from ten to sixteen miles leads from Stratford, Eltham, or Hawera to the edge of the Forest Reserve. Thence a horse track of four miles leads through virgin bush to the house, a roomy caravanserai capable of 'sleeping' forty people or so. The charge for accommodation is the nominal sum of one shilling a day. The ascent, though laborious, is safe and easy. Ladies have done it comfortably in four hours. At the house tinned food, etc., may be obtained at moderate prices, but visitors must provide their own bread, butter and blankets. There is good paddocking for horses. The trip, including horse hire, can be done from Stratford, Eltham, or Hawera for a pound, and need not take more than 24 hours.

Within five minutes' walk of the house are the Dawson's Falls, so named after their discoverer. Here an icefed stream hurls itself seventy feet over a ledge of lava into a wooded amphitheatre of perfect natural beauty. The falls, as will be seen from the illustration, are divided into two branches. Below the falls are two swimming basins, one for ladies and the other for men. The water is cold, but as bracing as an electric shock. Above the falls are a succession of fine rapids.

The house has not been long built, but is rapidly growing in popularity. As many as eighty have been known to pass the night there; though where Mr Lloyd, the genial caretaker, managed to stow them all passes the present writer's comprehension.



DAWSON'S FALL, NEAR THE MANAIA MOUNTAIN HOUSE.



Photos. by Herry & McAllister, Stratford.

THE MANAIA MOUNTAIN HOUSE.

THROUGH THE PROVINCE WITH THE GOVERNOR.

OPOTIKI, TAURANGA, COROMANDEL AND THE THAMES.

(Special Correspondent.)

The prosperity of the Bay of Plenty is undoubtedly retarded by the fact that the settlements along its shore are, with the exception of Tauranga, either situated on small bar-bound rivers, or have grown up on open bays where the landing of persons and cargo, or the shipment of the same, are not only tedious, but attended with a certain element of danger. Opotiki is a thriving settlement, the prosperity of which is due to the 10,000 acres of really excellent land which comprise what is known as Opotiki flat; but the advance of the place is prejudiced by the lack of communication with the outside world by any other means than by water, and that under the handicap of a shallow bar-bound river. When the vice-regal party landed on the morning of the 23rd ult., there was no wind, and the bar, which has to be passed broadside on, was quiet. It was negotiated under the guidance of White, the harbourmaster and pilot, whose experience of Opotiki and Whakatane rivers has extended over a great many years.

His Excellency has more than once expressed the opinion within the hearing of the present writer that the reception which the people of Opotiki district accorded him was, without question, in proportion to the size of the place, the best that he has received anywhere on his official tour of this colony. And certainly the crowd which were present at the formal welcome in the centre of the township was so large that one was justified in concluding that a great percentage of the residents of the district were present. At a very prettily arranged platform at the Bank of New Zealand corner was presented the usual address from the Town Board and County Council on behalf of the people while the school children, drawn up opposite the dais, added their quota by the singing of a patriotic song and 'God Save the Queen.' It was a great day for Opotiki 'entirely,' as an Irishman would put it, and possibly a greater day for the Chairman of the Town Board than even anyone else. In faultless frock coat, tall hat, expansive buttonhole—his immaculate attire bore the stamp of being a collateral for the occasion—who shall say that he was not the observed of all observers.

A very nice luncheon was given in the Opotiki Hotel, and the afternoon was occupied with a drive to Waioeka pab, some eight miles out. The expedition was very different indeed from that of Sir Geo. Bowen over 30 years before, when he visited the present site of Waioeka, and looking up the heavily bush-clad gorge, saw how hopeless the pursuit of the disaffected natives into the fastness of the hills would be; or even than the military expedition of a decade back, which, after riding up with great secrecy from Poverty Bay, spent the night in Opotiki, thus allowing news of their approach to reach that wily conspirator Te Kooti, whose arrest they had come to effect, and permitting him an opportunity to leave Waioeka, of which he availed himself. Lord Ranfurly's was purely a visit of peace, and to him was extended a cordial welcome by the Whakatohia people, whose peaceful settlement Waioeka now is. Although the settlement is still designated a pab, it reveals no indication of what were formerly the lines of defence; nevertheless, the place has changed less than most Maori settlements, and the native wharoes are still almost entirely of brushwood and raupo. The most modern feature of the place is possibly the £40 worth of corrugated iron with which the natives have very largely spoilt the appearance of their fine meeting house.

Throughout the day evidence of the stirring times of more than a quarter of a century back were cropping up. In the morning St. Stephen's Church was visited by His Excellency, and the loopholes in the building were pointed