

The New Zealand Graphic

And Ladies' Journal.

VOL. X.—NO. 22

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 1893.

[Subscription—25s per annum; if paid in advance, 20s. Single Copy—Sixpence.]

NGARUAWAHIA BRIDGE.

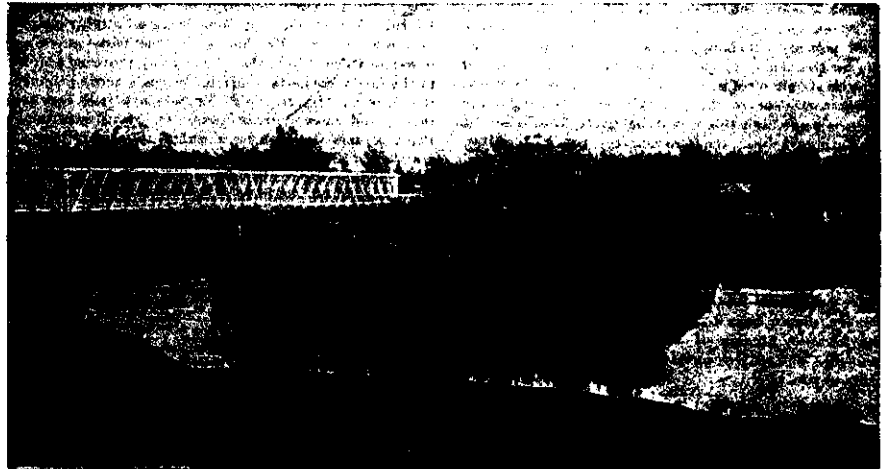
RATHER more than an hour after leaving Mercer, which is forever connected in the mind of the traveller with the bustle and broil of hurried lunch and ravenous lunchers, the Waikato train 'up' approaches a place whose natural beauties surpass anything to be seen on the Auckland rail roads, which are singularly uninteresting along the line from a scenic point of view. There are glimpses of pretty river scenery round and about Mercer for half an hour perhaps but they are rare, and do not prepare the eye of the listless traveller—wary of reading, yet with so little to attract him to look out of the window—for the beauties of that picturesque, but to English lips, utterly unpronounceable township, to wit, Ngaruawahia. The wise new chum attempts not to hopelessly a jaw-breaker, having learnt the folly of attempting these luxuries of names in Wales, where words absorbing a couple of alphabets or so are common as blackberries. Others make wild shots at the pronunciation, and there is at present, in Auckland, a gentleman who habitually calls the peaceful and healthful Waikato township Nigaragus, and who must presumably imagine that there are riotous proceedings up there at present, as per cable.

Seventy-four miles from Auckland Ngaruawahia is an oasis of loveliness in the desert of flat, uninteresting swamp and fern land, which characterise the monotonous railway journey from Auckland to Te Aroha and Oxford. Not a few tourists break the journey here for one day, and it is a matter for wonder that more do not avail themselves of the privileges allowed by the tourist ticket.

There are two large hotels facing the station, at either of which the traveller will be made as comfortable as thoughtful minds and willing hands can make him. The station is almost invariably crowded with folk come to see the train arrive, which is presumably one of the daily excitements in the Arcadian life of the townsfolk. It is a peculiarity, by the way, of the Northern New Zealand railroads

that even the most desolate and out-of-the-way stations along the line have invariably the crowd of sight-seers, Maori and European, to see the train come in. Apparently they are not, in the majority of cases anyway, expecting anyone or anything, but no matter how late the train is—

that it was their first sight of a locomotive, etc. To return, however, to Ngaruawahia. The crowd here is justified, for there are usually milk cans to be loaded or unloaded, and considerable shunting is also done, for the railroad officials, ever anxious for the comfort of passengers on



J. Martin

THE BRIDGE NGARUAWAHIA.

photo., Auckland.

and lateness is a thing they understand on the up-Waikato trains—the crowd is always there patiently awaiting its arrival. During the stoppage, generally unaccountably long, since no one is getting in or out, they stare with such absorbed attention at the train and its occupants that the unsophisticated would imagine

this line, combine the delight of slow goods with slow passenger traffic, there being usually more goods trucks on the train than passenger carriages. Ngaruawahia is the tap for Raglan bush, and 'tis here are embarked stock, etc., from that district.

Invariably, therefore, a good many passengers disembark here, and, as has been hinted, the tourist might do worse than follow suit.

In his excellent publication, 'Rural New Zealand,' Mr Houghton thus does justice to Ngaruawahia:

'At Ngaruawahia (which is Maori for the meeting of the waters) the slow flowing Waipa and the swift Waikato join hands on their road to the sea.

'We leave our traps at a comfortable hotel, and take a stroll through the little township to see the dairy factory, the Ngaruawahia Central Creamery and Butter Factory, belonging to Messrs Reynolds and Co. (Limited), whose head office is at 30 Borough, London. This firm has been established six years, and at first had all the difficulties to contend with which those who establish a new enterprise generally have to face, and the benefit of which the successors of the bold men who first attempt to subdue difficulties so often get. However, that is not the case here. The firm have triumphed over all difficulties, and the industry of butter and cheese making in New Zealand for the English market has now passed through the experimental and is in the thoroughly practical stage, with ample room for extension.

We look at the revolving churns—just great square wooden boxes swinging on a pivot they are—and then go into the room where the butter is worked up, salted, and put into casks ready for shipment to England. It lies on the floor in hundred weights, with a golden hue as of sunshine on it, and a fragrance as of many flowers. It is just our sunshine they are exporting in casks; there will be plenty left, that is a comfort.'



THE HEADLAND, MARANA.
(From an amateur photo. by Mr Walrond.)