

SUMMER CRUISE IN THE BAY OF PLENTY

SNAPSHOTS FROM LOG AND CAMERA ABOARD THE YACHT ARIKI

THE Northern Cruise has for years been the accepted way for the Auckland yachtsman to spend the one brief but blissful fortnight during which he is respite from the office to enjoy the finest pastime in the world. With a safe haven every twenty miles or less, the coast from here to wonderful Whangaroa makes an ideal cruising ground, with plenty of variety and not too much continuous sailing. But one can grow tired of even the north, beautiful as it is. Hitherto the south of Cape Colville has been looked at askance by yacht owners. The Bay of Plenty is such a great yawning gap on the chart that perhaps it was no wonder it has been so long unexplored. True, an odd boat has ventured to Mercury Bay, and even Tauranga; but it was practice-

south side of the south-east point. We anchored with the coir in about five fathoms, having first taken the precaution to make a tripping line fast to the anchor, as we were over a rocky bottom. In all doubtful spots we took this precaution, and never had the slightest difficulty."

Like most of the islands in the Bay, White Island, or Whakari, as the Maoris know it, is steep nearly all round, but there is another anchorage of sorts on the northern side of the point under which we lay. The holding ground is bad, however, and one has to clear out at the first sign of the wind coming in. We were more than fortunate, and landed almost as comfortably as though we were at the skids. "Allus tie yer painter" was one of the maxims of Cap'n Ben, but you want to go further in the



PREPARING A HANGI (MAORI OVEN),

which, contrary to appearances, turns out a meal that would win approval from even a Soyer.

ally a terra incognita—to be somewhat Irish. The honour of being the first yacht to explore the bay belongs to the Ariki, whose enterprising owner, Mr. Charles E. Horton, had for some time past been contemplating a trip to White Island, to take the place of the conventional Xmas cruise. Most of our yachting friends thought we were looking for hard work, and some of them smiled hard when we spoke of White Island as our objective, but we set sail late on Saturday evening, Dec. 22nd, with a light north-easter and barrels of confidence. There were six of us in the cabin, and two hands forward. Watches were set after tea. The wind fell lighter, and it was breakfast time next morning before we were off the watchman. Light wind, with something more of east in it, prevailed all Sunday, and it was not till late in the afternoon that we passed Ohena, in the Mercury group, on the way through Old Man Passage. Evening saw us off the Alderman group, when we set a course for White Island, and the navigating officer was more than proud when a steaming mountain top was reported right over the bowsprit shortly after daybreak. Sunday was gloriously fine, but there was almost a furious calm, as the Spanish sailors quaintly say, and we made but slow progress. Away inshore at about mid-day we could see the three-masted schooner Kaeo plugging away with her auxiliary, bound from East Coast ports to Auckland. Strangely enough, she and the steamer Waiotahi were the only boats we met during the cruise. So light was the wind that it was late in the afternoon before we made the landing, a small bay on the

Bay of Plenty. Never leave your dingy near the water-line. There is occasionally quite a decent-sized swell, even on very calm days, which doesn't fit in with the smooth-water habit of hauling up just out of apparent danger. White Island is a decent-sized mountain, with a huge crater, blown out down to the water's edge at the landing. It isn't white at all, but a pinky colour on the outside, which is barren all over, except for a few patches of stunted shrubs and ice plants growing near the edge. The floor of the crater, which isn't much above sea-level, is flat, and at the north-eastern side there is a lake of yellow sulphurous water. Beyond this lake is a large steam-hole, from which steam is always rushing with a noise like a steamer blowing off. This vaporous column floats high over the top of the island, and can be seen for miles round. The water of the lake is boiling, and emits a gas which is particularly trying to the throat and lungs. Our man of science did tell us the correct name of it, but it escapes me, except the impression that it would make a fine new swear-word. Common people know it as spirits of salts, and you can imagine one's sensations at the lake-side if you have ever been in a plumber's shop with all the windows shut. The sulphur is said to be fairly pure on the island, and the remains of a tramway near the landing remind one of the day when the deposits were worked as a commercial venture. White Island is a great place for gannets, which nest in thousands on several of the points on the south-western end. One of the most graceful of seabirds on the wing, the gannet is clumsi-

ness itself on land. You can walk right up to him squatting on his nest, and when you are alongside he goes off down hill with much hopping and squawking till he gets enough way on to rise in the air, where he has few compeers. We

ora: Kia ora;" reminded us of what day it was. So we bundled the lot of them into the cabin, and filled them up with cake and other reasonable fare. "No hea koe?" (where do you come from?) asked one of our guests; and when we



DANGEROUS GROUND: EXPLORING THE EDGE OF THE LAKE, WHITE ISLAND.

saw the home-coming after their day's fishing, and it was a wonderful sight to see the myriads of birds flocking down at sunset, till the points were quite white with them.

It was almost dark when we got on board again. After tea and a smoke we discussed the question of to stop or not to stop. We were in calm water, but the reputation of the place and a black-looking bank of clouds in the northern sky prevailed, and we thought discretion the better part of valour, so at ten p.m. we got the mud-hook aboard, and for the third night in succession we played the "hardy mariner." Our aim was to sail right across the Bay, so we set a course for Cape Runaway. Again the wind was very light, and, as it turned out, we might have lain at White Island all night in peace and quiet. We made the mainland at dawn, and again the navigating lieutenant had the satisfaction of seeing his abstruse calculations and manipulation of dividers, parallel ruler and compass crowned with success. Good anchorage will be found off the centre of the small hill on the western side of the small river which runs into the sea just under the Cape.

Soon after daylight on December 25—three days out from the moorings—we went ashore for fresh milk, so dear to the yachtsman after a compulsory course of the "tin cow;" and learned that there was a big hui (meeting) at the southern end of the Roads, at a place called Orete Point. After breakfast we got under way again, and dropped down be-

said "Akarana," they showed still more of the whites of their eyes amid a chorus of "Aue!" (Anglice, "By cripes!") Ashore we found several hundred natives who had gathered from Gisborne to Whakatane to celebrate the opening of a telephone line from Waiomatatini (where the Government line



CUVIER LIGHTHOUSE.

ends), to Orete, a distance of 120 miles. This is a purely Maori line put up by Maori labour under the supervision of Mr. Kelly, and paid for by the natives themselves, and there only remains a gap of some fifty miles to complete the connection with Opotiki, where the northern line ends, and so give communication along the whole of the East Coast. The cost of construction was about £8 10/ per mile, and the whole thing reflects the greatest credit upon the Maoris.



UNIQUE PHOTOGRAPH OF KAWAU (SHAGS) NESTING IN POHUTUKAWA AT THE RURIMA ROCKS, NEAR WHALE ISLAND.

low the point. Maoris swarmed on the banks ashore, and the anchor was hardly down when we were boarded by two large whaleboats full of excited natives, who had never seen a yacht anchor off their kainga before. "Merry Christmas! Kia

Such a scene of bustle you never saw. Haangis (Maori ovens) were making a great to-do—we had seen the smoke slowly drifting seaward in volumes just as we made the land at dawn, and wondered what the trouble was—a