

An Ascent of Mt. Egmont.

(By A. M. SKEATES, Auckland.)

While in New Plymouth on business last November I had many an admiring look at Mt. Egmont—that splendid snow-capped mountain—and this created within me a longing to tread the soil and scoria up to the summit. Being in New Plymouth again in February last, I managed to get together a jolly and sociable party numbering eleven all told. Hiring a brake, we collected our bedding and provisions, and made a start from New Plymouth one dull morning. We were not exactly fortunate at the start, for, after having gone

about four miles rain began to fall pretty heavily. However, not to be beaten by the unfavourable elements, we drove on, and about noon reached the radius line, which is 16 miles distant from New Plymouth and 4 miles from the Mountain House. Here we unloaded our brake, and awaited the arrival of the pack-horses. We then wended our way through mud and water along a horse track, which in fine weather must be a most pleasant and beautiful walk, and partook of lunch on the way. It is not exactly strange to relate that after nearly two hours' tramp we arrived at the Mountain House a bit weary, as well as wet, considering that we were climbing up all the time. When we

reached the House we had attained an altitude of 3140 feet above sea level. I might here mention that this house was at one time used as a soldiers' barracks at New Plymouth, and the Government, finding no better use for it, had it removed to its present position for the accommodation of mountain climbers and those seeking health in the exhilarating air to be found up there. I hear it is no uncommon sight to see elderly gentlemen of 70 and 75 years of age playing leap-frog over the tree stumps; and I believe it's true. The house is divided into five compartments, two at one end used for ladies' bedrooms, and two at the other end for gentlemen, the large room in the centre being used by

all as a dining-room and hall for concerts and dances. At one side of this common room is a large fireplace, where a huge log fire is always kept going. Here we speedily dried our clothes. We had already sent three pack horses down to the radius line for our goods, and these arrived by tea time, little the worse for the wet. We heartily enjoyed our evening meal, and then sought an early repose. We slept in bunks one above the other, as on shipboard. The next day broke without any signs of clearing up, and wet weather continued for five days, with sometimes a clearing up for an hour or so, when we got a glimpse of the beautiful white patches (Continued on page 47.)



MOUNTAIN PARTY IN THE BUSH NEAR THE MOUNTAIN HOUSE.



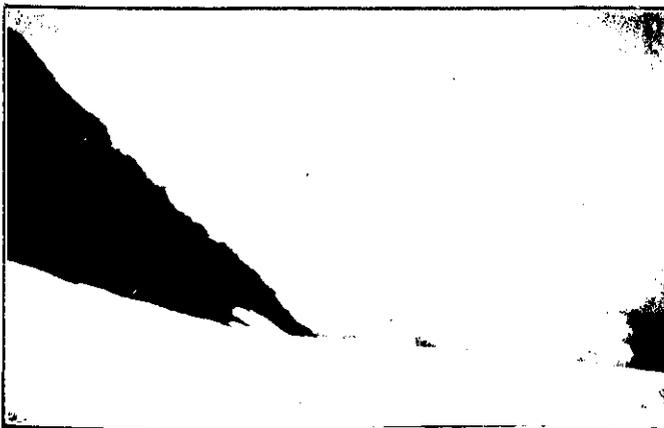
HALF WAY UP.



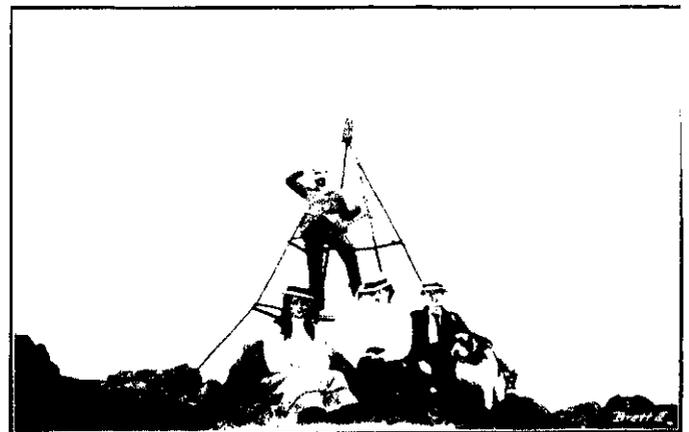
CROSSING THE CRATER ON FROZEN SNOW.



A WALTZ ON THE SUMMIT.



CLOUD EFFECT FROM THE SUMMIT.



AT THE TRIG STATION ON THE SUMMIT, 8200 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL.

A. Skeates, photo.

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