

was on the bust he used to blow about having been a cavalry officer, and dash my buttons if I don't think he really had been some't of the sort! He was bounceable and bossy enough for that or anything else. Before he boned my share of the stuff, he often talked about making up through the North Island to the Thames. Said he'd like to see the country, so he'd tramp it and get a job now and again on the road."

There was not the least doubt in my mind but that this was Fred Eady, the man I sought. He was a splendid boxer, I knew that to my cost, for he had often persuaded me to put on the gloves with him at his father's house.

I determined to make my way up through the North Island also, so I shipped to Wellington and bought a horse there, as I had no intention of tramping it. At a station in Hawke's Bay I heard of him again. The manager's report of him coincided exactly with the digger's. "He came to me stone broke, two shearings ago, looking like a dead-beat boozier who'd seen better days. I wouldn't have been bothered with him, but men were scarce and I wanted a cook for the men's hut badly; I told him so, never dreaming he'd take it. But he said it was just his dart, he liked cooking better than hard work. He did it well, too, for six months. No grumbling, like there'd been with his predecessor; but that was partly because, if any of the hands growled about his cooking, he went for them and dressed them down properly. Tackled a big burly fellow twice his weight and doubled him up in no time—he went in for the science of the thing. I never saw a fellow use his fists like it in my life outside a prize ring. After the six months were up, he said he must be off to Wellington, reckoned he'd ship home from there and see his friends. But he didn't, for about a month afterwards he turned up again without shirt or boots. He'd 'blown' his cheque, had a spree, and tramped all the way back. Asked me for pity's sake to take him on again. I did for awhile; he got on the soft side of me, partly because I could see he had been a gentleman; the men said he'd been an officer

in the army. I shouldn't wonder a bit, they are the worst when they once take the down grade. I soon had to sack him, though, he got too infernally quarrelsome, and several of the hands missed coin and things, and were frightened to tax him with it. He called himself Fred when he first came, Fighting Fred was his nickname; I couldn't get him to give me his surname at first. When I told him I must have it, he said, "Put down Fulton, it'll do as well as any other."

"Which way do you think he went when he left you?" I queried.

"Well, the hands said he was always talking about digging, that he'd been at the West Coast and should most likely make for the Thames when he left here, but he liked a spell on a station, now and again, right away from the cursed drink." It was Fred again without a shadow of a doubt. I made straight for the Thames, and hunted the Coromandel Peninsula high and low. I heard of him again here and there; his fighting proclivities and whisky drinking feats appeared to increase. But he had evidently left, and where he had gone I was at a loss to conjecture.

It was at this point of my hunt that I heard news which put even Fred out of my head for a time.

On landing in New Zealand, now fully six months since, I had been struck with the superiority of the earning power of colonial investments over English ones. My income from capital invested at Home was but a moderate one, I saw at a glance that the same capital invested here should at least double it. This would be a consideration, now that I had hopes of shortly becoming a married man. I cabled Home to my solicitors to sell out and remit the proceeds to me by cable. In due course they were placed to my credit here and, taking the advice of a broker, I invested the major portion in Bank of New Zealand and Loan and Mercantile shares. These appeared to me to be the safest investments in the market, mining shares I deemed too risky. It is true that I was induced by a miner when at Kuaotunu to purchase four thousand Kapai Gold