The Prince of Wales Feathers Geyser, Wairakei.

Pulman, photo.

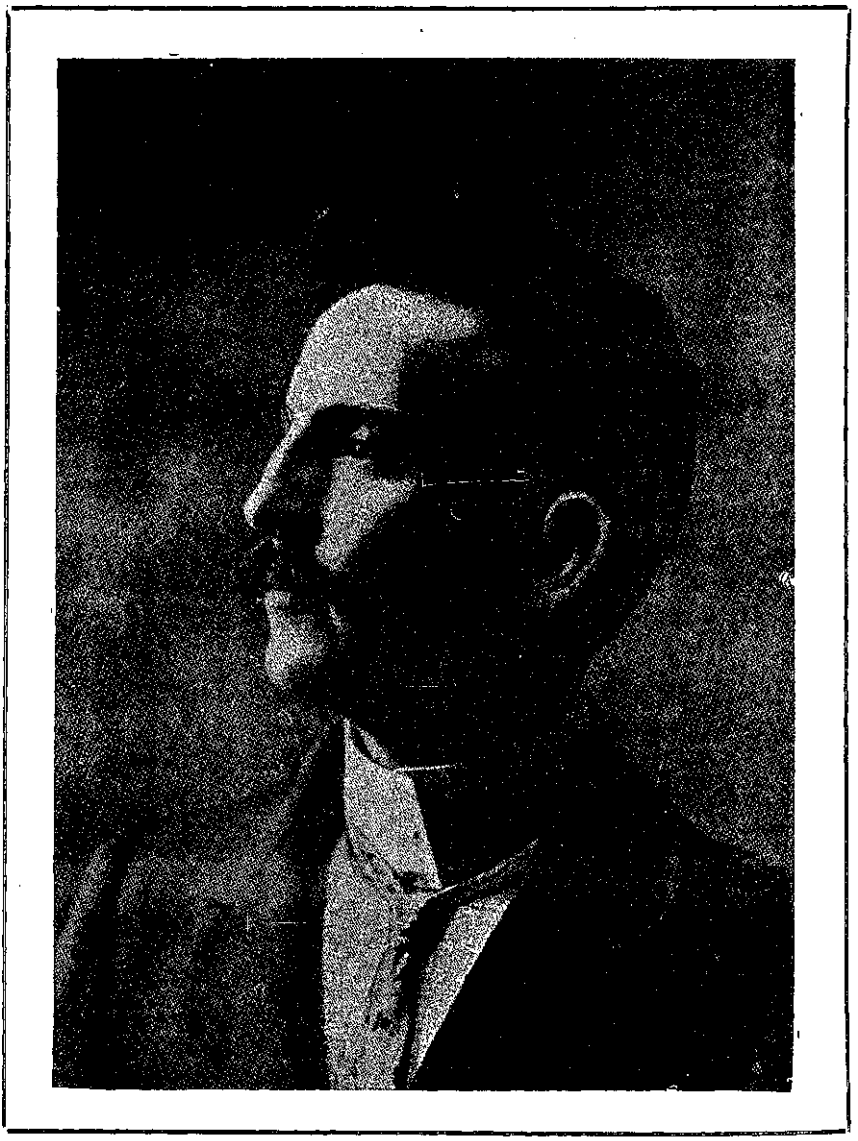
A POET FULLY GARBED.

DAVID ROSS' "AFTERGLOW."

By S. E. GREVILLE-SMITH.

"TO the living who love, and the dead who loved and who died, these songs of love, of life, and of death are dedicated." So runs the inscription on the first page of a volume of verse which the author, Mr. D. M. Ross, has called "The Afterglow." This title is in some senses a misnomer, but the words of the dedication express with the force of an epigram the "message"—if I may safely use a term so often misused—of the book. From beginning to end the theme is love—love, in all its myriad manifestations; love, in its rich and bewildering variety. And whether in its wildest, stormiest, most tender, most pathetic or most reverential mood, it is clad in burning words, that move—sometimes as if by pure instinct—to almost perfect music. "Almost," because here and there a flat note is struck, just as more than once or twice there is incoherency, or apparent incoherency, in the language; but these are accidents, and arise from no weakness of ear or of eye. Also they are independent of several obvious mistakes of the printer.

Before attempting an estimate of the value of the poetry, it is necessary that the limitations which the poet has set himself, or which have been fixed for him, should be acknowledged and understood. Mr. Ross plays upon a harp of divers tones, and he uses every note, but the changes, as I have said, are merely variations of one theme. Most of the poems are, frankly, love songs, but even where the express image is not linked definitely to the sensation of the sweetest and only endurable passion, there is an undercurrent of feeling that is indissolubly interwoven with it. In the descriptions of the natural beauties of the universe, or of the rapture of bird song, or in praises of heroism, the all-pervading theme is obvious, though not ostentatiously present. Even in the didactic pieces, which are to me the least interesting, there is the same insistent demand that the first place everywhere and in everything belongs to love. The whole embodies a wonderfully sustained note, so long sustained, indeed, that to minds not attuned it must appear monotonous. This is inevitable. But no poet that ever was will stand reading like a novelist. Certainly not Mr. Ross. Poetry, at its worst, aims at compression of thought and beauty of expression; at its best, of course, it is the ultimate achievement in both directions. It is obvious, therefore, that he who runs may not read poetry with the certainty of understanding, much less enjoying it. Poetry demands insight. However perspicuous the maker, who is also the interpreter, the transmitter of the poetic idea, the receiver must possess not only perspicacity, but absolute sympathy. The poems of "The Afterglow" are mainly introspective, and the thoughts are not always readily communicable without the exercise of a little patience, in some cases not without a measure of indulgence. But the labour



D. M. Ross.

never goes unrewarded. Often the mind is bewildered by the opulence of the imagery. Golden sunsets, opal skies, the glitter of innumerable stars, the beating of waves, the rustling of the winds, and the presence, seen and unobserved, of angels often make the effect phantasmagorial. But the phantasma are no mere stage-property. They are a symbolism by which the writer apparently endeavours to visualise what is wholly unsusceptible of materialisation. In the press of the market or the mart, it is difficult to believe sometimes that life is not all a mere matter of buying and selling, eating, drinking and sleeping, and "The Afterglow," if I read it aright, represents the strivings of an earnest soul to break the spell of an utilitarian world. We, who know the man, as well as the poet, find few enigmas in the book. He is not a dreamer, or a dilettante, a dabbler in the flowery paths of literature, but an earnest man, very much in love with life in all its phases, and brimful of practical common sense, backed by

quite phenomenal energy. He is many-sided. Poetry, with him, is not a plaything. It is just as much a part of his being as his religion. That he should write is as necessary as that he should sleep. It is something that he cannot help doing, and he must write all he feels. He pours out, often with pell mell rapidity and confusion, thoughts that the cool, grave, arm-chair critic would call injudicious, unwise, or audacious, mixed with others that are divinely pure and unexceptionable. That he should have written them is, however, one thing; that he should have published them is another. Many of the arm-chair critic variety abovementioned will doubt the expediency of issuing the book at all. The thoughts, the aspirations, the yearnings, the self-adjurations, and the self- and other objurgations, may be admitted to be wholesome as a species of auto-discipline. Men, we may be told, of intense sensibility sing, laugh, groan, weep, and pray in the secrecy of their closets, who would grow crimson with shame if they were discovered. Undoubtedly. But these have not been touched by the Promethean fire; they are uninspired. Genius is exigeant. In it inheres the passion to communicate. It will not burrow and hide. And beyond these obvious characteristics—obvious and characteristic spite of the belief about mute, inglorious Miltons—there is the natural human desire to let the world see the best that is in us, whether we be statesmen, or soldiers, lawyers, doctors, artists or poets. There is the pride in good work and workmanship. Further still, there is the not ignoble wish for reward. It is not, humanly speaking, probable for your true poet to remain dumb. The names of Tasso, Cowper and Blake stand up to meet anyone who attempts to controvert this. But how shall we know true poetry? The criticism of many hundred years has established no safe scientific criteria. Matthew Arnold's declaration that the true poetry cannot be mistaken, any more than the sunshine can be mistaken, seems safe; applied to persons of taste and culture it is perfectly safe. Israel Zangwill, in one of his brilliant papers in the "Without Prejudice" series, agrees with Arnold, and both quote these exquisite lines of Shelley's as a test:

"I arise from dreams of thee,
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright."

And Arnold, in another place, quotes Shakespeare's

"Take, oh take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn."

The poetry of these examples is perfect in idea and form. Instances of a like kind might be multiplied indefinitely. Let me give one or two from "The Afterglow" to serve by way of comparison, taking the passages quite at random. Take this from "The Last Kiss":

"The winds were playing with your hair,
They flung its glory round about;
An arrow sunbeam cleft the air,
In search of you, and found you out."

Or this from "Rest":

"Lean thou thy head
Close here upon my breast;
The Summer's dead,
The Autumn bringeth rest."

Or this, from "Sunset and Storm":

"The fire dies down, the thunders fail,
The trodden clouds find sweet release,
Until, with star-bespangled veil,
The night comes with a kiss of peace."

These are not taken because they are the best passages in the book. There are others more beautiful, if not so easily detachable, and I have purposely picked them hap-hazard. But, I ask, are they not of the genuine poetic metal? Do not they ring true? I, myself, find in them that impalpable, indescribable some-

thing that meets us in Shakespeare and Keats. Let not anyone suppose that "The Afterglow" is a collection of poetic trifles for the boudoir. If it has not already been made clear that it appeals to all that is most truly masculine in man and sweetly feminine in woman, the statement must needs be repeated in this bald form. There are strong poems in it that wash the heart like rain. It is impossible to quote at length sufficient to make this perfectly evident. But here is a stanza from the poem—beautiful in its own way as Tennyson's "Days that are no more"—"In Dreams":

"O wake me, God! If I should dream in dread
That those old days may never dawn again—
That death is creeping o'er them while I dream—
O wake me, God! to search the grave and find
One look unmouldered on a face I loved,
In those old days of tender hearts and true."

The spiritual insight of such lines as these is profound. It reaches the deepest springs in our nature. In the sweet, sadly wistful lines on "Mother," there is, similarly, a note that rings in all strong men's hearts:

"An angel face, framed in a snowy silvered gentleness,
Shines thro' the mist of thoughtless years outrun,
And wilful thoughts of rebel days and nights of recklessness
Hide their bowed heads, and vanish one by one."

There is a lighter touch in the exquisite poem "Granny," so dainty, so delicate, and so unerring:

"Seated there so still and saintlike, in the firelight's fitful ray,
Sheltered from the world that worries, often I would have you say,
If you live in spirit near us, or in spirit far away.

. . . . .

"Did the manly come to woo you, in your scarce remembered days?
Brought they gifts of flowers and homage in their gentle, courtly ways?
Did they flatter? None could flatter where they scarce could overpraise!

"Did you charm them with your beauty, when in festal halls you met?
Surely, for they still attend you, and you curtsey to them yet,
Passing radiant, star-like, queerly thro' the stately minuet."

One of the forms of verse in which the genius of Mr. Ross delights to express itself is that of the sonnet, the "narrow plot of ground" cultivated with success by none but true poets. I can find room for two specimens, "A Memory," and "The Watch on Deck." These may not be the finest, but they are perhaps the most characteristic:

"O just that day remembered! I shall know
The place we parted when in Paradise.
I see again those deep, love-litten eyes
Gazing upon me by the river-flow:
The gorse, with its young gold was all aglow;
The willows drooped within the mirrored skies,
And in sweet questions and in hushed replies
Soul spoke to soul, that day of long ago.

"O to be with you! and to kiss again
Those lips that breathed the spirit of that Spring!
I have grown weary of the ways of men—
The war, the sin, the ceaseless murmuring.
O to be with you one long day, and then—
Fly from this living on the sunset's wing."

"Becalmed upon the equatorial seas,
A ship of gold lay on a sea of fire;
Each sail and rope and spar, as in desire,
Mutely besought the kisses of a breeze;
Low laughter told the mariners at ease;
Sweet sea-songs hymn'd the red sun's funeral pyre:
Yet One, with eyes that never seemed to tire,
Watched for the storm, nursed on the thunder's knees.

"Thou watcher of the spirit's inner keep,
Scanning Death's lone, illimitable deep,

Spread outward to the far immortal shore!
While the vault sleeps, from the upheaving deck
Thou seest the adamantine reefs that wreck,
And Life's low shoals, where lusting billows roar."

The conception of the second of these is almost perfect. In all the sonnets we come constantly upon bold, original images, and lines of haunting beauty. Like this:

"I did not know the absence of thy face
Would silence every bird in all the world."

There is an element in the book which I am somewhat loath to touch. I mean the religious element. It would be difficult to define the poet's belief in the supernatural from this book. In places the strictly orthodox may claim him for their own, but it is in the last degree likely that he had any ology in his mind when he wrote. If there be anything distinct it is his adhesion to what is called the doctrine of the Larger Hope. In the lines "To Those Who Weep," we read:

"Shall He, whose grand creations roll
In scorn of either bound or bar,
From rack and pain of any soul,
Turn His strong hand to make a star?

"Then is there, in the morning's joy,
An undernote we cannot hear,
That He creates but to destroy,
And makes of Hope the door of Fear.

"O barren priesthood! have ye found
No pledge that God's redemption may
Find those within the underground
Who missed on Earth the Heavenly way?

"The Light that burns behind the sun,
The Pilot of a million spheres,
Shall He, when man's brief day is done,
Rejoice in his eternal tears?

"Or shall He, thro' the deepest deep,
Stretch Mercy's hand to heal and save
The rebel soul that cannot sleep
Without His pardon in the grave?"

These quotations are, of course, totally inadequate, as all quotations must be. They can but indicate the beauty of the book whence they are drawn. Nothing equalling "The Afterglow" in power, in facility of expression, or in human interest has appeared in New Zealand. There is nothing to suggest comparison with what has gone before. We have had nothing that would respond to the touchstone of Matthew Arnold, so far at least as the mass of work is concerned. Isolated beauties there have been, of course, and these will occur to the memory. The fact about Mr. Ross' poetry is that there is so much that is of the first class. That there should be inferior, and quite uninspired work in the book is inevitable, but the proportion of this to the large bulk of the volume is surprisingly small. There are echoes of other muses, but imitations of none. I believe that in this book we have the first notes of that song which, while it is national and native, has freed itself from the Commonplace. Mr. Ross will be read more and more on this account alone, until the loveliness of his verse is cherished for its own intimate delights.

NOTE.—Mr. Ross has frequently contributed to this Magazine. Of the poems included in "The Afterflow," "You and I and the Angels" appeared in November, 1899, and "The Love of the Stars," "The Sower," "Granny," and "Low Lies My Love" were amongst his other contributions.

CHAPTER II.

THE old fence dog had used the term "Happy Hunting Grounds" in connection with the decease of his sisters, and I felt that it would be interesting to hear his views on the future state of his species. so I drew him out to speak of them.

"I have, in the course of my life," he began somewhat pompously, "while engaged in driving sheep, been many hundreds of times consigned by my various employers, in language sometimes terse and vivid, at others verbose and prolix, to different phases of everlasting punishment. I have particularly noticed that these men applied to me exactly the same familiar terms that they used to one another, when an unpleasantness arose between them. From this fact I might reasonably have inferred that you, our masters, at least assigned us some place, if only an undesirable one, in the future world. But, bless you, I know better than that. You do not. I am only too well aware that these assignments to which I refer, were nought but figures of speech as far as we dogs were concerned. Shepherds use a great deal of this figurative language. Why, I know not! It is not pretty, though undeniably expressive.

"Yes; I am fully aware that you superior beings, as you call yourselves, have had the presumption, but not the right—mark that—metaphorically speaking, to set up at the portals of the Hereafter one of those abominable notice boards, often seen elsewhere, on which is written in glaring letters—'No admittance for dogs!' You arrogantly claim for your race alone the privilege of a future state of existence. Am I not right?"

He asked this question with considerable heat.

"Well I think there can scarcely be two opinions on that point," I exclaimed, then to soften the blow, I added, "It would scarcely be the sort of place for dogs, you know."

"I beg to differ from you entirely!" he retorted, testily snapping at a few more flies. "Let me tell you that we dogs are convinced that there is a happy hunting ground reserved for us, where we can enjoy sport on our own account, without having to make a toil of it to please our masters."

"Sport! what sort of sport?" I asked, thinking that it would not

be a happy hunting ground for the hunted under those circumstances.

"Ah! now you desire to know too much. The programme is not published yet," replied Mr. Tweed with the air of one who has effectually silenced his questioner.

"But let us be serious," I continued, "you say you are convinced that there is a future life for you. It is easy to say that, but what proof have you? Where are your inspired writings, your temples, your worship? And what is your creed?"

"I admit we have no such writings as you have. I much doubt if we should term them inspired if we had. We have no temples dedicated to any particular Deity; for to tell you the truth, we have no particular Deity. What we have is a Maker. But when you infer that we have no creed or worship, you make a great mistake; we have both; but they differ essentially from yours.

"You make a great point of there being only one God, but if the truth were told, so far as I can see, scarcely any two of you worship the same one for all that. You have each your own particular ideal of the Being you worship, and, in nine cases out of ten, it is a very poor ideal. The difference between these Gods of yours, lies principally, in the manner in which they regard various sins. Your God, for instance, thinks very little of your pet iniquity—hardly looks on it as an iniquity at all, but he is death on that of your neighbour; while his Deity regards your favourite sins as unpardonable, and his as quite excusable. Then look at your creeds, they are many; why they should be so, I know not; for they are all ridiculously similar in the end. Do they not all resolve themselves into the theory that the holder and those who think with him are on the direct road, and know every inch of the way, while the rest of their fellowmen, poor benighted creatures, are quite off the track? 'God pity them!' you say—but 'serve them right!' you mean, for they are no friends of yours."

"There is some truth in what you say, I freely admit. I never before heard the old saying, 'An old dog for a hard road,' so strikingly exemplified. But let me hear more of your worship and your creed. Are there really no bones of contention to create discord at your spiritual feasts?"

The old dog shook his head solemnly at what he evidently regarded as my levity, and made me feel ashamed of it.

"We worship our Maker. We know not, neither do we care, who, or what manner of Being He is. He is our Maker, and that is quite enough for us. We show our faith in Him by doing our duty in this world of His to the best of our dog knowledge and ability. We pay Him a much higher compliment than you do; for we do not for one moment believe, that He would be so cruel and unjust as to place us here to be kicked about by you, our masters, for a brief space, then wiped out utterly! One who could offer no better reward for a life of patient and faithful suffering than annihilation, might suit your ideas of a Supreme Being, but would fall far short of ours."

"But here another question arises," I remarked. "Let us, for the sake of argument, allow your view regarding a future existence for dogs to be the correct one, Mr. Tweed. What about the other animals? Are they also to be admitted to this happy hunting ground of yours?"

"Ah! now you want to know too much again! I frankly acknowledge that I cannot speak with any degree of certainty on that point. You must admit, however, that other animals are very different to dogs! So much lower, both in the social and intellectual scale, that it does not necessarily follow that any such honour should be awarded them. Here your argument, which you so abominably misused in our case, would appear to especially

apply. One would not imagine that it was quite the place for them. Fancy, for instance, an old merino scrubber, or one of those detestable cats, in Paradise ! The idea is too preposterous ! If they were admitted I should positively feel inclined to stand off the grass myself !"

"Oh ! then your hunting grounds are to be almost as exclusive as ours, after all ?" I exclaimed with some sarcasm.

Enchantment ceased and tribulation began.

"By no means ! for do we not go so far as to include you ?" retorted the old dog with the nearest approach to a grin, that I had yet seen on his gloomy features.

I never yet gained the day in a religious discussion. It is a subject on which, for the future, I have made up my mind to allow either man or dog to hold his own opinion unchallenged ; seeing that nothing I can advance is ever likely to induce either of them to alter it. I said no more about religion to this dog. I even regretted that I had said as much. He had evidently been a keen observer of human nature. He knew too much for me. I gently led him off to drivel on about his puppyhood again ; even that was preferable. The rapt expression, which (I am almost sure) had illumined his countenance somewhat, vanished, and a vacuous, and comparatively speaking childish one, took its place.

"Our nursery," he remarked, "had another drawback besides being accessible to a garden rake. The verandah floor was too close overhead. Mother was an extremely fussy and irritable old party, and it often occurred that just as we had comfortably sucked ourselves to sleep, and laid with our little stomachs distended almost to burst-

ing, and our curly heads pillowed softly on her warm breast, we were hurled recklessly hither and thither, as she jumped suddenly up with a start to growl savagely at a footstep which she heard on the verandah above us. We could have forgiven this once in a way, but it was chronic, and our little lives became a burden to us. When we reproached her, she called us ungrateful little demons, and asked us if we did not know that she did it to defend us from the black man, who otherwise would assuredly take us away from her for ever. She'd heard our mistress use this threat to the boys, and so had we. In our innocent little puppy babble we told her to tell that to the Marines, that we did not require defending, that we would much rather she should save herself the trouble. But she only caught us by the scruff of our necks and shook us well for our impudence. This was unjust of her, for how could we help having more sense than she had?

"Shortly after this, when we really did require defending, she stood calmly by, and never even troubled to growl. I'll tell you how it was. When we began to run about we left our nursery to have a look at the wide world and its inhabitants. We were lost in wonder and admiration at first, but soon got over that. Our master had been married twice, the son by the first marriage, Master Tom, was grown up, but by the second there were two little, chubby, apple-faced boys, you know the sort.

"You are doubtless aware of the unaccountable desire which possesses us dogs to own a human friend and master. I never could understand it, and I do not suppose I ever shall! You hold for us an irresistible fascination, I felt it first the moment I clapped my baby eyes on those boys; and what I feel most about this degradation, which has befallen my old age, is the lack of human sympathy and companionship. Ill-treatment, blows, kicks and curses, aye, even semi-starvation—all are as nought compared to this loss. You could never understand the longing that comes over me even to lick the feet of the surly boy who brings my rations—when he happens to think of it—not till I have polished them off though, that's always the first consideration. I am well aware that he doesn't care two straws for me, but, though I hate myself when I think of it, that does not lessen the feeling. This inordinate love for man is often the curse of our race. You can perhaps gain some idea of its intensity when I admit, as I will to you, that, though certainly not so fierce and passionate, it is far more faithful and enduring than our love of the other sex of our own race. But keep this fact to yourself, please; if it leaked out that I had divulged it, the ladies would hate me more than they do already, which is unnecessary.

"This extraordinary love of your race caused us even as pups to worship those boys at first sight, as I think I have already stated. The idea that they might perhaps deign to play with us, was simply entrancing, and overwhelmed us with delight. They did so deign; then entrancement ceased and tribulation began. Their idea of play differed totally from ours. It consisted, for instance, in each of them holding one of us up by the tail to see which of us could make the most noise—in these contests I excelled, Brother Bob was nowhere—pulling our ears, sticking their fingers into our eyes to see us wink afterwards, and a host of other ingenious tortures, too numerous to mention. And through it all mother never lifted a paw to defend us. In fact it is hardly credible that both the mothers, theirs and ours, looked on with the utmost indifference. Ours would have flown at any grown person who dared to ill-treat us, but just because our tormentors were little boys, she answered our cries for help as follows:—'Oh, nonsense! those dear little fellows can't hurt you much, I'm sure. A

little knocking about will harden you, and do you good. You were getting so rough and troublesome, I'm only too glad they are so kind as to play with you now and then, you won't be everlastingly worrying me for titty while they have got you, and I'm sure that's an unqualified blessing !'

"Mamma Runholder was equally heartless, if not more so. I overheard a lady visitor taking our part once. She was an old maid ; I love old maids ; why men don't, I can't conceive, they are always so kind to us dogs.

"'Oh !' she cried, 'see how your cruel boys are ill-treating those sweet little puppies ; do speak to them, please !'"

"'They are only playing with them, Miss Primrose,' replied the mother, 'I'm certain they can't be really hurting them, they are too fond of them ; let them alone, it amuses the dear boys, and keeps them good. They haven't been half the trouble to me since they've had the puppies to play with.' Then to the boys—'Take them round to the back yard, my little darlings, and play nicely with them there, we can't stand the noise here.'"

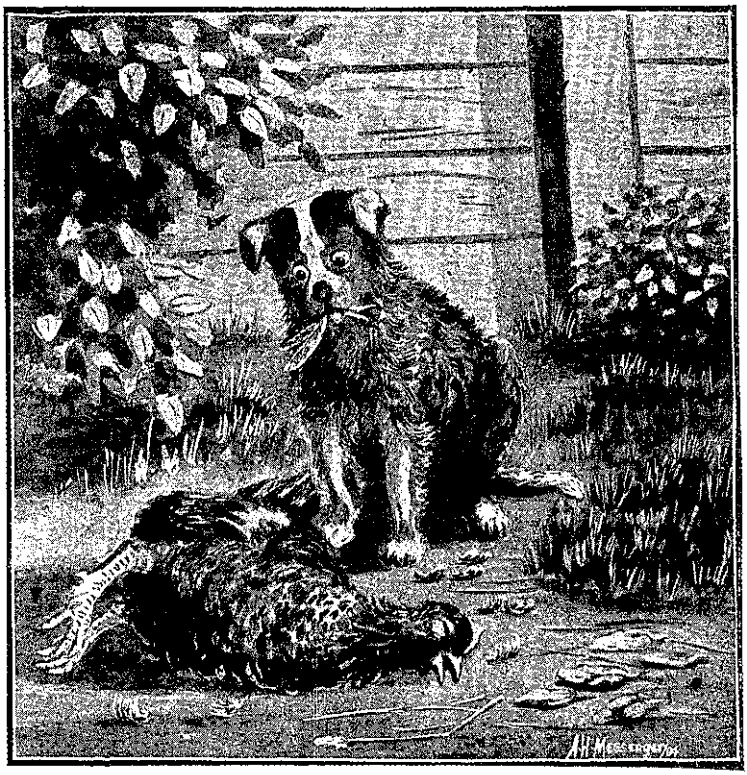
"Little darlings, indeed ! Little devils would have been nearer the mark. They trotted off as they were bid, carrying us tightly grasped in their arms, heads downwards of course, and had such fun with us —at least that is what they called it ! They'd seen pictures describing the way to bring half-drowned people to life, and must needs play the game with us ; first ducking us in a filthy stable pond and filling us with dirty water, then alternately pumping away at our fore legs, and holding us up by our hind ones to drain. But they were caught this time ; the old maid, bless her ! was leaving, and had to come round to the stable with her hostess for her riding horse, because the stable boy was not about. He was busy on another part of the farm—stealing apples in the orchard, I believe.

We started a museum of natural curiosities under the house.

Madame perceived at a glance what an awful pickle the boys were in, to say nothing of us, and asked Miss Primrose for the loan of her riding whip. It was promptly lent—you never had to ask her twice for anything, she was so good-natured and obliging. I loved her more than ever, but the boys did not; they positively hated her from that hour. They even planned her destruction in secret, but fortunately could not agree which of them was to carry out the sentence.

"Madame laid the whip on them vigorously. 'There—that's for your cruelty to the pups!—and that—and that—and that—and that for dirtying your clothes and drenching your boots and socks!' she screamed, suiting her actions to her words. You will observe how nice was her discrimination regarding the relative enormity of the crimes. It was the boys' turn to hold a howling competition now; and they even beat my record. They obtained their deserts, but it didn't do us much good. It only put a new game into their heads, which was no improvement on the old ones. They were the parents and we were their little boys, and we must be taught not to be cruel to kittens. They were not nice parents and we did not like learning from them. I confess we might have been a little rough on the kittens; there is no doubt we were up to every description of mischief in those days, all puppies are.

"Amongst other amusements we started a museum of natural curiosities under the house, out of range of the garden rake—we studied that point. Some of the specimens were of considerable value, and the collection as a whole did us much credit. There was a silver spur—we could have secured the pair, but



Bob was unlucky at this sport. A fine pure bred Brahma chick, which had evidently overeaten itself, fell down and died under his very nose.

didn't like to deprive our master of both, one was enough for our purpose; then there was a handsome, silver pocket fruit knife, we valued this highly, because we heard it was madame's grandmother's wedding present; one of young master's slippers and a smoking cap, worked for him by his first pet girl, and therefore quite an antique; a bustle and a tortoise shell comb, belonging respectively to the two maids; several of the boys' hats, a toothbrush, a drawing-room cushion and a toasting-fork, besides sundries too numerous to mention. One of the maids was discharged on suspicion of stealing the silver knife, but we were not sorry for her; she was a bad-tempered thing, and we'd had many a smack on the head from her broom. A girl like that deserves all she gets.

"As long as we confined our collections to articles which would keep, we were comparatively safe. But at that age we were hardly likely to understand the distinction. After practising for some time chasing the feathers out of the handsome drawing-room cushion, which eddied round the museum curiously when the wind was in the right quarter, we took to chasing fowls.

"Bob was unlucky at this sport, a fine, pure-bred Brahma chick, which had evidently overeaten itself beforehand, fell down, and died under his nose—those heavy fowls can't run worth a cent on a full stomach. Always ready to make the best of things, Bob at once concluded that it would do for the museum, and immediately deposited it there. The weather was warm and it did not keep. There was a row in the house, master sniffed, missis sniffed, and the maids sniffed. After much exciting argument and contradiction they located the odour, a floor board was prized up, and the museum opened to the public free of charge. We were not present at the ceremony, our modesty forbade, neither were we thrashed this time; but we had to wear that chicken tied round each of our necks, alternately, till we grew very tired of the smell. We gave up hunting chickens; having to carry round the corpse afterwards spoilt the fun from a sporting point of view. And thus passed puppyhood's happy hours!"

The old dog paused, sighed heavily, and demolished a mouthful more flies before he proceeded.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

« BIG TOM. »

By W. BROOKE.

BIG Tom was a foreman stevedore; standing six feet three, who with his sixteen stone of bone and muscle was considered about the toughest handful on the Australian Coast. That noted prize-fighter, Muldoon, the Californian Cyclone, winner of a hundred hard fights, had fared very badly indeed in a rough and tumble with Big Tom. Tom possessed a voice corresponding with his size and strength, and when he was superintending the loading of a ship, the work was rushed ahead, and the labourers earned all their pay. Tom was up and down the hold-ladders and on the wharf all day, shouting, cursing and driving the men, standing over them as they sweated and strained at the wool screws, and shoving the heavy top bales into place with his own huge arms and shoulders. The men looked on him as a hard taskmaster, otherwise he was considered not a bad sort, but he was certainly the last man to whom one would attribute fine and tender feelings. Personally, I rather liked Big Tom. He was rough in speech, but always civil to the ship's officers, and he did the loading by contract thoroughly and well. One blazing day in December, when Circular Quay was crowded with wool drays, and the dusty truckmen panted and toiled in the fierce heat, Tom seemed even more noisy and energetic than usual. He was standing over the main hatchway, shouting directions to the men below, when the steam whistle in the pressing loft sounded for dinner. The men clambered up the hold-ladders and trooped ashore to dine, but Tom went down the hold. Thinking that he had gone down to survey the work, I followed him below a few minutes afterwards for the same purpose, and walking over the tiers of wool bales into the forward part of the hold, I waited for my eyes to grow accustomed to the gloom. While standing there, I heard a violent sobbing behind me, and turning round, to my great astonishment I saw Big Tom stretched face downwards sobbing on the bales, his head on his arms, and his great body quivering at every sob with the intensity of his grief. He was evidently in trouble, and had waited for the dinner hour to creep into a quiet place and give vent to his emotion. Not wishing to intrude on his evident sorrow, I turned to walk away, when I kicked against a screw-jack, and the clatter caused him to look up and see me. The face of a hard, strong man, swollen and distorted with grief, is not a pleasant sight, and I felt very uncomfortable.

"What's wrong with you, Tom?" I inquired. Tom composed himself with an effort and told me his trouble.

"My little boy died lately, and we buried him yesterday," he said.

"What!" I exclaimed, "that little curly-headed chap who used to bring your dinner down last voyage?"

"Yes, Mr. Scott," replied Tom, "that's him, poor little creature. He had a tumour on the brain, and he lost his sight, and suffered a lot before he died."

"Could nothing be done for him?" I asked.

"No; I don't think so," answered Tom, "anyhow, I called in the best doctor in Sydney, and I says, 'Doctor, I've got money saved, and I'll pay all I've got if anything can be done for my boy.' The doctor who had been attendin' him was there, too, and they had a consultation, and then they told me that

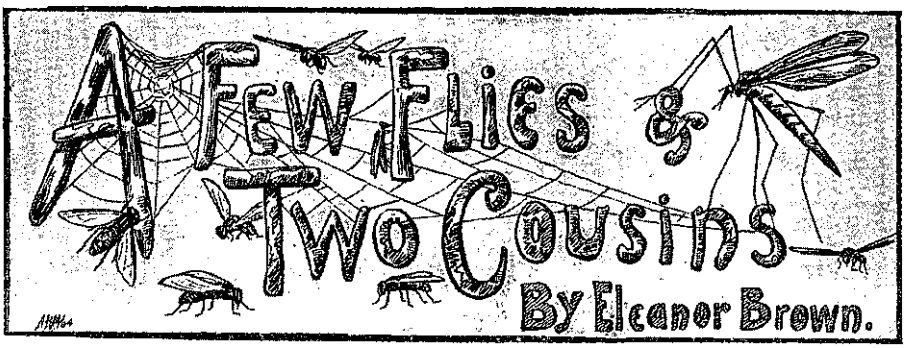
nothing more could be done. Poor little bloke, he lasted several weeks after that, and he was so good and patient. Although the pain turned him blind, he used to hear me come home, and he didn't cry out with pain so much when I sat by his bed and held his hand. Once I thought he saw me, and I says, 'Can you see me, Harry? Can you see your ole dad?' 'Yes, dad,' he says, 'I can see you': but he couldn't. The doctor said he couldn't. The night before he died, his mother prayed that he might be taken out of his pain. I ain't religious myself, but when she'd finished, I said, Amen. Last night, after the funeral, his mother was crying, and I says, 'Don't cry, ole woman, we ought to be thankful our boy don't suffer no more.' But I felt very bad myself to-day, that's why I came down here in the dinner hour and let myself go."

Tom told his story with such earnestness and pathos that I felt quite saddened, and I sympathised with him sincerely. I then went on deck, and left him holding his face in a bucket of water to remove the traces of his emotion. Half an hour afterwards, when the work started again, Big Tom was standing at the gangway, hustling the work along, and shouting: "Now then, hook on, you on the wharf! Get a move on, you blokes in the hold there! This ain't no school picnic! Lower away, Jerry! Drop it on the blighters, if they don't clear the hatch!"

Then he bustled round the decks, strenuous and profane, a striking contrast to the man who I had seen an hour before sobbing out his grief in a dark corner. Although out of working hours Tom was considered a good fellow; and despite his hard scarred face, he had kindly blue eyes, yet few would have guessed that rough, truculent giant possessed a heart more tender, loving and kind than those of many women.

G. Fossesholm, Photo.

The prickly pear, Darling Downs, Queensland.



IN the natural world which surrounds us there are so many claimants to our attention, so much exquisite beauty to be felt and conveyed, that it may be surprising to some that I choose to take for my subject representatives of a group so little loved as flies and their cousins. Inquiry is frequently made as to what use flies are. The general impression abroad is that they have only a talent for ministering to our discomfort, and making themselves as irritating towards us as they know how; consequently they are looked upon as useless cumberers of the earth.

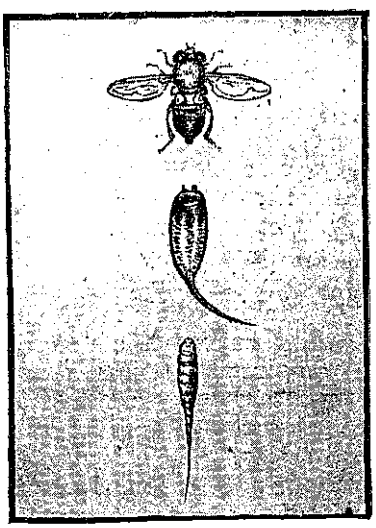
But for the credit of the family be it said there are few insects more useful in the economy of Nature than the oft maligned flies, so they are not entitled to all the maledictions we heap upon them. They belong to the extensive Order of Diptera, remarkable for great variety, the number of species, and their enormous profusion. The distinguishing characteristics are two wings and two slender pin-like projections called poisers, which take the place of the absent hind wings, and help the possessor to regulate the action of flying. It is very easy to identify any of the numerous band by the above, but I rarely find many who are anxious to have more than a nodding acquaintance with these Ishmaelites of the air, that have in their train all the blood-thirsty villains we know as gnats, bot-flies, flesh-flies, sand-flies —and every other fly of bad repute.

"They come not single spies, but in battalions," may with truth be said of flies in New Zealand, for they are practically everywhere, when I watch them in their gregarious flight, taking their revels in the sunbeams, cheating the bees, and filling the air with voices, they appeal to me as the most frolicsome of all our insects. They do not take life too seriously, and they always wear a humorous sort of jauntiness, as if to say, "see how brisk and alert we are." But when on duty they work with a will as Nature's sanitary inspectors, policemen of the air, and scavengers of the earth; and the sweetness and purity of the country bears testimony to the completeness with which it is carried out. One set aided by a keen sense of smell continually buzzes around to spy out and remove all impure matter that would soon pollute the air, and render it less wholesome and enjoyable.

Another relay, with tastes decidedly insectivorous, holds caterpillars in subjection by keeping a vigilant eye upon their movements, and utilising them as incubators when the necessity arises. The generations of flies that come into

existence that way is a startling proof of the countless number of caterpillars that mutely surrender to their artful manoeuvres. My first awakening to that fact solved a mystery that had been puzzling me for many months. How was it possible for flies to arise from caterpillars ? When saving chrysalids in the sure and certain hope of seeing moths emerge, one's credulity receives a mighty shock to behold instead a whole colony of flies troop out, trimming their wings for flight. But this is only by the way as a tribute to their smartness.

Again, there are other armies getting a livelihood by assimilating



Helophilus Fly from it's youth upwards.

the decaying flotsam and jetsam of our shores, hunting the " merry microbe," and fertilizing numerous native flowers during their inquisitive wanderings among the trees.

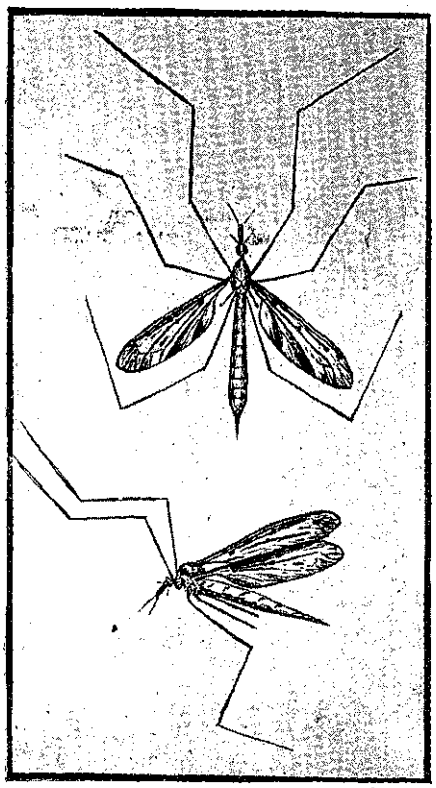
May we not infer from these and other details in their history, that all this labour or self-support, call it what we will, has a beneficial influence upon our surroundings, therefore upon us, and so far as the workers relation to mankind is concerned, naught but blessings in disguise ?

One of the most curious members of the fly family I know is the Helophilus, which in a certain sense may be called amphibious. You may know it by its singularly strange larval form, noted as " rat-tailed maggot," to distinguish the peculiar caudal appendage which acts as a collapsable air pump to the creature in its babyhood. Through this pump it imbibes enough oxygen for its support although the body may be covered by water for some depth. The first and longest time of its life is spent in stagnant water, there it may be seen wriggling around with inverted head, and breathing tube extended to collect the air. When the " still small voice " announces the hour of change, it shakes off the watery home-ties for a burrow in the adjacent earth where it can grow up to fly-hood. Under the water, and under the earth, for the appointed season, and then it awakens to its destiny, eases off the lid of its earthy prison to step out into insect society, and possibly less astonished at its neat and tail-less figure than I was when I first beheld its resurrection. All through the warm sunny days we can see it and its companions haunting the flowers claimed as its table on the same footing as the bees, but on the principle of first come first served.

I may here mention how an old Maori man, learned in the ways of the stars, the movements of the clouds and the winds, and all the little by-paths of Nature's lore, once drew my attention to this fly by exclaiming in an alert voice (though I supposed him oblivious to all around), " I te Kingi o te fly." The stone wall of language was between us, so a noble opportunity was lost ; but the little incident I never forgot, nor how the apt and poetic allusion to the rank he had raised it above its fellows appealed to me.

Cousin number one is the Crane-fly. This funny, spindle-shanked insect, so well known as " Daddy-long-legs," has, like the majority of its kin, no legs to move about with in its youth, but the deficiency is more than provided for later on when it appears to have gained

jointed stilts with which to stalk over the long dewy grass. The incomplete Daddy needs a vast amount of vegetation to keep up its

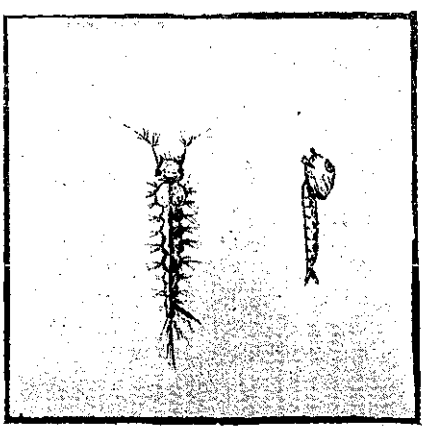


Mrs. Daddy.

spirits and sustain it during its legless probation, so of course it chooses the best to be had in the way of grass-land, corn crops, and such little luxuries. This naturally raises the vendetta of the farmer, who is the general sufferer by its gormandizing. When the mother plants her eggs in the rank grass or refuse close to the ground, the work that falls upon each one, as it hatches out, of nibbling off the roots above or below the surface requires no apprenticeship; and a few hundreds of them, having bequeathed healthy appetites, could soon lay bare acres without much effort.

What a terrible muddle it is when poor old Mrs. Daddy goes abroad, and walks by mistake into a spider's kitchen. She loses her presence of mind completely. No sooner does she extricate one length of leg than the others become more hopelessly entangled. About the only time in her life, I should think, when she wished Nature had left her alone in her leg-lessness. If she is fresh in the encounter, and has agility enough to get a good impetus on her body, she may escape by leaving half or more of her legs behind her. That is a little way the family has of shuffling out of difficulties by shedding limbs rather than sacrificing the body. Many times I have been left with threads of legs for consolation as the creature flew off. The Daddies, as a whole, have no special goodness to boast of, and only exist on sufferance, but for all that many hundreds manage to eat and pass their short and merry lives away. Although they do not sit in high places themselves, they have some relatives that do. And if it were in the insect world as it is in ours, that alone would cover their multitude of sins. Such is the advantage of great relations which often get greater as they recede.

Cousin number two is the nimble mosquito, and but a wee insect in comparison to its giant relative mentioned above. In its childhood



The undeveloped Mosquito - first and second stage. (Magnified).

it is chiefly taken up with hunting and devouring the lower organisms that flourish and abound in all stagnant water, thereby beneficially cleansing and sweetening it for some

higher use. The male is a meek, inoffensive vegetarian, but his blood-thirsty wife acts as if she had centuries of short rations to overtake. As if to further that desire she faces the world with a bundle of surgical instruments, and a gory determination to make up for the lack of savagery in her gentler spouse.

A little body but a large character; she knows her mind and makes a bold stand to have it. In some localities nothing short of steel armour could possibly turn her proboscis from the error of its way. It is not so much the bite we take exception to, as the irritating poison she injects with it in token of her savage independence. Nevertheless, before the acquisition of wings she and her family are absorbingly interesting to those who care to trace out the life threads of Nature's factors, and unravel them. Madam Mosquito makes the most of her allotted span, considering she is responsible for all the vocal parts, undertakes the attacking and poisoning, and yet is supposed to die of a green old age in three days. Before her latter end, however, she attends to her domestic duties with a will. She arranges her embryo's cells into an oval-shaped boat skilfully sealed, and secure from leaking or sinking, and casts it afloat on the water where her baby mosquitos could only live and develop for some time. Those fairy cells stand side by side with mathematical accuracy, and each has a lid upon the surface to allow her swarm at the very threshold of life, to take a header straight into the deep. At this early aquatic time they own a cunning contrivance for breathing through the tail, but as they moult and get on in life that air channel is discarded for a newer and more up-to-date design in the matter of air, which can now be received through two little ear-like appendages on the head. Now this last wrap fulfils a two-fold purpose; it protects and covers them during their fasting period, and eventually becomes a life-boat for their deliverance when they make their exit into the air. A perilous performance, truly! for they have nothing now to dread so much as water, and many, many die in the attempt. But we would never be any the wiser if we had not seen it. This proves that the ancient house of Mosquito is not tottering yet. Madam saw to that before she stole away to die, by leaving hundreds to succeed her, so that enough would survive to carry on the great work of her ancestors.

TRIOLETS: One Hill and Vale.

I LOVE one hill of hills,
  One vale of vales I love;
When tremble the Spring rills
I love one hill of hills;
When the warm sun downspills
  His clear light from above,
I love one hill of hills,
  One vale of vales I love.

In one sad vale of vales
  Of old Œnone wept,
Sadder than nightingales;
In one sad vale of vales
Of Ida, whose rich tales
  Slip from the tongue adept;
In one sad vale of vales
  Of old, Œnone wept.

But I, I laugh and sing,
  Sunshine my vale and hill;
Tears may their sorrow bring,
But I, I laugh and sing
With the first choirs of Spring;
  Earth may have sorrow still,
But I, I laugh and sing,
  Sunshine my vale and hill.

JOHANNES C. ANDERSEN.

THE WORKING OVERSEER.

By G. B. LANCASTER.

WEST-ORMOND switched on the electric light, backed out of the power-house, locked the door, and walked across through swish of water to the cliff where the ground-sluicers worked. The spark of light jumped before him from lamp to lamp, and shut out all the wild hills of dead manuka and distance with a solid wall of black. Under the near lamp-post the jet spouted from a four-inch nozzle, scoring up and down the rock as the nozzle-man's hand swayed it.

Ormond watched for two minutes with keen eyes and shut lips. The rock shivered and sunk forward in a pudding of yellow wash. The nozzle-man dipped his wrist a fraction, and the jet dug out a big manuka bush, tossing it over into the night beyond. Then the steady roar splattered on rock again, sending up a comb of white smoke above the light-arc.

"What's all that waste water doing round the junction?" demanded Ormond, bringing his mouth to the other's ear.

"She's leakin'. Bad. Dan says it ain't the joint nuther. He put in a new ring jest 'fore he went off shift."

"Leaking? Why don't you use the second head, then, confound you? What? You know I mended it yesterday." Ormond jumped for the two-way cock. "Get up to that other nozzle, I tell you." He slung the handles round with a jerk. "Keep her at that, and I'll see to the leak in the morning. Bolts worked loose, I suppose."

The man said something under his breath, and West-Ormond's hands came out of his pockets in a flash. But he dropped them, turned on his heel, and tramped through clayey mullock until the tail of light flickered out over a yellow running river and the box-man's oilskins. He knew that the pipe was worn out, and he knew that the men knew it. The understanding of Bailey's half-laugh sung through his head, and brought a roughness to his voice.

"Chard! I'm going down to the township for an hour or two. You'll work out that corner before I get back. See that Bailey keeps up to you."

Chard grunted reply, swung himself into the boxes, and sprang on a great choking boulder, heaving it overboard with a masterly kick of the shovel exactly as the swirling water ran abrim in a gurgle of spume.

Ormond dropped his head on his chest, and went down the dark hill with a sure, swift foot among the raffle of dead scrub and fallen-in shafts and stones. The grate of wash in the boxes and the snarl of the jet passed overhead, and down on the level of the Changing Creek was pale starlight and silence. Ormond hopped across the tail-race where it ran six feet deep, and slung along a half-yard track under the bank. The smell of briar-roses was in the heavy air, and the Changing Creek babbled soothingly to the still night.

Round a bend two dredges showed

up, glaring electric light, and pouring muddy shingle out steadily. Ormond cursed their fat, squat prosperity, swung himself up to the hill-top, cut across a corner, foul with briars and gorse, took the township street at its lower end, and hammered on the open door of a cottage sitting back among some poplars.

A candle glimmered up the dark passage, and Ormond spoke to the blink of it.

"Is Father O'Malley—oh; it's yourself, Father. Anyone here? For I'm not coming in if——"

The priest's quick ear caught the tension in Ormond's tone. He laid a fat hand on the younger man's arm, drew him through the door, and shut it.

..." There is not, then. I have just finished supper . . . will you have a pipe, Ormond? You've let me smoke alone these ten nights. Busy? Uh—h! When were ye anythin' else? Not that chair. Ye cracked it last time with your fooleries . . . there's tobacco behind ye, man. This tin's the same brand as yer own."

Ormond lit up with unsteady hands, drawing out the life in broken, impatient puffs. The Father lowered his bulk into a worn leather chair opposite, and made a blue veil of smoke between the two. If Ormond had a trouble he would come to it when he was ready. The little bee-clock on the mantel-shelf made anxious conversation, and once in every few minutes a cart rattled an answer from the street. The two men smoked silently. The priest moved first; grunted, and heaved himself forward in his chair.

"If I were behind the gratin', Ormond, I'd have ye up to the confessional in less time than this. Have ye killed a director, then?"

Ormond started. Then he recrossed his legs, and lay back.

"Oh, it's only the same old thing"; his voice was carefully careless. "I don't know what I've come to you to-night for. You can't do anything."

"I don't mean to try, sure. The souls of men take all the tinkerin' I can give without goin' seekin' to the dredges an' sluices."

"You'd find your work cut out if you came seeking to The Bear," said Ormond, bitterly. "She's going to pieces. To pieces; poor old girl. Just for want of a little of the money those confounded directors are sucking out of her. I've written to them"; he sat up, and his words came with a rush; "I've written and written. And I've dragged young Pebham over every inch of it till he must be as sick of it as I am. Heaven only knows how he has the face to call himself a manager! He comes up to the claim one half-day a week. One half-day! Then he goes back so town and writes up a report. Manager! Good Lord! There's not a sluicing hand in all Otago knows less about hydraulics than he does."

The priest's kindly eyes twinkled.

"O' coorse. Every man wud like to be the handle of the spade. It's niver so easy working with a foot on ye're shoulder all the time. But there's better men than yesilf done it, Ormond."

"I don't want to be the handle. D'ye think I'm minding what it is to me? Pebham can call me digger instead of working-overseer if it pleases him. I don't care. But it's the old Bear herself—the claim—and all the shareholders who will suffer for this rotting. That's what is driving me wild!"

He flung through the half-lighted room restlessly. The priest bit his thumb-nail, and frowned. He was a worker himself, and he understood.

"Can't ye get hold on the boys, anyway? Surely any man in his senses would see ye can't work a claim without money."

"They are not in their senses, then, I suppose. They are idiots. Blind, deaf idiots—and I wish to Heaven they were dumb, too! It's easy to understand, of course. Martlock let things go too far before he sold out. You bet he told

the syndicate that everything was in first-class order, and they can't understand why I'm always crying out for repairs. What? They only sent young Pebham up to look at it. He's about as much good as a sick head-ache. His father has told him that expenses must be kept down. That's all he can say when I show him a leaky pipe spitting like a cat. Curse him!"

"Tut-t-t!"

"I beg your pardon, Father. But, oh, Lord! You don't see the futile puerility of it all. Twenty-three miles of race, and two-and-three-quarters of pipes, and a twelve-inch plant—I tell you, it needs constant outlay to keep it in order. And this has had nothing spent on it for a year. I sent for steel plates for the lift-pipe head on my own, and there was a shine when the bill came in. Pebham said I had the box too close on the escape. He can talk the silliest rot——"

Ormond came back to the mantel-shelf, crossed his arms on it, and dropped his head. His nerves were strung to that tightness which in a woman would be hysteria. The priest got up heavily, and put his hands on the stooped shoulders.

"There's no credit owin' ye in taking your whippin', Ormond. We all have to do that one time an' another. But ye can bite on the bullet, can't ye? Or there's nothin' of a man to ye but the clothes."

Ormond did not move. He was squarely and strongly built, with the spade fingers and lean, set jaw of the practical engineer. But to-night he was weak as a little child. Just the half-laugh of one of the men that he ruled had over-set his strength for the time.

"It's a great thing to be a man, isn't it?" he said, indistinctly: "and to slave your soul out to do your work honestly—and to get no credit—no help—go on, Father. Tell me how much we've got to thank God for."

"It's yesilf hasn't much, if that's all the spirit that's in ye. Let it go, then. It's a man's work, an' not yours at all."

Father O'Malley had seen one in like trouble before. He had used the whip then. But Ormond was not caring for it.

"I can't," he said. "I've given her so much that I—I can't go back on her. She's had seven years of my life, and I believe she knows it. I couldn't work for another claim as I've worked for her. You don't know what it is to fight for her back in the hills when the rains are stripping the faces, and there's an even chance of losing half the race in a few minutes. I've done that six times this year. And the flume in Paddy's Gully is getting shaky. I was up to my middle in it most of to-day—that accounts for the drivel I'm talking, I suppose. Why don't you kick me out, Father?"

"Faith! There's niver an inch of ye softer than the toe of me boot—unless it's yer head. Ye have got something out o' servin' the Bear, Ormond. Did ye hear what that clock says? There's a heel of cheese in the——"

"Thanks. I can't wait. I want to be back before they change shift. Bailey is working a bit slack."

"Don't tell him that the night, then. For I'm thinkin' ye'd be speakin' with your fists . . . good-night, lad."

Ormond over-saw the shift, stumbled to his hut behind the power-house, and wrote a letter to the directors. Then he went to bed in his clothes. The letter brought not only young Pebham, but Pebham's father, and the very chief of all the directors beside. This was more than Ormond had prayed for. He was patching a nine-inch pipe that morning. The pipe was red-hot in the naked sunshine of the hill; the plate was hot, and the tap turned stickily in his hands. He grovelled for a dropped bolt in the half-dried yellow clay of the under-way, picked it out, and smudged the sweat off his forehead with his arm. Then the three men from town came over the hill and looked at him.

Pebham greeted the overseer casually; gave introduction more casually still; loafed over to the box-man, asked a few questions, and settled down to sleep in the sun. Ormond brought himself to attention instantly. All his body was alive with fight.

"I am very pleased to see you," he said. "You would like to look over the plant, of course. I am afraid you would find it rather far to get up to the pentstock—that is twenty-three miles from here."

Ormond had done it many times. But he grinned unkindly at the fat, elderly directors who were purple from the heat, and breathless from the short climb.

The chief of all the directors stared at the network of sullen black pipes climbing the hill, at Ormond's weather-board hut behind the tin power-house, at Chard shovelling the wash along the boxes in the heat.

"My goodness gracious," he said. "What a place! What a place to live!"

Ormond had lived here seven years. The all-surrounding hills with their bleak, black bluffs showing up through the dead manuka were home to him. He had shot rabbits in every shingle gully that fed the Changing Creek, from the pentstock to the township. He knew it by hot, fierce day, and perfect evening, and mad, storm-torn winter nights. That fat director would never know the Bear. He grinned again, rested a foot on the main-pipe, and waited.

The life of the Bear was throbbing under his boot.

Pebham the elder began to speak. He spoke with painful accuracy for five minutes. He told Ormond a great many things that Ormond knew far better than he did; he complained of Ormond's constant demands for repairs; finally he said that he wanted explanation.

"My son says that everything is in good order. We were given to understand that everything was in good order when we took the claim over."

Ormond's temper began to wake.

"I can't help that. It was not. If your son was here as often as a manager should be, he might know what he's talking about. The flumes and trestles are rotten—I'm always patching them. If you'll kindly come round here, and examine the pipes for the power-house and the Pelton wheel, you might see the plugs in them. I gave a week's work to each of those pipes. Then the jets——" Ormond wrenched a hydraulic jet out of its elbow and rolled it out to the open; "we are going back to the hydraulic in the creek-bottom next week, and these are the only jets I have to work with." He pulled out a measure, and laid it over the lip. "Seven-and-three-quarter inches. It should be five-and-a-half. How much pressure do you think we lose when the things are worn to that size?"

Ormond's flannel shirt was dirty, and loose at the neck, and his trousers were tucked anyhow into his long boots. But the two fat directors were afraid of him. The Bear did not look at all the same, laid nakedly here on the hill with a hard-eyed man standing over her to crush them with figures. Ormond had an unpleasantly virile grasp of his subject.

"Well well," said the chief of all the directors; "I dare say we can manage a new jet for you. But you are asking for pipes; a quarter-mile of pipes; twenty-one foot pipes at six pound apiece. We can't let you have those, you know. We were told that you were a fairly capable man—I beg your pardon?"

"I didn't speak. Yes?"

Pebham the elder took up the running. The sun was beating on the back of his neck, and anger had purpled his face.

"We were told that you were a fairly capable man, Mr. Ormond, and a fairly—er—truthful one. You must give me leave to doubt the

fact of your being either the one or the other."

"Will you kindly tell me why?"

"Er"; Pebham the elder shuffled nervously. "You have no right to speak to me in that tone, sir."

"I'll show you if I have in a minute. Why?"

"Pebham—my dear fellow—perhaps you had better let me speak—"

"I won't. Curse it; d'ye think I can't manage the man myself?"

If Ormond had been one whit less angry he would have laughed. But he stood in dead stillness, with a set to his body that caught young Pebham's sleepy attention, and brought him over to hear his father say:

". . . And so it is not only your incessant and puerile demands, annoying though they are. You must have some very good reason to give for the extraordinary falling off in the returns——"

"Whew!" whistled young Pebham, staring on the three. "I say, pater; I told you to go a bit slow with Ormond."

"Hold your tongue. Well, Mr. Ormond?"

"I can give you several reasons," said Ormond, speaking very levelly. "In the first place, we have had bad weather in the hills. That breaks the race, and occasions a stoppage. Twice this month a flume has been washed away in a spate. That meant nearly four days' break. A great many of the pipes are worn out. I have to be constantly changing them for repairs. That takes time. Then we have to run out a tail-race before we can get to work on the flat again. The dredges won't allow us to deflect the creek behind them."

"The dredges can't stop you. You are on your own ground."

"I told him so," said young Pebham. "But he wouldn't listen. Nobody listens to me."

"The wash carries down into their paddocks," said Ormond, choosing his words. "I think I have given sufficient reasons to satisfy the ordinary intelligence. If you want to know any more, you can ask the men. Now, Mr. Pebham; I have just one thing more to say to you. If you were a younger man, I'd have knocked you down before this. As it is, you will please take a week's notice from me, dating from to-day. And I should advise your son not to go back to town to-night. For I shall do no more work than the ordinary overseer. All orders must come from him in future."

"Oh, I say!" cried young Pebham. "I told you so, pater! For Heaven's sake hedge on what you said, can't you? I don't know how to manage the beastly thing."

Pebham the elder was giddy with rage. His red eyes were popping in his red face, and his words came thickly. They were not nice words to listen to. Very unequivocally Pebham the elder chopped a week off Ormond's discharge, tendering coin instead. He drew out a cheque to that effect on the beating main pipe of the Bear, and Ormond tore it up. Then the chief of all the directors spoke apologetically, and young Pebham complained, and Pebham the elder swore blue swears.

Ormond went away from it all, walking blindly. From its covered box by the Pelton wheel the telephone bell rang up from Willis' twenty-three miles away at the intake. Ormond picked up the receiver mechanically. Then dropped it, and sent word to Pebham by Meares. Meares was carting over some ripples that Ormond had forged out yesterday. The sight of them made the blood boil into his head and throat. He turned into his hut, and banged the door.

Father O'Malley had been to the very outskirts of his parish for a christening that day. His round pony had crawled and sweated the way over, but it came home before a whipping wind, and a rattle of thunder that shook the hills. ". . . It's a rough night we'll have on us, sure," he said. "An' it would be just like that Dinnis Murphy to choose it for dyin' in,

an' want me out . . . now, if that's him cryin' on me . . . faith, lad; I'm glad to see ye! It's not a buryin' or a christenin' ye'll be wantin' out o' me to-night?"

Ormond walked straight up to the fire where the priest sat toasting his slippers.

"I've left her," he said. "Father; I've left her."

Then he went over to the window, and leaned his forehead on the glass. Father O'Malley had loved a woman once. To the best of his knowledge Ormond had loved the Bear instead. He waited until the little clock had clattered through ten full minutes. Then he said gently:

"Come to the fire, lad, an' talk it out. Whose blame is it, then?"

Ormond answered questions wearily, and without elaboration. He sat with his elbows on his knees, propping his chin in his hands, and staring into the fire. It was a lean, plain face; weather-marked and lined. But the endurance and the alert decision had gone out of it.

"I'm tired," he said. "Tired. There isn't much good in anything, after all. A man puts the best of him into a thing, and—do you know what he feels like when he's told that his best isn't worth a tinker's curse?"

A sore soul requires very soft gloves for the handling. Father O'Malley put his on for present needs, while the lightning played outside the window, poking long fingers across the room, and the cottage shivered under the wrath of a full-waked storm.

Someone beat a mad tattoo on the knocker, followed the sound down the passage, and burst into the dusky room, crying on Ormond. Ormond looked up.

"Yes?" he said, without interest; "what is it, Chard?"

"Pebham says will yer come wi' 'im ter the pentstock? Willis is clean off 'is onion. 'Alf the 'ills are movin' wi' the water be'ind the faces, and 'e's scared fur the race."

"No," said Ormond. "You can tell Mr. Pebham that I have left the Bear."

Chard expostulated in unbelieving amazement that Ormond should think of such a trivial matter just then. Ormond battered a lump of coal with his heel.

"I'm not coming," he said again. "You can go back and tell them that I'll see them in perdition first. Put it any way you like. I don't care."

A silence that was rigid restraint fell between the men when Chard was gone. The priest only smoked in company. Ormond was not company to-night. He stood staring at the fire, with his hands deep in his pockets. Once he walked over to the window. The rain came in squalls, and a sudden lift showed the moon riding in the wrack above the mountain where the Bear took life. Ormond wheeled, and came back with shoulders straightened.

"Good-night, Father," he said. "I'm off."

"Where then?"

"To get a horse."

"I'll have a breakfast for ye when ye get back," said Father O'Malley, heartily, and Ormond went swift-foot into the night.

He roused out the best horse in the livery stables, grabbed any gear that came, and slung headlong down the street to the bridge. Here he took the creek, working up in a confident knowledge of his bearings, struck the track on the far side, and cast loose the rein on the wind-torn hill-top.

Ormond lay forward to the saddle as the track rose. A spark from the Bear lamps flashed across the creek. "I'm a skunk, old girl," he said. "I might have been some use if I'd gone at once."

A clear plan had shaped in his mind before he left the stables, and he was now heading for the pentstock. Once, years ago, he had seen the faces sliced off a range when a water-spout broke on the head, getting in behind the earth. He knew that not Pebham, nor a thousand Pebhams would be of any help to

the race if Willis had not talked lies on the wire. The Bear race was of all things difficult to guard. It began on a mountain, and doubled on itself a hundred times before it reached bottom. When the earth of the top shifted, it was quite plainly to be understood that the whole race must go out, swept before the torrent into the flume below. The flume straddled two miles of swamp, and little gullies, and worked-out mining country. It was the strongest bit of work on the Bear Claim, for Ormond had given it all his spare time for a year past. It might be trusted to carry the first of the rush—the half—enough certainly to swamp and buckle the slighter fluming beyond; to reach and choke the pipes, perhaps; or to drive them climbing each on each up the slope to the trestles crossing the creek.

The sleet whipped Ormond's ear, and the near hills rocked and changed shape as the storm ebbed and rose again. He left the track to drive his horse into a mad little mountain river that rolled boulders at him, and smelt of new wet earth. That cut off five miles and bruised his shin badly with a ripped-up young tree. The rain pelted like steel knitting-needles, and his hack began to flag. There was no track; the foot-way was rotten and uncertain; but the little knobs, and spurs, and gullies through which the Bear race took its way from the mountain showed up and hid again where the windy wrack drove.

The flume dribbled suddenly on his head as he rode athwart the track nineteen feet below it. He heard her roar above the growling thunder and the snap of the rain. Then he brought his horse up the gully side with hooked spurs. His right hand was cramped with the carriage of Father O'Malley's meat-chopper and a fine tooth saw. There had been no time to wait for better tools. At the gully top he tied up his horse; for the earth was riddled with gaping shafts. He went forward at a run, nosing by instinct among the holes. The blood in his ears deadened the roll of the thunder far above. The lightning snickered wickedly by his cheek, and in the dark behind he heard the livery stable horse scream in sudden fear. He had fought for the Bear by night before this. But not alone, nor yet with such danger compelling him. There was clear threat in that far-carrying under-mutter that was neither thunder nor rain.

The moon swept out from the thick black for two breaths. Through sleet like the bars of a cage Ormond saw the great hump of the Bear Mountain stripped into naked shingle and sleek with streams. Below, and brought forward to the eye, a thousand rivers galloped through scrub and round bluffs; spilling sideways into the bubbling gullies, and coasting down the spurs with heads of foam. Somewhere in the middle of that hell the race was going out. Somewhere at the top a dozen little men were running round the pentstock asking each other what should be done.

"They'd never think of trying to save the rest," said Ormond, in a high, fierce pride. "Never. Oh, good God; can't the dark hold up? Just for ten minutes!"

He swarmed up the flume like a cat, and crawled out along the cross-trees. The wind plucked his hands loose more than once, and the weight of his body as he swung took the skin from the palms. At his ear the flume was running full and steady; there was no grate of boulders yet. The sweet, damp smell of flax came up from the swamp to mix with the air that stank of sulphur and new-made mud. Ormond cast himself from tie to tie, making sternly forward. A vague, watery light gave form, but no distance; he guessed that by the change in sound. The full flood had not reached the flume-head as yet, but Ormond dared not wait. When it came it would give no warning.

"I'll give her a quarter-mile," he said. "If she stands up to it, that won't be too much."

He lay flat on a tie, and got the saw to work on a side-board. But the wood was wet, and the saw jammed and twisted. He dropped it, came astraddle the side, and used the chopper with a free arm-swing, beating, cutting, and splintering the thing into wreck. He worked backwards, knocking off the top board for a space of five feet. The wind was ice to his wet body, but the sweat dropped off him. It was such a little chance, and it meant so very much. In the beginning the water had washed round his ankle. Before the first board was off it clung cold to his shin. He talked to it in quick, broken words, while the wild night raved over him, and the flume shook on its skeleton trestles, and the rivers tore downward, flooding the broken race and choking it again with boulders, and leaping by gully and spur to the bottom.

He sprang into the flume; came to one knee, and fought with the lower board. The water muttered under his arm-pits, and slobbered over the gap. It was deadly cold, and the rush of it nailed him against the side as he battered it, desperate and blind.

"Give me a little longer, old girl," he said. "Only a little, and I'll do it."

The flume began to quiver as if ten ton of rolling stock were crossing it.

"By the Lord," said Ormond, "she's struck. But she's carrying. I knew she would." And he drove at the under-wash in an insane pride that his work should be so strong.

When the bottom board went the suction would carry him with it. That was of course. But it did not matter. The current would be deflected, for the grade was an absolute level. With the sloshy slap of water on his ears some words of Father O'Malley's hit his brain suddenly. "It's not a buryin' or a christenin' ye'll be wantin' out o' me to-night?" And in that moment he was afraid. The faint gleam of churning water and a couple of careless lightning flashes, written on the night, were all his world was giving him to take into the dark. Then the flume came down abrim, and Ormond, gripped bull-dog-wise to the last splintered board, carried it over with him.

The telephone poles were washed out, and this was why Pebham, coming down through the morning sunshine in the full and hopeless belief that two-thirds of a mile of twelve-inch pipes would be twisted and wrenched into wreck in the bottom of the Changing Creek, marvelled to find the races dry beyond the big flume. Then half the township went up, and understood all that Ormond had foreseen. There was nothing of the gap to guess at; for the overflow had dug out the trestles immediately below, pitched them forward, and parted the flume. Pebham stood and looked at it.

"That's the greatest piece of luck the Bear claim ever had," he said.

The livery-stable horse came home with a broken bridle. But it was three days later that the men from the lower dredge picked up Ormond's body in their flooded paddock.

A Trip to Taupo and the Volcanoes.

By C. L. HARRIS.

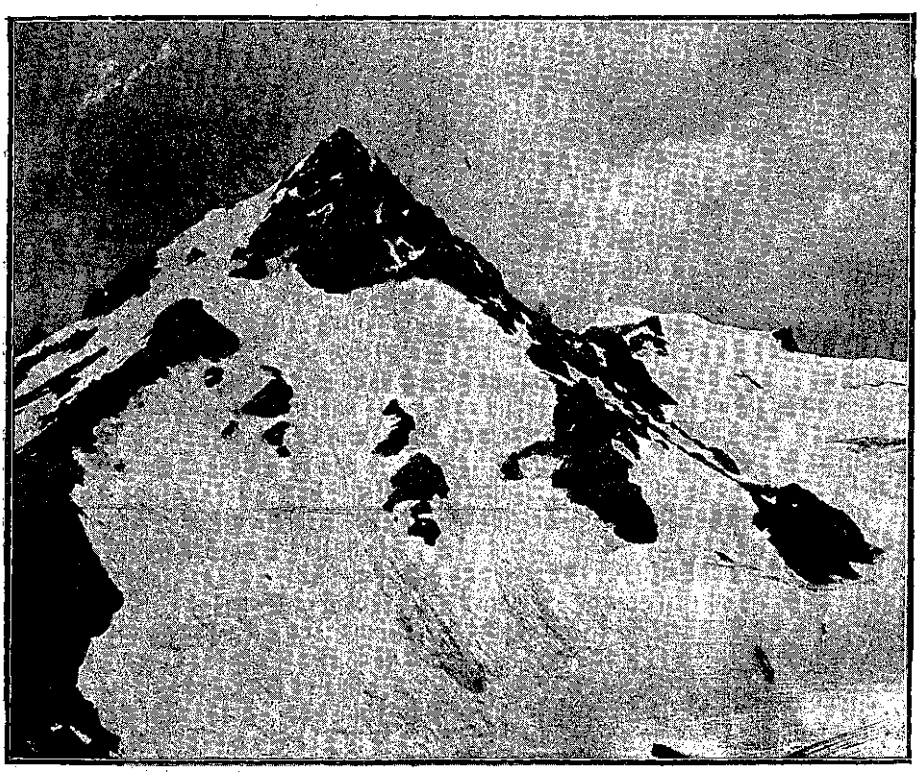
CHRISTMAS Day and a beautiful one. At seven a.m. we are on board the s.s. Wairere, the pioneer of Messrs. Hatrick and Co.'s steamers, accompanied by a gay crowd of holiday-makers, en route for Pipiriki. This part of our journey was one of great expectations, crammed as we were with glowing reports of the scenery of New Zealand's Rhine. We were in no way disappointed. For the first thirty miles or so the scenery is pretty but commonplace, thence to Jerusalem it improves considerably, but between Jerusalem and Pipiriki the river is grand in the extreme. Stretches of calm, deep water, casting beautiful reflections, skirted by high cliffs and wooded hills mantled with magnificent native forest trees, graceful palms and ferns innumerable, compose a scene which lingers in the memory amid our most cherished reminiscences. Pipiriki appeared en masse to welcome the arrival of its one daily excitement, and the pier was thronged with a gaily-dressed assemblage, composed chiefly of Maoris whose brilliantly coloured garments, contrasting fitly with their dusky complexions, gave life and gaiety to the scene. What songs of welcome greeted our Maori fellow-travellers as the boat neared the wharf, and what salutations and rubbing of noses as they stepped ashore! For Pipiriki was en fete and celebrating its Christmas by a great Maori gathering, to which we were shortly to be introduced. Collecting our baggage, we toil wearily up the hill steps to Pipiriki House, a miniature palace in its way, where one may live in absolute luxury while surrounded on all sides by the unmistakeable signs of the back-blocks township.

After dinner, we were invited to attend a Maori concert, and having, like most mortals, a keen sense of curiosity, we heartily accept the invitation, and make our way to the wharepuni at the pa some 500 yards from the House; here we find a great gathering of Maoris whose happy faces show keen enjoyment of Christmas festivities. What strikes one most forcibly on entering the building is the extreme orderliness and attentiveness of the audience. The local wit acts as M.C., and his word is law.

The arrival of the pakeha is greeted with acclamation, and the M.C. explains to us at great length that the Maori will sing first, and then the pakeha is expected to sing in return. So far so good, and the programme begins with a quartette in Maori, sung in harmony by four stalwart warriors. The singing was really good, but to the ears of the pakeha, who could not interpret the words, each verse seemed a repetition of its predecessor, and as verse after verse was sung to the same refrain, it grew monotonous. However, the song came to an end at last, and then arose a difficulty—the pakeha was to sing, and who was to uphold the honour of the pakeha. Volunteers were scarce, but two of our number consented to assist each other through "On the

Ball," the remainder promising to join in the chorus. This pleased the natives very much, and our representatives were accorded a most enthusiastic and undeniable encore. We put it down to courtesy, it was certainly not their want of musical taste.

Some of the Maoris sing well, the talent is there and only needs cultivation. A comic song in English by a Maori, announced to be from the King Country, fairly brought down the house, and indeed it was very cleverly handled. This Maori had certainly not been in the King Country all his life, unless my ideas of that locality are very crude; rather, I should say, he had been born and bred in the precincts of Dix's. About ten o'clock the M.C. announced that one of his brethren would sing a Maori farewell. This was a real Maori item. A youth of seventeen chanted a dozen verses or so in a minor key, prolonging the last note of each verse to a long-drawn wail. The singing of this last note seemed to be very exhausting, as he allowed an interval of five minutes between each verse; finally he danced a haka down the centre of the wharepuni. We interpreted this Maori farewell as a polite intimation for us to clear out, but before doing so, joined hands all round and gave them "Auld Lang Syne" in good, rollicking style. After this, we lost no time in getting to our respective beds, for we were to get to Raetihi (eighteen miles) next morning in time for breakfast—it subsequently turned out to be a very late breakfast.



South Eastern Peak of Ruapehu, top of Wangaehu Glacier.

By the time we had arranged swags, got our bikes in order, and swallowed a cup of hot coffee next morning, it was half-past six. Now for the road—well, on our first acquaintance we did not like it—good enough, perhaps, for horse

traffic, but decidedly rough for bikes, and as it is nearly all uphill, we walked quite half the distance. But apart from the unpleasantness of the road itself, the scenery is beautiful—bush all the way, lovely virgin forest stretching for miles in every direction, and at this time besprinkled with the beautiful red blossoms of the rata, which grows here in profusion.

We reached Raetihi very hungry at ten o'clock, and after a most enjoyable bath and a good breakfast, strolled out to see the sights, but Raetihi had none. A first-stage bush township, its one street lined with tree stumps and filled with mud holes; its buildings scattered at random; its population—you saw them not, but you heard the sound of the axe, and the saw, and the crash of falling timber, and the whole story unfolded itself. The place is thickly interspersed and surrounded by stumps, logs and dead standing trees now fast falling into decay, the bush having been felled before the formation of the township; but in the background the work of clearing goes on rapidly. We of the towns look with regret at the destruction of the forest, but the struggling settler has no time for sentiment, his first object being to clear the soil and make it reproductive.

After leaving Raetihi the road passes through some splendid level bush country to Ohakune (seven miles), and we are treated to some beautiful glimpses of Ruapehu in front. The township of Ohakune, so far as we could judge, consists of a boarding-house and a dairy factory. From Ohakune to Karioi the country gets poorer as we progress, but is well-watered by beautiful streams of clear, cold water flowing from the mountain. At Karioi we come out on the Murimutu Plains, grassless and treeless, stretching for miles in every direction, a wilderness of tussock inhabited by sheep and wild horses.

We arrived at Karioi, to the manifest annoyance of the landlady, late for dinner. That repast being over, the rouse-about informed us that the best ascent of Ruapehu could be made from there—that we could ride along a sheep-track for some six miles to the foot of the mountain, camp there, and then get to the top in four hours from the camp. We are looking out for that boy, and he is promised a warm half-hour on our next acquaintance; but his yarn was very feasible—"He had done it plenty of times." "Would he guide us to the camping-place?" "Oh, he'd see. Yes, he could come a little of the way—for a consideration of course."

We promised him five shillings, and started on the sheep-track. If you have never ridden a bike along a sheep-track across a tussock plain, try it. To the spectator the sight must be screamingly funny, the humour of the situation was not even lost upon ourselves. At Karioi we had procured our camping provisions, including a billy and pannikins, and laden with these in addition to our former baggage, steering along a track a foot wide, like a deep road rut bounded by tussocks, was anything but easy. For the first two miles our spills averaged one a chain per man, and as we rode in Indian file, when the man in front interviewed the ground he had to be active in removing himself and his machine from the track, to allow Number Two to take up the pacing. Thus, with clenched teeth and rigid limbs, we bumped along. The air now rent with exclamations as one struck the ground, the next minute with roars of laughter from the same man as the crash of the billy or a similar volley told of the fate of a comrade. Our guide, who cantered along on horseback, at last pointed out our camping-place—two miles ahead, he said, and along the same track—no need for him to come further—he had already come four miles (we reckoned it eight), and would now return. We paid the five shillings, had a spell, and let the ruffian go. It was well for him he went then.

We continued along the same track till dark, and apparently got no nearer to our proposed camping-place, so we struck off the track to a stream, and pitching our fly under the lee of a friendly flax-bush, turned in very sore and stiff on the hard ground—our baptism of hardships to follow.

We rose early from our uncomfortable beds, and after breakfast tramped over quite four miles of tussock plain before reaching our intended camping-place. From there the ascent was rocky without vegetation of any kind, but comparatively easy slopes; higher up, however, the grade became more difficult. We reached a saddle of the top of the mountain about eight hours after leaving camp, and essayed to climb higher across the top of the Wangaehu glacier, but the snow was too hard and steep for climbing without ice axes and nailed boots, so we had to be content with our performance. The view from the top is magnificent. One sees the horizon above the clouds, and the rivers trailing away in silver streaks which lose themselves in the distance. While the sun's rays struck mercilessly hot overhead, and were reflected blindingly upwards off the snow, yet the wind was bitterly cold and biting, and blew around the peaks and among the boulders with the roar of a mighty cataract. The mountain, from top to bottom, is covered with black, slate-coloured rocks of various sizes and shapes, but many of them had one or more perfectly flat surfaces. Red, irregular rocks of a burnt appearance also abound, and on the steeper slopes loose scoria and coarse sand. The descent took just about half the time occupied in the ascent, and we were back at camp just before dark. Shortly after tea, sleep took possession of us, after what most of us considered

Tourist Department, photo.

Tongariro, showing Red Crater, Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu.

the hardest day's work we had ever done.

Sunrise next morning gave promise of another scorching hot day, and amply fulfilled the promise. This morning we had a choice of routes, neither very encouraging. One was to return to Karioi, and take the road from there to Tokaanu (fifty-four miles), the other to strike across country to the road beyond Waiouru, thus saving at least eighteen miles of road, but having to wheel, push or carry our bikes and baggage over an indefinite stretch of tussock plain, we chose the latter, and feeling rather stiff from our yesterday's exertions, carried our bikes across the creek, and selecting a point to make for as being most probably nearest to the road, settled down to it. It was finding an unknown quantity with a vengeance—hour after hour went by, and found us still toiling on, wading creeks innumerable, and threading our way through rocks, tussocks, sand patches and swamps, until at last, after seven hours from camp, we caught sight of a cloud of dust about six miles ahead. On examination through the telescope, this turned out to be a coach—the mail coach from Waiouru to Tokaanu. The knowledge that the road was actually in sight somewhat raised our drooping spirits, and we waded the last river (the Wangaehu) and climbed the last hill with a little more enthusiasm, finally reaching the road at two p.m. at the tenth mile-peg from Waiouru. Thirty-four miles to Tokaanu, and oh, misery ! the road was sandy and to begin with uphill. However, we managed to ride, and the road improved as we progressed. From about the twenty-fourth mile-peg the grade of the road is down hill right to Tokaanu, and we appreciated the change. The scenery is rather fine and very wild. On the left, for the greater part of the distance, Ruapehu remains in view, now across the tussock plain, now beyond the Rangipo Desert, a wilderness of sand, now between the openings in beautiful patches of birch bush in the valleys of roaring mountain torrents, and now only her snow-clad summit is visible above the intervening mountain tops.

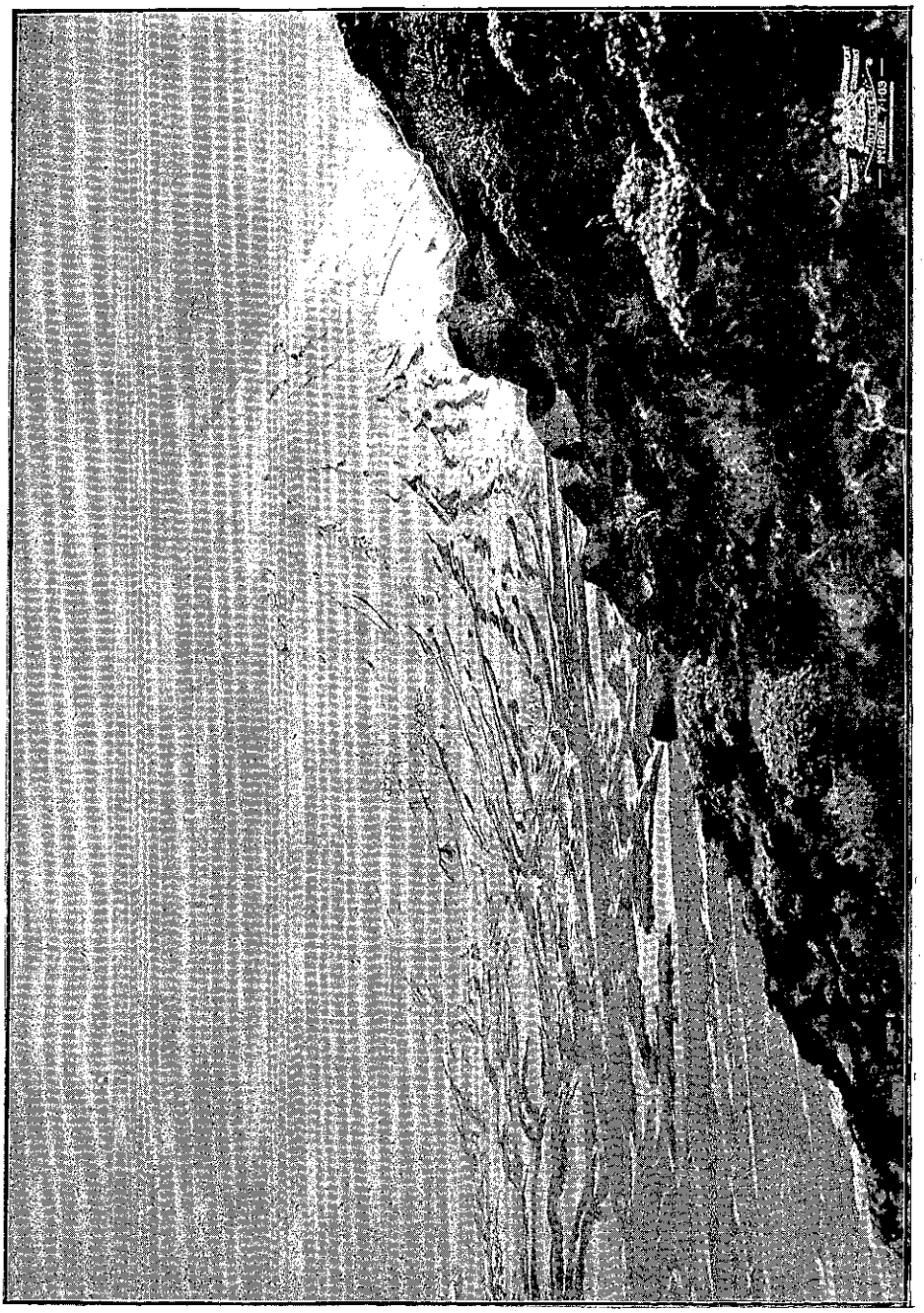
A little further on the smoking cone of Ngaurahoe stands out from the Tongariro Range, its aspect, dark and forbidding in the fading light, presents a strong contrast to its serene and peaceful neighbour. The sides of Ngaurahoe are very steep, and the clouds of sulphurous smoke from the crater hang around the top of the mountain, making it extremely dangerous to ascend except on the windward side. Beyond Ngaurahoe the rugged range of Tongariro stretches for some six or seven miles, its three craters still active, and belching forth white clouds of steam. Beyond again, close to Tokaanu, we pass around the base of Pihanga, a thickly-wooded mountain of about 2000 feet, an extinct volcano, its crater visible like a great quarry in the top. On the right rise the birch and tussock-clad Kaimanawas, neither very high nor very grand, simply rough-looking hills, stretching as far as the eye could reach. Nearing Tokaanu one gets beautiful glimpses of Lake Taupo and its surroundings. We reached Tokaanu very weary at about seven o'clock in the evening, and wonderful to relate, found a first-class hot dinner awaiting us. We were surprised.

"Oh !" observed a native, "no occasion for surprise. Old Blake knows who's coming long before they get here. Didn't you pass the coach ?"

"Yes."

"Well, perhaps you didn't notice, but the driver takes two or three of Blake's pigeons every day, and lets Blake know per pigeon-post how many passengers to prepare for, and any other items of importance."

We were apparently becoming important. It was quite a new departure for us to have our comings and goings heralded by pigeon-gram.



Ngauruhoe.

Tourist Department, photo.

The next day was one of rest for the weary, and yet who could rest in a place with so many sights to see? We had our first hot bath, and enjoyed it immensely. The baths here are round, natural basins of white silica, varying in size from six feet to twenty in diameter, and in depth from two to thirteen feet; They also vary in temperature at different times. You might go to one in the morning, and find it nearly cold, and again in the afternoon, and find it nearly boiling. Most of the baths overflow when superheated, and thus cleanse themselves naturally. This afternoon we went across a bay on the lake to Waihi (a Maori village about two miles from Tokaanu) to see the waterfall, borrowing for the purpose a boat which we found at the wharf, and a pair of oars which we found in the shed alongside. The old tub leaked like a sieve, we had twice to run ashore, and tip the water out of her, and as we had only one pair of oars and a head wind, progress was slow. At last, sighting some cherry-trees ashore, we beached the tub again, and had an excellent feed, fine, large, red cherries, dead ripe, and more than we could have eaten in a month.

Having satisfied the inner man, we walked the remaining half mile through the Maori pa to the falls. They are a fine sight, the largest is about 140 feet sheer from the top of the cliff into a deep, black hole, half way up the hillside. The water pours into the hole with a deafening roar, and flings a fine, misty spray all round. Over the edge of this hole is another fall of about forty feet, from the bottom of which the stream flows quietly down into the lake about 200 yards away. Attempts had evidently been made to harness the lower fall; the water-wheel is still there, but it does not appear ever to have been used, but remains a monument of useless labour and wasted capital.

Returning to Tokaanu our progress was like a fairy tale. The wind had risen to half a gale, and was blowing straight down the course, creating quite a "sea." I had been taking photos of the falls, and a happy thought struck one of us to use the focussing cloth as a sail, and an excellent sail it made, stretched between the inverted legs of the tripod, and held aloft amidships. The old tub tore along in fine style, shipping water by the bucketful, and giving us an exciting time. To the spectator the sight must have been a curious one—one man holding aloft the strange, black pirate sail; another baling as though his life depended on it; a third steering desperately with one oar; and a fourth holding the surplus clothing and endeavouring with indifferent success to keep it dry, and balance the boat at the same time. Strange to relate, we did not capsize, but reached the wharf safely, and on arrival were informed that one owner had been looking for his boat, and another for his oars; however, neither troubled us, so we replaced them, got back to the hotel, and spent the rest of the day round the springs.

Off again at six a.m. next morning, for the first nine miles over the road by which we came, but at the ninth mile peg we branched off to the right along the Waimarino Road. About six miles from the junction is the beautiful Lake Roto Aria in the valley between Tongariro and Pihanga. This lake is about three miles wide and six long, and in season should be a sportsman's paradise, as it is covered with black swans and other water-fowl. Several Maori pas nestle in the valleys close to the lake, notably Okohau and Papakai.

Papakai is on the main road near the head of the lake, about twenty miles from Tokaanu. Here we lunched, boiling the billy beside the Papakai stream, a slightly sulphurous creek flowing down from Tongariro. We found the pa at Papakai deserted, as indeed were all the pas around about, the Maoris being all away at a festive Christmas

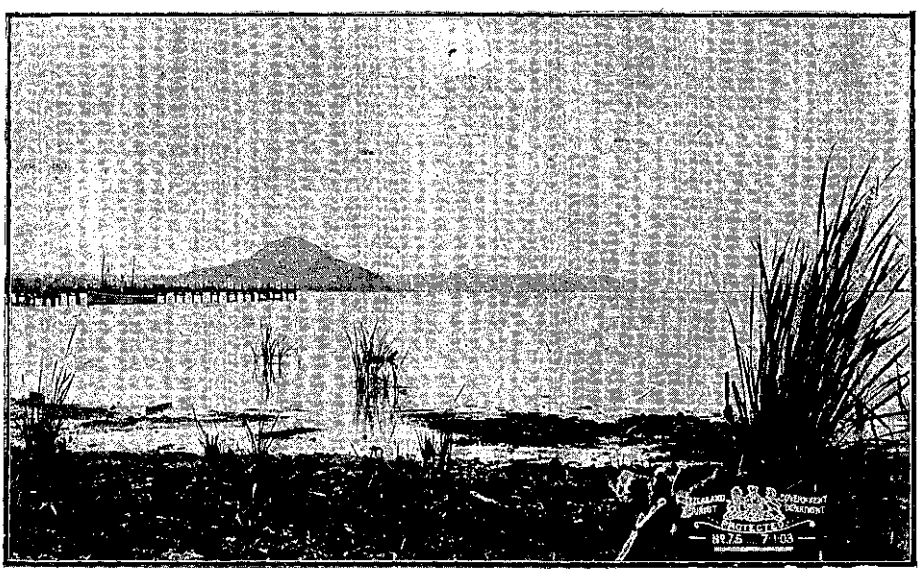
gathering on the shores of Lake Taupo. The wharepuni at this pa is beautifully carved, and has some really artistic monochrome paintings of Maori villages and historic places on panels ranged along the interior walls of its porch; one of the Hutt being particularly fine. The other whares are of the usual order, well ventilated and well smoked.

About a mile from Papakai we had to forsake the road and take the Ketetahi track, and as this proved impossible for bikes, we stowed them away in a flax-bush, shouldered the swags, and tramped the remaining seven miles to the camping ground just below the Ketetahi Hot Springs. Here we found a snug corner beside a stream, with tent-poles already fixed, and firewood within easy distance, for which we were duly thankful.

We woke up after a good night's rest to find it raining steadily with no hope of clearing. Nothing for it but to go on, so we started off up the mountain (Tongariro). After about ten minutes' climb, we reached the Ketetahi Hot Springs, a gully filled with roaring steam holes, down which flows a stream of scalding hot water, depositing as it flows a fine, jet-black mud deposit. This mud and hot water is supposed to possess splendid curative properties, and for some ailments is considered the best in New Zealand. We crossed several beds of smouldering sulphur, just burning sufficiently to raise a cough as a whiff came our way.

Away to the left the active crater of Te Mare blows out white clouds of steam. This crater takes its name (the white crater) from the colour of its walls and top, which are of white silica.

After reaching the top of the mountain, we came out on a saddle overlooking a beautiful blue lake, perfectly round, and of an intense blue colour, in a crater-like depression. This lake is about half a mile across, it has apparently no inlet and no outlet, yet the water is perfectly fresh. But most wonderful of all is the colony of seagulls that inhabit its shores, laying their eggs among the rocks in shallow nests holding two eggs each. Where does their food come from? The lake must contain fish, and if so,



Tourist Department Photo.

Lake Taupo from Tokaanu.

how do the fish live? Volcanic rock is not very nourishing judging by its appearance.

On the other side of this saddle, right in the middle of the mountain, is a vast circular amphitheatre about three-quarters of a mile across, floored with cinders and scoria, the sides rising steeply from the level floor. The thought strikes one at once, "What a splendid racecourse or sports ground!" Across this amphitheatre is the Red Crater, the colour of its sides, a brick-red, is doubtless responsible for the name. We crossed the amphitheatre and came upon two small lakes just below the red crater. Their colour was a brilliant emerald green, most unnatural, but very beautiful in contrast with the dull, rocky surroundings.

Our next object was to get to the top of the Red Crater. On the east side its outer slopes are formed of loose scoria and ashes about as steep as an ordinary house roof, but on the west side we found a rocky gully, up which we climbed, this brought us right on to the lips of the crater. Looking down into a crater is like looking into the Inferno. Sickening, seething clouds of horrible, nauseous vapours rising out of the bowels of the earth, accompanied by the dull, muffled roar of some huge subterranean furnace, recall the lines from Bowen's translation of Virgil:

"There was a cavern deep,—with a yawning deep and a dread,—
Shingly and rough, by a sombre lake and a forest of night
Sheltered from all approach. No bird wings safely her flight
Over its face,—from the gorges exhales such poisonous breath,
Rising aloft to the skies in a vapour laden with death."

The top of this crater is about 200 yards across, and one can see down about 200 feet into its mouth, but as the interior walls fall sheer from the lips, and one must go right to the edge to get a view, one does not look down much.

Beyond this again, and between the Red Crater and Ngaurahoe, is another cinder plain, but as the rain had not abated, and a thick fog was beginning to gather around, we went no further. Ngaurahoe rises off the Southern end of the Tongariro Range, and is about 1000 feet higher than Tongariro—Ngaurahoe being 7515 feet and Tongariro 6500. Its eastern side is like that of a huge sand-hill with the scoria and ashes from the crater, while the western is rocky; both are very steep, however, and the ascent takes an hour's hard climbing.

At the foot of this mountain is a small spring of cold, effervescing soda water, a godsend to the weary explorer who is lucky enough to strike it. The rocks of Tongariro in many respects resemble those of Ruapehu, but on Tongariro the variety is greater, and the abundance of coke-like cinders, ashes and loose scoria seems to indicate a much more recent upheaval.

Tongariro is not by any means a hard mountain to climb, and simply bristles with natural wonders. The only difficulty experienced by visitors is the lack of accommodation at or near the mountain. I understand that the Tourist Department contemplate erecting a Mountain House at Waihohonu, between Ruapehu and Ngaurahoe, within easy distance of both mountains. This will no doubt attract many tourists who, rather than endure a little hardship, would pass these wonders by without seeing them.

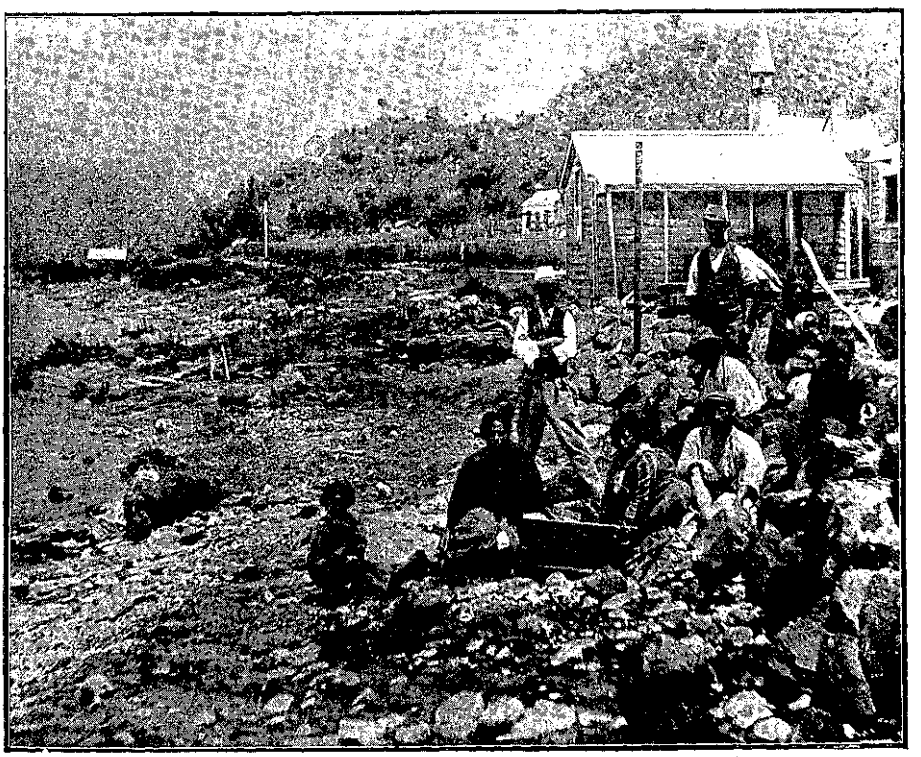
We got back to camp fairly early in the afternoon, and as everything was wet, packed up and walked down to Papakai, where we took possession of a Maori whare. Firewood was scarce, and the taiawa paddock fence suffered. But our clothes had to be dried, and we soon had a roaring fire. A few minutes afterwards, had the owner of the whare arrived, he would hardly have known us from some of his fellows, squatting around the fire, each in his blanket, our pakeha

attire strung around the apology for a chimney, the atmosphere thick with smoke, and the billy dangling gaily from the wire pothooks of the old slab and clay fireplace. The array of bikes and the beautiful stack of fencing-post firewood would no doubt have undeceived him; but he was far away, enjoying himself after his own fashion no doubt, and so were we.

It was New Year's eve, and we pictured our pals at home doing their best to paint the town red. Someone suggested waiting up and ringing the old year out on the bell in the wharepuni, but nobody answered. The suggestion sounded out of place here.

All our biscuits, butter and tea were wet and mixed up into a hideous conglomeration, awful to look upon, yet who cared? Hunger, like love, is blind. Fancy sitting down to a meal like that at home! Wouldn't there be a row! We found some potatoes in a corner and roasted them in the ashes—they were excellent. The owner of the whare had thoughtfully left his mat behind him, carefully rolled up in a corner, and we found it useful to sleep on, though it detracted little from the hardness of the floor.

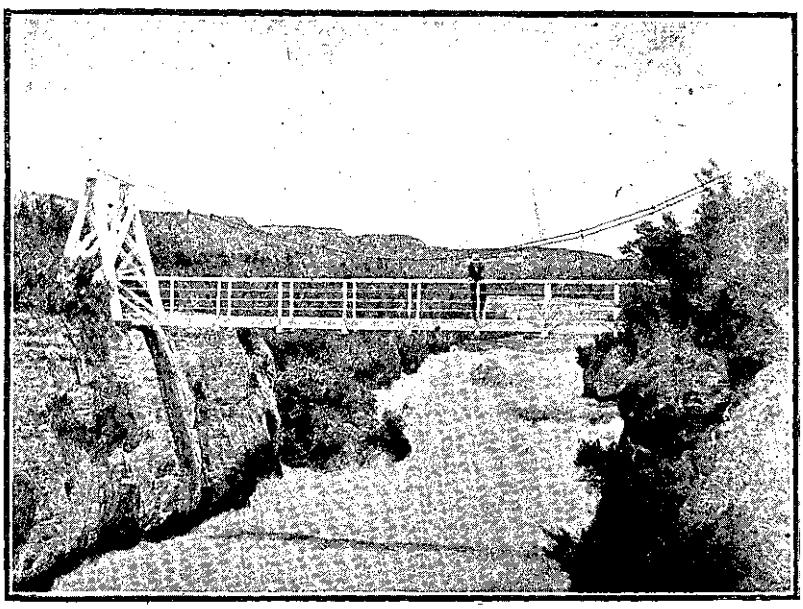
On New Year's morning we woke up to find the fire burned out, but our clothes dry. It was still raining, but did not continue long. Every little creek was running bank to bank, and the road, in many places the most convenient watercourse, was in a similar condition; however, all went well until within about a mile of the Tokaanu-Waiouru road, when one of our number had the misfortune to break one of the cranks of his machine. This necessitated his riding on one pedal for the remainder of the trip. At the junction of the roads our party divided—two to return as we came, and two, myself and another,



Group of Maoris at Waihi, Tokaanu.

to go on to Taupo and return by Napier. We reached Tokaanu about two p.m., and were quite content to loaf for the remainder of the day, after our friend had tried unsuccessfully to get a new crank for his machine.

Next morning we carried our luggage down to the wharf, and after dinner left by the steamer for Taupo. She was a small screw of about sixty tons, capable of carrying sixty passengers comfortably. Genial Skipper Ryan is a mine of information on all places of interest in the vicinity, and consequently is in great demand. From Tokaanu to Taupo, across the lake, is about thirty miles, and the steamer took just four hours to cover the distance.



Suspension bridge over Huka Falls.

After reaching Taupo, a nice run of a mile and a half brought us to the Spa—a veritable oasis in a desert of pumice and sand, covered sparsely with stunted scrub and fern. The Spa consists of a number of cottages scattered picturesquely about a beautiful garden in a fertile valley, leading from the base of Tauhara to the Waikato River. Down the valley, and among the cottages, flows a stream of hot water, clear as crystal, yet strongly charged with sulphur and alum. There are four baths along this stream; one, sulphur; one, alum; one, sulphur and alum; and one, sulphur, alum and soda. Just at this last bath the hot stream is joined by one of cold water, thus making an excellent bath of three temperatures—hot, below the hot stream; cold, below the cold stream; tepid, where the waters intermingle. At this place also is an elaborately-carved dining-hall in the form of a Maori wharepuni. Some of the carvings are of a boldness of design and fineness of execution seldom seen now-a-days outside museums. Here, indeed, is a place of rest; the very atmosphere suggests it, and everything about aids the suggestion.

We got up early next morning to go and see the Crow's Nest Geyser, so-called from the appearance of its basin, which resembles a mound of petrified sticks with a hole down the centre. We arrived just in time, for it played six times in as many

minutes for our especial edification. The Geyser is about five yards from the Waikato River, and when that river is high, plays every hour.

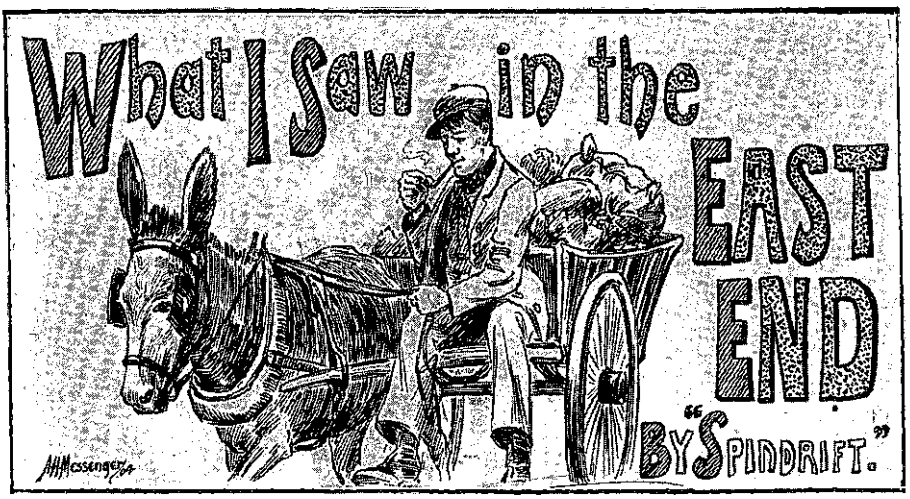
After breakfast we bade good-bye to the Spa, and rode through Taupo to the Huka Falls, returning to Taupo for lunch. Here, again, my mate endeavoured to replace his broken crank, but in vain, the nearest bicycle repair shop being at Rotorua, fifty-six miles away. One hundred and two miles to go to Napier with one pedal—not very encouraging, but we reached Rangitaiki, twenty-five miles, over fairly level, but forsaken, dreary country, by six o'clock, just in time for tea.

A white frost covered the ground in the morning, and we found the atmosphere very fresh on starting at five a.m. For the first eleven miles the road continues level, but beyond are the Kaimanawas, steep as house-roofs, and across these the road winds zigzagging in and out. Those responsible for laying it out had evidently determined to take it over the highest peaks, possibly to enable the tourist to view the surrounding country; for coach-horses and cyclists they had no compassion whatever.

Eleven o'clock found us at Tarawera, a small village, twenty-five miles from Rangataiki, nestling in a valley right in the heart of these hills, and here we lunched and had a spell. Just beyond Tarawera is the stiffest hill of the road, rising 1500 feet in four miles. It reminded me of a picture I once saw of the old diligence road over Mont Cenis before the days of the tunnel. From Tarawera to Mohaka (eighteen miles) the road continues among the hills, and even beyond Mohaka to Pohue, but after Pohue there is a down-grade right to Petane. We reached Pohue about nine p.m., and were quite ready to occupy the comfortable beds allotted to us.

Next morning, even with our battered bikes, we could enjoy the scenery, the road was all that could be desired, beautifully smooth, with a down-grade, and the scenery was a rest for the eyes. After the barren country of the interior, the beautifully grassed slopes of the Esk Valley are a treat to look upon. Prosperity is visible everywhere. Smiling homesteads nestle here and there above the clear, pebbly stream which meanders down by the roadside through choice plantations, orchards and lovely gardens, through the picturesque village of Eskdale, where we leave it to cross the hill and go down to Petane. Half an hour's ride around the lagoon from Petane brings us to Napier, and here practically our travels end, and we part to seek our several homes, convinced that—

"'Tis passing sweet to wander, free as air,
Blithe tenants in the bright and breeze-bless'd day,
Far from the town—where stoop the sons of care
O'er plans of mischief, till their souls turn gray;
And dry as dust, and dead alive are they—
Of all self-buried things the most unbless'd:
O morn! to them no blissful tribute pay.
O night's long-courted slumbers! bring no rest
To men who laud men's foes, and deem the basest best."



I HAD been dreaming—dreaming about our Nova Scotian mate, and the old "Bonita." Things were in a desperate state, and just as we of the crew were about to rush aft and overpower the officers, I woke up, and lay wondering where in the world I was. How still the ship seemed, we must be at anchor in the Thames, I thought, yet whatever was that dull roar that went on unceasingly, like the sound of breakers on a rock-girt coast?

Wondering still, I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes, and it was not until I endeavoured to climb out of my bunk, and met the carpeted floor with a groping foot, that I realised I was ashore in the Sailors' Rest. Then it was all as clear as day, the steady, unbroken roar that filled the air was of course caused by the traffic of the great City. It had filled my ears when I went to bed, and now at three o'clock in the morning it still continued unabated. Having realised that there was no watch to keep, and no trick at the wheel to take, I crawled back into bed with a sigh of satisfaction to wait for daylight. But there was no more sleep for me after once awakening to a true sense of my position. The very voices of this great Metropolis that I had come so far to see, fascinated me exceedingly, small wonder then that sleep should be effectually banished from my eyes. With the first streaks of daylight, I hastened to my window to take stock of my surroundings. It was not much of a view that met my gaze, but to me it proved most enchanting. Below was the street, where the City lights were already commencing to pale under the growing light of day. All sorts of vehicles were passing back and forth in endless succession, and the cold grey fog that hung thinly over them, gathered and thickened beyond the distant warehouses, where the maze of masts and rigging that towered above the docks loomed indistinctly.

My breakfast was a hurried one, not too hurried though to notice the wistful glances of several ragged little urchins, who peered hungrily in at the half-closed door that opened on the street. When I stepped

forth to commence my first day in London, I was in a position to take better note of my lodgings. The Sailors' Rest was one of several founded by Lady Ashburton, and stood facing the pavement of Custom-house Street, near the Royal Albert Docks. Almost directly opposite was a railway station, through which trains were running every five minutes, to and from Fenchurch Street in the heart of the City. The pavements were crowded with a motley gathering, consisting largely of seafaring men, costermongers and dock-hands, and the street itself was a moving panorama of every conceivable kind of vehicle ranging from an ice cream cart to a furniture van.

Almost before I had moved a yard from the door, I was accosted by a swarm of ragged little guttersnipes, armed with boot-blacking outfits, who vied with one another to obtain my custom. "Shine, sir?" "Shine, sir?" "'Ere y'ar', sir!" "They do want a lick, Guvnor!"

This last appeal from a particularly ragged and starved-looking little fellow was irresistible, so I surrendered, and placing my foot on his boot-rest, prepared to watch operations. After giving my boots a preliminary brush to take the dirt off, he paused perplexedly and scratched his head.

"What's the matter?" I queried, wondering what was troubling him.

"Blest if I ain't come wivout any water, Guvnor," he answered, looking up at me in a comical fashion. "But 'old on, I'll manage. Hey, Jimmy," he shouted to another little guttersnipe, who appeared at that moment from somewhere amid the maze of horses feet and vehicles that crowded the street. "Come over 'ere, I want yer."

"Wot's up?" queried Jimmy, sidling down towards us.

"Come 'ere an' 'elp spit on the blackin', while I cleans the Guvnor's boots," replied my boot-black, raising his brushes in anticipation.

So Jimmy spat, and work commenced briskly. It was a triumph of craft, and long before the two became completely dried up by their occupation, my boots were shining like mirrors under their united efforts. When they had finished, I handed my first acquaintance a sixpence in payment, he looked at it, turned it over, looked at it again, and then commenced groping in his pockets with both hands. Then he paused and looked up forlornly.

"I ain't got no change, Guvnor," he exclaimed. "Wait till I run over ter the stishun to one ov me pals."

I hastened to inform him that I did not want any change, whereupon, apparently unable to believe his own senses at this unexpected windfall, he gave vent to a low whistle of surprise, and took to his heels, with Jimmy in hot pursuit in hopes of a dividend. It was not until I was informed, later on in the day, that the usual charge for boot-blacking was a penny, that I understood his surprise and sudden disappearance.

After this little episode, I resumed my wandering up the street, and had not proceeded far when my attention was attracted by the sounds of music coming from a little, narrow side-alley that turned off at right angles to my course. Upon rounding the corner I saw a sight calculated to make anyone unused to East End ways stare. A short distance up this alley a small group of men, women and children were congregated round two girls dressed in true Coster style, Ostrich feathers in their hats and all. These two had a long skipping rope stretched across the alley which they whirled vigorously to the lively strains of "What, ho! she bumps!" played upon mouth organs by several other girls who stood at each side of the wielders of the skipping rope. The musicians took it in turn to rush in and skip vigorously, playing away at their mouth organs with all their might meanwhile. It was glorious fun, and the onlookers appeared to enjoy it as much as the actual performers.

The musicians took it in turns to rush in and skip vigorously.

I lingered awhile admiring the agility of the frolicsome damsels, and then once more moved on through the crowd seeking fresh adventures. Every few yards brought me something fresh amid the crowds of hurrying people. Here an Italian ice-cream man serving out some awful abomination to a crowd of ragged little urchins. A few yards further on a large piano-organ was performing vigorously, and a dozen ragged guttersnipes dancing wildly to its music.

Scenes of this description were common enough throughout the length and breadth of Custom-house Street and its neighbourhood, and that first day utterly bewildered me with its succession of surprises and experiences. Saturday night is the time to see the East End in its glory. The shops display their various contents lavishly by the aid of liberal illumination. Costermonger's donkey-barrows, laden with all manner of tempting merchandise, line the gutters in unbroken array. Every vendor of goods shouts and bawls his wonderful, low prices for high-grade materials, and the fun waxes fast and furious.

A familiar cry smote my ear. It

was that of a very fat butcher, who stood with arms folded across his portly chest, shouting: "'Ere y'ar' for yer prime Noo Zealand mutton!" That butcher always attracted me, he seemed like a friend in a strange land, somehow, and when one day, on passing his shop, I discovered several tins labelled "New Zealand Rabbit" in his window, I was completely overcome, and immediately rushed in and bought one, as a pleasing reminder of the many chases I had had after the nimble bunny in far away Fernland.

Posted at all the street corners one generally saw the vendor of whelks, with his hand-cart laden with these delicacies of the briny. "Whelks, sir? Lor' luv yer, sir, they're prime ones, orl the way from Yarmouth, and a pin, sir, 'ere y'ar', sir! Whelks! Whelks! 'ere y'ar', prime whelks, only a penny a saucer!" So he goes on, and the fashionable young "lidy" of the feathers, her sisters and cousins, and other friends and relations rally round the barrow, and pursue the furtive whelk with eager eyes and pins.

Fish shops are frequent in Custom-house Street, and the savoury smell of fried fish assails the nostrils at short intervals. Then there is the sausage and mash shop, with "Sausage and Mash, 2d.," marked on the window, and inside the glass a great steaming dish of this delicacy. That was a bait that never failed to capture me about mid-day, and an excellent dinner it made, too, for those who, like myself, were not too inquisitive about its constituents.

Every now and again in the course of my excursions into the mysterious regions of the East End, I came in sight of a crowd gathered upon the pavement. Closer inspection generally revealed a domestic difference in progress of settlement. As often as not the combatants would be women, sadly dilapidated-looking creatures, dressed in tawdry rags, holding a young hopeful in tight embrace with one arm and clawing fiercely at each other with the free member. Suggestions for the mutilation of one another were numerous, and freely given by the spectators. "Go it, Sal! Scratch 'er adjective eyes out!" "She ain't no class!" "Freeze on to 'er, Liza!" etc., etc., until the advent of a policeman who, generally after a severe bully-ragging from the two, clinched matters by leading

Whelks.

one of them out of range, and advising her to "Go along 'ome, now, an' keep that for yer old man!"

Everywhere signs of the deepest poverty and squalor were painfully evident, some of the faces I saw there haunted my dreams for months afterwards.

The little donkey-barrows of the Costermongers were always a special delight to me. They were to be found everywhere, and the meek little "Jerusalem mokes" seemed to make light work of the most impossible-looking loads. I have often gazed with astonishment upon these

diminutive little neddies trotting briskly along, dragging a barrow piled up with goods, the driver, evidently considering he was rendering every assistance in his power by sitting on the shaft whistling cheerily, and using his stick liberally.

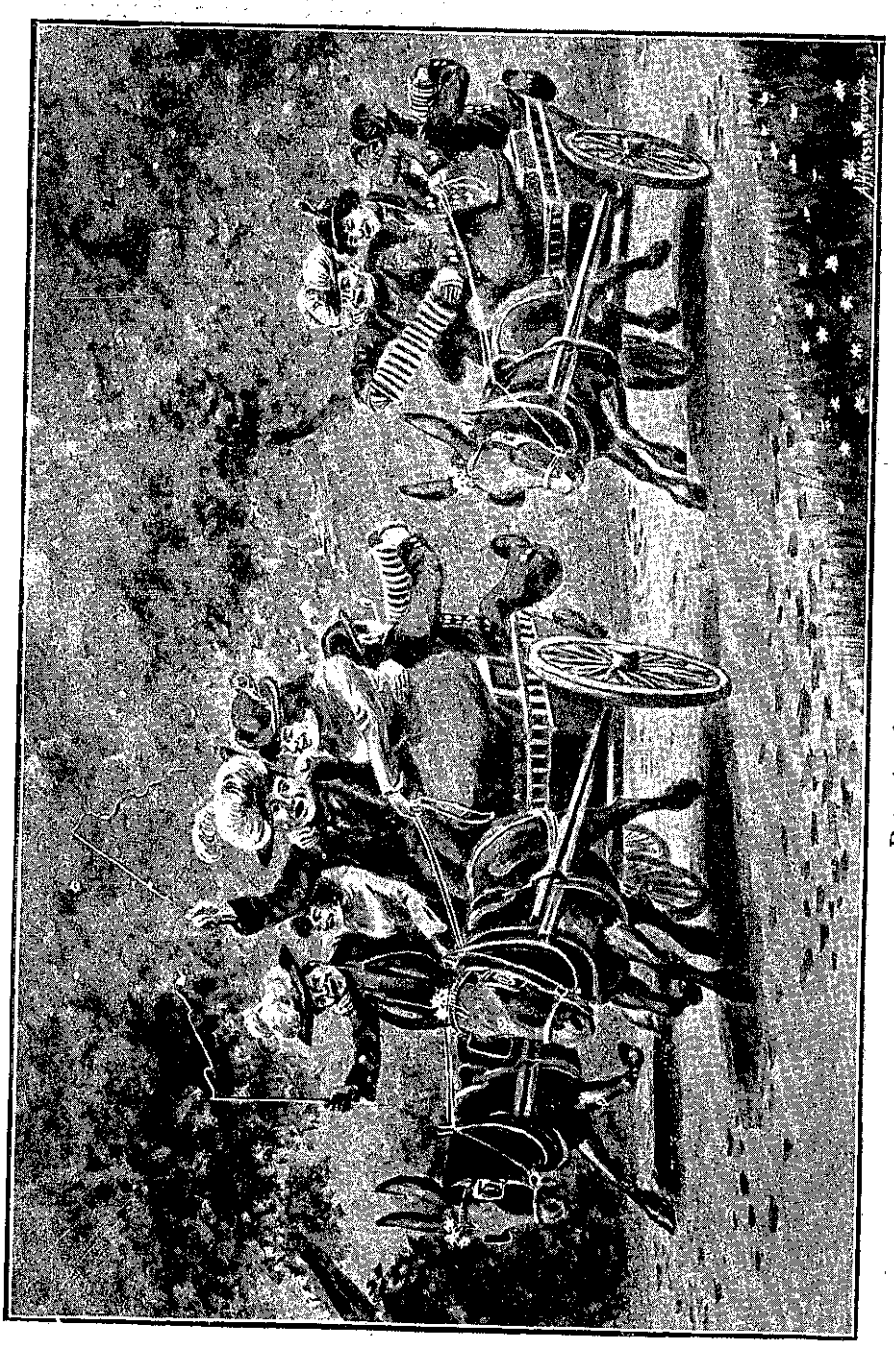
The glimpses frequently obtained among the docks and warehouses of gleaming water, and great brown-sailed barges drifting with the tide, struck me as exceedingly picturesque. The sun filtering through the usual haze of smoke and fog, that seems to hang at all times over this portion of the City, gives everything a peculiar dull copper tint, affording beautiful effects in colouring.

Not far from my lodgings, a great battleship was in course of construction, and it was wonderful to watch the rate at which the building of the vessel was conducted. Towering high above the surrounding buildings, and encircled by a maze of scaffolding, she made an impressive picture. The din from the building-yards was deafening at close quarters, and all day long the work was carried on without a break.

A sight that I am afraid would give many of our prohibitionists a severe shock, were they able to see it, was that of the crowds of young women of the Coster fraternity who throng the bars of the public-houses, taking their beer with the utmost nonchalance. It is a common sight to see a crowd of diminutive boys and girls returning from the public-houses carrying large jugs of beer for the home supply. Any attempt to carry prohibition in the East End of London, would, I believe, result in consequences on a par with the great French Revolution.

There was one cry that puzzled me exceedingly during my first week ashore in London, until one morning, happening to be out a little earlier than usual, I discovered the author of it. It turned out to be the war cry of the cat's meat man, an old, wrinkled-faced Coster, whose "Mee-eat, mee-eat!" "'Ere y'-ar', Cat's Mee-eat!" brought every cat within hearing to the spot as if by magic. When I met him he was serving out scraps of meat to different customers, amid a perfect chorus of caterwaulings from his feline friends, who clustered thickly round the legs of his barrow. Prompted by feelings of friendly compassion for the hungry swarms, I drew a half-penny from my pocket, purchased a bunch and threw it down amongst them. The gory scrimmage that followed my mistaken philanthrophy caused infinite diversion to the spectators, and a temporary suspension of business to the old Coster, who was not slow to vent his annoyance in his own peculiar phraseology.

One day, while wandering further afield than usual, I found myself on the borders of Epping Forest. It happened to be a public holiday, and upon alighting from the tram, I found a crowd of Costermongers with their sweethearts, wives and families, out for a "beano," their equivalent to a picnic. Although still early in the day the fun was uproarious. Concertinas were being played for all they were worth, and the 'Arries and 'Arriets were engaged in every description of giddy pastime with the utmost abandon. On one side the amorous game of "Kiss-in-the-ring" was indulged in with the wildest enthusiasm. A little further on a number of youths, less amenable to feminine attractions, attired in full Coster uniform, pearly buttons and all, were trying their luck at cocoanut shies. The most attractive part of this sport was that, besides the usual cocoanuts on sticks, there was a man in a barrel, wearing a tall hat, who kept bobbing up his head like a disappearing target. The sticks rattled right merrily against the staves of the barrel, and once or twice, amid roars of laughter, the top-hat would be sent spinning by some well-aimed blow. Several Coster girls were running round with large bunches of peacock's tail



Returning from the "Beano."

feathers for sale at a penny each. "'Ere y'ar' for yer lidy's ticklers!" was their cry, and they did a good trade. Armed with these feathers, the amorous 'Arries dodged about among the Lizas and the 'Arriets, tickling them under the ear, to a chorus of, "Garn now, will yer!" "Wot yer pl'yin' at?" etc., from these beauties.

Never before had I seen such uproarious fun at any outing. I had witnessed the amount of merriment the Coster fraternity get out of their sordid lives in their native slums, but certainly did not imagine it possible that it could be so far exceeded when they foregathered under the greenwood tree.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the day's proceedings, to a spectator, was when they harnessed up the Jerusalem mokes to the Coster barrows, and climbing aboard, set out on their return journey. With arms round one another's necks, and concertinas playing merrily, the cavalcade started off. 'Arry wore Liza's hat with its bunches of ostrich feathers, and Liza in turn perched 'Arry's cap jauntily upon one side of her head, and his clay pipe in her mouth. So they rattled off towards the crowded City, supremely happy, leaving behind them the green grass and the cool shade of the spreading oaks, for another sojourn in the squalor and dirt of the East End slums.

A thing that struck me particularly during the summer months in the City was the abundance and cheapness of fruit. Donkey-barrows full of strawberries and cherries were to be found everywhere, and all the fruit shops displayed a perfect wealth of these and other fruits. The vendors of summer drinks were numerous, and the quality of their liquids of a varied character. The most common, of course, was the ice-cream man, generally a swarthy Italiano, who lined up his white painted barrow with its fancy sunshade, alongside the gutter at various points of vantage. Here he plied his nefarious trade, surrounded at all times by a small crowd of ragged urchins, thirsting for a taste of the mystery that his barrow contained. Sarsaparilla formed another popular beverage, and handbarrows laden with great cans of this were generally to be found at the entrance to the railway stations and docks.

One scorching hot day in midsummer, and it can be hot in London, too, I tried ice-creams in an ill-advised attempt to quench my thirst. The more I took the more I wanted, and the temptation was ever before me. The result was a severe attack of cramp and a rush to the nearest chemist to obtain relief. He was a stern, heavy-browed, unbelieving sort of man, with strong temperance proclivities. He listened patiently to my relation of the cause of my trouble, but did not believe a word of it, for as he gave me a mixture, he uttered in dolorous tones the warning words: "It's the old story; that cursed drink demon is the ruination of so many promising young men. The best thing you can do is——" I swallowed the stuff and fled. It was doubtless made strong enough to counteract the effects of other indulgences, and proved quite equal to a wrestle with ice-cream.

The East End Music Halls were new experiences to me. The Paragon, one of the latest, is a gorgeous place. Here one may see almost any evening, such notabilities as Dan Leno, Little Tich, Marie Lloyd, and many of the other leading stars of London Comedy. One striking feature of the Paragon, as in fact of most of the Music Halls, is the long bar, taking up one side of the building, where drinks and other refreshments are served out during the intervals. Thus, instead of the mad scramble, resembling nothing so much as a football scrimmage, which takes place during the interval in our Colonial theatres, there is a quiet, orderly movement by those who seek refreshment to to the bar, where after partaking of a "four 'alf" and a smoke, the

thirsty ones return quietly to their seats as the curtain rises on a new turn.

The Royal Albert Docks were a favourite haunt of mine, and I never tired of strolling among the crowd of shipping that they at all times contained, Great P. and O. boats with their swarming Lascar crews, Blue Anchor line steamers, Messageries Maritime liners, huge American grain steamers, Turret steamers from the Mediterranean, and our

Ice-Creams.

own well-known New Zealand Shipping Co., Shaw Savill, and Tyser Line steamers, formed but a few of the many vessels of every conceivable nationality that packed several miles of docking.

Here the Thames bargee, one of London's most fluent and striking personalities, is particularly in evidence. He sails his barge when there is breeze enough, ander a great, brown spritsail, square-headed topsail, and jib. If anything gets in the way, he runs into it, following up his attack with a marvellous display of language of the most lurid character. If the vessel he runs into happens to be another barge, then his epithets are returned with interest, and in a manner that is highly diverting to an onlooker. One old bargee, whom I found seated on the rail of his barge, enjoying his evening pipe, informed me during the course of a conversation, that "His farver had had a barge before him; his two bruvvers both had barges, and his boy was agoin' to sail the barge after 'im." From which I concluded that the bargee, like the poet, is born and not made.

Ratcliffe Highway, so much talked of and sung about by sailormen, I passed through almost daily. Although "Jack Ashore" may be met with in almost any part of the East End, it is here that his class most do congregate. It is here that the skipper can always pick up a likely crew, when hard set for A.B.'s, which is seldom the case now that the foreign element is so cheap and plentiful in our Mercantile Marine. The good, old palmy days of Ratcliffe Highway have departed forever—the times when press-gangs raided its seafaring haunts, and carried off tough and brawny mariners, wearing short, well-greased pigtails, with a crack on the skull to keep them quiet. Now-a-days, however, Jack, as often as not in a sadly dissolute condition, staggers about arm in arm with Sal or Liza in a blissful state of immunity from any interference with his enjoyment. When his money is spent he goes down to the sea again to begin once more the old life of strenuous toil and hardship, doing work that the hardest worked man ashore would look upon as impossible, work that requires a strong arm and a stout heart, and all for the sake of a few pounds to earn him yet another spree when the good ship, with bursting canvas, heads home once more for London town.

The Romance of Ironsand.

By D. R. S. G.

THERE is perhaps no subject so fraught with the element of interest, I had almost said of romance, as that of the progression of ideas. The touchstone of experience calls in the rational faculty to account for observed phenomena in the world around us, and, presto! we immediately see a correlation of conditions awaiting our adjustment—the law is by and by revealed, and we have but to touch the "button" as it were, and the step upward is achieved!

Time was when scientific thought met with scant courtesy, where it ought to have received most, being looked upon as the embodiment of all the evil in the universe; but the times have changed since then, and in the future true scientific thought will be received as an angel from heaven, nay, as the very expression of the mind of the Creative God—for he who has discovered a law, i.e., a function in nature, has discovered a Divine thought in operation, and a Divine thought surely stands for a Divine thinker.

A very little consideration on our part must lead to the conviction that all the "good" we know comes through this channel of law, and following the doctrine of polarity, all the "evil" also.

The progress of civilisation at bottom is but a record of this touching of the "button"—this calling upon law to serve us; and perhaps no chain of ideas has influenced history more than that concerned and associated with the metallurgy of iron, and which we purpose making the subject of this essay.

To understand the subject dealt with some little knowledge of chemistry and physics is required, which let us now endeavour to impart to those who may be unacquainted therewith. Chemistry, then, is that department of human knowledge which concerns itself with the substances or materials or "matter" of which our own and other worlds, including our bodies, of course, are composed. Many, in fact most of the things around us, as well as our bodies, are composed of many kinds of matter, and but a few consist of one kind of matter only. When only one kind of matter presents itself to the chemist he calls it an elementary substance, or chemical element; and when two or more of such elements unite, they form a substance which is wholly different from either of these taken separately—such a combination being called a compound substance. Again, many of these elements as well as compounds may exist as solids, as liquids, or as gases. The very smallest particles of these elements, smaller than could be cut even in thought, are called atoms, and when two or more of these atoms link or associate themselves together as it were, such a group constitutes a molecule.

With this elementary and provisional key to our subject, let us now endeavour to form some intelligent conception of iron ore and its metallurgy. We shall take the chief compound of iron found in nature as our example, viz., iron-oxide, and particularly the magnetic

oxide as it is called, and a good example of which is found existing in the iron-sands of New Zealand and other countries. This magnetic oxide of iron consists of the elementary substance, iron, familiar to everybody, combined with an invisible gas, called oxygen, oxygen being also an elementary body. The composition of this oxide never varies, and chemists can prove that it contains three atoms of iron and four atoms of oxygen, linked together as it were, and this group of linked or associated atoms constitutes the molecule of this substance or compound body, magnetic oxide of iron. It is to be understood that, as in the case of the oxide just mentioned, all oxides of iron, as well as all other compounds consist invariably of definite combinations —there being no such thing as variability in the composition of a given substance. The force by which these atoms unite is called chemical affinity, and this force is stronger between the atoms of some elements than of others. In a single grain of magnetic oxide of iron, as occuring in our ironsand, there are millions of such molecules associated under the law of crystallisation, which law, under suitable conditions, determines that such association or grouping shall take the form of an octahedron, and it is the surfaces or facets of these perfect, or imperfect, crystals which we see glittering in the sun wherever iron-sand is found.

When a chemist writes down magnetic oxide of iron, for shortness and convenience he uses what is called a chemical symbol, and as there are as we have seen three atoms of iron combined with four atoms of oxygen, he writes Fe_3O_4, Fe standing for ferrum, or iron, and O for oxygen. It may be as well to state that other oxides of iron exist in nature, for instance, FeO and Fe_2O_3, besides other compounds of the metal, the most important of which is the carbonate of iron $FeCO_3$. It has been said that the force of chemical affinity between the atoms of different elements is found to be variable, so that we can conceive of the atom with the stronger affinity being able to drag away, as it were, an atom from a molecule in which the force of chemical affinity is weaker than its own, and, indeed, upon this fact the whole science of the metallurgy of iron rests. In the metallurgy of iron the elementary substance carbon plays an all-important part, the charcoal at one time used in the production of iron mainly consists of this element, coal and coke being other and less pure examples, graphite being another form, whilst the diamond, strange as it may seem, is pure carbon. It is found that the atom of carbon, at a given temperature, has a stronger affinity for the oxygen atom than the iron atom possesses, and it therefore follows that if carbon be brought near enough to the molecule of iron-oxide, the iron atom will be forced to give up its hold of the atom of oxygen, and that the carbon atom will combine with the oxygen atom and bear it away, the iron being thus left alone, i.e., in the condition of metal as we know it, the carbon and oxygen atoms, linked together, flying off into the atmosphere in the form of an invisible gas called carbonic anhydride, commonly known as carbonic acid gas, and the symbol for which is CO_2. It is easy to conceive then that where countless millions of these atoms and molecules of iron-oxide and carbon are associated at the given temperature, and where no other supply of oxygen atoms is within reach of the iron atoms, that the iron will accumulate and find its lowest possible level, being, of course, in the fluid condition, whilst the carbonic acid gas will ascend into the atmosphere. There are other substances which are capable of separating the oxygen from iron-oxide, one of these being the gas called carbon monoxide, the symbol for which is CO, that is, one atom of carbon united with one of oxygen. All bodies having such

an effect upon iron-oxide are called "reducing" agents, and the process itself is called "reduction"; hence the conversion of iron-sand, i.e., iron-oxide into metallic iron is called the reduction of iron-sand. It should now be clear that, if we have a mixture of iron-sand and charcoal, i.e., carbon, at a sufficiently high temperature, the reduction of the same must inevitably take place if sufficient charcoal be present—nay, it would be a miracle if such reduction did not occur, such is the prerogative of law! The fiat goes forth, and so far as man's experience goes, there has been no escape from or shirking of the command: "Let there be iron!" The same certainty prevails throughout the whole range of chemical activity—once the knowledge of a law is established, the scientific mind cannot conceive of any departure therefrom; and so long as the planets are seen pursuing their appointed courses, so long, given the heat, and the presence of these reducing agents, shall we see iron produced from iron-oxide.

With this basis of solid fact fixed in our minds, let us now give free play to our imagination: let us place ourselves, say, in the British Isles, it may be one or two thousand years ago, and let us suppose that we are members of a semi-barbarous people; we have neighbouring kinsfolk, some of whom are adepts in the production of flint implements of war, and we have just had a tough tussle with fellows from the north, and are celebrating the event by a big feast. Piles of wood have been built and ignited upon the out-crop of a lode of iron-stone, and a whole reindeer has been roasted thereon—the orgie over, we have slept. On the morrow, a semi-savage Venus, wandering near, stoops down, and, out of curiosity, pokes amongst the embers of the fire and observes the presence of rounded knobs upon the surface of the iron-stone. Her curiosity increases, she proceeds to scratch with the ragged edge of one of her flint ornaments, when, to her wonderment, the bright metal reveals its existence! It surely is no wild stretch of imagination to conceive of such a series of events; we have here the iron-oxide of the ore and the charcoal of the fuel, accompanied by the requisite temperature, and the surface of such iron ore under these conditions, we know, would be reduced where projecting in thin pieces upwards into the fire. We can imagine this early observer bringing her Adonis to view her discovery, and we can see him as he gives one of the largest rounded and "reduced" corners of the iron-stone a chip with his flint hatchet, and he, also, is puzzled at the bright, metallic substance thus revealed. It is thus that these semi-barbarous minds are set a-thinking to laboriously puzzle out the problem, and it may be to form a rough hatchet from the metal to cleave the Northern fellow's head, or an arrow-head to bring down a reindeer for the common good. In any case, no Curie ever performed more laborious work, considering their relative equipments. These barbarians build up a fire of charcoal embers, it may be, and in this fire they place some pieces of iron ore; they know that the wind helps the fire, so they arrange that a draught upon the hill-side makes it burn fiercely, and by and by they are rewarded by a trickling stream of metal—the far distant earnest of the millions of tons pouring forth from our "blast furnaces" to-day. Step by step they advance, by months, decades, and centuries, discovering the properties of the metal, one by one. Thus the knowledge and experience of our fore-runners advances until we find it emerge in early historical records as one of the industries of primitive man. Again and again, down the ages since then, the result of a so-called accident has revealed facts which, leading to enquiry, have yielded unexpected harvests; but to the simple-minded savage, if to any, belongs the laurel wreath, we think.

Let us now endeavour to trace the advance of the iron industry confining our enquiry to British records only; and it must necessarily be a very brief review. Perhaps the earliest account that we have of the working of iron ore dates about the year 1370, charcoal being the fuel used; but before that date there existed all over the British Isles what were called "bloomeries," the ancient sites of which are marked by "cinders" or refuse heaps. In Scotland over one hundred such sites have been counted, and over eight hundred in England. It is recorded that the "cinder" from the sites of these ancient "bloomeries" in the Forest of Dean alone, supplied material for twenty furnaces of a more recent date for between two and three hundred years; this "cinder" contained sometimes as much as 60 per cent. of metallic iron, such being the wasteful nature of those ancient processes. As time went on the timber of the country became increasingly scarce on account of the amount required in the production of charcoal for these iron works, and this doubtless set inventive minds to work to discover a substitute, and in the year 1611, one Simon Sturtivant obtained a patent in Britain for the use of "sea coale" or "pit coale" for the treatment of iron ore and other minerals, and eight years later Lord Dudley obtained a patent in the same connection, and seems to have been successful in working it: too successful, indeed, for he could under-sell the other iron-smelters, who were using charcoal, from £3 to £6 per ton of "pigs," i.e., pig-iron, so by some means or other they forced him to close his works! In 1785 Abraham Darby was successful in permanently establishing an iron-works in which he used coal in the form of coke.

Reverting to these ancient "bloomeries," it is to be noted that they were of comparatively small dimensions, and so to speak, exemplified a rudimentary form of the "blast" furnace as we know it to-day. It is quite easy to conceive of primitive man constructing these "bloomeries" of sun-dried clay, and renewing the rude structure after each operation of smelting the ore: in fact, such a procedure, strange to say, was adopted in England in the Ulverston district until within a little over a quarter of a century ago, whilst the natives of Africa use practically the same method to-day. The "bloomery" may be broadly described as a shaft of hard-baked clay, with an aperture near the bottom by which a "blast" of air was introduced, the iron ore and charcoal being placed within the shaft, the fire was then lighted at the bottom and the "blast" turned on, the iron-oxide in the ore, being in due time reduced, found its way to the bottom of the shaft, and when the operation was over, the furnace was partly demolished and the "bloom" of metal removed for further treatment.

It will now be necessary to explain the nature of iron-ore, ironstone as it is often called, and of which there are many varieties, all, however, being similar, in so far that the element iron is the commercially valuable constituent therein. Iron-ore, then, consists of the elementary substance, iron, combined with oxygen as the oxides, Fe_3O_4, or magnetite, as it is called, as Fe_2O_3, or haematite, and also with carbonic anhydride $FeCO_3$ as the carbonate of iron, or clayband and spathose iron-ore—these are all, more or less, mixed or commingled with foreign matters, such as silica, clay, "lime," etc., and the art of metallurgy consists in the separation of the valuable metal, iron, from these useless or foreign bodies with which it is associated.

At the parting of the ways, i.e., where ancient methods sink into disuse, we meet with the early type of what is now known as the modern "blast" furnace, in which fluxes were used to combine with these foreign bodies, and thus allow

the oxides of iron to come more readily into contact with the reducing agents, charcoal, coke, etc., as previously referred to, and thus set the iron free. The most common flux used being limestone, which, given a sufficiently high temperature, combines with the silica and other foreign matters already named, forming a fused or fluxed mass which flows away leaving the metallic iron; this fused material is, when cooled, somewhat similar to the darkest coloured bottle-glass, and is technically known as slag.

Before describing the modern blast furnace and its use, in which furnace coal or coke is the fuel employed, it may be useful to mention that the last iron-works to use charcoal in the production of iron were those of the Messrs. Ainslie, at Newlands and Backbarrow, in the North of England: in fact, these works may be in operation still, as the writer is referring to a period of some twenty years ago. The Backbarrow furnace was about thirty feet high, and turned out about twenty-eight tons of "pig" iron per week. It was stated that eight tons of charcoal were used in this furnace in the production of four tons of pig-iron, the iron produced being of very high quality, and bringing a high price in the market. The blast of air used in this furnace was cold.

Coming now to the blast furnace of to-day, and speaking broadly, we may say that it differs only in detail from the early form, the "hot blast" and the "basic lining," being the chief improvements; and as a means of obtaining iron from its ores, per se, this furnace possibly leaves little to be desired. Indeed, having been specially designed to deal with ores of iron, i.e., oxides, carbonates, etc., of iron, associated with a relatively large proportion of other substances, such as silica, lime, magnesia, alumina, etc., it meets the requirements of the case admirably. When, however, it is considered that all those substances in the iron-ore other than the compounds of iron, are only so much useless material to be got rid of by the costly method of fluxing—and thus separating the iron in the metallic form from the said useless or foreign matters—it is not surprising that many attempts to devise some more rational method in the metallurgy of iron have been made; these attempts, however, up till now, have not met with success. Thinkers in this field have asked themselves: "Can't we get rid of those intolerably useless substances in some way or other, and deal with the iron-oxides direct?" Now, if this has been the thought of technologists in connection with iron-ores, consisting, as has been said, of a large proportion of useless material associated with the valuable iron compounds, how much more should the practically pure iron-oxide, as exhibited in the iron-sands of the World, appeal to the rational, much more the inventive mind! Why, here is a supply of raw material ready to hand, and practically free from those useless foreign matters, can't we invent some process to deal with this material just as our semi-savage ancestor dealt with the problem of iron-ores in his day? Are we less capable than the man who, upon yon cliff scratched the rude figures of the reindeer and the mammoth? We have had a Rubens and a Millais since then, and yet the ages wait for a parallel advance in the metallurgy of iron. Is it not strange that the concept of pre-historic man should to-day practically be in touch with the metallurgy of iron in that aspect of the subject now under our notice? For the blast furnace, be it observed, practically touched the high-water mark of pre-historic metallurgy through the connecting link of the "bloomery." And, we may ask, suppose that primitive man had fixed upon iron-sand from which to produce his iron, would he have dealt with it in the same way as he dealt with the ore? Undoubtedly so—he would, if

dealing with it at all, of necessity have made it into briquettes, i.e., iron-sand mixed with suitable material, such as clay, etc., and formed into coherent pieces, and these he would have smelted in his primitive furnace—that is, so long as he could not have obtained good iron-ore at hand, for, surely, given a supply of good iron-ore, he would never, I take it, have dreamt of making such briquettes, which in effect, really means making an artificial iron-ore; like a sensible savage, he would say: "Here is a good, natural iron-ore ready to hand, why should I attempt to make it artificially? it means money and labour!" Although our early ancestor had no money, yet he had its equivalent. And are we to be no further advanced in the metallurgy of iron than he, and not so far advanced, indeed, in our conception of dealing with iron-sand?

Now, let us consider what the conditions requisite for the production of iron by the blast furnace amount to. One sine qua non is the presence of an adequate temperature or amount of heat; and we must here note particularly that this heat, when the blast furnace was conceived, was only obtainable by combustion—i.e., by the burning of fuel, and to accelerate the burning and so raise the heat, a blast of air was used, on the same principle as in the case of the blacksmith who uses his bellows to obtain the heat he wants. This blast of air is introduced at the lower part of the furnace and hastens the burning of the coal or coke, mixed with iron-ore and flux with which the furnace is charged. It should be particularly noted that the iron-ore smelted in this furnace must be of such a nature that the gases developed within the furnace may find easy access to the oxide of iron contained therein; pieces of iron-oxide, per se, small or large, if not intermingled with the foreign bodies already referred to, cannot be adequately treated in this furnace. The more open and porous the ore the more easily reduced the oxide of iron contained therein is accomplished. It thus follows that rich magnetites and haematites, because of their richness in iron-oxide and comparative absence of foreign matters, cannot be properly dealt with in the blast furnace, unless used in conjunction with poorer ores. Suppose for present purposes that our blast furnace consists of a shaft, somewhat contracted towards the bottom, and that the bottom consists of a hollowed cavity with a tap-hole at the lower part for drawing off the molten metal, and one at the higher part of the said cavity, i.e., through the side of the furnace, by which the slag is run off, and suppose we have the interior of this shaft filled with iron-ore, limestone, and coke, mixed in due proportions, and that the blast is in operation, what happens is this: the oxygen of the air-blast unites with the carbon of the fuel, and, as there is excess of red-hot carbon present, when it, that is to say, the oxygen, reaches the upper part of the furnace, it exists in combination with carbon as the mon-oxide of carbon (CO) which coming into contact with the oxide of iron at a red heat, takes the oxygen from the same and leaves the metallic iron in a spongy or porous condition, which metallic iron as it passes downwards by gravitation, mixed and along with the general charge, becomes fluidified in the lower and hotter parts of the furnace, where it also takes up carbon (from the fuel), silicon, etc., finally finding its way into the cavity at the bottom of the furnace, i.e., the "hearth," where it accumulates beneath the fluid slag, which slag of course consists of the flux and useless foreign matters contained in the ore; this iron is drawn off periodically, and forms the "pig" of commerce. The slag is allowed to flow away from the upper tap-hole. There are two points which must be noticed here, the first being that when carbon atoms meet with an abundant supply of oxygen

atoms at a given temperature, they unite and form the gas, carbonic anhydride (CO_2), if, however, this gas passes through red-hot charcoal, it is robbed of one of its oxygen atoms by the excess of carbon present, so that instead of one molecule of CO_2, we have two of CO—the latter being the powerful reducing agent already referred to. The second point is this: when the element iron comes into contact with the element carbon at a high temperature, it takes up a proportion of this element and forms steel. Under the conditions existing in the blast furnace where the foreign bodies, such as silicon, etc., are present besides other impurities, steel cannot be formed, and mere "pig" iron is the product.

For our present purpose this may be taken as a general description of the "blast" furnace and its operation. It will be observed that the points to note are these: first, that the oxide of iron shall be easily accessible to the reducing agents; and, second, that the temperature shall be sufficiently high to fluidify the iron; the descent of the charge being determined of course by gravitation.

Turning now to iron-sand, as occuring on our beaches for example, it would obviously be impossible, in view of the foregoing considerations to deal with this material as such in the blast furnace, as anyone can see it would simply run down and choke the furnace. The reflection then naturally arises, that from this standpoint successful reduction cannot be looked for, and that the only way left, if the blast furnace is to be used, is to make the iron-sand into briquettes, and smelt these in the same way as ore—which, however, even pre-historic man would surely not have done, so long as he could have obtained good iron-ore ready to hand! But are we to be influenced by such an enlightened thinker?

May not the time have arrived when the conception of pre-historic man must give place to higher knowledge—the gift of physical science to the age? To-day we are not limited to combustion as a means of obtaining heat as our fore-runner was. We can produce a temperature higher vastly than we require without combustion, i.e., without fuel, solid or gaseous. We can, so to speak, turn this heat off or on, high or low at will. This heat is obtained by arranging a "resistance" of proper material as part of a suitable electric circuit. This, it will be observed, entirely dispenses with the fuel and blast of present practice. Now, as to the other conditions which obtain in the blast furnace, we have already seen that the presence of carbon and carbon mon-oxide in contact with iron-oxide produces metallic iron when at the required temperature. This fact is established by law, so that, given the conditions, the results must invariably follow, and are thus beyond all dispute.

This brings us now to the consideration of an invention from which great things are expected, inasmuch as it promises to inaugurate a new era in the metallurgy of iron. The invention, moreover, is by no means confined to the production of iron and steel, but possesses a very wide outlook even beyond the domain of metallurgy. It is claimed for this invention, that, just as the blast furnace secures the proper conditions for the production of pig iron from iron-ore, so this furnace secures the ideal conditions for the production of iron or steel from iron-oxide per se, i.e., "separated" iron-sand for example, that is to say, iron-sand as found in nature from which the small proportion of foreign substances, such as silica, etc., has been removed by magnets or otherwise. This furnace, as stated, is heated by electricity, and may be described as a shaft or chamber of carbon slabs, graphite for example, (i) (See Figs.) that is the same material of which steel-making crucibles as used in present practice are composed, encased in a

non-conducting material and bound together by self-adjusting clamps, the latter are not shown in figure. In the interior of this shaft are placed carbon electrical "resistances," (a) which are termed "incandescents" by the inventor, the furnace being thus an "incandescent furnace"—indeed, it would appear, the only "incandescent" furnace in existence. candescence, i.e., white heat, thereby, and of course communicate this heat to the walls and interior of the chamber, and thus to any material passing through the furnace. The interior of the furnace being kept full of reducing gas during the operation, and the temperature, by the passage of the current, having been raised to, say, 1600 degrees centigrade, less or more, a constant

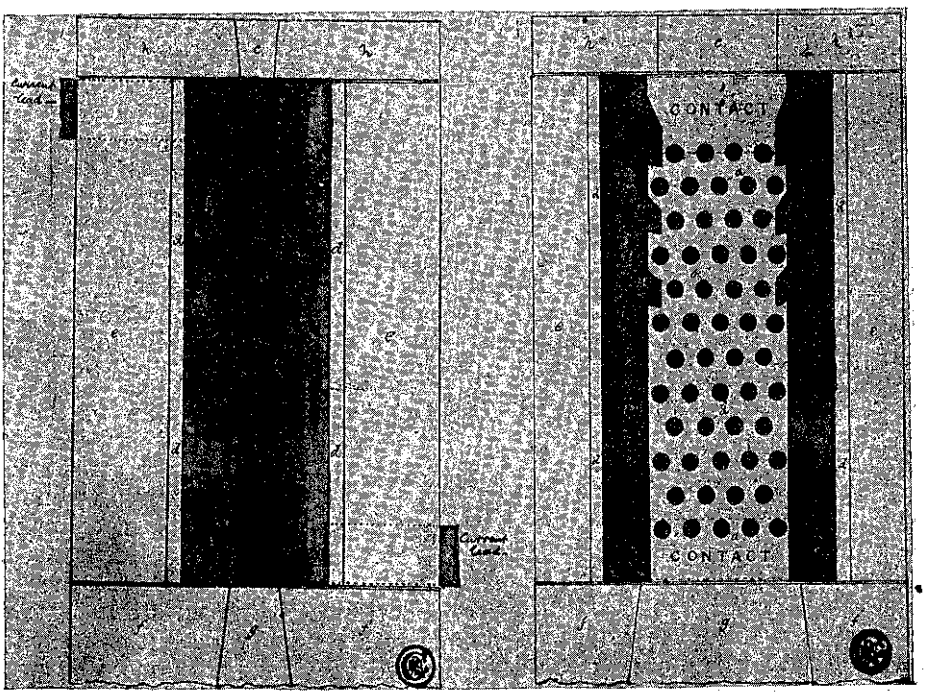


Fig. I.

The "Galbraith" Electric Furnace. Vertical line through the centre at right angle to aspect shown in Fig. II. (general idea only).

Fig II.

The "Galbraith" Electric Furnace. Vertical line through the centre at right angle to aspect shown in Fig. I. (general idea only).

In the above Figs. the "current leads" connect with the carbon walls *i i*, and the resistances or "incandescents" connect these walls, insulation when required being of course duly provided. *d d* is asbestos packing, *e e* being firecIay slabs.

These "resistances" or "incandescents" are made of any suitable form of carbon, graphite for example. A suitable feeding arrangement for the iron-sand, etc., and also a receiving vessel for the metal produced are of course provided. Conceive then the interior of this shaft heated to the required temperature by the flow of a suitable current of electricity through these resistances, which are raised to incandescence, i.e., white heat, thereby, and of course communicate this heat to the walls and interior of the chamber, and thus to any material passing through the furnace. The interior of the furnace being kept full of reducing gas during the operation, and the temperature, by the passage of the current, having been raised to, say, 1600 degrees centigrade, less or more, a constant stream of mixed iron-sand and charcoal powder is fed in at the top of the furnace (c), the proportion of charcoal requisite to reduce the oxide of iron to the metallic state, and to convert it into steel, having been of course duly adjusted. The charge in its descent falls upon and between the incandescents, is reduced and fluidified, takes up carbon, and leaves the furnace at the bottom (g) in the form of steel.

The product may either be "granulated" steel, billets or castings, and by mixing the feed-charge, which may, if preferred, be pre-reduced iron-sand, with any required proportion of nickel, tungsten, manganese, etc., etc., any variety of steel may be produced; such is a general description of this invention.

It is to be noted that in this invention, we have, as it were, a concentration of the ultimate aims of the iron metallurgist as regards both the furnace and the finished product. As regards the furnace, it will be observed we have the heat or temperature without the fuel and without the blast, and that the useless and objectionable foreign matters before mentioned, along with the fluxes which their presence necessitated have been thrown out or eliminated from the problem, so that iron-oxide alone remains to be dealt with. As regards the finished product, in the nature of things we produce not pig-iron but steel, thus dispensing with the Bessemerising of pig-iron, at present an indispensible step towards the ultimate aim of the iron metallurgist, viz., the production of steel, and thus at one stroke sweeping away at least half the cost.

From the foregoing it must be obvious that, if the merit of simplicity be the hall-mark of great inventions, the outlook of this latest addition to the World's possessions ought to be a bright one, resting, as it does, upon the following simple but very solid facts:

(I.) Chemical affinity, which determines that carbon and carbon mon-oxide, at a given temperature, in contact with iron-oxide will produce iron, and if excess of carbon be present—steel.

(II.) The flow of a suitable electric current through a conductor such as is specified in the invention, will produce the heat or temperature required.

(III.) The descent of the charge through the furnace is determined by gravitation, and is thus practically automatic.

Chemical affinity; heat of "resistance"; gravitation; these are all established laws, as we know, and upon the fiat of these laws rests the claims of the "Galbraith" Electric Furnace, and of the Continuous Steel-making Process bearing his name, lately introduced to the public.

It may be of interest to add that a Company has already been formed in New Zealand, with headquarters in Auckland, to put this invention to practical use.

G. Fossesholm, photo. **Proserpine River.**

THERE are beautiful bits of scenery in the Queensland Bush, as these photos show. They were taken in the Proserpine District, where sugar is grown and harvested by swarms of Kanakas. The river, which wanders leisurely through the dense tropical verdure, abounds in alligators, and snakes frequent its banks in greater than usual numbers. From the boughs of the orange-trees the carpet-snake hangs drowsily, and the green snake glides silently, with scarcely a rustle of leaves, from tree to tree.

As we pushed our way through the bush on an idle excursion one day, my friend stept on a big, brown snake; its colour, which closely resembled that of a dry stick, prevented him noticing it. It curled round his leg and bit savagely, but his tough, sun-baked leggings saved him. The brown snake is poisonous, but the tiger snake and death-adder are most deadly. Two black varieties also bear very bad reputations. These all keep to the ground, where the colour of the soil suits their complexions, and enables them to escape special notice. As we strolled along, we

G. Fossesholm, Photo.

The home of the Alligator, Proserpine River.

passed the fringe of bush, and found ourselves on the verge of a waterhole, as ideal a home for the flocks of wild fowl, as was the neighbouring bush for the gaily-plumaged singing birds.

The pool was alive with fish, jumping, ever and anon, clear of the water to snap at the many varieties of flies which tickled their respective palates. On a muddy bank, in a far corner, an enormous alligator reclined at full length. He was evidently posing as a rotten log, either in hopes of present prey, or to keep himself in practice. But for the occasional twinkle of his eye, and the very slight motion caused by breathing, the deception was perfect. Slight indications truly which would only be noticed in a country where one is ever on the alert for such dangerous impostors. These rapacious monsters sleep in the sun most of the day, but are instantly wide enough awake, should anything tempting enough come in their way. In the evening, when a cool breeze moves the air, they search for a full meal, and generally manage to get it.

As we stood silently on the edge of the pool, we noticed a yellow water-snake gliding swiftly across,

G. Fossesholm, photo. The bush of Proserpine.

dexterously catching the small flies and frogs which crossed his path, and swallowing them in a procession which, curiously enough, reminded me of quaint, old-time pictures of reptiles entering the Ark.

We strolled into the pleasing shelter of the bush again, and soon came to the river. Here we paused to enjoy the beauties which Nature had spread so profusely for the delectation of those who take the trouble to observe them. My comrade was of a congenial nature, and we could not help remarking what an infinity of pleasure and profit to mind and body is lost through the foolish blindness of those who rush through life with eyes and attention only for those things which they fondly imagine will fill their pockets.

There was not the slightest breeze to ruffle the surface of the river or stir the leaves of the water-lilies which fringed its shores. On our side the dense bush prevented the rays of the sun penetrating, and all was soft shade, but pouring, as it were, over the tops of the trees, they appeared to gild the further bank with double brilliance and radiance. They danced joyously on the broad, fan-like leaves of the

G. Fossesholm, Photo.

The stag-horn in the Proserpine bush.

stately palms which glory in the moist soil of the river-side. They penetrated the outskirts—but the outskirts only of the dense bush beyond, showing a fantastic tracery of light and shade that can never be done justice to on paper or canvas. The hand of man, after all, even in his most triumphant moments, but mocks the Creator.

On the drier patches of land stood giant fig-trees, amid the clefts of their branches the stag-horn fern flourished to perfection. This plant must draw its sustenance from the moist air of the riverside, for it is often content with a dry log or stone for its resting-place, though it prefers the higher life on the branches of trees.

JOHN FARRELL:

POET, JOURNALIST, & REFORMER.

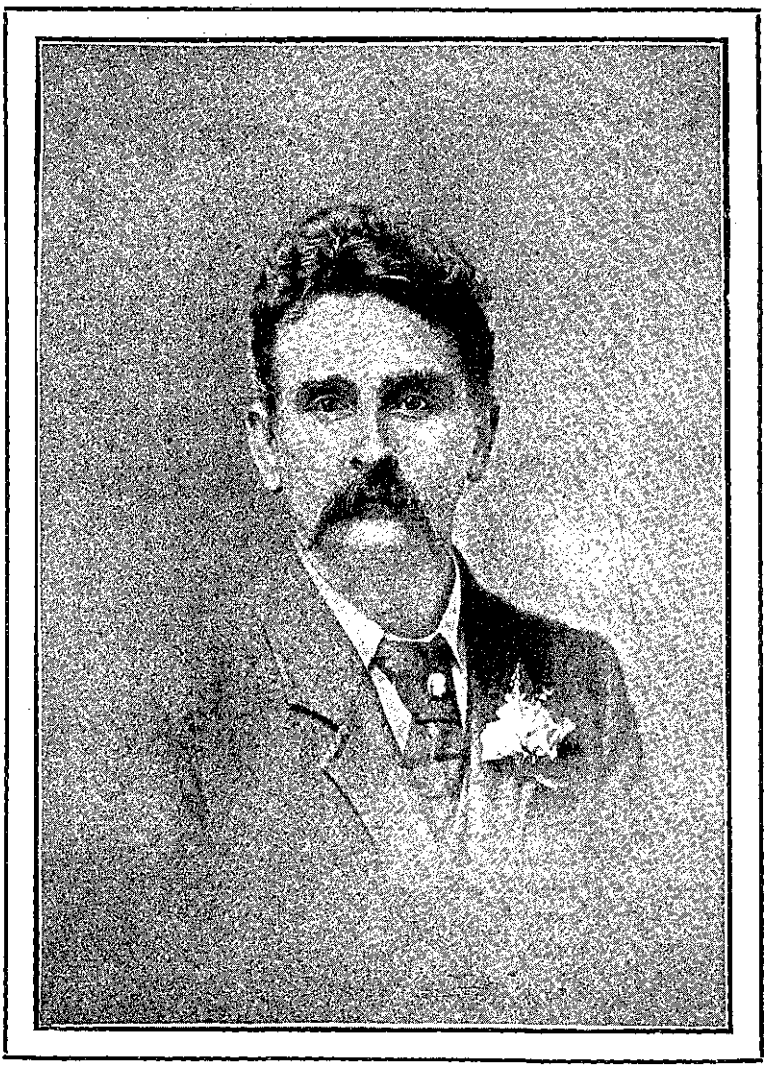
By BERTRAM STEVENS.

JOHN FARRELL, who died suddenly on the 8th January last, was the chief of the present generation of Australian singers, the successors of that brilliant band—Kendall, Gordon, and Brunton Stephens—whose verses were the finest fruits of Australian poetry during our first century. It is now over sixteen years ago since Farrell's principal work was published in book form, and except for occasional signed contributions to newspapers, and a splendid poem on "Australia," which appeared in the "Picturesque Atlas," he has published nothing since, so that his name as a poet has to some extent slipped out of notice, and has lately been submerged beneath the great flood of Australian poetry which began with the publication of "The Man from Snowy River," in 1895.

Only a limited number of copies of "How he died, and other poems" were printed in 1887, and for years past it has been a rarity in the book-market. Expectations were raised by the announcement in 1895, or thereabouts, that a volume of verses by John Farrell was "to be published shortly," but the years passed and nothing came of it. His health was so bad, and his leisure so scanty, that he could not attend to the preparation of the volume for the press until just a few months before his death—too late to see it through himself. Two or three of his poems, however—notably, "How he Died" and "The Last Bullet"—are known and well-remembered throughout Australia. They have been reprinted several times in selections of Australian poetry, and must always occupy an important place in our literature. These two poems are representative of the bulk of his poetic work during his early years. He could only write in the little leisure his busy life of droving, farming and brewing left him, although he made a constant study of books and men during that period.

His poetical gifts were early recognised by, amongst others, the late Wm. Bede Dalley, to whom he dedicated his volume of poems. He was called from brewing to the more congenial work of professional journalism, where he quickly gave proof of first-rate ability. Though a poet and somewhat of a dreamer, he was never carried away into the shallows of sentimentalism. He always retained a strong hold of the realities of life, and his imagination seldom flew further than the future that would easily be possible if a reasonable measure of justice were done on earth. He was a shrewd and logical reasoner, clear-sighted, and intensely interested in the current affairs of the world, in politics and political economy—which he counted first among the things that matter.

His wide reading and fine taste made him an admirable reviewer and writer on literary subjects. Un-



John Farrell.

fortunately, however, the strain of daily newspaper work and the continuous physical suffering, which he patiently endured for over twenty years, quenched his poetic ardour, and prevented him from fulfilling the promise of his early work. How great was the loss to literature may be judged by the excellent quality of his most recent verse of importance—"Australia to England," published in the "Daily Telegraph" on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897, and reprinted as a booklet. This was written at a single sitting. Two days before the event he was asked to write something suitable. He sat down the same night, and by the morning it was finished—about 150 lines of vigorous, ringing verse, full of fine phrases and a splendid picture of the great procession:

"A heaving sea of life, that beats
Like England's heart of pride to-day,
And up from roaring miles of streets
Flings on the roofs its human spray;
And fluttering miles of flags aflow,
And cannon's voice, and boom of bell,
And seas of fire to-night, as though
A hundred cities flamed and fell!

"While, under many a fair festoon
And flowering crescent, set ablaze
With all the dyes that English June
Can end to deck a day of days,

And past where mart and palace rise,
And shrine and temple lift their spears,
Below five million misted eyes
Goes a gray Queen of sixty years."

This poem received world-wide commendation. Rudyard Kipling wrote to the author in terms of high praise; Professor Dowden spoke of it as "a memorable poem, fine and vigorous in spirit, in utterance, and in the movement of its verse." Congratulatory letters were also received from the late W. E. Henley, Cardinal Vaughan, Conan Doyle, Lord Wolseley, Colonel John Hay, Miss Jane Barlow, and Prof. Gilbert Murray.

"It is said that more than twelve thousand odes to the English race on the occasion of the Record Reign," said one of the chief New York journals, "many of them by poets of universally recognised ability, have been published. Of these, the Sydney 'Daily Telegraph' must be credited with having produced, in 'Australia to England,' far and away the strongest and finest, not excepting Kipling's striking 'Recessional,' and much more distinctly not excepting Mr. Alfred Austin's hide-bound lines."

Many years of newspaper work had given him keener, critical insight and greater precision of touch; hard work and bad health did not impair the vision and the faculty divine; but inspiration ceased to well up in the jaded brain. It is reasonably certain that if opportunity allowed, he could have written much superior work to that which forms the larger part of his literary legacy. His early poems contained many crudities, and some were unpardonably long; but he had recently subjected them to a very thorough revision with a view to republication, casting out the weaklings and pruning many of the others—in every case considerably improving the originals. Considering the fact that he had not had the advantage of much scholastic education when young, and that he passed most of his early years in circumstances where books were few and literary influences non-existent, it is surprising that he had written so much of such high quality as he did before he was thirty. His metier was the narrative poem, generally realistic and humorous. He delighted to allow his fancy to play on every imaginable, grotesque or absurd phase of his subject—as in "My Sundowner" and "Stand By," the latter a weird and elaborate curse on a ludicrously inadequate occasion. His easy rhyming faculty, a gift of terse and vigorous phrasing, and a general fund of rich humour, enabled him to accomplish some excellent work of this kind. He was seldom lyrical; but when moved by feelings of admiration or passionate protest against Wrong, his verse rose to high levels. It was always simple, clear and forcible. It would be easy to quote many fine lines and happy phrases, but the following passage from a long, early poem, called "Adrift," represents a part of Farrell's work not generally known:

"There is no future Heaven whose bliss
Surpasses love's first thrilling kiss;
No rapture born of realms above
Transcends youth's first requited love,
When mutual yearnings, fiercely felt,
In one great pang of Heaven felt,
When Passion thrusts aside control,
And soul unveils itself to soul.
To feel again that moment's breath
I'd brave all Hell's undying death,
And woo eternity of pain,
To live o'er that blest hour again."

His aim was always lucidity. It was only natural, therefore, that his literary favourites were Tennyson and Stevenson. He never appreciated Browning or Meredith, whom he frankly said he had tried to read and failed to fully understand. As there is so much that is excellent in English literature which can be understood by any ordinary reader without a gloss, he considered that only professed students or those with a special bent that way, need bother about the mystical or the obscure.

Though Farrell was a very well read man, he was not by any means

bookish. His principal interests were outside the library and in among the throngs of men. A frequent saying of his was that "nothing matters, anyhow"; nevertheless, he believed that a great many things did matter, and that—

"This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank,—it means intensely and means good."

For what he thought was right he strove valiantly to the end, and shortly before his death he resigned his position because he could no longer write as he believed. Perhaps few men have been filled with a deeper or more sincere love of their fellowmen that John Farrell. It was not merely an abstract humanitarianism. He felt keenly for the woes of the great multitude, victims of the world's injustice; for those whose lives of toil are barren of hope, whose lot is one of privation, pain and misery. Always his pen was devoted to the advocacy of what he regarded as the remedy for social ills; his hand was always in his pocket to help whoever might need it. An earnest and enthusiastic disciple of Henry George, dating from the days when disciples were few, he perhaps did more than any man in Australia to popularise the principle of land value taxation, and to uphold the doctrine of free-trade. In the political life of his own State he was a potent force for good, and as a citizen, his death is a national loss. By those who were associated with him in the Single Tax movement, he was regarded with the warmest affection; and wherever that political faith had found any followers, the name of John Farrell was known and esteemed. He cheerfully gave up his time to any who called on him, and for years he carried on an extensive correspondence in connection with Single Tax matters.

To know John Farrell was to love him. Entirely unselfish and devoid of vanity, he never obtruded himself and his affairs; he loved to talk, but was an excellent listener; and one of his amusements was to stand amongst the crowd at election meetings or in front of a cricket score, and listen to the comments of the Average Man. While believing sincerely in peace, there was that of the original Adam and the blood of the Celt in him which made him appreciate a casual fight or a story of fighting, and Kipling appealed to him strongly on account of his virility and his unique power of presenting the natural man in all his brutality and bravery. Farrell was a many-sided man, well informed, with a rich, rolling voice, flavoured with a brogue, which made him always an interesting talker. He had ever a kindly word of praise for other men's work, and with his sanely optimistic philosophy, he was a source of refreshment and courage to his friends. Those who enjoyed the privilege of his friendship are not likely to forget the quiet, brave, kind-hearted man, who bore his sufferings so nobly, and who "never doubted clouds would break, never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph," but "held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better."

John Farrell was born at Buenos Ayres (South America), on the 18th December, 1851, his parents having previously emigrated from Ireland. He went with his parents to Victoria, via England, in the year following his birth—shortly after the discovery of gold. After mining for a few years, his father turned farmer, and the best part of John Farrell's youth was spent on his father's farm in the Loddon River district, Victoria. John left home when nineteen, went to Bendigo, and worked for nearly two years in a brewery; then went to Queensland, travelling far North in quest of gold—which he did not get, but instead a severe sickness. He felled timber for a while, returned home after two years absence, and continued work on the farm. He obtained employment in a brewery

again, at Camperdown, Vic., and married in 1876 a Miss Elizabeth Watts. Tried farming for about a year, and returned to brewing, going to Albury, N.S.W., in 1878, as manager of a brewery there. He commenced writing for Sydney "Bulletin" in 1882, and was a regular contributor for many years. Started brewing in partnership with T. Gulson, at Goulburn (N.S.W.), in 1883, and in Queanbeyan at the end of 1884. Read Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" at this time and became an enthusiastic disciple. Abandoned brewing, and went to Lithgow, N.S.W., where he bought a paper and ran it for over two years as "The Lithgow Land Nationaliser"—the foremost organ of the Georgian doctrine in Australia. The paper proved a financial failure, and Farrell came to Sydney in 1889 to edit "The Australian Standard"—a Single Tax newspaper, which he left to join the staff of the Sydney "Daily Telegraph," as leader writer in 1890. For some months he was editor, but resigned and continued leader-writing, book reviewing, etc., until July, 1903, when he resigned altogether. He was offered the editorship of the Australian "Review of Reviews" just before his death. He died in Prince Alfred's Hospital from heart failure, 8th January, 1904, and was buried in Rookwood Cemetery. The following is a list of his publications: "An Iliad of Albury" (Albury, 1878); "Two Stories, a Fragmentary Poem" (Melbourne, 1882); "How He Died, and other Poems" (Sydney, 1887).

G. Fossesholm, Photo.

The prickly pear, Darling Downs, Queensland.

My Lady's Bower.

By Alma.

Lady readers are invited to discuss current topics in these pages, suggest subjects for discussion, and also to contribute photographic studies on any subject of interest. Contributions should be addressed: "Editor My Lady's Bower, New Zealand Illustrated Magazine," and should arrive early in the month. In all cases where stamps are enclosed for the purpose photos will be returned.

HAS it ever struck you that with the education of the public to good music the musician will become rare? Now, that may seem very paradoxical, but only at first reading. For what I mean is that the present great number of people who play or sing badly will tend to decrease. We have all along called anyone who performs, a musician. Only for lack of a better term. "Amateur" is so general, and in music particularly, gives a distinctly erroneous impression. For is not an amateur a lover? And how many of those who pound away each day, through long, weary years, at scales and exercises, rewarded occasionally with "Silvery Waves," or "Golden Breezes," or "Singing Rivers," or something equally ridiculous, are

Luscombe, photo. Tired.

lovers of the labour which is to them anything but art, with or without a capital?

I remember, as a child, being one of five, all drilled in music. Among us were a piano, a violin, a flute, and a clarionet; and we rose at six, and took the family piano in turn. Four of us had to get in a half-hour each before breakfast. One unfortunate had to practise his flute half-hour as well, and I think the violinist spent a cold and unprofitable hour. We pleased ourselves as to what we practised and how. As long as there was continuous sound, it was well. One lazy brother used to spend at least ten minutes of his thirty coming out frequently to see if time was up. For my part, an unlearnt lesson or an enticing story-book stood opposite my eyes, and my fingers practised. I am afraid the violinist looked out of his window and bowed vigorously or otherwise, according to view. I am sure now that we should all have been better chopping wood, or better still, sleeping.

Then there was a boarding-school where twenty girls divided between them eight pianos during six and seven a.m. The computation of the divisions of time allowing always that no one had the same piano two days running, used to give the poor governess a fearful headache, and the supervision, proved to be necessary, was an insurmountable barrier to peace.

So it is. Parents spend money on pianos, and a small income upon tuition for their children—and as for the worry of the practice—it's really inconceivable to those who have not undertaken the responsibility of it.

Well, I began by speaking of public music, which may be one good result of all this drilling. If it is, then I am glad to hear of some good phoenix from the ashes. Whatever its cause, it is having the effect of driving the music-spoiler out of the field. Not entirely: for the fever has not yet run its course. But it makes him play what he does in correct time, even if it does not

S. Beck, Photo.

View in Woodhaugh Gardens, Dunedin.

S. Beck, photo. Fern trees, Orepuki.

always succeed in making him sing in tune.

By the frequent hearing of good music, more critics have sprung into being ; and many of them are doing a service by what may seem unkind criticism. And again, instead of giving their pupils pretty sounding "tunes," modern teachers instil the theory, which is nearly as difficult to some would-be musicians as is mathematics. Then there's harmony, and as a relief from exercises, now swollen to an enormous bulk, learners get apparently tuneless compositions by foreign composers, masters of the classic, and with no better titles than Impromptu, Etude, Symphony.

Somehow, I do not think too many of the growing generation will care to extend their knowledge of this, to all but lovers, uninteresting curriculum. So that there is hope for the next generation. Fancy what a time we, as grandmothers, will have—no scales, no Czerny's, no fantasies, no morceaux. Music by that time will be reduced to the theory of silence. A child—no ! a lover—will be able to practise in bed, in theory, of course. And at the most, only one of each household will be courageous enough to attempt even that.

Pianos will be relegated to the attics or the auction mart—unsaleable relics. And the other instruments of harmony—but if I go any further in this direction, you will think me as bad as the average musician.

BOOKS THAT SELL.

There is much to be learnt from an article in "The Outlook," by Mr. George P. Brett, the president of the Macmillan Company, on the subject of what makes books sell. His conclusion is that "merit and vital human interest, rather than the methods by which it is exploited, can in the long run give a book wide circulation." He recognises the fact that new methods of advertising have frequently met with great success, especially, he says, "where the novels exploited followed on the heels of really popular books, and especially also when these latter were imitated by the successors in question." But he goes on to say that the results have finally proved to be "an increase of expense on the part of the publishers for advertising, the filling of the columns of the daily and weekly newspaper with inane and often offensive personalities about authors and their works, and a general weariness on the part of the reading public." He states that books which deserve to succeed, eventually find their public whether they are advertised or not, and gives three instances. Here it may be worth while to quote in full:

"In the winter of 1882 Mr. F. Marion Crawford—who has, I believe, published more novels that have met with wide success and popularity than any other living writer—brought out his first novel, 'Mr. Isaacs.' Its early history is curious and very pertinent, I think, to the points I am trying to establish. . . . 'Mr. Isaacs' did not find its public at once, and the enormous popularity and sale which it afterwards enjoyed began only after it had been published some little time.

"Few people, probably, to-day read Bellamy's 'Looking Backward,' which, nevertheless, remains perhaps the best story of its class, and was for many months more read and talked of than any novel of its time, its sale probably having reached half a million copies. Yet on publication it met only a lukewarm reception, and, passing from the hands of one publisher to another, was not pushed as some recent novels have been. Its sale, notwithstanding, was so large that I have been told that its original publisher, who went out of business, could have paid all his debts from the profits of this one book, if it had found its public at once on publication.

"No recent book has repeated, I think, in the course of its publication the experience of Mrs. Ward's 'Robert Elsmere,' which was given away as a premium with a bar of soap—common washing-soap at that—and the incident, though amusing, is not perhaps particularly 'a propos' of our theme, which is to show how books achieve circulation; yet 'Robert Elsmere' is, nevertheless, an excellent example for our pur-

pose. Published before the days of international copyright, its American publishers had little incentive to make it popular, to do so being merely to run the risk of piracy. Yet of their comparatively expensive edition tens of thousands of copies were sold, and in the various pirated editions which afterwards appeared the book must have circulated upwards of a million copies and without advertising or exploitation of any kind in the modern sense of the word."

His concluding remarks are also well worthy of the attention of all aspiring young writers :

" In order to achieve success in light literature, it is necessary to deal with the themes which have and must always have 'perennial human interest.' The success of opportunity or of the moment may perhaps be attained without doing so, but the books which have become standard and will live throughout all time will be found to deal with those subjects and only those which are of enduring interest to the human race."

Agnes Repplier, the well-known essayist, in a late number of "Harper's Bazaar," is pleased to note that the distinctively " feminine " book has almost disappeared. She concludes that we have had a surfeit of shallow and insipid books for women, and the limitations that make for the feminisation of literature have been fostered with disastrous solicitude. She regards " the gradual disappearance of books written essentially for women, and a consequent, and not irrational tendency on the part of women to invade the territories of men, as encouraging signs of the times." Her opinion of the problem-novel is worth quoting :

" When the problem-novel burst like a muddy meteor upon the world of fiction, women hailed it with an enthusiasm which only the desperation of 'ennui' can explain. Its profoundly illogical character offered no barrier to their appreciation. They felt that here was something easy to read, yet presenting food for thought ; something which, without taxing their intelligence, opened new fields of speculation. It was—it is still—more interesting than the tale which describes through forty chapters the vapid love-making of two young people who exist only for courtship and the wedding-march. It is more stimulating than the story in which sentiment, religion, and domestic economy are blended together for the refreshment of the female mind. This last product is recommended as being 'wholesome,' by which, I suppose, is meant harmless, as wholesome in the sense of nutritious or invigorating can never be implied. It has 'winsome' heroines who bear hardships with sunny resignation, dress daintily upon nothing a year, and cook to perfection on an odourless oil-stove. Its heroes, being designed exclusively for the reward of such virtues—like male houris—are quite as remote from humanity. Its sentiment is puerile. Its religion lacks nobility and distinction. It is a feeble survivor of a school of fiction once deservedly popular, a school of which Miss Charlotte Yonge was the ablest and most honoured exponent."

The following extract from the remarks made by Mr. Eden Phillpotts on the occasion of the unveiling of the memorial tablet and window to Mr. R. D. Blackmore, in Exeter Cathedral last April, will be read with pleasure by all who have enjoyed that exquisite work "Lorna Doone."

" Summed in his books and reflected in the sequestered life of Blackmore were many messages. He showed, as every supreme dramatic artist had shown, that goodness was man's only hope—that evil, sooner or later, reaped the whirlwind. He indicated the virtues of courage and humility, the propriety of tolerance, the value of self-reli-

ance, the distinction of patience. He fired the weary with new hope: he helped the impatient to persevere; he showed the sanctity of art and how it might be all sufficing, even to the unsuccessful, provided that their aims were high enough and their reverence sufficiently deep and real. Those who knew him could attest how those qualities of fearlessness and modesty and respect for the wonderful gift entrusted to his keeping were a part of himself. His splendid generosity, his gift for finding out the worth in others, his charity, and his humour made Blackmore a man apart—a personality unique in that literature for whose highest traditions he always stood. In the quality of a sea-deep, sweet, sane humour and large understanding of humanity's strength and weakness, unblemished by any shadow of exaggeration, he had had no equal since Fielding. He had departed leaving the world richer than he found it."

The marble tablet, which is placed under the window, contains the following inscription:

This Tablet and the window above are a tribute of admiration and affection to the memory of
RICHARD DODDRIDGE BLACKMORE, M.A.
Son of the Rev. John Blackmore, *Educated* at Blundell's School, Tiverton, and Exeter College, Oxford (Scholar), Barrister of the Middle Temple, 1852,
Author of 'Lorna Doone,' 'Springhaven,' and other works
Born at Longworth, Berks, 7 June, 1825,
Died at Teddington, Middlesex, 20 Jan., 1900.

'Insight, and humour, and the rythmic roll
Of antique lore, his fertile fancies sway'd,
And with their various eloquence array'd
His sterling English, pure and clean and whole.

'He added Christian courtesy, and the humility of all thoughtful minds, to a certain grand and glorious gift of radiating humanity.'

Cradock Nowell.

The publishers, Messrs. Duckworth and Co., London, forward for review "The Poet's Mystery," by Antonia Fogazzaro, translated from the Italian by Anita Macmahon. This work first appeared in the "Nuova Antologia," and the book commences with a letter, forwarded by the author to the Editor of that journal, stating that a lady had lent him the manuscript which was bequeathed to her by an Italian poet of some renown, who died rather suddenly a few years ago. It is a description of part of his own life, as he wrote it to his lady friend. She rightly judged at a time when vulgar love-stories are all too common, "that it would be wrong for her to keep back this narration of a love which she describes as divine." The reader, on laying down the book, cannot fail to be grateful to her for making it public. The story is told by the poet himself, and he states in the first chapter that it is "not for the world, but only for the generous souls that a calumny would sadden, or the perverse ones that would take pleasure in it." Probably a very large number will come under one or other of these definitions. The poet is a dreamer of dreams. Twice in his life, with an interval of nine years, he had dreamt that he was drawn out of an unknown abyss by the power of a sweet voice that spoke above him in a foreign accent some incomprehensible words. He regarded the voice as "a prophetic one, a mysterious communication from the Divinity." It was to this voice, also, that the reader has to be grateful, for the poet, in introducing his subject, writes: "Would it be wiser to lay aside my pen and trust myself to God? I think of Violet, who is always my guiding star, and hear her voice—the sweetest, I believe, that ever sounded from human lips—say to me: 'Write, love!'" Of course, he met the owner of the voice, sweet Violet Yves, some time after he last dreamt of it. Equally, of course, it was for her that he conceived the love which his lady friend described as "divine," the story of which he relates so charmingly and so pathetically in the book. There is little doubt that the work has lost somewhat of its beauty by its translation from the Italian, the language of love, but it is equally certain from the result that the task could not well have been in better hands. The book will be widely read.

Messrs. Wildman, Lyell and Arey forward two new books from Methuens, "The Blunder of an Innocent," by E. Maria Albanesi, and "Under Suspicion," by Adeline Sergeant.

The Innocent in the former work is Nancy Baillie, the daughter of Lady Alicia Baillie who, to escape the pinched penury of her aristocratic home, had accepted the luxury and wealth of life with a rich young commoner engaged in brewing. She had been living in protesting fashion ever since, and viewed with some contempt Nancy's fond love for her father. Lady Alicia assists a certain Edward Loftus to secure a seat in Parliament, and desires him for a son-in-law. Nancy appears agreeable, but her father, out of compassion, takes to his home a niece of his, Bettine Sylvester, whose mother was dead, and father a third-class actor who had spoilt his career by drink. Bettine is a cool, calculating young lady, whose fascinations no man could withstand. She at once successfully exercises her power on Loftus and becomes engaged to him, but before the marriage day transfers her affections to Lord Nigel Kingsbury, Nancy's cousin, a weak young spendthrift, for whom Nancy had just found out she cared more than she had ever done for Loftus. Old Lady Kingsbury, a strong-minded grandmother, does all she can to assist Nancy and Nigel, who are both great pets of hers, but in vain. A wealthy stock-broker, Peter Callard—who had incurred Bettine's hatred by his treatment of her before her uncle rescued her from poverty—after trying in vain to secure Nancy's affections, becomes engaged to Bettine on the subsequent death of her husband, but the widow has her revenge on her old enemy in a very dramatic and effective manner. On the eve of his anticipated wedding day, he learns she has married her old lover, Edward Loftus, having previously cajoled Callard into allowing her to burn the mortgage deeds which he had piled up on her late husband's property.

"Under Suspicion" also deals with love affairs in high life (?) Lord Hugh Castleton has married a music-hall girl, and separated from her. He has a very eccentric daughter. He is with his sister at a Swiss Hotel. A party of Alpine climbers, roped together, meet with an accident. Two guides and a clergyman fall into an abyss, and Miss Laurence Boudinot, the clergyman's sister and heroine of the book, with those behind her, escape by the rope breaking, the others are never seen again. Lord Hugh, who thinks his wife dead, admires Laurence, and in order to get a hold over her makes her believe she is under suspicion of having cut the rope and saved her own life at the expense of her brother's, and also of two of the best guides in the village. She becomes companion to Lord Hugh's sister, and afterwards takes charge of his daughter. Lady Hugh turns up, and altogether Laurence has a bad time through the persecutions of the contemptible aristocrat, and the vagaries of his wife and daughter. Her behaviour, however, through all her troubles is irreproachable, and she eventually consoles herself with the love of a doctor who is also under suspicion. The book will be read by the admirers of the curious creations of this authoress, but by few others.

Messrs. Upton and Co. forward a new book by W. E. Norris, entitled "Nature's Comedian," published by Longmans. Harold Dunville was the Nature's Comedian. He was by birth a gentleman, and had chosen the army as a profession, but a discreditable bankruptcy had obliged him to give it up, and try to earn his bread and butter on the stage. His family objected, his brother, the Rev. Richard Dunville, however, overcame his objections when he acquired fame, and his sister, a

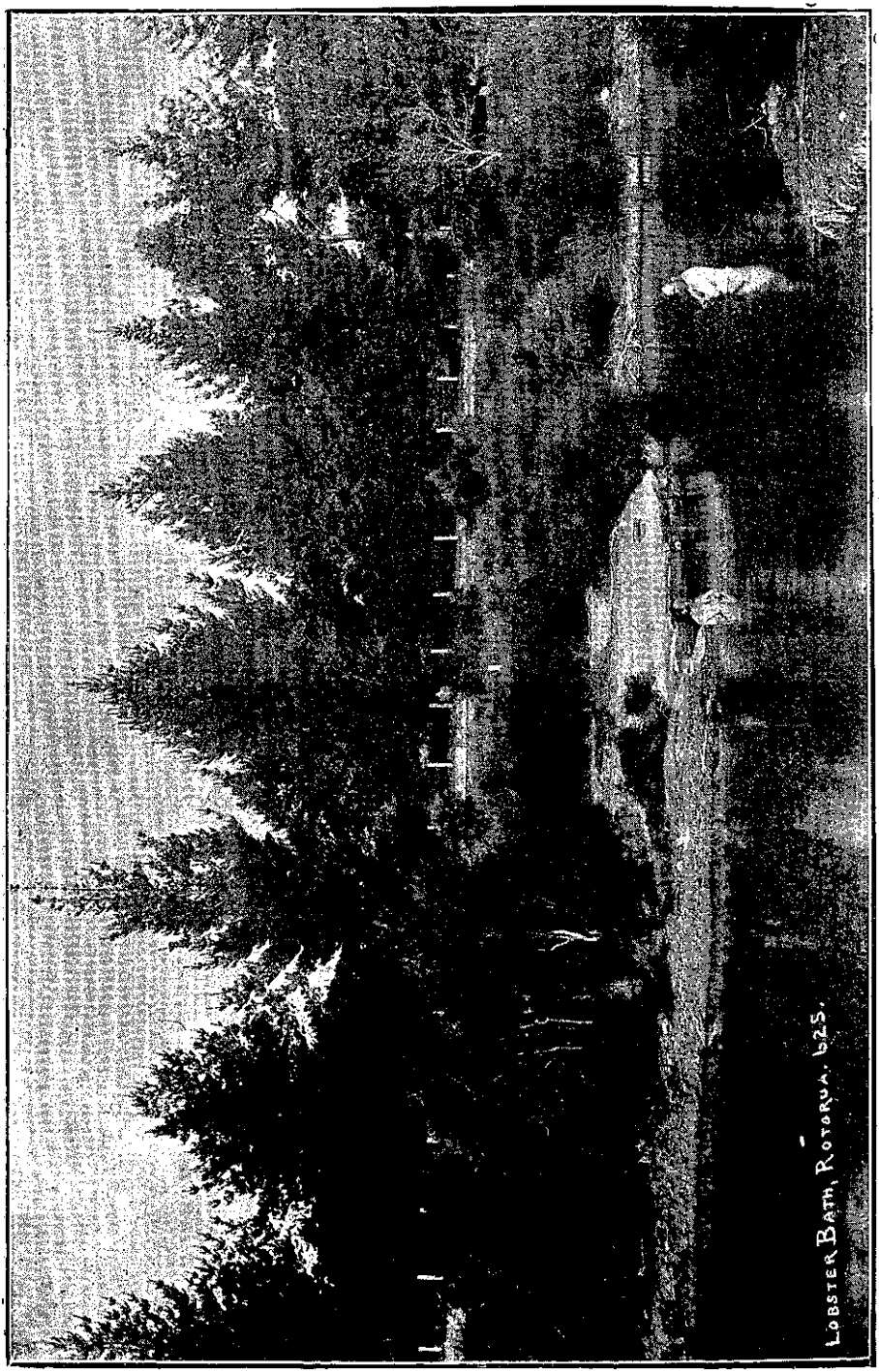
plain-speaking old maid, in a less degree. While visiting at his brother's country parsonage, he met two young ladies, and being impressionable, fell in love with the first, Lilian Ormond, daughter of a conservative country magnate, and his affection was returned. But Josephine Gardiner, the strong-minded daughter of a self-made radical, to whom Dunville Manor had been let in days of retrenchment, determined to take him up and "run him." Her father had great influence, a radical member was required in the district. Josephine persuaded Harold that he was the man, notwithstanding his family conservatism; that politics offered far superior opportunities of advancement and wealth than the stage; and that his ambition should be to get back Dunville Manor, the family estate. Notwithstanding Josephine's assistance, Harold was beaten by the Conservative candidate, and she dropt him. His parson brother wrote a play which he revised and adapted to the stage. Lilian, who thought very highly of the Rev. Richard, never forgave Harold when he returned to the stage, for posing as the author of this play. She married Richard, who had been hopelessly attached to her for some time. Harold had to fall back on Miss Fitzwalter, an old flame, who played first lady in his brother's play, thus rewarding her for her untiring devotion to him and the sang-froid with which she had witnessed his many love affairs.

Messrs. Constable are about to issue an English edition of a work entitled "A Russo-Chinese Empire," which has created great interest on the Continent. It deals with the action of Russia in the Far East, and the strenuous determination of the Chinese to resist the economic invasion of their country by Western Europe. The author, M. Alexandre Ular, collected the materials for his work during his residence in China and a journey through Siberia. Although late events have undoubtedly changed our views with regard to Russia, the book cannot fail to prove interesting at this time. The author holds that the peril to be feared from "the gradual and imperceptible development of a Russo-Chinese Power is enormously increased by the extraordinary vitality of the Chinamen, and by the apparent indestructibility of his ancestral social system and co-operative industrial methods."

Dr. Carl Schmidt has been occupied during the last seven years in piecing together 2000 small fragments of papyrus, and translating the contents from the Coptic. The result is the publication in Heidelberg of the "Acti Pauli," a description of many of the Apostle's journeyings which have not yet appeared. Dr. Schmidt claims that we have already only parts of one great work in our Bibles. The Coptic M.S. was written by an elder of the Christian Church in A.D. 180, "to honour St. Paul and combat agnostic heresies."

Messrs. Methuen have just published another volume of their "Books on Business" series. Mr. A. Gowans White is the author, and his works deals exhaustively with Electricity and its recent developments for industrial purposes, in a manner which makes it interesting not only to the scientist but to the general reader.

Tourist Department, photo. Mitre Peak and Sinbad Gully, Milford Sound.



Lobster Bath, Rotorua.

The Lion, Milford Sound.

Tourist Department photo.

ROUND THE WORLD.

JAPAN AND RUSSIA.

The most talked of event of the war at the time of writing has been the actions of the Russian volunteer fleet in the Red Sea. The seizure of neutral shipping is generally understood to be an attempt on the part of Russia to draw off the attention of the world from her defeat by setting other nations, now neutral, by the ears, and causing a general war. It is scarcely conceivable that the Russian Government could expect to gain much material advantage by this means, as in the event of England joining Japan, Russia could not reasonably expect any other Power to take her side in her stricken state against so powerful a combination. Much as some of them might desire to do so, if any measurable chance of success presented itself, one could not imagine their taking such a step under the present conditions. No nation would be mad enough to court almost certain defeat, even when the advantages to be gained, if by some odd chance they should succeed, are considerable; how much less so in the present conditions. Taking this into consideration, the only other interpretation would seem to be that the act has been committed in the sheer recklessness of consequences, engendered by her recent reverses at the hands of what she regarded as so insignificant a foe; or at the most with a desperate hope that some unforeseen advantage might possibly accrue to her. The news which comes to hand as this goes to press that Russia has "climbed down" confirms this latter view.

ARMY REFORM AT HOME.

Mr. Arnold Forster's proposals in the direction of Army Reform are certainly the most feasible that have yet been put before the authorities. The War Secretary appears to be the right man in the right place. He is no doubt considerably indebted to Lord Esher's Reconstruction Committee for the fulness and completeness of his scheme, but to the information gathered by this means he added the experience he had himself during the twenty years he has made military affairs his close study. About three years ago he published a work, entitled "The War Office, the Army, and the Empire." This was a sharp criticism on the then existing state of affairs. If his sweeping proposals are adopted, which seems almost certain, we may expect to see the War Office cast off for once and all the reproaches which have been so deservedly piled upon it of late, and Tommy Atkins emerge triumphantly from the charges which a blue-mouldy administration and old-time training have obliged him to bear. The saving to the country of £2,394,000 a year by the adoption of this scheme, although no inconsiderable item in itself, is a mere bagatelle compared to the inestimable advantages of having an efficient and up-to-date

force ever ready to uphold British prestige in any emergency that may occur.

COLONIAL DEFENCE.

While army and navy reform are so prominently before the public at home it is pleasing to note that several of our colonies are taking steps to institute a better system of defence. Canada and Australia are both legislating in this direction. The Canadian Militia Bill provides for a military council comprising the Minister for Defence and the chief military officers to take the place of the general officer commanding, and the Federal Government proposes having an Inspector-General under an Advisory Board for the same purpose. This movement has been rendered necessary by the general dissatisfaction so often expressed of late at the present state of Australian defence, and New Zealand would do well to follow suit as promptly as possible, for our defence system is in quite as unsatisfactory a state as were those of our sister Colonies before these reforms were proposed.

THE LATE PAUL KRUGER.

The ex-President of the Transvaal Republic, of whose death we heard last month, has had an eventful career. He was essentially a strong, shrewd man, with an accurate knowledge of human nature. Had he been less narrowminded and bigoted we should have admired him more. It was the fact that he possessed in so large a degree the quality known as slimness by his compatriots, and mistook it for wisdom that led to his downfall. He was born in 1825, in the Zunt Mountains at the Cape. From a boy he had been often engaged in expeditions against predatory bushmen and invading Zulus, and was, like most of his race, an expert rifleman and hunter. At twenty-three he was appointed assistant-field-cornet, and rose in rank rapidly. He was never wounded, though he showed great bravery in the many expeditions in which he was engaged. He was first elected President in 1882, and his subsequent actions will not soon be forgotten. The lessons that he and his followers taught the British War Office of being not only always prepared for war, but to reorganise Tommy Atkins and adapt him to the up-to-date methods of fighting, are already bearing much fruit.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

There appears at last to be a very good chance of the Athanasian Creed retiring from the rubric of the Church of England. The Anglican bishops at home have decided to consult the Colonial bishops on the question of at least making the use of it optional. This is the beginning of the end. The only marvel is that this step was not taken years ago. It has already been omitted from the American Prayer Book, and the Church of Ireland only uses it for reference. The argument against its use is a powerful one. To understand it, Bishop Weldon says, "demands an historic spirit, a theological learning which cannot be found in congregations of men and women educated and less educated, and even little children." Why then should they have been compelled for so many years to join in a form of worship that they cannot understand, and one which, from the damnatory nature of much of its phraseology, could be so wofully misinterpreted?

THE PUBLISHER'S DESK.

THE WIDE POPULARITY OF THE NEW ZEALAND ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE.

The number of contributions we receive from New Zealanders, who have left our shores and settled in various parts of the earth, show how they still appreciate their national magazine. During the past month contributions have come to hand from England, Scotland, British Columbia, Paris, Roumania, Samoa and Australia, and in each case the contributor has received copies of the Magazine from friends he or she left in New Zealand. These contributions could not all be accepted, but the best of them will appear from time to time.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

We have much pleasure in announcing that we have made arrangements for introducing a new feature in next month's Magazine. It will take the form of several pages of original paragraphs dealing with the subjects which have proved of most interest during the preceding month at home and abroad.

ART IN ADVERTISING.

Advertisers should note the design for the advertisement of "Tiger Teas" in this issue. It cannot fail to attract attention to the article in question. It is better by far than a whole page of testimonials, which no one troubles to read, or, if they do, don't believe! It gives one the impression at once that the tea must be as good as the advertisement. It was specially designed by our artist for the proprietors. Send for designs to suit your business requirements.

Articles on the following subjects will appear shortly:—

MUSA, THE DESPOT (CONFESSIONS OF A LITERARY MAN).—By Jessie Mackay.
LEAVES FROM MY BRIGHTON NOTE BOOK.—By W. Townson.
TWO NEW ZEALANDERS ABROAD.—By Dora Wilcox.
ESPERANTO, LA LINGVO INTERNACIA.—By Robert Colquhoun.
THE LEGEND OF THE DRAGON.—By A. de Lisle Hammond.
HERRICK AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.—By Rachel Dee Brownlowe.
THE WOMEN AND GIRLS OF CHRYSANTHEMUM LAND.—By William Grüner.
SOME ASPECTS OF THE LAND TENURE PROBLEM.—By James Hight, M.A.

Storiettes by the following Authors:—

DOBSON AND TANTIA BHEEL.—By T. S. Gurr.
A YANKEE IN MAORILAND.—By Quill.
JOHN ALDEN IN MAORILAND.—By Hilda Keane.