

acres in extent, whose gleaming rock faces may be plainly seen from Wellington, twenty miles away. It took us half the day to reach the



A boulder-strewn gorge.

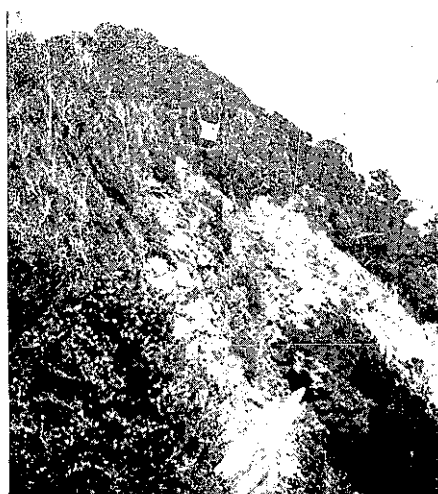
summit of the mountain, for we had to make a track as we went along, climbing with hands and feet up the precipitous slope, where beautiful umbrella ferns were growing shoulder high.

Here we saw our first huia, and later on in the day we came across several pairs of these rare and beautiful birds. Kakas and pigeons were in hundreds, and the trees were literally alive with tuis who filled the air with their blithesome melody.

It was a tough climb, truly, but we were amply rewarded. The summit resembled nothing more than the scene in a fairy pantomime. The stunted and weather-beaten tree stems with their tangled grey beards and flowing garbs of pendent moss and gnarled and intertwined limbs might well be attendant dwarfs dancing an intricate measure in some weird, fantastic dance on this secluded height where man rarely, if ever, trod. Here and there one swept the earth in a courtly bow to some unseen divinity. On either hand great precipices, dropping sheer at our feet made us feel that we were indeed in another world, till after creeping

under the branches of the wind-swept trees which had never been able to gain an upright position in this exposed locality, the sight of a trig station effectually dispelled the illusion. We had dragged a chain ourselves.

The station consisted of an iron pipe, embedded in the ground, in which during survey work a pole bearing a flag is set up for purposes of observation. From this point we got a most extensive and magnificent view embracing to the north and eastward the whole of the lower portion of the Wairarapa valley, including both the Wairarapa and Onoke Lakes. To the southward lay Palliser Bay stretching in deepest blue to Cape Palliser, and the vast infinitude of the far horizon. Away to the westward Wellington harbour lay before us like a map, with the distant city spreading like a white mist at the feet of the sun-browned hills that guarded it. Far away beyond Wellington over the Terawhiti hills, a narrow gleaming belt of silver marked the position of Cook Strait, and faintly outlined in the distance,



Our flag on the summit of Mt. Matthews.

loomed the blue ranges of the South Island.

Before we turned to descend the mountain we nailed a large sheet of stout calico to two small birch