

A Visit to the Greenstone Country.

By CHARLES HEAPHY.

THE following narrative was published in Chapman's New Zealand Magazine in 1862. Its exceeding interest is our apology for reprinting. It will be observed that the curious cave described as having been visited by W. Townson in his Fox River tour was also visited and utilised by Messrs. Brunner and Heaphy.

PART I.



THE WAI POENAMU, or the water of the greenstone, is a name written in the old charts against a lake in the Middle Island. Cook calls the whole island "Tovai Poenamū."

The words are corruptions of "Te Wahe," or the place of the poenamū.

To explore this country Messrs Brunner and Heaphy left Nelson on the 18th March, 1846, purposing to follow the western coast on foot. In the previous summer they had been stopped, when on an inland track, by the mountainous and wooded country of the gorges of the Buller river, in latitude 41 degrees 50 minutes.

The course now lay from Massacre Bay, past Rocky Point, and the place marked on the chart as the "5 fingers." On leaving the Aorere river, in Massacre Bay, each traveller carried a weight of 85lbs of provisions and instruments, the former consisting of 40lbs flour, 10lbs sugar, 1lb chocolate, with 8lbs powder and shot, the weight being made up with spare boots, blanket, book sextant and compass, with a few presents for any natives that might be fallen in with.

By the difficult coast track at Rocky Point, and past the old sealing haunt at Toropuhi, only three miles a day could be made with the

heavy loads and the rock-climbing. Large fragments of granite, from ten to sixty feet in diameter, composed what represented the beach; and, at low water, amongst these, and between them and the surf, the path lay.

Inland, high granite ranges, forest-covered, blocked up all passage save where some old war path had been cut to avoid a jutting point which the tide beat against, and where it was necessary to ascend some 500 feet and keep the hill side for a mile or more; the descent generally being by the bed of a torrent, or by a supple-jack rope over the cliff.

The great disadvantages of a coast route, when there are no natives, is that all the rivers have to be crossed where they are widest, at their junction with the sea. At the Awaruatu, Karamea, and Mokihi-nui, rafts had to be made. The most buoyant raft is made of korari, or the dry flower stalk of the flax, which is made into bundles ten or twelve feet long, and as thick as a man's body. The bundles are lashed together into a boat-shaped raft about 24 feet long and 4½ feet wide, tapered towards the ends. Paddles have to be cut, and with a weight of 500lbs or 600lbs, a river of half a mile broad may be conveniently crossed. With a greater distance the material becomes satur-