

He always came with a budget of news, and though he could neither read nor write he was fairly well informed even on matters outside the horizon of the Bush, while his observations on men and things were very shrewd and practical. He had been to every timber station in the province, and could hit off to a nicety the leading features in the character of every contractor or boss between Tairua and Mangonui. He worked cheerfully from daylight to dark, whether his employer were

had taught the kitten to jump and set the dolly's broken leg.

It is hardly to be supposed that such a paragon should be without some flaw in his composition, and I grieve to relate that our friend was not free from one that was almost universal among the old-timers. He was all right so long as there was no grog about: but once he got the taste—or, I believe, even the smell—he became another man. He would purchase half a dozen bottles of rum to start with, and go on a regular



On the Wallaby Track.

present or not, and was not at all particular as to the nature of the job he was asked to undertake, as for instance, when one of the matrons of the community wanted to visit a distant part of the settlement it was not unusual to borrow the old man for the day to look after the house in her absence. On her return she would find the place all tidied up, a week's supply of firewood cut and stacked, and the dinner cooked to a turn, while the children would tell what a time they had had, and describe how Jack

burst so long as he had a copper left. He went through all the stages: first, hilarious and playful, then gloomy and quarrelsome; generally ending up in a fight, in which, as might be expected under the circumstances, he usually got the worst of it. As soon as he had "suffered a recovery"—frequently a painful one—he was always ready to admit the particular kind of fool he had been, and was full of good resolutions for the future. But they never came to anything, and at greater or less intervals the old