

of his early adventures and Bush experience. And even the visions of the fowl-ranch and the onion-bed faded away. He commenced to turn in early, but he used to light his candle every hour or so and have a smoke. I guessed what was going to happen, but I was afraid of precipitating matters by making any remark. At length the end came. After a more than usually restless night he told me one morning that he wanted to go for a change, and asked me if I would mind settling up. I knew him well enough to be aware that there would be no use in arguing the point, so I gave him his cheque, and he took his axe and blankets and departed, and I never saw him from that day to this.

I left the settlement soon afterwards, but as I kept up a correspondence with my friends, I was posted up from time to time in the local news. I found that the old man had made up for his prolonged abstinence under my roof by a burst of more than usual magnitude. He had wandered into a sly grog-shanty, where he got drinking and playing cards with a lot of Maoris and gum-diggers. The card playing developed into a fight, and being in a minority, and with money to lose, he soon got the worst of it. Three days afterwards he crawled back to the settlement with a broken arm besides several cuts and bruises—all he had to show for his six months' wages. However, he soon recovered and went on as before. Sometimes he was gardening for the Major, sometimes taking a small contract of splitting puriri, but usually acting as general utility man for one or other of the settlers.

Eventually he disappeared from the district, and many and various were the speculations as to what had become of him. But as time passed on without bringing any news, the opinion was firmly adopted that he must be dead—probably drowned in a creek or perished in some trackless hush where his bones would be found many years after-

wards when the land came to be cut up for settlement.

But old Jack was not to make his exit in so prosaic a manner. One of the settlers, on a visit to Auckland for the summer holidays, was passing down Queen Street on Christmas morning, when he was struck by a tall, upright figure marching with a military step be-



A Brand from the Burning.

hind the band of the Salvation Army, which in spite of the unfamiliar uniform bore a remarkable resemblance to Booreedy Jack. He looked so hale and hearty, and so well set up that the likeness might only have been an accidental one were it not for the peculiar kink in his left elbow that has already been remarked on. That was unmistakable.