



"Sons o' Men" is a collection of clever stories by a New Zealand author, G. B. Lancaster, who has been a frequent contributor to this Magazine. It is published by Mr Andrew Melrose. The Sons o' Men are station hands, surveyors, bushmen, and et hoc genus omne, who are introduced to the reader in the first story, "The Backbone of the Country," as they are hustled out of the whare on the Mindoorie Sheep Station, in Southland, by the overseer, Walt, to save the sheep on the hills from a snow-storm. The author has a thorough grip of the subject selected, and describes in a vigorous and forcible style the storm and stress of life in the back-blocks of Southland. Here is a quotation: "The back-country is a stern mother to the sons she has borne. Time by time will she strain them, and burden them, and test them, until each separate spirit stands up confessed in strength, or goes under, passing out from her power. But those that are true men love her for the want of ease she gives them." In "Mates" the same characters are engaged in a rattling gallop after wild cattle. In "Without Proof" the effect of living a solitary life in a rabbit's hut is shown in the madness and death of Tommy Derolles. "The Story of Wi" takes another phase of life. Lane, the owner of Mindoorie, adopts the Maori child, Wi,

and has him well educated. Wi wishes to go into the Church to improve his people, and enters a theological college, but breaks out at last on the ground that all white men are liars. That the pakeha had cheated his trust. He had given the bible and withheld the application. Wi has fallen in love with a white girl and can't get her. "Hell-for-Leather" describes how Tony sat a noted buck-jumper of that name. From "On Bassett's Camp" the following extract may be taken. "The bush breeds her workers for herself, she will have nothing to do with the rejects of other trades. And mau by mau the camp was of that powerful, swaggering, light-hearted type that will fight like bull-dogs, drink like dry sand, work like the demons of the pit, and play like children after school in the grave, gaunt bush wilderness that holds their lives." "Another Man's Liabilities" is a story of a survey-camp, which readers of this Magazine will remember. "Mother Macgregor" shows how a fine old bush woman nursed Harry Morrell when dying of drink, because he had won her heart by taking off his hat to her. He had been a gentleman some ten years before. There are a number of other stories on similar subjects. G. B. Lancaster is certainly to be congratulated in that "Sons o' Men" is one of the best collections