



Josiah Martin,

RIDING THROUGH THE BUSH.

Auckland.

within a foot of them. As I came to the surface one of the boar's feet caught me a scrape on the neck. Bully then released his grip with a look at me which seemed to say: "You can take a hand now, old man." Seizing the boar I pushed his head under the water, and while he was gurgling and spluttering I struck him near the ear with my small hunting knife, and dyed the splashing waters with his blood. Old Bully closed in again, and in a very short time we had the veteran warrior lying dead on the shelving bank of sand.

This bout was merely the precursor of a more desperately fought battle later on. An old boar is no good for meat, his flesh is too rank, so after securing the tusks I left him, hoping to drop across a fat barrow before night. It was as yet quite early in the morning. We then clambered up the fern-

clad ranges skirting the creek, and worked back in the direction from which we had come, taking the opposite side of the creek. While proceeding up a sloping range I heard a yelp from the dogs away to my left in the fern, which told me at once that they had started another pig. Glancing quickly round in that direction, I saw them dashing through the fern down into a swampy gully covered with thickly - waving *raupo*. I hurried to the spot, but on reaching the gully could neither hear nor see either dogs or game. They had disappeared as if by magic. I could not understand it, for I could not fail to have seen them had they cleared the end of the swamp. I hunted all round the side of the gully, and shortly heard a muffled sound proceeding from the centre of the swamp. Breaking through the intervening fringe of

*manuka* I noticed the mouth of a dark, mysterious - looking cavern in the centre of the gully, and on a level with its surface. Suddenly the smaller bull-mastiff sprang out of the narrow entrance with a long bleeding rip on his side. He had had enough of it. The boar had evidently taken refuge in this peculiar hiding place, the mouth of which shelved down to a depth of some eighteen or twenty feet, ending in an underground creek or cavern about eighteen feet long and ten feet to the roof. The rank reeds and tangled growth almost covered the narrow slit or opening which ran along a portion of the roof, through which trickled a small stream of water. Gazing down into the depths I noticed two gleaming eyes and the yellow body of Bully swaying to and fro, as if crouching for a spring, but the fierce eyes in front never seemed to move.