

precipitous bush-crowned limestone bluff rises from the creek-bed to the height of the viaduct, and everywhere around the limestone foundation crops up on the hill sides and by the banks of the clear streams, sometimes in the most peculiar shapes. This limestone country abounds in caves and in subterranean watercourses. A creek takes a sudden dive under a ridge and disappears, springing out into the light of day perhaps a mile or more away. The limestone region is most promising-looking land all through, and it will make the best of pastoral country.

Twenty miles beyond Te Kuiti the Poro-o-Tarao tunnel is reached. Some years ago, when the contractors were at work at the tunnel, Poro-o-Tarao was a lively bush township, with its stores, accommodation-houses, workmen's camps, and lime-burning and brick-making works.

After the tunnel had been pierced through the range, the place was deserted for some years, and the stray traveller wondered what induced the Government to carry out such a costly work in the midst of the wilderness while the railway line was yet scores of miles away. The railway-trains, however, now run through the underground way to the Ohinemoa Station, on the southern side; but when the writer first travelled that way there was no convenient route to the "promised land" beyond except by riding through the fifty-three chain tunnel on horseback, and a damp, dark uncanny ride it was.

Once through the long tunnel the open valley of the Ongarue, a tributary of the Whanganui, comes in view, and we are in the pumice lands of the Upper Whanganui basin. Here are the rock-hewers' white tents and roughly-built houses, the trail-breakers, the small army of navvies who are toiling on the great Trunk line, building the permanent way for the railway trains of the future, which will run between Wellington and Auckland. When that comes to pass, and the navvies lay down their picks and shovels, and the platelayers finish their labours, and depart for other scenes and rail-routes new, a flying trip through the once unknown and mysterious

'King Country' will be a very trifling matter.

The mineral wealth of the King Country is at present practically unknown. The only thing we are sure about is coal, of which there are large



Pegler.

THREE WARRIORS BOLD.

seams being worked on the banks of the Mokau. Away further South, in the basin of the Upper Whanganui, there are coal measures of apparently vast extent. Tramping down the little Paparata Creek, shortly before reaching its confluence with the Tangarakau, an important tributary of the Whanganui, we came one day on a coal-field in the middle of the great forest. A ledge of coal cropped up in the bed of the swift creek and formed a little waterfall about six feet high. Our party knocked off some lumps of the mineral, and at the camping-ground we found it to be a good brown coal.

The glamour of gold has led many