

Burke's mission to tickle the fish the next morning. The netting came later.

Dolly, who had shunned the Club for the last three days, was down on the wharf, idly watching the loading of a big grain cargo for Africa. Unto the lazy figure on the sea-wall where the waves came in from the horizon to batter and splash eternally, appeared Burke. He nodded and perched himself on the granite, watching the great black cranes groan and heave as they swung slowly against the multi-coloured back-ground.

"Fine old boat, isn't she?" Burke's tones breathed the sweetness of honey; "rather a good day to be going out in her."

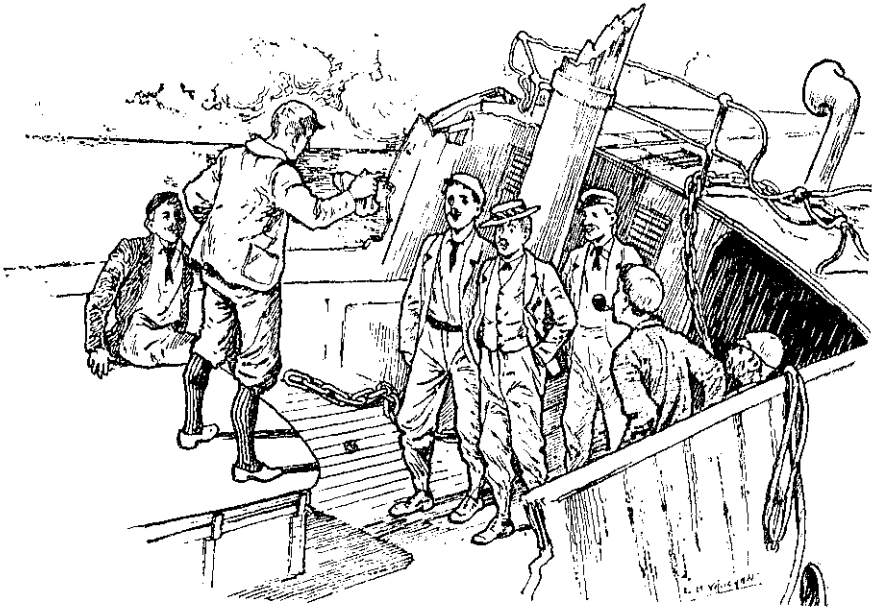
Dolly kicked off little rough bits of concrete, and tossed them into the oily green

"All right, Dolly; you needn't bring that up again, of course, you did as—as you thought best. Come and smoke the pipe of peace along the Pipiriki road this afternoon. It's grand for biking as far as the tunnel.

"I will," said Dolly, and Burke departed with an uplifted soul.

Pipiriki road runs parallel with the railway for five miles. Then the line dives between high clay cliffs to hide in the Rongitunui tunnel, and the road takes a trend eastwards, past the lonely tussock flats, salt and grey with the sea breath, where human life is not, and the earth smells of eruptiveness.

A boat was riding on the high tide beyond one of the sandy knolls as Dolly and Burke



FOSSITER, BY REASON OF HIS SENIORITY, DELIVERED THE VERDICT.

water where the vessel lay, and his blue eyes were very serene.

"You'd be uncommonly sea-sick. Men of your calibre always are. Nor would you have sufficient scope for your rôle of peace-maker. She only carries about thirty men."

Burke said something very low. Then he pulled up his feet as a trolley came along with a pile of scrap iron, and reminded himself that it would not be wise to hit Dolly on the head; and he comprehended that the way of the diplomatist is hard.

came round the corner; and a clump of manuka scrub bristled with caps of many colours.

But Dolly was blind to these things until Burke neatly tipped him off his machine and sat on him. Then he saw faces known of yore, beneath the caps, and understanding came swiftly.

Coombes and Seamore let him talk as he listed while they gathered him up and bore him seaward over the grey-yellow sands. Halkett made himself useful when the