

down the fearful drop on the far side, leaving the few most desperate riders of the hunt that were up, fairly pounded—Trelawney, the master, Old Limpity, the huntsman, and others of that ilk. That was a moment worth living for. It secured us the brush. And to the boy of fourteen a brush well earned was a thing more to be desired than the premiership of a colony, or even an invitation to dine with the King.

What days those were! That Christmas dance given by the genial old squire of the parish and his good lady to us youngsters. Wasn't it just prime? Don't we remember even now the immense satisfaction we felt when we inscribed our name in bold text-hand—no, we are not going to tell how many times—on the card of positively the sweetest, prettiest and dearest little girl in the room—nay, in the whole countryside. Of that point we were perfectly assured. If we weren't judges of budding beauty, we should just like to know who was! How divinely the winsome little witch danced! Poetry of motion, bah! That's what we call it now we are grown-up. But the simile seemed ridiculously weak then. None of the poetry we had ever read came anything like within coo-ee of it—not even John Gilpin, and that is saying a great deal. And didn't we enjoy seeing the other fellows green with envy? Not a very pleasant Christmas party for them, you say? Ah, that's another story. It isn't their recollections we're giving, but our own, and there is nothing like sticking to the point. Besides didn't we give those of them who cut up rough over it the satisfaction of trying to punch our head afterwards? Of course we did! And it wasn't our fault if, as we told them at the time, "they couldn't scrap worth a cent," and found the satisfaction wasn't worth having when they got it, was it? But a truce to such recollections. We are not in England, and don't

want to be, now that the Coronation is over, and there is nothing particularly worth seeing. What about Christmas holidays here? We must not forget that very many of our readers had the inestimable privilege of being found in their earliest infancy under the fine rows of succulent cabbages in New Zealand gardens. At this season of happy recollections we surely may be permitted to use, if only as a figure of speech, this our first, but evergreen theory of the origin of man. A theory, by the way, which had a big following of embryo philosophers ages before old man Darwin monkeyed up the subject so atrociously. But, bless you, they will see him out.

These same knowing young Maorilanders, whatever their origin, have a special facility for holiday-making. No race, black, white or intermediate, could beat them at it. There is every inducement, the country and the climate were made for the enjoyment of a good time especially at this season of the year.

Tommy, a youth of my acquaintance who lives near town, gets regular invitations from an amiable old uncle to run up into the backblocks, and take possession of his station for the Christmas holidays. The old man does not really abdicate, but Tommy, after the manner of favourite nephews, is practically boss. He has never yet been known to refuse. "Bring a few chums; more the merrier," writes the genial old chap, and the obedient lad does it every time. And what fine times they have. I've been there and seen them. The old gentleman always saves a stiff bit of mustering till they come up. He delights in popping them on the rowdiest stock-ponies, giving them the roughest bits of country where the wildest mobs of cattle are to be found. He roars with laughter if one of Tommy's friends, new to the game, gets shot out of the saddle as the cunning old stock horse spins round after a refractory