

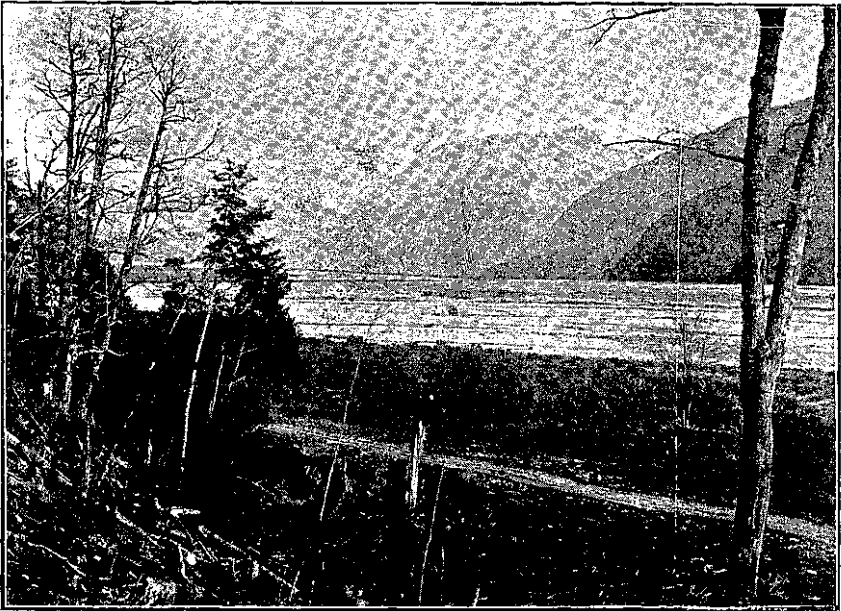
Sunday before Christmas we sang carols, one of our party wielding the baton.

We rose at five a.m. the next morning, and had an early breakfast, so that we were well on our journey westwards by seven a.m. While at the Cass camping place we saw several wekas and other native birds. They were not at all shy, and at meal times walked over the table-cloth, helping themselves to anything they fancied.

The next day's journey began with a pleasant ride to the Bealey. The Waimakariri happened to be

Christchurch, to whom we were anxious to send the season's greetings.

Then after a brief stay we crossed the river—a stony bed a mile wide. Rough journeying it was for our horses, so as soon as we had crossed the narrow stream of water we got down from the vans and crossed the rocky river-bed on foot. When the other side was reached another panorama opened before us, and we began to go up through the Bealey Gorge. We had lunch in a pretty spot at the foot of Arthur's Pass, after which the



Wheeler & Son, photo.,

Crossing the Bealey.

Christchurch.

very low at this time. The hills and mountains about us were extremely beautiful, covered with verdure, and in the fresh morning air they took on a delicate purple tinge. Away beyond the wooded hills were the higher mountains with their snowy caps, and wherever the eye rested there was something fresh and charming to look upon.

Our vans drew up at the Post Office, and as it was Christmas Eve the officials were kept busy transmitting telegrams to friends in

horses had some hard climbing to do. To relieve them we walked a considerable distance, and enjoyed it, too. Wild flowers we saw growing in rich profusion—here, indeed, was a happy hunting-ground for the botanist. We caught a glimpse of the Punch Bowl waterfall, and a section of our party left the road to get a nearer view. They got the view they sought, but when they rejoined us an hour or two later, they were wetter, if wiser men. Some of them had gone up to its foot, and had found the slippery