

Such is the effect of adventuring your dare-devil bread on the stormy waters. It comes back as it went out—in "blow." The blow is in both cases equally genuine.

At Lyttelton more trips round the harbour with residents in pleased astonishment, and of course in marvel at the record trip of the small craft and its plucky navigators. The marvel grew all the greater when the men knew the sort of weather in which this record trip was made—three hundred miles of ocean journey and not a mishap in all that tumble of sea and roaring winds. A record trip in midwinter on the Maoriland coast—what more can be said?

From Lyttelton the Kelvin found her way in over the Sumner bar, and was stuck up by the hospitable, eager and most astonished people of that much-frequented borough. As soon as they could get away the navigators made for the bar, but the bar was not negotiable. It was a bad check in fact. So they solaced themselves with a contrast. They felt their way up the estuary, struck into the picturesque Avon, and steamed up to Christchurch, tying up at last after many vicissitudes among the weeds during which they were too busy to admire the charming English scenery around, at the skids of the Canterbury Rowing Club, just inside the East Belt bridge. Half Christchurch came there to see and to marvel, to ask questions, and to hear enthusiasm descanting on the merits of the Kelvin engine and the behaviour of the staunch little craft that had made the big voyage.

The trip down to Sumner was very pleasant, but it found the bar still not negotiable. The craft, therefore, was carted to the railway and taken back to Dunedin by the express.

When he got back to his native heath, this is what the owner said of his trip:—"Though exciting enough at times, and hardly what one would call always comfortable, wet to the skin for hours at a stretch, sleepless for a couple of nights and days, plugging along on a hitherto unvisited coastline, snatching one's tucker under 'cold tack' conditions, we still consider we are justified in saying we had a pleasant time, and given fine weather conditions, and as reliable a craft, hope to hear of other motor boatists making use of their crafts, and enjoying a similar outing."

Motor Boat Notes.

Messrs. Collings and Bell report the launching from their slip of a 30ft. cabin launch for Mr. W. T. Quelch, of Parnell. Among the new things in her design is the roomy cockpit, partly glassed, front and half sides, to keep the helmsman dry and in shelter. The cabin is roomy, 7ft. long, neatly panelled, with two bunks over lockers. The engine room is forward. The engine is a 10 h.p. Doman Medium type, which drives the craft at a good speed. The boat is lighted by electricity, and there is a sparking outfit for the engine, consisting of dynamo, automatic cut-out, Annette, and storage battery for keeping the lights going after the stoppage of the engine. The boat on her trial behaved in every way splendidly in the heavy sea that was running in the channel. The owner, who was on board—Mr. Quelch, of Parnell—expressed his great satisfaction, and as this is the third boat the firm has built for him, the fact is suggestive of the manner in which work is turned out at their factory.

This firm is building two tuck stern centre-board yachts for Messrs. Murphy and Chamberlain, of Ponui Island. The owners intend to use them both for cruising and racing.

Napier Harbour Matters.

A Strange Story.

In the days when all the villages by the seas of Maoriland were applying to Parliament for leave to raise money for making breakwaters, a certain prominent legislator proposed solemnly to fill up all the natural harbours and make artificial ones. He added that those persons who might have the idea of selecting for these new works the most exposed and impossible points on the whole coast of the Pacific would be gratified and delighted with a phenomenal success. Success? Yes, Sir. He looked at it this way: These people are looking for trouble, and trouble they will get in that way in plenty.

That wag was speaking generally, but if he had been aiming the shaft of his caustic wit at Napier, he could not have gone nearer the bull's eye of a great blunder. Anyhow, the description of the sort of people who tried to make breakwaters and got no further than making blunders, applies to the perpetrators of the Napier breakwater even better than if they had sat for their photo to his camera.

These people had a natural harbour, properly defended from the sea, and in every way the very thing for the class of craft then in use, and capable of extension by infallible simple means to any extent that increasing trade might reasonably demand.

They also had a point of coast exposed beyond the dreams of phantasy or the nightmares of indigestion. Standing between the two, the harbour practical and developable, and the absolutely impossible point, they actually turned their backs on the harbour and chose the point, so impossible and so awful. The subsequent history is long and disastrous. We propose some day to tell it with regard to its salient points. But for the moment we need only say that its upshot is very simple; it is that those choosers of the point which no one with eyes would have chosen, have met with the complete success predicted for them by the humorous legislator who flogged them with the whip of lampoon. The breakwater which they are alleged to have built, and indeed appear to have built is the most complete success in the noble game of seeking for trouble. Whenever the wind gets to hurricane force the breakwater might as well not be there, for it is not the least use to anybody, and as for itself, it would certainly be better if it was not there, for in that case it would not get mortally damaged, which it does regularly during every storm.

Hundreds of thousands have gone into that breakwater and found trouble. That would be nothing comparatively speaking. But when these builders actually are agitating for some more hundreds of thousands to keep up the phenomenal success of the search for trouble, it is time for the lieges chiefly interested to put their oar in. If they do not stop that breakwater from going on looking for trouble they will spend as much money as will fill the sea for a thousand miles solid, without getting any nearer to a real breakwater fit to stand against the surges of the Pacific.

This strange, eventful history goes back twenty-seven years. It was in 1883 that

the Harbour Board of Napier offered a prize of £500 for competitive designs for a harbour at Napier. Thirty-four designs were received, which were duly submitted by the Board, which just then happened to be in a reasonable frame of mind, to a commission of English engineers, and these awarded the prize to the best according to their view—the view of mere experts let it be granted, men standing at the head of the prosy category of those who understand their business. Their view of the best turned out to be the design of Mr. Culcheth for the improvement of the inner harbour. Mark that well, all ye students of the Napier history falsely described as of a breakwater, for there is no breakwater at Napier. The thing they have is a breakstone. The sea is the hammer, and the results are awful.

But this did not suit the blind men on the Board. They had turned their backs on the inner harbour, which was possible, and they had fixed their eyes on the Bluff, which for all purposes of defence against the ocean was impossible. They pigeon-holed the report of the men who understood their business, and they appointed a local man to supply plans and estimates and report for a breakwater from the Bluff at Napier. One might suppose that the thirty-four plans aforesaid on which the experts who knew their business had reported had all ignored the Bluff, concentrating, in a sort of unholy conspiracy, on the inner harbour. But the plans embraced in their comprehensive list inner harbour and breakwater both. Was it likely that the known predisposition for the breakwater from the Bluff on the part of the Board would not have made some men attend to the breakwater in preference? Anyhow, Mr. Goodall was told to go down to the Bluff and attend to the business of a breakwater.

This is important. It means that from the first days of the Harbour Board there has never, with the exception of the above-named report of Mr. Culcheth, been any report on the harbour question. The Harbour Board appointed to office decided it without reference to experts at all. The one expert report it got was from the commission of competent English engineers. That report it pigeon-holed and proceeded on its own assumption, unsupported by a tittle of expert evidence or advice, to decide that the breakwater scheme from the Bluff was the only thing possible. The opinion was worth not even the paper on which it was written. Nevertheless, it has governed the fate of the Napier harbour from that day to this. We have been bursting ourselves in a fruitless fight with the ocean for a quarter of a century without one word of professional advice to justify such onerous and responsible and important proceedings.

That the breakwater made thus unprofessionally was early in trouble was no surprise to any one. But things went on till 1906, when the public insisted on something definite, and Mr. Marchant was asked to report on the whole question of the harbour. Men had got to grave doubts about the breakwater and the merits of the inner harbour recommended in the report pigeon-holed by the Board had become invested with some prestige by that time. Therefore the order of reference to Mr. Marchant was very explicit.