

A SOLDIER POET GOES SOUTH

Continued from last week.

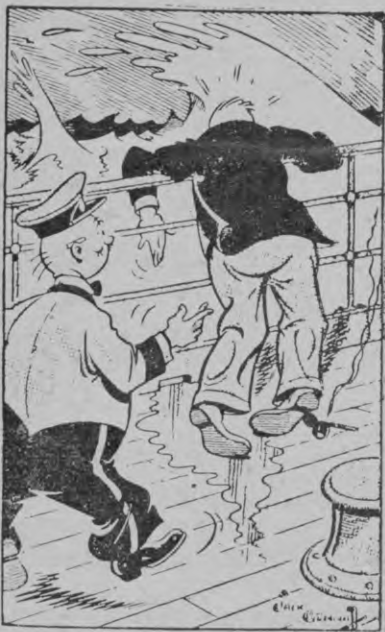
I have always wanted to see Dunedin. Moreover, there are many things I can do there; go and see Thomas Bracken's grave—the author of "God Defend New Zealand"; see the Hocken Library—a collection of our early books; they have a fine collection; and call on several old, interesting friends.

Oamaru is an oasis in this endless plain for travellers here can have a meal in the slow time of twenty minutes.

It is a good one too and cost only 2/-. Having had mine I am now seated, once again, in the train.

Seagulls here and there swoop over the station as we still are only a stone's throw away from the sea. Giant rocks and boulders are piled beside the station.

The train swings over a bridge and we catch a passing glimpse of the town itself. I see a church, beautifully built, and neat rows of clean-looking houses.



"Congratulations, sir!—You've been invited to sit at the captain's table!"

The rest of the journey, as we reached closer to Dunedin, became very hilly and we had two engines stubbornly pulling with all their might.

Arrived Dunedin 5 o'clock and booked in at the Y.M.C.A., in Moray Place, where I had an excellent room on the fourth floor, overlooking the Otago Girls' High School, a little way up the hill.

Dunedin, I soon discovered, was a well-laid-out city with spacious squares and plenty of rest places. The streets were mostly steep and at night it was wonderful to watch the cable-cars, dimly lit, crawl comfortably up their sides. They looked like glow-worms of another world, twisting and winding part of the night, and all pulled upward by an unseen, steel thread. Several times I travelled

with them to partake of their joyous strength.

VISIT TO THE ALLENS.

In Dunedin, I called on C. R. Allen, the well-known scholar, novelist and poet, etc. His home, once the scene of many a gay evening (for his father is Sir James Allen) is now quiet.

Sir James Allen has reached the grand old age of 87 and, despite his years, is still a much alive man. He spoke with me for some minutes in which we discussed the past and the present.

Sir James, to my eager delight, recalled vividly many incidents of the last Great War, when he was New Zealand's Minister of Defence, etc. I last saw him as I was walking near the stream by the University, where crosses the bridge. He shook hands and tottered up the hill path leading to this historic home.

Before leaving him, I said I hoped he would be spared many more years of peace and quietness. Accordingly, he thanked me for my kind thoughts and wishes and said he also wished me well.

C. R. ALLEN.

His sister, a kindly possessed woman, showed me into the drawing-room where C. R. Allen was awaiting me.

I went to see C. R. Allen on the advice of John Harris, the Librarian of Otago University, and my friend Noel Farr Haggard.

After a word of greeting, the poet led me upstairs (and there are plenty of them) into his bedroom study. Here we talked. Our conversation broached on most subjects under the sun.

C. R. Allen is very much awake, though he is blind, to the darkness now descending all over the world; his forebodings for the future, however, were balanced by his sane outlook on life and could easily be understood.

He then described a visit Robin Hyde (Iris Wilkinson) paid him some years back, before she left for China.

"She sat," so he said, "in the same room and chair that I was now seated in, holding in her hand a press-book of cuttings." They were reviews of his work, and she read a number of his poems aloud to him. She was a wonderful writer and C. R. Allen values her memory highly.

While with C. R. Allen I showed him the McKee Wright MS which I am editing; he seemed interested and liked my preface. "It killed two birds with one stone," he said.

Towards nine o'clock I left.

C. R. Allen accompanied me down the drive and path, talking all the time.

On leaving, he gave me a copy of "The White Cliffs of Dover," a fine book; and a copy of his recent book: "Sonnets and Studies."

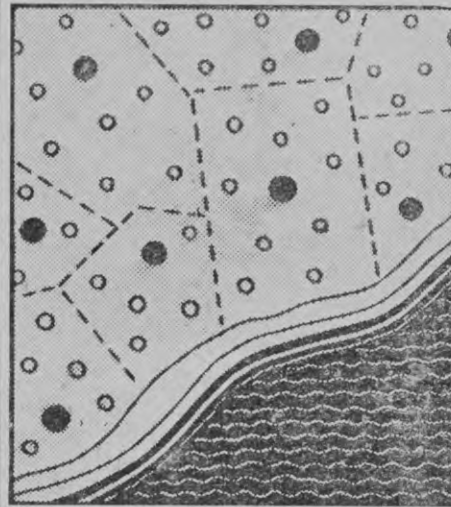
A memorable evening, thus spent in a most enjoyable way with two outstanding men in this country's progress, brought a never-to-be forgotten holiday to an end.

DEFENCE IN DEPTH—continued

and the front of the Maginot Line was the last to fall!

There is no doubt whatever that if the French had organized a Home Guard Army on the lines now developed in Great Britain, the Germans could have been held. These volunteers would not have had to face large bodies of troops better trained and equipped than themselves. Their duty would have been to wipe out the very small numbers of mechanized troops in the first break through.

Official opinion in this country now holds that but for the formation of the Home Guard, a large-scale invasion would have taken place. The methods of landing troops in Great Britain are known. Parachutes, gliders and transport planes can bring over a comparatively small number of men.



The Home Guard is used for "defence in depth." Each zone in case of invasion can deal with the small mechanized forces of a first attack or with parachute or air-borne troops. In the above diagram, the black circles represent the centre "strong point."

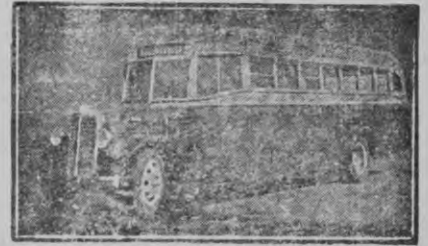
These, well armed with automatic weapons could be expected to make easier the way for larger bodies of troops. Nine-ton tanks can be landed from the air and normally their occupants could be expected in an area more or less undefended, to capture suitable landing fields.

Defence in depth by the organization of the Home Guard is therefore an accomplished fact and the stronger, more trained, and better equipped the Home Guard becomes, so much more help will be given to our other fighting forces.

Eventually it may become necessary to invade Germany. Can Hitler adopt this regional defence? Certainly not by the formation of a Home Guard in any of the occupied countries, and not even in Germany.

Every man in Britain may be trusted with a rifle and ammunition for use against his country's enemies. This is not so in the Nazi slave states. Millions of the people of Europe are praying for the day when they can oust the Nazis.

Hitler dare not arm them!



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