

cannot do—stay put. It may be a week, it may be a month; sooner or later the road calls, and with his swag on his back and the cheque for his labours in his pocket he steps out ready for what the bend in the road hides. Freedom is his creed and independence his watchword. He does not beg for a job. He offers his services, and if your ideas of what is fair reward for those same services do not coincide with his you may keep your job. If he finds after taking the job that it is not to his liking, he tells you so and leaves. In an increasingly standardized world, where so many of us are cogs or ciphers, he is a refreshing contrast. Drink often sets him on the road, but more often than not it is just plain wanderlust. His phraseology is picturesque, and he refers to his wanderings as "carrying the swag," "humping the bluey," "waltzing Matilda"—swag, bluey, or Matilda being synonymous terms for what the genteel hiker would call his rucksack.

Fred's story was typical. I had pieced it together from what he had told me on his various visits, in that laconic non-committal way he had. Son of a well-to-do Swedish business man, after he had served his term in the army he had wanted to be a naturalist. His father thought this was foolishness when there was a good business to be taken over. Fred decided that his brother could very well look after the business, and shipped on a sailing-vessel for America. He finally drifted to California, where he wandered about learning all there was to know about

orchards. The sea called again, and he spent several years roaming round the world in craft of all sorts, fetching up this time in the State of Victoria, Australia. The orchards received him to their welcoming arms, and in the course of several years there were precious few spots in that State or New South Wales that Fred had not penetrated. From there he had come to have a look at the "shivery Isles," as the Australians call New Zealand. Liking what he found, he had stayed, and after fifteen or so years' wandering all over the North and South Islands had made the country his home and had no wish to see his native Sweden again.



The next two days he took my neglected and straggling orchard in hand, and, working methodically and without any word from me, he made it that I should be able to reap the boon of fruits in their season. Knowing his worth I left him to it and stood meekly by one evening while he lectured me on my sins, mostly of omission, in the orchard and instructed me in what to do in the future.

At night he unloaded his year's store of news. Talk of this station owner who spent his time in town; of that farmer's wife whose extravagance was a byword in the district; how the land and the stock looked in other parts; and sometimes, for the children's benefit, tales of his army days in Sweden, of bivouacs in the snow and long marches in the cold.

On the third morning of his visit I was out at dawn mustering sheep for a buyer to look at, and as I rode along the ridge I saw a short, trim figure with a swag up stepping out towards me. I smiled to myself. It was no surprise. The afternoon before he had finished in the orchard early and had spent the time before tea in washing and patching his scanty wardrobe. Now he was off to

