KORERO

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Kapiti

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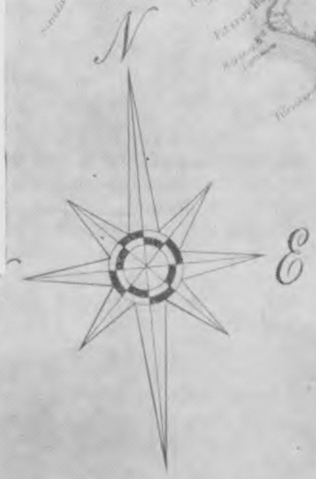

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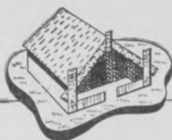

KORERO

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Contributions to Korero

You are reminded that a maximum sum of £3, payable in canteen orders where there are canteens under New Zealand control and in cash where there are not, will be divided among contributors in each issue. It is necessary, therefore that all contributors should send us number, name, and full address. Remember, too, that articles are not the only contributions we are looking for. We would like to see also short paragraphs, black and white drawings, and verse. There is space, too, for your comments and inquiries, provided you keep them short. The address is: "D.A.E.W.S., Army H.Q., Wellington." Mark your envelopes *Korero* in one corner.

Illustrations for this article by courtesy of the School Publications Branch, Education Department.

MOST NEW-ZEALANDERS who have seen anything at all of Kapiti Island have seen it from Wellington's west coast beaches or perhaps from the deck of a passing ship. Few, or comparatively few, have been on it. That is because it is a bird sanctuary, owned by the Crown, and no one may go ashore there without permission from the Lands Department.

When you have your permit it still isn't easy to visit Kapiti. Three and a half miles of the Tasman Sea separate the island from Paraparaumu Beach, the nearest point on the mainland, and for passengers there is no regular transport. Fishermen who live on a little island just off the southern tip of Kapiti will take you if they can. But sometimes the sea breaks so furiously on Paraparaumu Beach and the steep shore of Kapiti that the journey across would be dangerous; too dangerous, indeed, for even the most experienced of launchmen.

The fishermen land you at Rangatira, a little bay on the east coast of Kapiti with bush-covered hills rising almost sheer behind it. In this bay lives the island's only regular inhabitant. He is the caretaker. About his house there is a small piece of flat land, behind which the island rises steeply to almost 1,800 ft. at its highest point. The island is six and a half miles long and in area is less than 5,000 acres. At the northern end there is a flat of about 100 acres, which is part of 500 acres of farm land the Maoris own. The remaining 4,300 acres is vested in the Crown. The land belonging to the Maoris is separated from the bird sanctuary by a stock-proof fence, made necessary because sheep, cattle, goats, and pigs which were loosed on the island many years ago damaged the young trees and other growth and prepared the way for erosion. Now on the western side, where you look out over the Tasman Sea from a height of 1,800 ft., the cliffs are scarred by avalanches and cut by ravines. Once the bush grew thickly there. Now there is none.

The bush on the island's heights suffered, too. When the stock had cleared the undergrowth, gales sweeping in from the Tasman Sea heavily damaged the trees. Even now, when natural growth is aided by careful cultivation, you find huge trees which the winds have torn out by the roots. Perhaps these winds have had some part in fashioning the fantastic shapes of the trees which grow near the summit.

Goats caused a great deal of the damage, not only by eating the young trees but by running about on the

steep cliffs and causing avalanches. But all the animals have now been cleared from the sanctuary, except opossums and rats, and these are being trapped. Freed of the animals, the bush, especially on the eastern slopes, has recovered quickly. Most of it is second growth, helped by thousands of trees which the Lands Department has planted. But here and there old trees—rata, maire, and matai—huge and gnarled, tell of the vigour and size of the original bush.

As the trees and undergrowth have recovered, the birds have multiplied. "Provide the food and the birds will look after themselves." This has been the maxim the Lands Department has worked under. And if you happen to wake on Kapiti before dawn of any summer day you will agree that the policy has been a wise one. For half an hour, especially after rain, the noise of the birds makes sleep impossible. The bell-birds seem the noisiest of all; there are hundreds of them. Yet if you go outside you quickly find that they are probably only a small proportion of the total bird population. Native pigeons, for instance, soar to a hundred feet and drop in a vertical dive almost to the tree-tops. Or perhaps, like fat balls of green and white and purple, they sit and watch you from branches a few feet away. A very foolish bird, the native pigeon, as Samuel Butler wrote in 1863. "Tie a string with a noose at the end of it

In Kapiti's bush.

On Fisherman's Island.

to a long stick, and you may put it round his neck and catch him." These days, of course, you may do nothing of the sort, since the pigeon, with other native birds, is protected.

Amongst the flax on the flat land are the tuis. Hundreds of them, too, their glossy dark plumage shining with green and purplish metallic reflections. They are drinking the honey of the flax flowers. But they are greedy and jealous, and in quarrelling amongst themselves they take off and perform aerobatics no airman would dare dream of.

Green and red parakeets, white-eyes, white-heads, native cuckoos, and fantails—numbers of all these birds contribute their own distinctive notes to the continual chorus. With them, too, is the robin, for one member of which family Butler seemed to have a special affection.

"When one is camping out," he wrote, "no sooner has one lit one's fire than several robins make their appearance, prying into one's whole proceedings with true robin-like impudence. They have never probably seen a fire before and are rather puzzled by it. I heard of one which first lighted on the embers, which were covered with ashes; finding this unpleasant, he hopped on to a burning twig; this was worse, so the third time he lighted on a red-hot coal; whereat, much disgusted, he took himself off, I hope escaping with nothing but a blistered toe. They frequently come into my hut. I watched one hop in a few mornings ago, when the breakfast things

were set. First he tried the bread—that was good; then he tried the sugar—that was good also; then he tried the salt, which he instantly rejected; and lastly, he tried a cup of hot tea, on which he flew away."

Butler, of course, was writing of the little black-backed, yellow-chested fellow then found in the South Island. The North Island robins, which were the ones noticed at Kapiti, have slate-coloured chests and certainly showed tried to surprise them at evening along the bush track. They are there, however—small and larger grey ones and small brown ones.

At the northern end of Kapiti is a lagoon, to which thousands of ducks wisely repair in the shooting season. Once one was left behind, and it has lived there since, perhaps the quaintest of all the seekers of sanctuary. The caretaker has called it "Hoppy" because it has only one wing and one leg, a

Fisherman's Island, with Kapiti in the background.

no signs of the curiosity and impudence which Butler noted in the southern members of their family.

Along the steep track which leads to the summit of the island, you may perhaps find a weka. When we came across one up there it looked in the dim light of the bush a little like a kiwi. Apparently it was as much interested in us as we were in it, for it came out from under a tangle of roots to inspect us at close quarters and stayed while we photographed it. Of the kiwis we saw no sign, though we disability which, however, has evidently been no insuperable handicap.

Kapiti to-day, then, is an island of bush and birds, undisturbed by human habitation and the perquisites of trade and progress. But its story was not always like that. You may remember that it was once the stronghold of the Maori chief, Te Rauparaha. He captured it in 1823 and from its shores carried war to nearly all the tribes in the southern half of the North Island and to many in the Sounds area in the South.

Against him his enemies once launched a great amphibious operation. Two thousand fighting men drove their war canoes into the tide that rips and eddies round Kapiti. And the tide had an important effect on the outcome of the battle. According to one account, an extra large wave overturned the leading canoe and others crashed into it. Seizing the opportunity offered in the confusion which followed, the defenders rushed in and routed the invaders.

Another story of the time would seem to make Hinemoa's swim from Mokoia Island, in Lake Rotorua, look like child's play. A Maori woman is said to have swum four miles from Kapiti to north of Waikanae. And, as if that were not enough, one narrator adds that she carried a child on her back! Any one who has watched a launch leave Paraparaumu for Kapiti will understand what that swim meant. The boat is first caught in a strong rip which carries it northwards. Then, in the middle of the channel and again near Kapiti, the current changes.

Europeans came to Kapiti early. And this, perhaps, was one of the reasons why Te Rauparaha chose it as a stronghold. Here he could obtain from traders the muskets he needed to keep his supremacy over the surrounding tribes. Cook saw Kapiti as he came out of Queen Charlotte Sound in 1770. "About nine leagues to the north of Cape Tierawitte and under the same shore," he wrote, "is a high and remarkable island . . . This island . . . I have called Entry Isle."

Not many years after Cook, traders and whalers were calling at Kapiti. The traders wanted flax and also dried human heads, which were worth as much as twenty guineas each to them. The whalers had at least two shore stations on Kapiti and others on the nearby islands. One, on the island called Tokomapuna, seems to have been noted for the discipline and efficiency with which it was conducted, in sharp contrast with the freedom in which most of the whalers lived. The whaling was very profitable in the early "thirties," but the whales soon became less plentiful and the number of ships fewer. Relics of those days, however, can still be seen. Rusted trypots lie upturned on the beach at Rangatira and on the small islands off the coast and there are still signs of the houses the whalers lived in.

When Colonel Wakefield arrived in New Zealand in 1839 to bargain with the Natives for the sale of land to the New Zealand Company, his ship, the "Tory," anchored off Kapiti, and Te Rauparaha was one of the chiefs who boarded the "Tory" for the negotiations. Colonel Wakefield gives this description of him:—

"In person Raupero is not conspicuous among his countrymen, his height being rather under the average. His years sit lightly on him; he is hale and stout and his hair but lightly touched with grey. His countenance expresses keenness and vivacity, whilst a receding forehead and deep eyelids, in raising which his eyebrows are elevated to the furrows of his brow, give a resemblance to the ape in the upper part of his face, which I have remarked

This, too, is on Fisherman's Island.

in many of the Natives. He was cleanly dressed in the ordinary mat and outer blanket worn as a toga; slow and dignified in his action; and, had not his wandering and watchful looks betrayed his doubts as to his safety, perfectly easy in his address."

Wakefield visited the little island off Kapiti on which Te Rauparaha lived. "A miserable house," he wrote, "tabooed for himself and his wife, with one end parted off for his son, offers no temptation to his enemies nor calls forth the envy of his rival allies. Near it are piled cases of tobacco, of cotton goods, and of various objects which he has begged or borrowed from the masters of various vessels anchoring here. These are covered with dead brushwood and narrowly watched by his slaves. He seldom stays long in any one place, but goes from settlement to settlement, often in the night, to avoid any design on his life from his foes on the main . . . Notwithstanding the many bad qualities of this old man—his blustering, meanness, and unscrupulous treachery—he possesses some points of character worthy of a chief among savages. He is full of resources in emergencies, hardy in his enterprises, and indefatigable in the execution of them."

To-day this smaller island, little more than a mile in circumference and shaped like an obtuse cone, is a nesting-ground for gulls. Round the stone breastworks which Te Rauparaha built, grass and flax now grow high and there is nothing more to disturb the peace than perhaps a fight between a seagull and a tern.

Kapiti already has a memorial from this war. It is a seat made from stones carried from the shore and set beside the track at Rangatira. It is opposite a camp site used before the war by a Wellington family interested in bird-life. A member of the family was killed on service with the Air Force, and the seat, surrounded by newly planted trees, is in memory of him and his Air Force comrades. The last line of the inscription reads:—

"For them the bell-birds chime and the robins trill a requiem."

AFTER THE SNOW

By CHARLES FRANCIS

THE COUNTRYSIDE was deathly quiet. Henry shook the snow from his coat and hat, then entered the whare and pulled off his gum boots. It was good to be inside. He crumpled up paper and gathered a handful of kindling wood he'd put in the oven to dry the night before.

Once the kindling was alight he poked small pine logs through the grate door. The room was icy cold, but soon it would be warm. Already the escaping smoke from the old iron stove was giving the room a warmer smell. It always smoked to begin with, as though the chimney was hard to find. He brought the only chair in the room up to the fire, and pulled off his wet socks to be hung on the oven door to dry for the morning.

Henry was accustomed to these evenings by the fire; sometimes he'd read, and other times he'd just sit and enjoy being really warm. To-night he didn't want to read, so just sat and waited for the water and milk to get hot. After a while he opened a tin of biscuits, took out three, and broke off a lump of cheese, then poured the nearly boiling water over the coffee and sugar in his white enamel mug and so had supper.

Henry was cowman to a small dairy-farmer way up the foothills where the wind from the white Alps blew keen and cold most nights and days. Early in the morning he'd be over to the cowbails, milking and separating, then swishing water over the cold concrete and sweeping up the slush and cow-dung with a hard straw broom. Then the cows were to be taken to the feed paddock, the pigs fed, and everywhere mud and slush and the cold wind. And then the same all over again in the early evening. After a wash and tea he'd go over to his whare for a quiet time by the fire. Usually he looked forward to a book and the fire, but to-night he couldn't be bothered reading and was tired of just

sitting. If only there was a wireless that he could fiddle with to get some swing to break the monotony.

In the morning he mentioned to the boss that when he next went into town he would want a cheque, as he was considering buying a wireless. The boss suggested he see a certain person who lived about a mile down the road whom he'd heard had a set for sale. Henry decided to make inquiries about this second-hand set before buying a new one in town.

After dinner he rode the old farm bike down to the address given, about half a mile over the railway-line to a little grey house behind a high macrocarpa hedge with a red wooden gate.

A young woman answered his knock, and on hearing the reason for his visit invited him inside. The set was a good one, better than Henry had expected, but probably, thought Henry, more expensive than he'd expected. She told him how much she was asking for it, and Henry left, saying that he would think it over.

Back in his hut that night he pulled at his pipe and thought how he could manage to buy this wireless. No longer could he stand these nights just watching the pine logs burn.

The next night he again went down to see about the wireless, and suggested paying so much down and the balance at the end of the month. The woman agreed, but wondered whether he would be willing to do some work around the place for her in payment for the amount to be left owing. There were trees in the orchard to be pruned and a small plot of ground to be dug. This suited Henry, so he took the wireless back with him that night, with the arrangement made that he would spend his spare time in the middle of the day working in her garden.

The fire was warmer and the room seemed brighter with the wireless going, and Henry was pleased with the bargain.

He started pruning the trees the next day. The sun was out and the garden, being sheltered from the wind by the thick macrocarpa, was warm even though patches of snow remained in shady places. Miss Williams had shown him what she wanted done, only four or five days' work, so soon it would be finished, and the wireless really his.

Came the sixth day and Henry was filling his pipe watching the last of the rubbish slowly burn away.

" Tea is ready, Henry," came a voice from the kitchen window.

" Right-o, Hilda, I'll be there," Henry answered. He raked the half-burnt rubbish into the centre of the bonfire, then strolled over to the house.

As they sipped their tea and ate still warm tea cakes, Henry said, " Those macrocarpas on the north side would be better cut down a few feet to let in the sun."

" Yes," said Hilda, " but I don't feel like tackling it myself."

" Well, I was going to say that I'm doing nothing much up there once I'm rid of the cows, so if you liked I could come down and fix them for you."

" Oh, no, I couldn't let you do that."

" Don't be silly ; I'll start on them to-morrow."

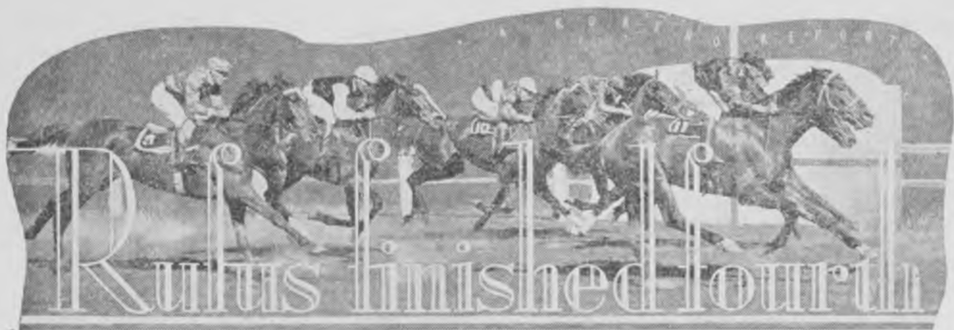
A week passed and the macrocarpas were all cut down. Henry was having his tea with Hilda and feeling disappointed that after to-day there seemed little excuse for coming down here. He didn't like to suggest more work requiring a man round the place. Then Hilda looked up from her tea and said, " You know, I've missed that wireless since I sold it to you ; I think I'll have to get another one next time I'm in town."

" Why did you sell it in the first place ? " said Henry.

" Oh, I was so sick of just sitting by the fire listening to the jolly thing—sometimes I'd almost feel like throwing things at it—but now it's gone I find the silence lonely."

They talked a long time over tea that afternoon. The cows weren't milked till late and Henry's tea had to be put in the oven.

But it wasn't so very far from Hilda's house to the dairy, and, as Henry's boss said, if Henry could be there on time in the morning he didn't much mind where he slept. And Henry doesn't have to think up new jobs as an excuse to go down to that grey house behind the macrocarpas, his wife thinks them up for him.



HE'D BEEN, he said, in the racing game since he was a toddler, from the day nearly fifty years ago when he held a horse while his father undid the girth and slipped off the saddle. At that time he could hardly walk. Since then he had been a stable lad, an apprentice jockey, a jockey, jockey and trainer, private trainer, and trainer under his own name. He had worked on stud farms. Now he was head stableman in one of the largest training establishments in the country. He sat, legs dangling, hat down on his eyes, on the white railings of the fence. For half an hour at a time there was a blue cloud of smoke from the foulest pipe in the land. He talked; we listened.

At seventeen years he was an apprentice jockey riding for his father, a trainer. Things weren't going well. Prices and costs were high; horses were scratchy in their training; there were several breakdowns and several mishaps. Bills had been coming in; with them later there had been letters impatiently worded.

It was a district in Poverty Bay. There was to be a meeting on Friday and one of his father's horses had accepted for the last race. On the Tuesday his father told him he would have to have the ride. And more than ride—he had to win. The horse was the lightweight of the field. If necessary, he would have to reduce his own weight to avoid carrying any extra burden. "Son," his father said, "I've mortgaged the house: the rest, the future of your mother and sisters, I leave to you."

He realized the seriousness of the position. In three days he reduced his weight by 16 lb. Worry and lack of sleep weren't enough; he spent hours in the sweatbox and jogging along miles of road; he ate no more than a few mouthfuls of food. Even then he was 1 lb. over the handicap weight.

Never had the first seven races passed so slowly or with so little interest. He was nervous. The thought of his family without a house to live in worried him almost to distraction. He imagined the villain of a mortgagee gloating in the crowd. At last the parade round the birdcage, the preliminary canter past the stand, the line-up for the start. The first time he broke the tapes he was warned by the starter; the second time he was fined £2; the third time he was fined £3 and threatened with disqualification.

He was £5 in debt and his father on the rocks before the race was started. The crowd roared and they were off.

That night his mother and sisters slept with a roof over their heads. He won the race by a furlong.

Although not as improbable as some, the story is typical of those we heard from the racing men at the country meeting we attended. We went with Royal Victor, the three-year-old colt by Siegfried from the Magpie mare Goorabul, who descends from Eulogy. We went from the stable where Royal Victor is trained; with us in the horse train were Ted, the head stableman, and the two lads, Stooge and Ray.

On that race day there was a crowd of several thousands. Among them were butchers, lawyers, shoemakers, labourers, clerks, dentists, and engine-drivers; there were two priests; there were men in uniform (admitted free) and girls in summery frocks, members of Parliament,

policemen, and taxidrivers. There were Americans, Maoris, Chinese, and South-Islanders. On a white hunter and wearing a red coat was the clerk of the course. There were thirty barmen, and as many barrels, thousands of glasses. There were cooks and waitresses, course stewards and officials; men to operate and supervise the totalizator; honorary surgeons and veterinary surgeons; a judge, a starter, a handicapper, a clerk of scales, a timekeeper. And thousands of others.

Also present were a hundred or more horses.

At the barber's shop in that country town earlier in the morning the barber left me with lather on my face to answer his telephone. He finished the shaving, patched up a cut, and whispered in my ear that "things" were happening in the first race; S—— was the oil; one of the bets to be put through the tote was of £800. It was a hurdle race. This mare had shown no form for two seasons; in a dozen or more starts she had finished without a place. A strange sort of business, we thought, but maybe he was as good a tipster as he was a barber. We bought a green ticket for a place, a blue one for a win. The mare won by a length and a half. We, too, were able to sleep that night with a roof over our heads.

The day passed with rain, with umbrellas in the stand, outside the tote, in the entrance of the marquee where pies, sandwiches, and cakes with icing were sold inside with slopping cups of tea. From fifteen minutes before noon, the time of the first race, the day passed with excitement, the scramble for betting, the tenseness of the starts, the driving fight of the race, the yelling of the crowd swelling into a roaring fury that was the finish—a stamp of approval for the winners that were favourites, the

opposite for those that were not. Everywhere the crowd, people jammed and sweating and shoving; and in the enclosure the horses and jockeys with coloured silk shirts that filled in the wind so that these little men were balloons of coloured shirt; they seemed to have no legs, no arms, no head.

We talked to some of the jockeys. One was managing to roll a cigarette and at the same time hold four thoroughbreds, their noses almost touching. He didn't mind telling us he weighed little more than 5 st. Another, an apprentice, was 4 st. 7½ lb., and he didn't see why he should have to pay a penny each time he wanted to weigh himself when it cost his brother, who was 14 st., the same amount. They are not all as light as that; but, except for hurdle and steeplechase riding, they can't be too much more than 7 st. Any increase after that has to be watched. For many jockeys weight is a constant worry; to keep it down means a diet, small helpings and without plates held out for more, plenty of exercise, and, if necessary, the sweatbox. "Yes," chipped in one old trainer, "and the main thing about diet is to say 'No thank you,' but most of my boys say, 'No thank you, I'll have something light'—and think it's fine if they just stick to cream-puffs."

Boys wishing to be jockeys are put on probation with a trainer for six months, and if after that their service, conduct, and progress has been satisfactory they are apprenticed for another six months, at the end of which, with the approval of the New Zealand Racing Conference, they are granted apprentices' licenses.

For the next three, four, or five years they serve as apprentices before they are given their jockeys' licenses ; by regulation they have to be at least twenty-one years old before they are allowed to hold full licenses, but if they have served their apprenticeships satisfactorily before they reach that age they may be granted conditional licenses. For all the time of their apprenticeship the trainer for whom they are working is responsible to the Racing Conference for their conduct and honesty, and he is required to make reports from time to time.

Between races the pause for rest is only brief ; hardly a minute to lament your last bet, a loser by ten lengths, or hardly a chance to stand in the edging, shuffling queue to collect a div., a handful of notes and silver, before it's time to hunt up the winner for the next race. Men pull on cigarettes ; women for once forget their make-up and their hair, which is straggling from the rain ; faces peer from under hats and umbrellas through the drizzle at the tote. Bells ring, and the indicators, giant coloured thermometers, lengthen and shorten to show the odds. Every one listens to his neighbour ; everywhere are newspaper clippings, guide sheets, and lists of past performances : cards of all colours, all with the latest dope, the certain winners—all for the price of 6d. Crowds in the bars, in the stands, on the course : people betting, and drinking, and talking.

The day passed with a race over hurdles, a maiden race, a hack race, an open handicap, and a memorial race, the winner of which paid £20 and had a pink sash tied round his sweating, heaving neck. At last the eighth race, a nack handicap of £180, in which Royal Victor was a starter. Rufus, a three-year-old colt, registered brown but looking a shining black, had just had his exercise shoes replaced by lighter racing plates by one of the many farriers who always attend the course on race days. Beside him was Stooge, the stable lad, and over against the railings was his jockey, 5 ft. and 5 st. He was talking to the owner in whose colours he was riding—gold, royal blue sash with gold diamonds, gold cap. After weighing in, the scale registering to an ounce the weight of the rider and his saddle and gear, the jockey swung into the saddle. Rufus stood more

than fifteen hands, the jockey less than 5 ft., but he needed no leg-up and he had no help from the stirrups. He didn't pull himself up by the saddle, he didn't take a running jump, nor did he use a step-ladder: one second he was on the ground, the next in the saddle—and how he did it is his own secret On his saddlecloth was his racing number—8.

The horses, the twelve acceptors, pranced and danced round the birdcage, shied sideways through the ornate gate, and breezed at half pace past the stand and past the crowd. It was three minutes before the tote closed, the bustle for tickets was quickening.

Up went the balloon; the horses cantered quietly to the starting-post. It was a sprint over 5 furlongs and they started from the back of the course. It wouldn't take long now. It wouldn't take long after they started, either.

There was all the agony of the start. Twice the tapes were broken; horses backed and turned sideways; it seemed they would never go.

Then they were off. There was a jockey off, too, left sitting on the ground: a riderless horse led the field. Round the top turn they came, a bunched blaze of colour, swiftly moving. The crowd was on its feet; as the horses rounded the turn and came with driving feet into the straight, the shrillness of the loud-speakers giving the positions was lost in a roar that swelled to bedlam a furlong from the finish.

Where is No. 8? Where are those colours? There he is; we were on our feet, too—third, second, third again. Come on, Rufus. Flying, rushing feet, jockeys with their necks against the necks of their horses, whips threshing, spurs flaying. They flashed past the post. Even a policeman was on his toes.

In the middle of that bunch—No. 8. And when the numbers went up, Rufus had finished fourth.

The horses came back sweating and heaving and tired. Some had spur marks on their backs, the skin broken. We could feel the warmth from their bodies as they passed. There was a salute to the judge. Later there would be explanations to owners.

Half an hour later all that was left of that day was a litter of tickets—green and blue.

ONE-ACT PLAY COMPETITION

A one-act play competition for Australians and New-Zealanders is announced by the School of Arts, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. The competition closes in Australia on June 30, 1945, and the prizes are: first, thirty guineas; second, ten guineas; and third, five guineas.

The Playwrights' Advisory Board, Sydney, which will judge the entries, has offered to arrange publication of winning plays of sufficient merit in book form in Australia and New Zealand on the usual commercial basis with a percentage of the retail-selling price guaranteed to the author. The promoters reserve the right for a period to perform the winning plays at Wagga Wagga on a royalty basis. We have a limited number of entry forms and copies of the conditions, and service men and women in New Zealand and the Pacific who are interested should apply for them through their educational services to *Korero*, care D.A.E.W.S., Army H.Q., Wellington.

MANUKA

BY DR. W. R. B. OLIVER

Considered to be the most useful member of the flora for the warmth-giving quality of its wood, for its use for brushwood shelters, repairing muddy roads, and for numerous other purposes; sometimes reviled for its aggressiveness in quickly occupying cleared land; yet loved by all as a true New-Zealander, the manuka, if not the accepted national flower, is in fact a national emblem, as it is the most widely distributed and consequently the most characteristic New Zealand tree.

The manuka belongs to the Myrtle family, which contains many kinds of trees and shrubs with conspicuous flowers. Often, as in the eucalypts and ratas, it is the stamens that give character to the flower, the petals being inconspicuous; but in the manuka it is the corolla that mainly contributes to the masses of white, pink, or even crimson flowers that cover the bushes through more than one season of the year.

On good soil the manuka grows into a fair-sized tree; but it tolerates almost any situation. Sand-dunes, poor clay soils, arid swamps, steam-heated ground, and pumice soils are all occupied by this adaptable species. But its size diminishes as conditions become unfavourable, and in some situations manuka plants reach only a few inches in height. Nevertheless, they flower profusely and reproduce their kind no matter how inhospitable the surroundings.

The wood of the manuka is extremely hard and hence takes a high polish. It is reddish-brown in colour, but on account of the small size of the trunk can be used only for such things as handles. It was indeed greatly valued by the Maoris for making their ceremonial staffs or taiaha. Larger-sized timber is obtained from the manuka's close relative, the kanuka or "white" tea-tree. The medicinal properties of infusions of the leaves and bark of the manuka were known to the Maoris. By the early settlers manuka leaves sometimes were used as a substitute for tea.

When you get back

SEAFARING CAREERS

The opportunities for an ex-serviceman to go to sea are very few, and any course of study with this object in view must be embarked upon with extreme caution and only after exhaustive inquiries about the possibility of a position in the particular kind of work contemplated.

It is hoped to reinstate as soon as possible after the cessation of hostilities those who, prior to the war, were employed in the mercantile marine, and to this end the British Officers' Merchant Navy Federation has submitted a memorandum to the Minister of War Transport. A copy of this memorandum may be seen at the office of the New Zealand Merchant Service Guild, 109 Customhouse Quay, Wellington. In New Zealand steps have been taken to set up a committee consisting of representatives of the Marine Department and of the unions concerned in order to bring down recommendations for rehabilitation, such as to give injured seamen the opportunity of being taught another trade, or to cope with possible unemployment.

The Marine Department has set up at Auckland a School of Navigation which will supply correspondence courses for seamen.

For the most part, the normal method of entering the merchant service in New Zealand is in the capacity of " boy "—*i.e.*, " deck boy " (deck department), " peggy " (engine-room department), and " cadet steward " (provedore department)—but before being considered for engagement the youth is required to become a financial member of the appropriate union.

The chief avenue of advancement lies in the deck department, which may eventually lead to positions as deck officers and finally to ships' captains, but naturally youths are usually employed in the few vacancies that may occur.

It takes at least four years to be eligible to qualify for the Second Mate's Foreign Going Certificate, which involves the study of these subjects: principles of elementary navigation, practical navigation, cargo work, elementary ship construction, and English. (See " Rules relating to the Examination of Masters and Mates in the Mercantile Marine, 1940," obtainable from the Marine Department, Wellington.) Certain shipping companies apprentice " cadets " to train them for becoming deck officers, but these appointments are made from the London offices of the companies concerned.

Marine Engineers

The prospective marine engineer must serve five years' apprenticeship in an approved workshop (for a list of such shops, contact Mr. G. Unsworth, Chief Examiner, Marine Engineers, T. and G. Buildings, Wellington). At the same time he must study for the Third-class Engineers' Examination, the scope of which is set out below. Candidates must be not less than twenty years of age.

A successful candidate may then seek employment with a shipping company and further his studies for the Second-class Certificate and, later, the First-class Engineer's Certificate. In addition to passing these examinations, he must fulfil certain conditions of experience at sea as set out in " Rules relating to the Examination of Engineers in the Mercantile Marine, 1939," which may be purchased from the Marine Department at the cost of 1s.

A certificate recognized only in New Zealand is the Coastal Motor Engineer's Certificate, which is issued in two classes. To obtain the Second-class Certificate the candidate must be not less than twenty-one years of age and must have served as an apprentice engineer in a workshop for five years. The class of shop for this work is not so restricted as for the Third-

class Engineer's Certificate. The scope of the examination is given below.

A candidate for the Second-class Coastal Motor Engineer's Certificate who has passed the New Zealand Education Department's Technological Examination is exempted from sitting the certificate examinations in practical mathematics and drawing. Further, study for this examination is good training for the Third-class Engineer's Certificate, and in both cases the apprentice can obtain his theoretical knowledge at the night classes of a suitable technical school while he is serving his time in the workshop.

As a wartime concession, men who had started their apprenticeship and then been employed in the Services as mechanics may apply for their trade experience in the Armed Forces to be considered towards the five years' apprenticeship.

WIPING OUT THE HAPPY HOME

By Jim Henderson

I WAS lying stripped off beside the manuka bushes bordering the little country creek when I heard two furlough men crossing the plank bridge above me. I heard them hesitate, then stop.

"A grand little stream, Sandy," said one, "a beauty little stream. Look how she ripples over that sandbank. And the trees and bushes reflected in this pool. Just what I used to dream about over in that dusty damned desert."

"A creek to remember always, Jim," said Sandy's deep voice.

There was the sound of a low-pitched, affectionate laugh.

I kept quite still. I wanted to listen.

For some moments they spoke fondly, kindly to the little stream.

"You know, Sandy"—it was Jim's voice speaking—"I once prayed that I might see this particular stream again. And here I am right now. I guess it was answered, all right."

(I was glad I had kept still.)

Then, maybe thinking the conversation was becoming sloppy, he added quickly:

"She'd be worth a few million quid if we could pick her up and plonk her down on the Siwa Track, Libya-way."

"Sure. Sure." Silence. Then:

"Gosh," said Sandy, "I didn't know your place was so close to ours before, Jim. Why, look up the valley. See that limestone cutting. Your home is just behind that. Couldn't be more than six miles."

"*Aiwa*," said Jim in dreamy assent. "Six miles . . . easy in reach of a twenty-five-pounder. H.E. charge three. Ten five sixty set."

"That's right," agreed Sandy. "And good cover round here, too. Good road to bring up the guns. Switch 'em off up that dip below Auntie Ruth's house. Just room for a couple of troops."

"A couple of anti-tank guns to cover this bridge against surprise attack—oh, she'd be as sweet as a nut."

"Now we want a good O-Pip," said Sandy. "Let's see. What about Sheep's Face Hill up to the left? You'd see everything from there. It's a piece of cake, George!"

"*Aiwa*," cut in Jim. "Just the job. Up with the guns! Action Front! Two rounds gunfire! Sixteen shells! You'd wipe out the house—and the flamin' woolshed as well."

"Task completed. Strongpoint completely obliterated—wiped out—utter destruction," summarized Sandy, happily.

Suddenly the sound of a hand thumping the flat of a back. Then Jim's voice protesting:

"Hey, you cow, what are you doing? You've talked me into wiping out my happy home—the home I've fought for these four blasted long years."

"Strewth. We've gone and done it properly. Sorry, Jim."

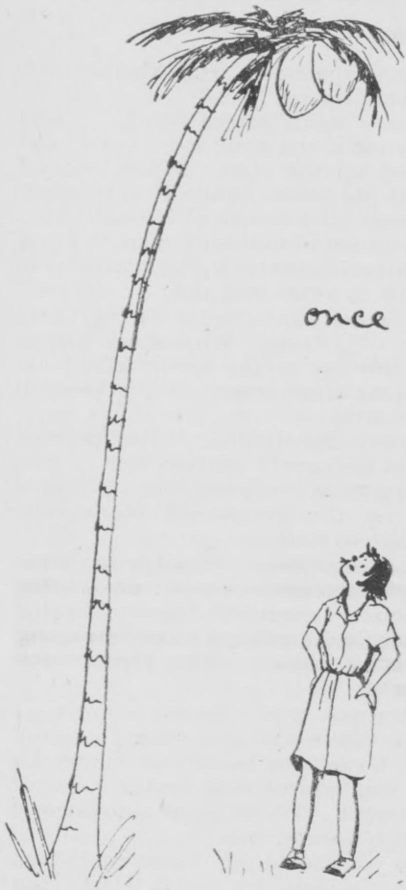
"So you should be. Come on, Sandy. Forget the war for a bit. Old Jock should be setting 'em up now down at the 'Traveller's Rest.' Let's go."

"Lead on, Kiwi."

And their footsteps died away in the distance.

Tropical fruits

are delicious –



once you

find out

where to get them.

P. Hulston

With the New Zealand W.A.A.C. in the Pacific.

BRED in the PURPLE

A KORERO REPORT

THREE THOUSAND guineas for the top-priced colt, from Foxbridge out of Ann Acre, 1,550 guineas for the top-priced filly, by Nizami from White Gold, 90,865 guineas for the 194 yearlings sold, 456 guineas the average price.

There, in figures, is the story of New Zealand's "nineteenth annual national sale of thoroughbred yearlings" at Trentham Stables on January 19 and 25, 1945. And every figure is a record.

If to the total of the yearling sales is added the return from the 75 brood mares, stallions, horses in training, and untried stock sold on January 26, it brings the sales to 269 lots and the receipts to 113,674 guineas. Even that odd shilling which divides the plain pound from the lordly guinea is important; it means in this total £5,683 10s., so that in pounds shillings and pence the sales brought breeders £119,357 10s., a respectable sum.

Add to these figures a few facts about the weather—the first day very hot and very wet and the second two days very hot and very fine—and it might almost be supposed that the whole story of the sales has been told. There is a little more to it than that. There is, for instance, the harmless but intriguing mystery which for a time surrounded the identity of the buyer of the top-priced colt. That 3,000 guineas should be given for a colt by an unknown purchaser was too much for the rumourmongers. Immediately Wellington was flooded with reports that the colt had been bought by a United States soldier. The only really strange thing about this rumour is that it seems to have been correct, or rather, as nearly correct as any rumour could possibly be. The purchase at the sale was made by Mr. A. Winder, Te Rapa, as agent for Mr. A. E. Bowler, a well-known promoter of amusement enterprises in Auckland. Mr. Bowler himself later announced that he had a buying commission from an American at present in the United States Armed Forces; he did not know, however, whether the American would want the colt, and if he did not Mr. Bowler would keep possession. In any event, the colt will remain in New Zealand until after the war in the charge of Mr. Winder.

Like Topsy, the yearling sale has "growed" from very small beginnings; in 1927 at the first sale 49 yearlings brought £17,161, with a top price of 1,025 guineas for a bay colt. At the second sale, in 1928, the great Phar Lap, a chestnut colt by Night Raid from Entreaty, was bought by Mr. A. J. Davidson, of Sydney, for 160 guineas; he was to win in stakes for his owners £70,000, a pleasant return on the original investment. Since that first sale nearly 2,000 yearlings have been sold for almost £500,000—the exact figures are 1,934 yearlings and £441,085. Moreover, it is hard to see where or when the sales will stop growing; 1943 was a record with 39,592 guineas given for 157 horses, 1944 another record with 67,835 guineas paid for 161 yearlings, and, of course, the 1945 figures were better still with 33 more yearlings sold, another 23,000 guineas spent. Only one record remains now to be broken: the auctioneers have still to sell a better horse than Phar Lap at a lower price.

There, no doubt, is the dream of every buyer—the purchase of a second Phar

Lap. It is a hope the auctioneer is always ready to encourage; for every horse he has a special plea. Some, to use his own veteran phrase, are "bred in the purple"; upon their pedigree he gives little lectures, with the usual references to the untold thousands earned by the "own brother" to this colt or that filly and to the performances on the course and at the stud of sire and dam, of grandsire and grandam through Heaven knows how many generations. Of the others, less promisingly bred, he knows how to talk. His patter here is different; unblushingly he contradicts flatly his arguments of a few bare minutes before. "Never mind lineage, think of the individual. Look at the stance of him. That chest will never let you down, plenty of room to breathe there; here's a colt in a thousand. Back your own judgment!"

The fascinating thing is that that is just what these quiet men around the ring are doing—backing their own judgment, and backing it not for a few pounds but for many hundreds of pounds. And the risk they take is a long-distance risk. It will be twelve months at least until the horse is raced as a two year old; it may be three years or longer until the wisdom of the purchase is proved. They are quiet and efficient, these men who take such risks. About the ring there is much bustle and more noise, but it is not the buyers who make it. They are so quiet, so undemonstrative, that an outsider cannot see who is bidding—here a catalogue is quietly raised and another £100 goes on to the price of a colt which perhaps already stands at £500 or £600; from another direction there is a slight nod and the price is up another £50; a raised pencil somewhere towards the back of the crowd and it's up another £100. In a matter of minutes it's all over. The Foxbridge colt was sold in under seven minutes; bidding began at 1,000 guineas and raced through the hundreds to 3,000 guineas before the crowd caught its breath. Another Foxbridge brought 1,500 guineas in three minutes.

Of course, it is not all so easy as that. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that the Foxbridges were sold before they entered the ring. There are fashions in racehorses just as there are fashions in hats, and Foxbridges are in the fashion just now. It is a fashion, however, that has a solid basis of performance and pedigree, which is more than can be said of hats. The black colt which brought the top price was by Foxbridge out of Ann Acre and a full brother to Bridge Acre and Al-Sirat. Zetes, for whom 2,400 guineas, the previous record, was paid at the 1929 sales, was by Limond from Water Wings; and Oratorian, for whom also 2,400 guineas was paid in 1930, was by Hunting Song from Oratress. In other words, they had the trade-mark of quality—but these are big sums of money to pay for one colt who may break a leg or sicken and die before he has time to prove himself on the course or at the stud. It's a chancy business, and it is not surprising that during the eighteen years of the sale only seven horses have brought over 2,000 guineas.

The Foxbridges dominated the sale. The fourteen colts and the five fillies sold brought in all 23,610 guineas; only six sold at under 1,000 guineas, and one, a black colt out of Gay Blonde, brought 1,750 guineas, with Mr. Andrew Grant, of Fairlie, as the buyer. The top price for the Foxbridge fillies was 1,300 guineas, which was brought by two, one out of Card Player and one out of April Fool. This bidding is easy to understand. Foxbridge for five years has led the winning sires list in New Zealand, and he still leads it. At the Auckland Cup meeting he was represented by the winners of the Auckland Cup, Railway Handicap, Great Northern Foal Stakes, Queen's Plate, Christmas Handicap, and Nursery Handicap. The catalogue carried this enticing note about him: "Half brother to Cresta Run, winner of three races valued at £14,540, including One Thousand Guineas in record time, and Imperial Produce Stakes. Sire of Foxmond (Great Northern Oaks), Fearless Fox (Queensland Derby), Lou Rosa (Great Northern Foal Stakes, Royal Stakes, &c.), Regal Fox (Great Northern Derby), Black Ace (A.R.C. Welcome Stakes, 1944), Bridge Acre (Wellington R.C. Guineas, 1944), and Al Sirat (Wellington Racing Club Karitane Handicap, 1944), &c." His stock would certainly seem to be a good buy.

Foxbridge was not utterly alone in his glory, however. Robin Goodfellow provided six fillies and six colts which brought 7,500 guineas and included the top-priced filly, a chestnut out of Sunny Maid, for which Mr. C. C. Davis, of Christchurch, paid 1,550 guineas. His top-priced colt was also a chestnut, this time out of Horomea. For it Mr. F. Firetti, Taita, gave 1,375 guineas. Second-highest price of the sale was the 1,800 guineas given for a brown colt by Bulandshar out of Kana, with Mr. W. Owen, of Christchurch, as the buyer. Another Bulandshar colt from Portadown brought 1,500 guineas, and altogether nine colts and two fillies brought 8,695 guineas. There were only four offerings of Balloch stock, but they sold very well, three colts from Anteroom, Numulus, and Nassau bringing 1,600, 1,000 and 1,400 guineas respectively and a filly from Wyndale 1,400 guineas. Thus four Balloch yearlings earned 5,400 guineas. Six Coronach colts brought 4,205 guineas and two fillies 1,900 guineas, 6,105 guineas in all; and 12 Nizami fillies 7,020 guineas and three colts 920 guineas, a total of 7,940 guineas. One Nightmarch filly out of Praise brought 1,500 guineas and another by Variant 650 guineas, with a total for three fillies and two colts offered of 2,360 guineas.

Yearlings like these almost sell themselves. With others the auctioneer has to fight for every guinea. The story he tells is worth listening to. He begins with typical buoyant optimism, and proceeds to his final "All done? Can't dwell. Must sell!" through a bewildering variety of moods. He is alternately reproachful, threatening, coaxing, sometimes angry and, as a last resort, pathetic. The buyers are always shy and difficult. Very seldom do they begin the bidding at anything near the market value of an animal, although once the bidding is begun it goes on very swiftly in the case of a popular breed. The auctioneer starts the ball rolling with his few comments and a suggestion as to the price: "Wonderful family, gentlemen, wonderful family." Then, briskly, "Well now, where shall we start? 1,400 guineas, 1,200 guineas, a thousand? Come now, gentlemen, we've got to start somewhere. What about 500 guineas? Thank you, sir, it's far below his value, but we've got to start somewhere." Soon enough, if the auctioneer is lucky, the price is up to 950 guineas,

and then his cry becomes "Even it up, even it up, make it the thousand. What's an extra 50 at this price?" and, the cunning of this is amusing, "No need to count the cost now. It's against you, sir. Surely you're not going to let a 1,000 guinea colt go for want of a miserable fifty." Usually he gets his thousand. But he will fight just as hard for 150 guineas, labouring his way through rises as small as £2 10s. And there lies the great secret of his art; he knows when to reduce the rises from 50 guineas at a time to 25, to 10, to 5, and in the last resort to £2 10s. Very seldom is he beaten; it is a rare occasion indeed when a yearling is led out of the ring unpurchased to the accompaniment of his firm comment: "I'm not hawking him, gentlemen. It's a rotten price we're getting, and I'm not going to hawk an animal like this. You'll have to do better if you want him."

The scene as he sells is fascinating. In the ring is the yearling, shy, sensitive, leggy, and beautiful. His coat glistens in the rain or shines in the sun; sometimes he jerks impatiently at his lead as his staring eyes show his dislike of crowds. In the ring, too, stand the spotters, three of them, to watch the bidding, shout the rises to the auctioneer, and identify the purchasers. Tucked away in a corner ready to leap forward the moment his services are needed is the small boy with his bucket and broom.

Round the small ring is gathered the crowd, some sitting on the tiered stands, others moving restlessly about. Facing the semi-circle is the auctioneer in his small raised stand, microphone in front of him, loud-speakers at each side. In the rear, an anxious figure tucked away in a corner of the tiny contraption, is the breeder of the yearling on sale at the moment. With him the auctioneer consults occasionally, offering a word of congratulation or putting a question, to return with the decision to sell or not to sell. This is the tense moment for the highest bidder; the yearling will be his at the price he has offered, it will be passed in, or if the owner and auctioneer decide to try a little longer he may, if he wants it badly enough, have to give another 50 or 100 guineas and his bargain may become expensive. So in this brief interlude there are three anxious people, buyer, seller, and the auctioneer who doesn't want his sale to lag.

It is in these few seconds of decision as though the actors on this small stage were frozen into their typical attitudes. The spotters peer anxiously round the buyers ready to shout to the auctioneer should a catalogue be raised or a head nodded. The clerks below the box continue making their notes, professionally imperturbable. The reporters at the long table to the right of the box and below it are mildly amused by the tricks of the trade which they have seen practised too often for them to be any novelty. Then the silence is broken either by a new bid—and that happens quite often—or by the horse being passed in. That pause may be worth quite a few guineas to the owner. It is good tactics.

From the more light-hearted and less-dignified members of the crowd there sometimes comes a ribald piece of advice. It is a curious mixture, this crowd. Scatterred through it are numbers of country people, most of them in what has become almost the uniform of the sheep-farmer come to town—tweeds, always good, usually well cut, and sometimes with that pleasantly worn appearance, a rather careless soft hat with the brim down all round, and so on. With them are wives or daughters or just friends, some in jhodpurs and stock, others in tweeds or, if the day is fine some sort of linen frock. Then there are the racing folk, smarter, nattier, with something about the tilt of the hat, some extra stripe in the suit, some rakishness about the pin in the tie that makes them unmistakeable. There is even something about the tone of the voice. And to finish it off there are the curious odds and ends which any crowd produces—a few art students struggling to get the long legs of the yearlings to look right in their rough notes, a few men in uniform, most of them obviously absent without leave, the inevitable Waac with even a Waaf and perhaps a Wren, and the boy with the bucket and broom who carefully follows the careless yearlings round the ring.

On a fine day it is a very pleasant scene indeed; there is about it all the atmos-

phere of a fair with something, too, of a small country show. On a wet day, like the first day of this year's sale, the whole affair becomes bedraggled, and if the day is hot as well as wet the discomfort reaches its peak. The hills which rise up on both sides of the Trentham racecourse seem to compress the small wet valley into an oven, the noise becomes irritating, the auctioneer seems to be fighting the weather and the buyers as well, and there is no humour and little fun. The tarpaulins over the stands leak here and there, and underneath, the packed spectators squirm in sticky discomfort. There is one note of colour. An elderly patron, immaculately clad to the point of foppishness, is wandering around the ring carefully protecting himself against the rain with a bright red and yellow beach parasol.

The only refuge seems to be the bar, which is very small, very crowded, and only moderately convivial. In the corner stand three casks with, on top of them, a crate of soft drinks, and with these cluttered adjuncts of drinking it is almost impossible to move. Outside it rains harder and harder, and through the rain comes the insistent, tireless voice of the auctioneer. Sometimes, when the bidding is slow, his staccato trumpetings become like a needle stuck in a gramophone record: "130 I am offered, 130, 130, 130, any advance on 130, any advance, any advance, 130 it is, 130 it is. Can't dwell. Going to sell." At last, with a sigh of relief, "Sold!" Then it starts all over again. Still, it's a human little cubby hole, the bar. And so useful —on a fine day a refuge from the heat, on a wet day a refuge from the rain, always a refuge from something.

The last lot sold, the captains and the kings of the racing world depart in the large and shining motor-cars which grace the entrance to the stables, and the humbler patrons by train and bus. The scene now is a bit empty and depressing. All that is left are a few recollections already dim and faint, a few mental snapshots—the wistful comment of a breeder who had sold a colt for 1,500 guineas, "I'd like to have raced him myself," the bonus of £50 that went to the colt's stable boy, the hard-luck racing tales of the less-prosperous veterans who travelled by train, the murmered reflections of a tired soul worrying about the next race meeting: "So and so ought to pay a hatful if he wins. Bill might give me the tip if I can find him"; the irritated comment of a disappointed breeder: "We might get decent prices if we could get rid of these blasted Foxbridges"; and the fact that the beer was free.

By 538687

One evening a few months ago, our gang wandered into the Y.M. for supper. We sat around the fire, and some one started an argument. But some one else had left a *Korero* on my seat. I flicked a page, idly, and there was a report on one of New Zealand's smaller newspapers.

Before the war it was my job to run just such a country newspaper. Smaller, in fact. It came out once a week, on Thursdays, for one of our rural towns and the farming districts nearby. Let it be nameless here. Price 2d., circulation 1,800, but don't let that give you a false impression.

It has been dead since war became more important than printing. We were a young staff and there was no alternative, anyway. The presses, the linotype, the platen, the guillotine, staplers, perforators, type cases—all these lie quietly beneath their dust covers. I like to think they are waiting for peace to give them life again.

But life will mean problems, and they face small newspapers everywhere. If the homely little journals with names like *Bugle* and *Examiner* and *Record* are to survive in a hustling world and play a useful part, they must face up to these problems. In facing up, they may lose some of their quaintness, which will be a pity, for there is charm in quaint ways. But sometimes there is decay, too. The list of such publications dwindles from year to year. I can think of a dozen for whom the difficulties became too great.

Perhaps you live in a city and (unless you are a big shot) never see your name in print. You see Sleepy Hollow's *Bugle* only when Aunt Emma sends the family a copy with a story about her sewing circle. You study it as you would a curiosity, and laugh at the strange emphasis on small things and ordinary people. The main headlines are as far from your world as country was from city fifty years ago.

Well, there is the main problem. To-day, country is never far from city. Rapid transport, good roads, express deliveries—these things have made suburbs where before there were towns. Motion pictures, radio, mass entertainment—these things have standardized our tastes, inclinations, most of our desires. Sleepy Hollow, with its individual traditions, colourful personalities, and characteristic ways, is slowly losing its identity, being moulded into the same flat pattern that makes the city. And as the trend develops it will be in danger of dying spiritually, socially, and commercially.

It is a problem which causes concern in New Zealand, as it does elsewhere. Some of our leading educationists have seen the danger. They have placed the emphasis on the small community. They hope to see the day when centralization is abandoned, and we live not in crowded, hustling cities, but in separate groups in the country, where we can be close

to the hills, the trees, the grass, the soil, our dwellings clustered about a social and cultural centre.

This way, Sleepy Hollow may come to life again. This way, there is a challenge to the *Bugle*.

Community centre projects are still rare in New Zealand. It happened, nevertheless, that our little weekly newspaper was published in a town which was helping to show the way. Let me tell you how we met the challenge.

As it was.—We had a newspaper, price 2d., circulation 750, published twice a week. It went into approximately 45 per cent. of the homes in our town and district. It suffered from most of the ailments which to-day afflict the smaller newspapers—in normal times, of course. Metropolitan competition was serious. Radio advertising had cut down the appropriation available for the smaller journals. An insufficient staff (the small newspaper must make every penny count) meant an overworked staff, and an overworked staff means journalistic necessity more than journalistic enterprise. To all those who, after hearing " Editor's Daughter " on the radio, feel that it would be fun to produce a country newspaper, I can only say, try it, not once or twice, but every week year in and year out. You will have no spare time. Even keeping linotypes going when they are thirty years old requires unlimited ingenuity and is likely to produce grey hairs.

Put bluntly, the metropolitan morning daily could make it impossible for us to live, if it chose. We could hold ground only on the slender advantages of local preference, local emphasis, more detailed news-gathering, and the plain loyalty of our readers. We were down on circulation, and we were down in that important factor in news presentation—time.

But don't think it is like this with all country newspapers. We were still young, and we were still struggling. Newspapers are institutions and, like other institutions, they gather strength from the years. Some of them grow to be real old grannies, and even when they can no longer see very clearly they go on about their daily business, wrapped in a shawl of time and tradition and the affection of their subscribers.

We were rather too close to the city, and perhaps we were suffering more than is usual from that trend I spoke about. It seemed we could make no further headway, so we took the plunge.

The Changes We made.—In 1938 our town decided for a free library. Instead of the old subscription library, available only to those who could afford it, the new venture was supported from rates, thrown wide open to every man, woman, and child who cared to use it. A live association with the Country Library Service made the best books available to every member of the community.

Even before this, plans were materializing for the establishment of a community centre attached to the local high school. Carnegie grants had enabled a valuable collection of art prints and literature, music records, &c., to be assembled. Plans were drawn for the necessary buildings. Government assistance was promised.

We began to argue with ourselves. What is *our* place in all this ? How can *we* play a useful part in this development of community life ?

Several things were obvious. We were by inheritance the voice of the community. In the scheme of things to come we could play a vital and useful part. We had the machinery, hoped we had the drive to put it to the best use.

The first thing to go by the board was that 45 per cent. circulation. How could we serve a community if we were reaching less than half of it? The library was our cue, the answer was a blanket delivery to every home.

A hundred problems came hard on the heels of that decision. Newspapermen will shudder at the thought of such folly. We did our share of shuddering, too. But in the event, I don't think we lost any "prestige"; I think we served the community better than ever before, and we certainly made friends. The financial results were inconclusive, because of the war which was to interfere, but they were promising, and we were certainly no worse off than before.

Nights of planning, estimating, innovating produced answers to most of those hundred problems. They also produced an inch-high pile of typewritten manuscript, and every morning an office table littered with scribbled scraps of paper and cigarette ash.

The problems? We had decided to become a "free" newspaper. How could we do it and face our friends? The thing we get for nothing has no value! You can't sell your newspaper, so you are going to give it away! What were the counters to these gibes?

First of all, our readers would know of no other reason for the change-over but that we were determined to play what we saw to be our role in the development of community life. To the name of the paper, on the front page and over the leader column, and on all our stationery, we added the words, "The Community Newspaper." The price, 2d., was retained. A subscription was retained—a voluntary subscription. (We expected nothing from this, and were surprised.) We tied up even more closely with the community centre, the high school, the free library, the churches, the local bodies. An attractive "ballyhoo" folder was prepared for advance distribution to every home. It was important that we be well announced.

Finance was the next big problem. Would the venture pay, or would it bite the dust? Against the loss of regular subscriptions and the increased cost of production and delivery, would advertising revenue balance? We studied it from every angle. Careful estimations were made of the probable increase in "casual" advertising; "contract" advertisers were "sounded." The reaction seemed favourable. We made our calculations, and this time we were *not* surprised. The front page was rearranged, labelled "The Notice-board of the Community." In action it was a honey. For the first time, Mrs. Brown could advertise her lost watch, the tennis club its forthcoming ball, the Borough Council its general notices, and know that every home was getting the message. It was a good service, and it earned the right reward. Business houses using contract space were also quick to realize the advantages of over-all coverage. They contracted for more space, paid a better price for it.

Biggest headache was the news side of the venture. There is a lot of news

in a borough and a dozen smaller places scattered about the district, some up to twenty miles away. But it is " small " news, hard to gather. The traditional method of collecting this news is to find in each village some public-spirited person who is " in " everything to act as correspondent. He or she is paid so much per column. But these days it is often impossible to find such a person, and when a choice is made it is often unsatisfactory, especially when the novelty has worn off. In any case, our budget allowed for one reporter only, and he would be fully occupied in the town and at the office.

There was one way left. We could rely on the voluntary contributions of readers in these country districts. Newspapermen will shudder again. They know how easy it is to get Mrs. Smith to promise a report of her daughter's twenty-first birthday party. They know, also, how close to the impossible it is to lay hands on the actual copy. When a week has gone by and you meet Mrs. Smith in the street, she hasn't had the time, or she didn't know how to start, she's so sorry, and you say it doesn't matter. But you didn't get that story. In a small newspaper little stories like that are news.

Some way we had to make it easy for amateur reporters to work for us. The answer was : forms. We devised forms to cover every standard function ; weddings, birthday parties, dances, kitchen evenings, ; meetings of all kinds ; sports events, cricket, tennis, golf, football, basketball matches. These forms made it easy for people who previously never got past chewing the ends of their pencils. Around them we built a system of keeping check, mailing, elbow-jogging, and so on.

It worked, better than we had expected. The forms went out, and most times they came back again, promptly, in their preaddressed envelopes. Over to the reporter, it was his job then to be a rewrite man. Sometimes a smart linotype operator wrote the forms straight into lead.

The first issue was marked by a change of " dress," some new features, including an inexpensive illustration service from Copenhagen (of all places), and a general brush-up. Later we installed one of the new " legibility " type faces, a big improvement. We were determined to maintain a standard ; in spite of the removal of the circulation incentive, there would be no slipping back. From week to week we printed the homely, intimate story of what people do who live in a small town and in the townships and on the farms nearby. But in addition we carried to every home this kind of story : reviews of interesting new books available at the library ; a record of the beginnings and hopes of our community centre ; a column from the churches, which carried their message beyond four walls. Not many New-Zealanders write good books ; one, favourably received here and abroad, first saw print in our pages. These things were not bought and paid for. They were contributed by readers for readers. We were the medium. We became twice as effective, three times as useful. We had met the challenge, and as far as events allowed we had succeeded.

But less than a year later, there was war. All thoughts of community development, except along necessary lines, were dropped. Plans for the centre went on the shelf. All our newspaper staff were eligible for military service ; one by one they went into camp, and soon I followed. We had already suspended publication for the duration.

Is this the answer for the *Bugle?* Is there new life for country journalism this way? Perhaps it is only one way of many. Perhaps the wrong way. Let us be the last to suggest that we flew any brave new banners in the newspaper world. But we did fly a modest pennant in our town, and no wind blew it down except the hurricane which is still blowing.

Mr. E. D. Crossley, whose story this is, was until recently a Squadron Leader in the R.N.Z.A.F. He has now returned to civilian occupation. Before the war he was a commercial traveller in Sydney. In three and a half years overseas he saw service in Hongkong, the Persian Gulf, Sicily, East Africa, Egypt, North Africa, Malta, India, French Morocco, Palestine, and Iraq. In 1942 he won the first M.C. awarded in this war to a member of the R.N.Z.A.F. and in January of this year he was mentioned in dispatches. The story which he tells below is one of two he has written for *Korero*.

On August 4, 1941, I was posted from Singapore to an R.A.F. station at Kaitak, Hongkong, for duty as an Army Co-operation pilot. The island of Hongkong, which is separated from the Chinese mainland by about half a mile, seemed to me a very beautiful little place. The winter climate was agreeable, prices of most commodities were reasonable, and in general I thought living there particularly pleasant. At that time the war in the western hemisphere seemed distant and unreal, except when I saw the names of comrades in the casualty lists. A war in the Far East, involving us, seemed nothing more than a remote possibility; though occasionally I wondered what would happen if the Japs did attack, since their frontier troops were only twelve miles away.

But then came the morning of December 8. At approximately 7 a.m., without any warning, a formation of some forty Japanese planes came out of the blue directly over the aerodrome. We watched them coming. They kept splendid formation, and I remember thinking they looked very pretty. But to say I was scared is putting it mildly. I was in an absolute palsy of fear.

Our aerodrome defences were not very good. We had only a few anti-aircraft guns and no fighters. And after this first bombing attack, which did considerable damage to the aerodrome, we had no serviceable aircraft of any kind. The nearest enemy aerodrome was only twenty miles away, and from this first day until the end of the campaign the sky was never clear of Japs. For the first few days we had an alert every hour.

Our station was actually on the mainland of China, but when the Japanese broke through the lines held by the Punjabi Regiments and the Royal Scots, we were compelled to abandon it and fall back on the island. All Air Force men in Hongkong were then

attached to the Navy for whatever duties they wished to allocate us. I was posted to a machine-gun position on a hill on the right flank of the Winnipeg Grenadiers, with instructions to hold it at all costs. I had three machine guns and eighteen men.

We could see the Japanese clearly, and I must say they were determined. About half a mile away, in a valley, they had occupied an isolated hillock and placed a flag on the summit. We could see Japs moving on this hill; so we informed a battery of howitzers immediately in our rear. That afternoon the howitzers literally blasted the top off the hill. But ten minutes after the last shell struck, the Japs were back again with another flag. This business of knocking the Japs off the hill, only to see others take their places, went on for several days, and the enemy's casualties must have been considerable.

The position we had been defending covered the entrance to the reservoir and the main road coming away on the side of the hill to Naval H.Q. It was subjected to intense mortar fire from positions immediately below, and so we were ordered to take up another position covering the main road two miles to the rear. There we mounted a gun on either side of the road.

As you know, however, Hongkong was unable to hold out, and after our capture the Japs marched us, with six thousand other men, through the main streets of the island. Every man, including the G.O.C., the Commodore, and the Air Officer Commanding, had to carry his own kit. The Chinese in the streets watched us pass in silence.

Our destination was a former British barracks on the mainland. The Japanese had stripped the buildings of everything of use and value. Floorboards, pipes, wiring, taps—all had been removed. Officers were not separated from the men, and we had also in the camp a number of Indians and Chinese.

For nearly two months we lived on third-quality Saigon rice, which we cooked ourselves in 30-gallon petrol-tins cut in halves. My portion was two "555" cigarette-tins a day. Water, however, was plentiful. The building which the sentries used as a guardhouse had been the British troops' recreation hut, and over the door was a large sign, "Welcome." In the compound there were no trees: it was bare. But there was room enough to take exercise.

After five weeks here on two cigarette-tins of rice a day, things were getting pretty grim. The commonest complaints were dysentery and constipation. There were more than two hundred cases of amœbic dysentery, and because we had no medical supplies of any sort nothing could be done for them.

You can imagine, too, how, with six thousand men confined in a small space, fantastic rumours quickly circulated. Two of the commonest were that Hitler had committed suicide and that the German Army had been totally defeated. When I later found out how things actually were, I was naturally badly shaken.

The greatest difficulty we had to face in planning an escape from this camp lay in the fact that the only way out was through China. We knew neither the land nor its people, but we had heard that bandits infested the surrounding countryside. In addition, the Japs had spies in our camp.

An exchange of some Chinese sweets for a bottle of soya-bean sauce was to help me a lot. I made the exchange with a Chinese who put me in touch with a British Army officer in the camp who spoke Cantonese. This officer, who had an extraordinary Oxford accent and wore a monocle, was an Army doctor married to a Chinese who was a friend of the owner of the soya-bean sauce.

He and I compared notes and plans for almost three weeks. We were trying to discover the positions of the Japanese troops, for if we were to escape we would have to cross the main road. A break in the night wouldn't lessen the problem much, since the road was brilliantly lit.

One by one our plans went astray, until in the end our position looked hopeless. More and more sentries were posted round the camp, and the barbed wire was first doubled and then tripled. An outside contact we had managed to make came to nothing, and the attempt we finally made to escape was a desperate

bid for freedom at any cost rather than the result of any carefully prearranged plan.

I had by chance met in the camp an Army captain who knew the layout of what were called the new territories of Hongkong—a strip of land extending about twenty miles inland. The captain joined the doctor and myself, and the three of us made the break together. I should mention here that I had promised to provide, as my contribution to the escape plans, an aeroplane to take us out of Free China when we arrived there. I didn't know, of course, that we had no Air Force there at that time. But the other two believed me, and so I was able to go along with them.

Five minutes after we got outside the compound the sentries spotted us and immediately opened fire. Bullets were flying in all directions, but I feel sure now that we did not provide a definite target and that the shots were fired indiscriminately. Although we had been told that the Japanese would shoot escaping prisoners on sight, we wore our uniforms.

Our prison camp was on a small promontory on the China coast opposite the island of Hongkong. After we got outside the compound we entered the sea and swam across the bay, of which the promontory formed one end. The swim took about forty minutes. We still had to cross that brilliantly-lit main road, and so, on leaving the water, we crept along by the side of the road in the hope of finding a suitably shaded spot to cross. While we were doing this two native dogs barked, and as we threw ourselves into a ditch a Japanese patrol passed at the double. We waited until we thought the Japs could no longer hear us, and then climbed on to the road, crossed it, and made our way into the surrounding hills. We had felt exhausted after our forty-minute swim across the bay, but we were able to march over the hills for four hours without stopping. As dawn was breaking we entered some thick foliage and there slept through the day.

We resumed our journey at dusk, heading due north with the idea of reaching the East River, which runs east and west across the Kwantung Province. When the moon came up about 11 o'clock, however, we discovered we were lost. We were in the fortifications of the Shingmun Redoubt, and

about us lay the putrifying bodies of our own men killed there three or four months previously. We lost as little time as possible getting away.

Our march that night was one I shall never forget. About us were the white limestone cliffs of the Shingmun Valley, shining in the light of a full moon. The quality of the light somehow suited the country. It eliminated distances: it scored every cleft of the valley and made the shapes and promontories of the hills familiar.

We were fortunate enough to find the main road again, but almost as soon as we had done so we had another lucky escape. As we sheltered in the shadows at the side of the road, two Japanese passed within 10 ft. of us. For the next few days we marched over hills and through swampy valleys. Our food-supply, which consisted at the time of our escape of two tins of bully, a tin of cheese, and a tin of sardines—sardines were worth about £30 a tin—had run out and we were getting very hungry.

Then, one very cold misty night in the hills, we met a Chinese who spoke excellent English. He told us he was a pro-British guerrilla operating in the surrounding country, and said that if we cared to wait a few hours he would find food and arrange for a junk to take us across the bay. Earlier that day we had passed through a village where we paid a thousand dollars in Hongkong currency for a guide for the afternoon. We surmised that this fellow, having seen our money there, had followed us.

The whole thing seemed a bit suspect, but we decided to accept the fellow's offer. It had been raining continuously for two days and we were wet, tired and, hungry. This possibility of assistance, therefore, was one we were not prepared to give up. The Chinese took us to a cleft in the hills and told us to wait for two or three hours while he made the necessary arrangements.

We must then have dropped off to sleep, for the next thing I remember was seeing a man waving a dagger and shouting " Yakpunchai ! " (Cantonese for " We are Japanese men "). One of my friends, Tony, was on the ground with four men beating him up. The only weapon at hand was a pole, sharpened at one end, which we had found in the hills. I picked this up and drove it into the stomach of the nearest of our assailants. As he collapsed, two more of the bandits—there must have been eight or nine of then altogether—turned to deal with me, but at this moment Doug, the third member of our party, appeared, from where I don't know, and smashed one of them over the head with a bayonet, which he had apparently taken from an earlier opponent. Between us, Doug and I managed to account for about four of them, and the others ran away.

When we picked Tony up we found he had two terrific gashes across the scalp and all the tendons of his right arm were severed. He was only semi-conscious, but we patched him up the best way we could with a couple of field dressings which we happened to have, and as soon as possible went on our way again.

Tony in the next few days performed miracles. The pain in his arm must have been great, but not once did I hear him complain. Doug, who was an Army doctor, managed to keep the wounds clean until we were able to get Tony to hospital some two weeks later, and this although we had only one bottle of permanganate and sometimes had to wash the wounds in stagnant water.

The day after this encounter one of Doug's knees packed up on him, and I contracted dysentery. And so when a couple of nights later we fell in with more bandits we were in no condition to oppose them. This time there were about sixty of them, and if we had resisted we would probably all have been killed. After they had stripped us of everything of value, the bandits ,however, were not at all sure what to do with us. They held us for twenty-four hours, then let us go.

Within four hours of leaving them we ran full into another bunch. This crowd were armed with Mausers, but for reasons which will appear presently it would be unfair to describe them as bandits. They were mainly Chinese negroes and most of them seemed to have relatives in Jamaica. Their leader was named Lee—Mr. Lee. He wore Chinese trousers with a coat and waistcoat in European style and a slouch felt hat. Round his waist were three rows of bullets and a Mauser hung on either side. He had two gold watches on one arm and magnificent rings on every finger. When we first met I offered him my Onoto fountain pen as a peace offering, but he gave it back to me, saying it was too cheap!

He told us his was one of the many unrecognized guerrilla bands in South China. He depended on village folk to assist him with supplies. If they refused, he burned their villages down. All in all, he was as bloodthirsty an old rogue as you could ever hope to meet. But, once having satisfied himself we were really escaped prisoners, he seemed to take a great fancy to us. Indeed, he invited us to remain with him, promising that he would make our fortunes within twelve months. His offer tempted all three of us—the life looked good to us—and it was with much reluctance that we refused it.

While we were sitting round a fire in his house one evening he told us there was a Japanese Divisional Headquarters only a quarter of a mile away. He took us to the top of a nearby hillock, and from there we could see a Japanese sentry silhouetted against the sky. Indicating the sentry, Mr. Lee remarked: "We shoot that b—— every Saturday!"

It wasn't so easy to leave Mr. Lee, and when we did finally say goodbye to him we did so with genuine regret. He gave us a guide, and on our first day's journey we covered nearly thirty miles. This march brought us to the headquarters of a Captain Wong, who welcomed us heartily. Captain Wong's job was to embarrass the Jap lines of communication and to train young men for guerrilla warfare under his command. These trainees were no more than twelve or fifteen years of age, but their discipline and self-denial were incredible. In the short time we were at this camp, they destroyed four Japanese lorries, killed 130-odd infantrymen, and captured a considerable quantity of arms and equipment.

Captain Wong agreed to have us conducted through the Jap lines to Free China or the first unit of the regular Chinese Army, whichever was the nearer. We crossed the Canton–Kowloon railway by night, and were then passed from village to village, the inhabitants of which fed and cared for us as we went.

The time of our journey was the Chinese New Year and many of the villages we passed through had in celebration been freshly white-washed and decorated with picturesque signs. These villages were in enemy-held territory and much evidence of the Jap occupation was to be seen. The poverty was *indescribable*. Many villages were burned out, and fields, from which the cattle had been driven away, were empty. We heard stories of women and children being raped and murdered and of young men being conscripted into the Jap labour corps, yet everywhere we found a will to resist. I am sure the Chinese have no such word as defeat in their vocabulary.

In due course the guerrillas brought us to the regular Chinese Army and handed us over to Major Woo, of the

Signal Corps. Just at this time the Chinese Army had counter-attacked and the Japs were retreating in our direction. With the Chinese Signals we took to the hills and watched the Jap Army go by.

It was in a little village at this time that we met Mr. Marsman, an American multi-millionaire, who has since published a book called "I Escaped from

Hongkong." He mentions us in two or three pages. He had escaped by using enormous bribes, and when retaken by the Japanese he had produced a passport declaring him to be a Filipino and therefore a non-belligerent.

In Canton, the capital of Kwangtung, which we eventually reached, we were taken to a Catholic hospital run by Father Ma, who took us down to a newly constructed eating house, and ordered what he thought a reasonable meal. There were at least eight plates of soong, the Chinese equivalent of the English meat dish, and we must have had these filled at least three times. Father Ma then ordered sumpu, a reasonable rice wine. When we had all had four glasses of this, Father Ma was becoming visibly excited and we were becoming visibly intoxicated. Before we left the restaurant Tony had liberally bespattered the good father with quantities of rice and sumpu. We left Tony in that Catholic hospital and I have not seen him since.

Doug and I went on by mule, junk, sampan, charcoal-burner, and on foot. On the borders of Kwangtung and Kweichow we visited the palace of the last of the Kwangtung emperors. The palace dates back to the Ming Dynasty and is excellently preserved. It is kept by a brotherhood of Buddhist monks who use the palace as a monastery We met there a very charming old priest whose age was reputed to be 103. He was a man of considerable accomplishments, and as well as speaking innumerable Chinese dialects he had at least four foreign languages.

The palace consisted of a series of pagodas increasing in size. The largest of these housed a 30 ft. gold and gilded statue of Buddha. At the rear were two enormous trees, said to be two thousand years old. For hundreds of years these trees had shown no sign of life and were, in fact, decaying. But at the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war they sprouted. The Chinese, for a reason unknown to me, regarded this as a good omen and built a shrine at the base of the trees. The pagodas were coloured in blue, red, yellow, and white and were much gilded. They were solidly built, mostly of wood, with what looked like tiled roofs.

I often wish I had had a camera with me, but mine had been stolen by the second bunch of bandits together with my films of our experiences in Hongkong, among which was one of our march to the prison camp.

The remainder of our journey was uneventful. It took us to the British Consul's residence at Kunming, and from there we were flown to Calcutta.

E. V. Paul, Government Printer, Wellington