



*Water is dammed in the hills for irrigation.*

relief scheme allowing 14s. 9d. a week tucker money. Equipment was provided, the cost of it later deducted from the gold return. In two years he obtained two ounces; he calculated that the dirt he washed returned one penny a barrow. Boots were £2 a pair. His mates included former racehorse owners, bookmakers, a clergyman, clerks, paper-hangers, publicans, and farmers. Only one struck rich: he pegged and worked a claim which returned gold worth more than £6,000. Soon after he went bankrupt: the dreary years of the depression weighed too heavily, for some time he lived an orgy of spending which, finally, left him poorer by far than when he started, more unfortunate than his mates.

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"Go and see the old cemetery: that will tell you something of the days the early settlers and gold-miners lived through," said the carpenter. We went, pushing against the Prevailing Wind.

"That'll do you no good: it's full. You'd do better to try the new one; it's only a little farther out of the town," said the barman, who had a beard, helpfully, when we called in for direction to this old-time cemetery.

Much of the lettering on the stones, especially on those facing north, had been bleached unreadable by years of that hot sun. The gate creaked mournfully, anciently—suitably—when we opened it; it might have been the first

time it had been opened for long enough; it certainly had been years since any practicable attention had been given to the ground. Weeds choked everywhere, thick and wild, thistles stood higher than the tombstones; we had to clear them to read the inscriptions. We sat on the steps of one of the stones, ate blackberries we could pick without rising, and considered this curious burial-ground; compared the smooth, safe easiness of living to-day (at least in New Zealand) with the harsh, tough, day-to-day existence of less than eighty years ago. Average age of death shown on the tombstones was about, probably less than, thirty years, for the women as well as for the men; there was hardly one inscription with the age above forty years. "Life how short, Eternity how long," read one epitaph. How true. One husband, who died aged twenty-two, was buried with his wife, aged twenty. Many wives, some of them mothers of families, had died even younger.

Causes of death also were shown. Most common were falls from horses, falls of earth and rock, drownings in the Kawarau and Molyneux Rivers, and drownings in floods. Those buried there had come to Otago Central from all over the world—from the counties of England and Ireland, from Scotland, several from the Continent; Chinese lettering was over two or three of the graves (had the souls of the occupants reached the Land of their Ancestors? we wondered, thinking of the ancient and usually honoured custom which to ensure immortality, demands the return of the body of a dead Chinese to China. We remembered, too, the ship that was chartered to take from New Zealand to China the remains of about five hundred Chinese who had died, been buried, and later disinterred. Off the coast, the ship struck a reef, the captain and twelve men were drowned, and the cargo of corpses went not to China, but to the bottom of the sea).

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It wasn't that the Head Wind had stopped prevailing as we cycled to the country dance which was to be held a few miles from Alexandra; it was just