

The Boy Colonists

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*or Eight Years of Colonial Life  
in Otago, New Zealand*

Rev. E. Simeon Elwell

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This account of two boys' stay in Otago from 1859 to 1867 aims "to inform friends of the real nature of colonial life in the early days of the settlement of that Province", and is characterised by a cheerful acceptance of the hard work, primitive conditions, and the isolation endured on the sheep-stations. The excitement of a chase after bushrangers provides them with a welcome relief from the never-ending chores.

Their first experiences in New Zealand were most discouraging—on asking an old Maori chief if he ever tasted human flesh, Harry was told, "Oh yes, there is no meat equal to white man: I hope that I shall taste it again some day". Arriving at the sheep-station where they were to work as Cadets for board and keep but no pay, they "were rather horrified" to find that their new home consisted of a thatched hut with an earth floor "which seemed eloquent of fleas". Even the blankets "were hardly calculated to inspire Englishmen with confidence". Despite these inauspicious beginnings, their natural good-humour and curiosity provides them and the reader with many interesting diversions, such as Ernest's first attempt to milk a wild cow to help supplement the meagre diet of mutton and potatoes with the "luxury" of milk and butter.

A valuable record of people and places during the early settlement period of Otago.

*Cover Illustration: "On the Road" by L. J. Kennaway from "Crusts: a Settler's Fare due South" (1874) republished by Capper Press (1970).*

## THE BOY COLONISTS.

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OR,

Eight Years of Colonial Life in Otago,  
New Zealand.

BY

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BURNHAM, SOMERSET.

London:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co.

OXFORD: THOS. SHRIMPTON & SON.

1878.



REPRINT PUBLISHED BY  
CAPPER PRESS  
CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND  
1975

Printed offset by the Caxton Press, Christchurch  
from the copy in the Dunedin Public Library

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED,

BY KIND PERMISSION,

TO

SIR JULIUS VOGEL, K.C.M.G.

## INTRODUCTION.



THE following pages contain simply a brief and plain narrative of what occurred to a settler in the Province of Otago, New Zealand, during the years 1859-1867.

They are written chiefly to satisfy a whim, and also to inform friends of the real nature of colonial life in the early days of the settlement of that Province.

Many of the names are real, and all the facts are related almost in the order in which they occurred, a greater part of the book being simply an enlargement of a diary. My aim has been to write not so much an interesting as a true account; yet I trust that to many of my friends, at any rate, the book will have some little interest.

E. SIMON ELWELL.

## THE BOY-COLONISTS.

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ON the twelfth of June in the year 1859, two boys, aged respectively seventeen and sixteen, embarked at Gravesend on the good ship C., bound for New Zealand. The ship was bound for Port Lyttleton, but an arrangement had been made with the company that, if possible, the captain should land them at Port Chalmers, or Oamaru in Otago; for they were going out under the care of an old colonist, a Mr. P., who held a sheep run in that province.

Mr. P. was a quiet, inoffensive little man, not at all the kind of man you would expect to find as a Colonist. He had gone home on business, had got married and was now returning. It was rather unfortunate for the two boys that they went out with one, who, though very kind, had after an eight years' stay in New Zealand obtained so little acquaintance with the real work of a colonist: for if he did know anything, he seldom showed his knowledge, and was often unable to give any satisfactory answers to the boys' eager inquiries.

All the information they could obtain from Mr. P. about New Zealand was what Ernest had already partly learnt from books; *viz.*:—It was discovered in 1642 by Tasman, a Dutchman, and again in 1796 by Captain Cook. Captain Cook having made a survey and a map of the coasts, it was very soon visited by whalers, and several whaling stations were established. Some of these old whalers were still to be found in the islands. One notable man, J. H., possessed a lot of

land, which he was said to have purchased from the Maoris for a little tobacco and a few blankets. In 1840 New Zealand became a colony of Great Britain, and in 1848, just eleven years before our friends reached its coast, a settlement was formed in Otago by the Scotch Free Church Association, Captain Cargill, after whom Invercargill was named, being the leading man. With him the J.s and the V.s, whom the boys afterwards knew well, went out and became the founders of the new settlement.

Mr. J., a very clever little man, had not done much for himself, and was only helping his cousin to manage his station at Papakaio. Mr. P. had secured one of the best blocks of land in the Oamaru district. It included the present town of Oamaru, where the woolshed was erected for the convenience of shipping the wool. From Oamaru it extended along the coast line to the Waitaki, a distance of fifteen miles; it was bounded by the Waitaki on the north for nearly twenty miles: then the upper boundary was formed by a creek usually dry; the boundary line then followed the creek to its source among the hills till it met the Waireka, which formed the fourth boundary. It was a splendid block of land, hardly to be matched as a sheep run in all Otago. A great deal of it is now under cultivation, but at that time Mr. P. rented the whole of it from government. It consisted partly of plain, partly of low downs and a few hills, with one small piece of table-land.

To return to our voyagers, whom we will now briefly describe. The elder, Harry Talbot, was fair, full of fun, and good-looking: the younger, Ernest, was dark, shy, and reserved.

The circumstances which had urged them to venture on so long a voyage and separation from their friends, were widely different in each case. Harry had been educated at a public school, and from early boyhood had

been accustomed to fight his own way and take care of himself. After leaving school at the age of fifteen, he had taken to farming, and had acquired a small knowledge of that on a farm which his father, a physician, had purchased near Chester. He had learnt also to shoe horses, carpenter, &c., &c., and naturally had a desire for country life and work; so that he was both by nature and habit thoroughly suited for a rough colonial life. Ernest, on the other hand, had always been at home, and had never learnt anything practical. Owing to whatever causes, Ernest grew to entertain a very bright view of the world outside his home, and to fancy that when once set afloat in the world, and free to act on his own impulses, he should soon carve his way to fortune and honour. He was ignorant of the merest trifles of every-day business life, though eager to learn anything likely to be useful. Nervous and shy, he was only too glad to avail himself of Harry's experience and friendly aid in arranging for the voyage, &c., after all friends had wished them "Good-bye."

It was not long before he required that aid. Ernest's father went down as far as Gravesend with them, and took them on shore to make a few final purchases. He then left them, promising to row alongside the next morning should the ship not have started. However, the time appointed for starting was about five a.m., when the tide became full, so they saw no more of him, to their deep disappointment. About four a.m. Harry and Ernest were fast asleep in their "bunks" in the after part of the vessel; dreams of the friends they had left, the new country they were bound for, and the new life they were from that time to lead, coursing confusedly through their minds; when suddenly they were aroused, or partially aroused, by a knocking at the cabin door.

"Does Mr. E. occupy this cabin?" shouted a gruff voice.

"Yes," faintly replied Ernest, half afraid that something had gone wrong, and that he was going to be taken up, or summoned, or something else just as dreadful; for he had a great horror of the law and the police, and everything connected with them, and an exaggerated notion of the trifles that might constitute an offence against them. It was with difficulty then he gasped forth a faint "Yes."

"Four pounds fifteen and tenpence for you to pay, Sir, for extra luggage."

"Extra luggage! I did not know I had any. Extra luggage!!"

"There is the account." And the man thrust in Ernest's face a piece of paper covered with enigmatical writing and a few figures,—the sum total, four pounds, fifteen and ninepence, being exceedingly clear, though what it was for, it was impossible for Ernest to decipher. Poor Ernest! though his father had given Mr. P. twenty pounds to invest for him, he had only just five pounds in his own pocket. Rubbing his sleepy eyes, with a heavy heart he slowly fumbled about for his purse, pulled out the money, and handed it over. The man handed him the bill receipted, and stepped quickly out of the cabin, closing the door with a bang. That bang seemed to have thoroughly aroused Harry, who had been a half-dreamy, half-conscious listener to this little dialogue.

"Ernest!" he shouted, in a very yawny tone, "what's all this you have been saying about extra luggage?" Ernest piteously related what had occurred.

"What?" exclaimed Harry, "you don't mean to say that you paid four pounds fifteen shillings and tenpence for extra luggage? You paid it? Paid!!!"

"Yes," faltered Ernest, "the man said I must."

"Let me look at the bill. All fudge! put on your clothes at once, and run after the fellow: he is sure to be on board getting money from others. Just point

out to him that these boxes charged in this account are not yours at all: he will give you your money back at once."

"Oh, I can't be bothered," said Ernest, "I want to go to sleep." The real fact being that Ernest was too shy, and too much afraid of being laughed at. Harry was not to be done, though.

"Well, I have never seen such a chap. If you really will not go for the money, I will." On went his clothes in a twinkling, and off he ran in search of the gruff-voiced man. In less than ten minutes, to Ernest's joy and surprise, he returned with the money in his hand. They both had a hearty laugh over the matter, in spite of Ernest's mortification at having been so unbusinesslike, and they soon fell fast asleep, not waking again till the vessel was some miles from Gravesend. At eight in the morning they were the only passengers on the deck, and they were much surprised to find that only the first and second mate and two sailors were there, coiling ropes, arranging sails, &c., &c., ready for hoisting. On entering into conversation with the chief mate, Mr. Appleby, they learnt that the greater number of the sailors were tipsy and asleep, and that such was usually the case on starting on all voyages. It was eight or ten days before they got well clear of the Channel, the wind being constantly almost dead ahead, and the ship being but an indifferent sailer: the crew named her "The Haystack,"—she seemed to have so little power of beating up against the wind. During those ten days, and in fact during the first fortnight, Harry and Ernest hardly knew who would be their companions, beyond Mr. P. and his wife, a Mr. Fisher, and Captain Fritz, old New Zealanders, most of the others keeping below, and not having much appetite. After Madeira was sighted, the passengers began slowly to emerge and to try to look cheerful; but for some days



their smiles were evidently of a painful nature. However, when all became really at home on the sea, Harry and Ernest found that in the saloon there were besides themselves about eighteen passengers, in the second cabins about thirty, and in the steerage about two hundred.

At first the food was very good at all meals ; but Harry and Ernest shortly noticed a change for the worse at breakfast and tea. When they got clear of the channel, and began to feel the sharp pangs of hunger, owing to the great " tonic " powers of the sea-breezes, and at the same time discovered a change in the quality of their food, they were greatly disconcerted. Ernest coming to breakfast one morning, very hungry, and seeing some nice-looking omelettes, thought he would like some. The first mouthful was enough. He turned to Harry with an exclamation of disgust.

" Oh, Harry ! don't take any omelettes ; they are perfectly horrible ! "

" Well," replied Harry, " they can't beat the rolls : I have heard of making bricks with straw, but never saw rolls made with it before."

" The coffee is worse than the omelette. How is your tea, Harry ? "

" Like ditch-water ; it is only the knowledge that there will be nothing else to be had that may possibly in the end enable me to drink it. I suppose these are some of the pleasures of the sea."

That morning neither made much of a breakfast : they tried luncheon, but found the biscuits mouldy, though the cheese was good. They began to feel rather doleful at the prospect of a hundred days or more of this kind of food. Fortunately Homer's saying is true, " Nothing is more shameless than the stomach," and in a few days even the rolls and the biscuits appeared palatable and the tea drinkable : the coffee proved always too much ; it was and continued to be

perfectly undrinkable. The dinners were during the whole voyage very good, and on no occasion did our young friends fail to do justice to them. Famished from having barely tasted breakfast, they were always ready for, and always (unpleasant as the admission is) calculating on it. Those who know what real hunger is will pardon them, and will not condemn them as greedy. The dinner generally consisted of either fresh mutton or fresh pork, chicken or ducks occasionally, salt beef always, *bad* potatoes, or at least hardly eatable, and pease-pudding. These dishes were followed by very good puddings or pies. While some of the passengers continued ill, Harry and Ernest had no lack; but when the saloon table was duly filled with hungry dinner-eaters, Ernest and Harry, whose hunger and appetite were too great to be good for them, were not able to satisfy themselves. Every scrap almost of the fresh meat was finished daily, and as they did not like the intensely hard salt beef, their great resource was the pudding. This always was sufficient to go round once, with enough over for two or three to have more, but not for all.

Oh terrible, shocking truth! our friends were quite excited daily to watch for the answers of the ladies and then of the senior gentlemen: they examined their countenances with longing eyes; they were filled with delight when the precious words, "No, thank you," issued from their lips. These ladies and gentlemen, no doubt, saw and pitied the poor boys' hunger and, as they not improbably termed it, "greediness." Often and often afterwards, Harry and Ernest talked over those dreadful longings of theirs, and each confessed how ashamed he now felt; but each contended that anyone who felt the same sharp hunger, would, under similar circumstances, experience the same (must we use the term?) "greedy" longings. Enough of this. Too much, some readers will say.

One thing used to annoy Harry and Ernest very much. Among the saloon passengers were a man and his wife, an exceedingly cadaverous-looking couple, with an exceedingly cadaverous-looking baby. The wife used always to sit between Harry and Ernest, generally with the baby in her arms. Almost invariably this baby used to set up the most terrible howlings at meals, but the parents persisted in sitting them out. Luckily for our young friends' peace, these people were frequently too ill to appear at all.

The incidents of interest on the voyage were very few. In the tropics twice, once owing to the carelessness of a second class passenger, a fire broke out. The second time the sailors were heating some pitch for calking some part of the ship, when suddenly the pitch boiled over and spread like lightning in a large sheet of flame over the whole width of the deck by the cooking-galleys and up the rigging. Harry, Ernest, Mr. Fisher and a few others were talking, lounging, and shooting at birds on the after part of the vessel. They promptly helped the sailors by handing the buckets out of the boats suspended from the davits at the side. In a few moments the flames were extinguished, but during those few moments to those inexperienced in such scenes the case seemed hopeless: the flames appeared to have got such a hold, to have spread so widely, and to be climbing the rigging so quickly, that there appeared to be no chance of quenching them. However, a few determined and well-disciplined men soon overcame them, in spite of the confusion which reigned meanwhile among the steerage passengers. The weather being fine, hot, and calm, almost everyone was on deck, and there was a general rush of mothers for their children, husbands for their wives, together with screams of agony from those unfortunates who were pressed against the burning pitch and against the stoves. Two shepherds were most severely hurt.

They had been cooking their dinner; consequently they were standing near the stoves, and as the rush was made they were jammed right down on them, and their hands and breasts were dreadfully burnt.

Another day, a long boat of a vessel was noticed in the distance floating by bottom upwards. Some of the passengers requested to be allowed to go with the chief officer, Mr. Appleby, who was much liked, to see whether they could discover to what vessel it belonged, and also to ascertain if any one were clinging to it. Some who had glasses, thought that they could make out a figure of a man on it. The Captain's glass contradicted this latter statement, and permission was refused, the captain urging that storms were very frequent and sudden in those parts, and that if a boat put out, there might be great difficulty, or even an impossibility, in the way of getting her back.

When the C. got off the Cape of Good Hope, a violent storm arose. The weather had been very beautiful, and for a whole day a splendid fair wind had been blowing. All the studding-sails were set, and "the Haystack" had been going along all day at a terrific rate for her, ten or eleven knots an hour, when suddenly the captain came on deck about six in the evening, and, to Harry's and Ernest's disgust, ordered all sail to be shortened as speedily as possible. However, our friends were soon glad that the captain had come on deck: for almost immediately the wind began to rise rapidly. Passengers and all lent a willing hand, as the captain really seemed anxious to get the sails in quickly. Harry and Ernest, and four or five others, did know by this time most of the different orders, and how to work both in shortening and increasing sail, though they were still great novices, and likely to be deceived in their estimate of their own strength. For instance, Harry and Ernest alone tried to lower the mizen stay-sail, a sail which was only set that one day

during the whole voyage. But when they found they could not do it, instead of letting go the rope they clung to it, and as the vessel rolled they were lifted right off their feet, and saw beneath them no longer the ship, but *the sea*. It was a terrible moment: Ernest had the highest part of the rope, he being tallest; Harry was below. Ernest shouted to him to drop directly the vessel should roll back again. This he did, but not in time to allow Ernest to do so too. Harry rolled against the hencoops, but Ernest was swung clear of the vessel again, and now began to get rather tired with clinging, and rather alarmed; in fact he almost thought he should drop into the sea, which seemed to be boiling and bubbling all around him, and which was rendered more terrible by the dimness of the light, as it was now almost dark. However, he clung with desperation to the rope, the spray from the raging waves dashing over him, and the huge waves themselves seeming ready to swallow him up: at length (for though it was barely a minute, it appeared an infinity of time) the vessel rolled back, and Ernest was safely tumbling over the deck with Harry, causing great alarm and confusion among the ducks and hens in their narrow coops, for the hencoops were ranged along the sides of the quarter-deck, and were used as seats for the passengers.

Ernest and Harry waited up till nearly eleven o'clock, the wind rising higher and higher, and the sails on the main and foremasts being then double-reefed. The boys soon fell fast asleep, but about four o'clock in the morning they were almost shaken out of their bunks by a tremendous thud. The vessel had evidently been struck heavily by a sea. They listened for a few minutes, thinking that they would hear the raging of the storm, but all seemed quite quiet, and the vessel appeared to be rolling as if in a calm, or almost calm, sea. They dressed hurriedly, thinking that perhaps

something was wrong ; but when they got on deck they found it was blowing a perfect hurricane, and the ship was lying to, that is, not moving at all. The waves were enormously high. Each one appeared certain to sweep over the ship, seemingly towering far above her mast. They must have been at least forty feet high. About eight o'clock the storm lulled a little, and the captain prepared to start on. This was rather a difficult and dangerous manœuvre, for at first the vessel would not answer her helm very well. Two men were lashed to the wheel. Ernest was standing behind them. Harry was in his cabin. The ship no sooner began to move than a huge sea struck her and swept over her from stem to stern, wetting every part of her with the exception of the extreme stern where Ernest was standing. Parts of the bulwarks were broken ; the saloon doors were dashed open and the water invaded the cabins. The ship regularly shivered and seemed ready to sink. She had hardly recovered from this, when a second and a third wave washed over her. After this she appeared to regain her buoyancy and to ride over everything. About ten o'clock, a poor weakly young fellow tried to mount the deck by the ladder, but before he got half-way up a wave washed over him ; he became very ill, and vanished for the rest of the day. The next passenger who tried to get a breath of fresh air, was, to Ernest's surprise, the cadaverous parent with his baby. Only Ernest, the chief officer, and the man at the wheel, were on deck. The vessel was rolling fearfully, and no one could walk without holding on to the handrail, for sometimes the vessel lay right over first on her left, and immediately after on her right side, and the deck was almost perpendicular. The poor unfortunate parent was thrown down at once on setting foot on deck. Ernest and the chief mate scrambled towards him, but before they could help him at all he had slid backwards and

forwards three times from side to side of the deck, clutching the baby frantically all the time. The baby uttered the most piercing screams. Neither of them was hurt, and after the chief officer and Ernest had helped the poor fellow to his cabin, they could not refrain from a hearty burst of laughter as they thought of the ridiculous figure he cut sliding about helplessly on the deck.

At length, after a fair share of storms, the usual catches of sharks, albatross, Mother Carey's chickens, flying fish, &c., they sighted the "Snares." These safely past before nightfall, the next day they were within view of the Middle Island. The sail-maker had for some time past been preparing a rope and canvas chair with which to lower Mrs. P. over the side should they manage to get to Port Chalmers easily. Mr. P., Ernest, and Harry, were all excitement. They were destined to be disappointed, however.

Within two or three hours a dense fog came on, and the captain never having been to New Zealand before, and therefore not knowing the coast, thought it prudent to stand out to sea again.

The day after, in the morning, the ship was supposed to be off Banks' Peninsula, a large rocky isolated hill at the edge of the Canterbury plains, about thirty miles long by sixteen wide, evidently the work of a volcano. A hot N.W. wind was blowing, which seemed to strike on them like a blast from a furnace.

There appeared to be two openings close to each other, either of which might lead to the harbour. The captain was uncertain which to take. He made signals for a pilot, but in vain. Captain Fritz recommended him to try the one which he finally did try, and which proved to be the right one. Captain Fritz was an old New Zealander, and knew the coast well. He was rather a queer man though, used to talk rather oddly, shave seldom, dress badly, and had every appearance

of shirking clean water. From his own account he had for many years done what Harry called "pigging it" with the Maoris. Harry used to be always making fun of him. Mr. Fisher, also an old New Zealander, joined with Captain Fritz in assuring the captain that he was positive that the entrance the captain was thinking of trying was the right one. The captain made up his mind at length to try. Sail was shortened, and they approached the land very gradually, taking every precaution. All was right, however, and the C. was soon within the entrance. As she passed the first gully, a blast of the hot north-west wind swept down on her, and for a moment Ernest thought the ship would capsize. The captain did not seem in the least disturbed by the wind, but he was fidgety and anxious, because not even yet was there a sign of a pilot or any vessel.

One of the second-class passengers walked up to him and said, intending to be jocose, pointing to the cliffs on the other side, "These are what you call basaltic rocks, captain, are n't they?"

"Basaltic donkeys, or anything you please! only don't trouble me now," was the sharp reply. The would-be witty Jaques slunk off to pack his things, and appeared no more till the ship was anchored. In a few minutes more a pilot boat rounded the point, the pilot came on board, and within half-an-hour the C. was safely anchored.

Most of the passengers got off, luggage and all, at once in the boats which came alongside, but they did not all manage to reach the jetty. Some were carried out and had to land a good quarter of a mile away from it on the steep hill-side, so violent was the wind, and most of them got a good wetting. When the first rush of passengers was over, Harry and Ernest went ashore with the chief officer, merely to look about them, they not being in any hurry, as they would have to stay



some days on board till a schooner could be found to convey them and their baggage to Oamaru. Landed on the rough wooden jetty, and, unlike the others, unencumbered with luggage, Harry and Ernest started off first to examine the town. Their examination was soon concluded. Nothing much was to be seen in the way of shops; only a few stores with goods piled up seemingly anyhow, and one or two pretty weather-boarded houses. There were a lot of convicts working opposite the largest store, with one or two armed police patrolling near them. Ernest stopped to look at them and at the stores. Presently one of the convicts wheeled his barrow close up to where Ernest was standing, and asked him for some tobacco. Neither Harry nor Ernest smoked, so Ernest replied that he had none; the next moment one of the police walked briskly up and ordered Ernest away. He stared at the man for a moment, half inclined to answer angrily; but fortunately Harry pulled him away, and he at once thought better of it: yet as he walked away, much to Harry's amusement, he kept grumbling, saying that he had left England in the hope that he had wished good-bye to all "move-on's," all fences, all "notices," and "all persons found trespassing will be prosecuted with the utmost rigour," &c., in fact restraints of all kinds; and here, on the first moment of his landing, he was met with a horrible "move-on." However, the hill they were beginning to ascend soon showed him that he must save all his breath, for even had he been in good training it would have tried him well; and as it was, after one hundred and twenty-three days on board ship, he was by no means equal to much hill work. Harry and he were both eager to be at the top first, to get the first view of the country beyond, and of Christchurch. Five or six times they thought they only had one more rise to surmount to get to the top, but still they found another rise beyond. At last Harry exclaimed,—

"I do not believe there is a top, do you, Ernest? This hill seems like one of those serpents or dwarfs you read of in fairy tales,—cut off one head and a dozen fresh ones appear; mount one rise, and still another looms beyond. I am tired out, and shall take a rest." Down he went on the grass.

"Oh well!" replied Ernest, "I suppose there must be an end to climbing it, some time or other; and as we have made up our minds to go to the top, I shall not stop till I get there, and then I shall rest and enjoy the view."

So on he trudged, and got to the top rather before Harry. There was not much to reward him. The highest part of Banks' Peninsula, up which he had been climbing, was Mount Herbert, a little over three thousand feet high. The Peninsula was formed of rough hills, timbered here and there, but mostly covered with coarse grass and ferns. Right away in front of the spot on which Ernest was lying, were the great Canterbury plains, the town of Christchurch lying about six miles out on the Avon. Between Christchurch and Ernest ran the little river Heathcote. There was one large patch of bush to be seen; all the rest of the country for miles away was quite flat and bare, with the exception of the immediate neighbourhood of Christchurch, where might be seen a few green paddocks fenced in, and a few gorse hedges.

It was getting late, so, after a short rest, the boys rose to go down the hill. This they found almost more trying than climbing: the running down seemed to shake them so tremendously. When they got to the bottom they hurried on to the pier, where they found the chief officer waiting for them. That night they slept very soundly indeed, being quite tired out. Next morning they started directly after breakfast in a boat, for the jetty, and from thence to walk to Christchurch. This time they went by the regular track over the hill,

and did not feel the climb so much. Descending on the other side, they soon came to a little fountain by the road-side, erected by some lady to quench the thirst of passing travellers.

Having duly praised her wisdom, and enjoyed the fruits of it by slaking their thirst, they walked on along the dusty roads to Christchurch, which they reached about noon. They called on a cousin of Harry's, a solicitor, who received them very hospitably, and invited them to dinner. Then, for the first time for some months, their eyes were delighted with the sight of a beautifully clean white tablecloth. This cloth actually seemed to render the meat and the vegetables and everything on the table more eatable and enjoyable. After dinner, Harry's cousin took them about and showed them all that was to be seen, and then left them at the hotel. Here they got very comfortable beds, and in the morning tasted for the first time some splendid whitebait fresh caught from the river.

The day after their return from Christchurch, while they were fishing off the stern of the vessel, their attention was attracted by a noise on the main deck: they ran forwards to see what it was, and found the first and second mates in loud and angry tones ordering the sailors to work. The sailors doggedly refused to do anything unless they could get an extra allowance of rum. Shortly the captain came up on deck, and ordered the mates to put the ringleader into irons. This man, a determined looking ruffian with only one eye and a face scarred all over, made a stout resistance. The chief mate seized him, and then ensued a great struggle, in which all the sailors joined: finally they carried off their leader in triumph, leaving the chief mate on deck rather mauled about. The second mate at once hoisted the flag for the police, who quickly came on board, and, after a brief struggle, secured, handcuffed, and took off the man. The other sailors

were then obliged to set to work; but they did little and that little sulkily. The chief mate told Ernest that they were evidently plotting more mischief. About noon, the captain ordered his gig to be lowered to go ashore.

Now was seen one chief cause why he would not allow any boats to put off from this ship during the voyage, though even he could hardly have suspected that matters were as bad as they were, or else it is scarcely likely that he would now have attempted to use his own boat. The gig was lowered, but, oh! sad to say, like those of *Æneas* in the storm, it "gaped with fissures," and notwithstanding its reputation of being "equal to a life-boat" (as declared by some of the officials) it filled immediately, and sank as far as the rope which attached it to the vessel would allow. Three other boats were lowered, all with a similar result, and at length the captain was fain to hire a boat to take him ashore. When Ernest asked the chief mate the reason of this, he was assured that the boats were really very good, only not having been examined for a long time, and having been for months exposed to a scorching sun, the timbers had shrunk, but, as soon as they were well soaked again, the boats would become quite serviceable; and so it proved in the event. Still, if these boats had been needed on any emergency, as seemed not unlikely more than once, they would have been utterly useless, and all on board must have perished for the want of them.

One of these boats did not fill quite so quickly as the others. A sailor was ordered to stay in it to bale out the water, and though it gained on him at first, he afterwards managed to keep it down. All the boats were allowed to remain soaking, and this one was fastened to the fore-part of the vessel: every now and then they were all baled out, but one man was kept constantly in this boat so as to get it ready for the

captain next day, by which time it was thought that perhaps it might be fit for use. The next day came, but the boat, and not only the boat, but three or four of the sailors had gone. They had evidently unfastened it in the night, baled it out, and with muffled oars stolen away.

After attentively examining each side of the bay for some time, the chief mate at length descried the boat bottom upwards in a little cove about half-a-mile off. He ordered one of the other boats to be baled out, and after trial it was thought safe, by taking an extra hand to keep constantly baling, to venture in it to the cove to get the first boat.

The chief mate said he would go himself, and asked Ernest and Harry if they would like to accompany him. They gladly agreed to go. One of the sailors baled, the other two and Harry and Ernest rowed, the chief mate steered. They soon reached the cove, pulled the boat up alongside of the one the runaway sailors had left, and started to see if they could make out any traces of them. The first place they came across was a Maori hovel. The sailors frightened the old Maori woman in it by running after her ducks and hooting. The poor old thing, who, dressed simply in a long dirty looking kind of night-dress, looked very absurd, as she ran screaming after them, kept half-begging them to stop chasing her ducks, and half-abusing them for doing so. They did not stop, however, till they had caught one duck, and terrified the old woman into fits by pretending to wring its neck. Then suddenly they darted off at full speed, and went round the corner of the wood out of sight. The mate thought they had gone off for good after their comrades. He, Harry, and Ernest, followed them to the corner, and found that they had only gone into a small house there to ask for milk. They ran on again, but returned in about an hour. After the search for the

runaways was given up, and whilst they were waiting for the other sailors to return, Harry and Ernest amused themselves by looking for shells, which Ernest wished to collect and send to his English friends. They found some very pretty specimens, and returned to the boat with their handkerchiefs laden. Altogether they spent about three hours on shore, and then rowed off to the ship, towing the recovered boat.

The next day they went ashore at Port Lyttleton again, to look at the tunnel which had been begun through the hill to Christchurch to connect it with the port by rail. Then, the only way for conveyances of any kind was round the point by the edge of the coast, a very circuitous route.

This tunnel was not finished till 1867, when Ernest had left New Zealand. Its length was about a mile and a half, but the rock through which it was cut was very hard and tough. Harry and Ernest separated soon after they got on shore, and Harry fell in with an old Maori chief, since dead, Tairoa. This old fellow was tattooed all over in the most extraordinary fashion. Had his face not been thus spoilt he would have been a handsome man. He was of a fine athletic build, and seemed very intelligent. He was a Northerner. His faith in the English ever being able to penetrate the hill was small.

"They will never do it," he observed to Harry, "the rock is too hard."

Harry then asked him if he had ever tasted human flesh.

"Oh yes," he said, "there is no meat equal to white man: I hope I shall taste it again some day."

Harry could not exactly make out whether he meant his words in earnest or in joke, he laughed so immoderately; but he believed that the old fellow really did fancy human flesh still, from the way in which he smacked his lips.

Harry and Ernest found afterwards that there was a vast difference between the Maories of the North and those of the South. The Northerners are altogether a finer and more energetic class of men. The Southerners are few and weak, and always used to stand in awe of the Northerners, and were in a certain way subject to them in old times. Still even among the Southerners there are some fine men, but none of them seem to care much for genuine steady hard work.

In two or three days the schooner which was to convey Harry and Ernest to Oamaru was ready. Gladly did they pack their things and go on board. The wind was dead against the schooner going out of harbour, and it was some time before they managed, by frequent tacking, to make the open sea. At length they did get out; yet they were not destined to see Oamaru so quickly as they expected. It was fully a week before they got there. Calm weather prevailed, and for some days little or no progress was made. Such a cruise would have proved very pleasant for those who like yachting, for everything was most comfortable on board. The captain and three of the sailors being musicians, played frequently, and made the time pass pleasantly; but Harry and Ernest were anxious to see their new home and country.

After clearing Lyttleton Harbour, keeping close to the land they passed the entrance to Akaroa bay, where there was a small settlement, consisting chiefly of French people. From the distance it seemed a lovely spot, well wooded, well watered, and well sheltered. Coasting along from thence they passed Lake Ellesmere, a fresh-water lake, only divided from the sea by a little shingly beach. It is fed by the river Selwyn, which runs down from the Malvern hills, and takes its name from Bishop Selwyn. They anchored for half a-day off Timaru, a small town, or rather village just springing up into a town, used by the settlers chiefly for

storing their wool previous to shipment for England. All these places, Christchurch, Lyttleton, Timaru, though dignified with the name of towns, were only a small collection of weather-board houses: the colony not having been planted more than nine years.

The landing of their luggage afforded Harry and Ernest some amusement. The government boat crew was at that time composed entirely of Maories, under the charge of a Mr. Hurstfield, an Englishman. Before he was appointed, the settlers had had to manage all boating work for themselves, but now he took everything of the kind in hand, and made a fixed charge for landing all goods. Goods when landed, unless carted away at once, were placed in the government store, a long large building formed of weather-boards, with an iron roof, and situated on the bluff just above Oamaru. When Hurstfield first came, he tried white men for his crew, but he found them such a drunken, disorderly, unmanageable set, that he was compelled at last to engage all Maories, and though they gave him a good deal of trouble at times, he infinitely preferred them to white men as a crew. There was a small Maori "keike" or village, just at the edge of the beach, consisting of a few mud huts, thatched; and in this village his crew lived, so they were always at hand.

They seemed to be full of fun, jumping and capering about in all directions, all giving orders, shouting and screaming at each other. As they neared the shore, when returning from the schooner with the luggage, most of them suddenly sprang out, and getting some on each side of the boat ran it up high and dry with a rush.

Harry and Ernest watched them afterwards sailing paper boats down the Oamaru creek where it runs along the edge of the beach into the sea. As the little boats raced down stream, the natives jumped, clapped



their hands, and laughed like children. This boat crew was employed in fencing, at odd times when there was no vessel to unload. They were fond of playing cards and shirking their work. Ernest often afterwards when on his way across Hurstfield's paddocks to see him on business, noticed these Maories squatted in a circle behind a flax-bush, out of sight of the house, playing cards, chattering, and disputing loudly, frequently with a bottle of brandy by their side, and always with pipes in their mouths. As he passed they would shake their heads at him, and with a knowing wink, pointing at the ditch, would say, "Aha! old fellow, this is better than ditching. "*Utu* (i.e. payment) all the same."

Harry and Ernest soon learnt that they would have to rough it. They had hardly landed when they discovered that they must walk to the home-station, eight miles off, with their blankets (and anything else they needed) on their backs. The distance seemed to them great, fresh as they were from a long sea-voyage and little accustomed to walking or to carrying anything.

As they trudged along, their attention was soon attracted to frequent rustlings in the grass. This was caused by the lizards, which seemed on warm days almost to swarm. Ernest had a great horror of all creeping things; but he quickly got used to these lizards, they were so numerous and so perfectly harmless. They were only a few inches long, but Ernest frequently found a much larger kind in the mountainous country on the ledges and in the crevices of the rocks. The next animals they noticed were the Paradise ducks: birds with splendid plumage. The drake is more gorgeous than the duck, and the duck has always a white head. They were excellent eating, if hung long enough and well cooked: otherwise they were terribly tough. Some of the old settlers used to

say in joke that they were animated by the spirits of departed Maories. This idea probably arose from the fact of their cry being a most unearthly kind of shriek, most unpleasant to hear. The only pair Ernest ever saw tamed belonged to a Mr. Teachemaker. Every morning about four these terrible ducks would mount his chimney-stack and set up the most hideous crying, so that it was impossible to sleep. Teachemaker must undoubtedly often have regretted that he had been so successful in taming them. Another interesting bird they started out of a lagoon,—a swamp-hen with a red bill, called by the natives the Pukeko. The original birds were said to have been imported by the natives when they themselves first visited the island.

Harry and Ernest were so interested in these new sights and scenes that the first six miles of their journey was over before they were aware that they had travelled anything like so far. Hitherto their path had lain over a narrow strip of plain which divided the hills from the beach. Now it began to pass over a "saddle" at the extremity of the hills. When the travellers reached the top of the "saddle" they fully expected to see the home-station. Nothing, however, was to be seen but a large plain, quite bare except the grass that it produced, with other hills in the far distance. Not a house of any kind was in sight. Another mile brought them in full view of the home-station and its small collection of buildings. When they reached it, the first person they met was Mr. J. the manager, a cousin of Mr. P.'s. He received them very kindly and cordially, and, after a few enquiries as to the voyage, &c., showed them their future sleeping abode. It consisted of a rude mud hut, with thatched roof and large open fireplace. Round three sides of it were ranged tiers of bunks, or wooden bedsteads rising one above another; some being fitted with coarse grass mattresses and rather dirty blankets, white and blue

and red. Harry and Ernest were shown two empty bunks, and were told that they could either lie on the boards as they were, or set to work and cut some grass to lie on. This they did immediately, and prepared their beds for the night. Mr. J. himself occupied one of these bunks. Harry and Ernest were rather horrified. The floor was of earth, and seemed eloquent of fleas. The blankets were hardly calculated to inspire Englishmen with confidence. However, our friends were not likely to complain.

Having chosen their mode of life, they inwardly determined to make the best of it. Moreover, they were the more disposed to be silent and content when they were taken to the house (? hovel) prepared for Mr. and Mrs. P. It was hardly any better than the one allotted to the manager and his friends. It was of mud, thatched, and had a clay floor. There was a little furniture of the rudest kind,—two chairs, for instance, a luxury not thought of by the manager, who had to content himself with a seat on the side of his bunk, or on an old packing-case, or a log of wood. Mrs. P., who had even, if possible, less notion of such rough life than Harry and Ernest had, seemed pleased and happy, so they could have no cause to complain.

Between six and seven in the evening they were summoned to tea. Mr. J., two or three run-holders, who had dropped in on their way down or up the country, and Harry and Ernest, formed the party at tea the first evening. The P.s took their meals by themselves in their own hut or wharré. The tea or dining room had a shingled roof, and was made of rough slabs of wood. It stood out on a rise at the edge of the hills about three hundred yards from "the bedroom," which was a little up the Papakaio Gully. At one end of it was a small room used as a sleeping-room by the married couple who did the cooking, firewood-breaking, cow-milking, &c., for the gentlemen of the station.

The working men generally had a man-cook, though married couples were beginning more and more to be employed as they got more numerous. The cooking was done in the dining-room. At tea the conversation ran on sheep, cattle, runs, and exploring parties. One large exploring party was shortly expected, led by a Mr. Reece, or Reiss. This gentleman did obtain some new country that had been either not yet discovered, or not taken up. In fact, many good runs were taken up and stocked after the arrival of our friends. In those early days any one wishing to get a run used to take his pack-horse and all necessary provisions, together with a chart and a compass, and ride on till he had passed all the then occupied land in any particular province of the Middle Island (the whole of which, except certain lands reserved for the Maories, had been purchased by government); then being in an unoccupied country, he examined and marked off on the map any portion from twenty to a hundred thousand or more acres which took his fancy, hurried back to the Head-office in town and asked for a lease of it. In Otago, the custom was to pay twenty pounds down, to put on so many sheep, the number being fixed by the government officials according to the nature of the ground, and to pay yearly for these sheep and their increase at the rate of a halfpenny per head. If the run were a cattle run, or if any horses were kept, the charge was sixpence per head. The lease was for fourteen years. When these leases expired, as several did before Ernest left New Zealand, a considerably higher rate of rent was fixed for those again let out as "runs." Sheep were charged at the rate of sixpence or sevenpence per head, and cattle at two-and-sixpence. Many of these early taken up "runs" being near the coast, and consisting, as Mr. P.'s did, and those about the mouth of the Molyneux and Taieri, of excellent agricultural land, were cut up into blocks and sold by

auction, the minimum price being ten shillings an acre. This price was shortly raised to a pound, and the government price now is about three pounds an acre, though of course the charge varies with the nature of the land.

The Canterbury province was managed differently. Any one could purchase unoccupied land in it anywhere for two pounds an acre. The early run-holders in Otago had a magnificent opportunity of making money by land investments, but some let it slip. Every run-holder had a right to purchase eighty acres for his homestead, and ten-acres for each of his out-stations at the rate of ten shillings an acre. If he paid for the surveying he was allowed on the eighty acres an extra twelve acres, and on the ten acre lots an extra acre and a half. Mr. P. was one of those who let his opportunity slip. One of his runs, for he had two or three, possessed a home-station at Oamaru. This entitled him, according to the above rule, to ninety-two acres of land (in the very centre of what is now a flourishing seaport with railroads running into it from all parts) for forty-six pounds, if he paid for the surveying. He did not apply for it till too late, and it was therefore with the utmost difficulty that he got any compensation at all from government.

Well, to return to our friends. They listened with the utmost eagerness to the conversation about the exploring parties, their likelihood of success, &c., and they longed to join some expedition of the kind. They had no chance, however, partly because they were so young, and partly because they felt it incumbent on them to stay with Mr. P. for a certain time.

Next morning they had an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with all the outbuildings, &c., on the home-station.

Besides the buildings already mentioned there was the men's hut, also of mud: the *futtah*, or store,

weather-boarded, and with a shingled roof. This building was raised about four feet from the ground on piles, which were tinned round to prevent the rats from climbing up. In it were kept sugar, flour, tea, ropes, nails, clothes, boots, tobacco, matches, and in fact everything that could possibly be wanted by those working on the station. When the men or any one wanted any of these articles for *personal use*, that is to say, not for *station use*, the station-holder sold them to them, and thus acted as a sort of shop-keeper, or general retail dealer: although this was a convenience to the men rather than a source of profit to the run-holder.

There was also among the station buildings, a rough stock-yard and shed for the cattle, used for milking purposes and also for branding, &c., and there were sheep-yards of a very primitive make. The garden was large and good, containing a great number of very productive apple-trees, no end of strawberries and other fruits, besides all kinds of vegetables, including asparagus, celery, &c. One or two paddocks were fenced in and cultivated. The general plan was to get a couple of crops of oats off the first two years, and then lay the field down in rye grass and clover, fencing in a new lot to grow oats. In this way on many stations in a few years a considerable quantity of land was under cultivation or well-grassed; though some run-holders made no improvements of the kind. At one time wheat used to be grown on some of the stations, and then the corn had to be ground at home, and each passing guest was handed his modicum of corn to grind to make his share of scones for tea and breakfast: but things were getting a trifle more civilized now, and flour was always to be had in abundance, imported from Australia and Tasmania. The plain in front of the house was about eight miles broad, and twenty or twenty-five miles long, bounded

on three sides by the hills and the river Waitaki, and on the fourth by the sea, where it ended abruptly in sheer cliffs from ten to thirty feet high. The plain itself was rough, fairly well grassed, and frequently broken by what are known as "Maori ovens," that is, large holes, almost round, with sloping sides about four feet deep. Here and there were regular breaks or chasms in it. There was one remarkable chasm at the "Big Hill," four miles from Papakaio. The plain differed from the Oamaru strip in being, with one solitary exception, quite bare of cabbage-trees and flax, with which the Oamaru strip was literally covered. The hills in the neighbourhood were low, but rough, with a good sprinkling of ferns and "tutu,"—the latter a most dangerous plant: destructive to ruminants. Horses will not touch it; but cattle and sheep run to it and devour it greedily, if they have not seen it before, or if they have been kept from it for any time, or if they are hungry, as after being kept in yards for a day. It is especially dangerous after rain. The most deadly kind grows only about two feet high, but some reaches five or six feet in height. At the beginning of each year, when the new plants begin to spring, and are about two inches high, to the casual observer they appear not unlike asparagus heads, but they soon develop and put forth branches and leaves, the more deadly sort being of a dull leaden hue. The roots are wonderfully long, tough, and strong, sometimes even breaking the ploughs. It is only after long and repeated breakings and uprootings that the plant can be destroyed, its roots are so very numerous.

Though everything about the station was in a very rough and primitive state, improvements were in course of being made. For instance, a large weather-board house was being erected for Mr. and Mrs. P. about half-way between the hut in the gully and the "dining-room." The "dining-room" hut was being itself

improved by the addition of a weather-board house of two rooms, intended for a bedroom for Mr. J., and a sitting-room for him and any "cadets" like Harry and Ernest. A large stone house of three rooms was being built, almost two hundred yards further out in the plain, for the men: two wells were being dug: new stock-yards and sheep-yards and wool-shed were in course of erection, and fresh paddocks were being enclosed. So things were not likely to be long in such a "savage" state.

On the first Sunday, Harry and Ernest strolled into the little bush at the head of the Papakaio creek, to see what they could discover. They noticed as they clambered up the banks of the creek that Mr. P. had planted several "blue gum" trees, and that they were growing exceedingly well, some being over fourteen feet high. The bush was full of birds; most noticeable among them was the Tui-Tui, a small dark bird, about the size of a blackbird, with a white ring round its neck: hence often called the Parson bird. Its notes were very sweet and rich. The settlers sometimes tamed it, and taught it to speak. The Kaka, a large brown parrot, and green parrakeets were there in numbers. In the autumn they were sometimes a great pest, devouring everything, and in winter at times they were so plentiful, and could get so little to eat, that it was quite easy to catch them. There were also lots of small birds, like fantails, robins, and wrens. They started a wood-hen among other birds. The wood-hens are small birds, about the size of a partridge, with very long and active legs. They are unable to fly. Dogs are very fond of hunting them. Sometimes they catch them at once, at other times they dodge so successfully that it requires a sharp dog and a long chase to catch them. Directly they hide their heads they fancy themselves safe, and in their security are easily caught. About a pint of rich oil can be extracted from a good



plump wood-hen; and when this is extracted the bird is not bad to eat, if you are hungry. Many people avoid it, because if there is any carrion about it is sure to have fattened on it. The oil is often used by some shepherds, by Germans especially, for butter, and by others for greasing and preserving their boots; though others again declare that it is fearfully destructive to shoe-leather. These last are probably mistaken in their views, having an inveterate dislike for the birds. Ernest often when short of food and in want of a little excitement used to give chevvy to them, catch, cook, and eat them, and use the oil for his boots, without experiencing any ill effects himself, or observing any injury to his boots. It was generally pretty safe to use them: for, though they did feed on carrion, that was only when they could get it, a very rare thing in those days; moreover in that pure air its presence was easily discernible. On talking over the different animals they had seen, they were surprised to learn from Mr. J. that no toads had ever been found in New Zealand, and that frogs were extremely scarce.

The first few days Harry and Ernest were employed in morticing posts for fencing, and in fencing; working with an old hand, Peter Crew. Then they were sent to Oamaru, to help to unload a small vessel that had just come in with timber for the new wool-shed. They walked down. When they got there they found Mr. J., who had ridden on before, ready waiting for them. He provided each with a pair of moleskin trousers and a striped cotton shirt, and told them to leave their other things off for the day. They quickly changed, and then began their part of the work. The mode of landing the timber was this: the sailors fastened many planks together, making them into small rafts; these they lowered over the side, and towed some and paddled others to the shore as far as they would float. As soon as the rafts had grounded, Harry and Ernest had to

dash into the water, mount them, let go the fastenings, and then secure as best they might the scattered and floating planks. The sea was rather rough that day, and as the beach shelves very suddenly they had no very easy and no very safe task. Often just as they commenced loosening the knot, a big wave would wash right over them, raft and all. Mr. J. joined vigorously in the work. He was fully up to everything of the kind, and well able to direct all hands, having in early days been accustomed to a good deal of the same kind of work. About every two hours he went round with a bottle of rum, giving each hand a small "nip," as it was called. Harry took his share, but Ernest did not like spirits, and found he got on equally well or better without them. At twelve o'clock they "knocked off" for dinner, which they ate as they were, in their wet clothes. The smokers then took a pipe, but Harry and Ernest went on with their work. Once or twice, venturing too far, they almost got carried away, for, though the water was not deep, the beach was so steep and the shingle afforded so uncertain a footing that even in the shallowest water as the waves retired it was almost impossible to keep one's feet. By the evening they had got all the timber in, and after changing and taking tea they walked back to Papakaio.

Mr. J. in a few days easily discovered that Harry was the most useful assistant, and consequently he was chiefly employed about the home-station in fencing, &c. Ernest was sent to an out-station, about eight miles off. This out-station was, like the home-station, named after the creek on which it stood; the creek was the Waikoura. Like many other creeks it ran in a fair-sized stream as it left the hills, forming several large lagoons, but before it got a mile out in the plain nothing whatever could be seen of it, the bed then running underground. At one point, about three hundred yards from the hut, it struck against the ridges on its right, and

formed a very deep and clear pool, in which Ernest often bathed, and out of which he managed to catch cray-fish, though in no large quantities. His work at the Waikoura was to be the setting up of sheep-yards, and the formation of a wash-pool and suitable landing place for the sheep. Of course in this work he played a very secondary part, being merely one of a number of assistants, though at first he was sent by himself to commence.

The wool had generally been sent to England in the grease, but this year Mr. J. wanted to try washing the sheep before shearing. Ernest was sent with a man, a horse and a cart, blankets, hurdles, &c. The journey occupied about two hours and a half: on a level plain the whole way, the road presented no obstacles. The greater part of the way there was simply a bridle track.

Waikoura had been represented to Ernest as a great advance in civilization upon Papakaio. Architecture was evidently on the move in New Zealand; at least as the settlers in those districts thought. The men on the station had informed Ernest that there was a really good house there, *almost* finished. Anderson, another cadet, who had reached New Zealand about a fortnight before Harry and Ernest, and who had had some experience in carpentering, was to follow Ernest in a few days to put the *finishing touches*. Alas for Ernest's dreams of a comfortable house! (not that he really cared much for it, or thought much about it; for so long as he got cleanliness he rather enjoyed the roughness than not), a world of meaning was contained in those few words, "*almost*," "*finishing touches*."

Arrived at the house, Ernest had not time at first to examine it. He and the man, who wanted to get home before dark, were busy unloading the dray. Off went the blankets on the ground. The dray was then moved on to the place where the hurdles were to be set up, and the hurdles were then removed and piled

up on the ground. No sooner was the dray quite unloaded, than the man, "Old Peter Crew," as he was called, moved briskly off homewards and left Ernest to wend his way to his new quarters, and to ruminate on his new position. He found his blankets, flour, tea, &c., on the ground where they had been flung from off the top of the dray at first, in front of a good-sized substantial cob-walled house of three rooms; one storey, of course: no houses at that time in Otago were of more than one storey. Good walls: so far so good: but walls do not constitute a finished or even a nearly finished house. These walls had sundry holes or openings in them in suitable places for doors and windows, but Ernest looked in vain for both. There were none, and there was nothing to act as a substitute for them. Moreover, only half the roof was on. The rafters were up, certainly, and so was the ridge-pole, but rafters and ridge-pole are no protection against rain and wind. The sleeping apartment only was covered. This was about fourteen feet by twelve, and contained the usual tiers of "bunks" to accommodate about fifteen men, as it was intended to be used during sheep-washing time. There were no mattresses in any, except one which the shepherd who occupied the *house* (?) had got for himself. Ernest's first work was to cut sufficient grass to lie on. By the time that he had accomplished this task, the shepherd made his appearance. He was a tall thin old man, who had done a great deal of shepherding in Australia. He found the New Zealand work very different, and did not like it so well. When Ernest knew more about him, he noticed that he was always complaining of the cold New Zealand winds, and that too at times when the warm, or, as Ernest considered it, hot north-west wind was blowing. The old fellow's name was Isaacs. He begged Ernest at once to light the fire, as he felt very unwell, having only that morning recovered from the

effects of eating "tutu" berries. The foolish old man had not believed that it would affect him, so he ate rather freely of them. The "tutu" had the same effect on him as it has on cattle. It made him foam at the mouth, gnash his teeth, and run and jump about wildly. He said that it was fortunate that he had already noticed its powers in the case of sheep, for directly he felt it beginning to work on him, he bled himself, and so greatly mitigated its effect, and no doubt saved his life. Sheep or cattle seldom thoroughly recover from it: they are generally apparently affected in the brain by it, for they wander alone, after all its physical effects seem to have passed away, and nothing will induce them to join their fellows. Ernest in after years saw as many as three hundred killed in one night by it, and it was not at all an unusual thing for the best bullocks and sometimes a whole team to be carried off in one night. Some parts of the country had no "tutu" at all: other parts were covered with it. In the case of bullocks unyoked for the night, the greatest safeguard against it was to drive them straight to the water and let them take a hearty draught before they ate anything. When they were "tutu'd" the only cures were either to bleed them or to put ammonia on the tip of the tongue. Sheep were generally bled in the eye-vein, bullocks under the tail, because it was dangerous to get in front of them, since they were perfectly mad under the influence of the "tutu." Sheep could easily be bled, but the only chance of bleeding bullocks was when they were standing shivering with their legs stretched out stiff, the foam dropping from the mouth, in the intervals previous to their jumping and running fits. If killed by the "tutu," as they inevitably would be unless bled, they swelled out to an enormous size. On the whole, then, this plant was a terrible scourge to those on whose land it existed, and to all who happened

to be obliged to drive stock through where it grew. Still some settlers made a little use of it. It made tolerably good wine, if the juice were well pressed out of the berries, and care were taken to prevent any seeds getting into the liquid. The seeds appeared to contain all the hurtful qualities. Well, it is easy to imagine that after this poor old shepherd had been in the morning jumping about under the effects of this potent plant, and since then had been endeavouring to get through his day's work, he was by no means fit for much, and was only too glad to have Ernest as a companion and assistant. Ernest quickly lighted a fire and prepared the tea. There were some loaves ready baked, and some boiled mutton, so all he had to do was to boil some potatoes, and some water for the tea. Taking the potatoes in a bowl to the creek in one hand and a kettle in the other, he first filled the kettle, and then washed out the potatoes and brought them back in fresh clean water to boil them. When the kettle began to boil, Isaacs noticed that Ernest seemed to be looking about for something, and immediately guessed what it was.

"Oh," said he, laughing, "you're looking for the teapot, are you, mate? You need not trouble yourself, we don't use such things out here; put the tea into the kettle."

"How much shall I put in?"

"Oh, take a handful out of the bag."

Ernest did as he was directed, and as soon as the tea was drawn, sat down on the side of one of the bunks to do justice to it and the meat. There was only one pannikin between the two, so they drank out of it by turns. Notwithstanding these little drawbacks, Ernest enjoyed his tea very much, and the shepherd seemed better and more cheerful after his. A very few days of New Zealand life had shown Ernest that all class distinctions must be dropped; and though at first a

little surprised at being treated merely as an equal by such men as Crew and Isaacs, he did not take it to heart, for he had wisdom enough to perceive of how little value deference was unless it came from the heart. He had a long and interesting chat with Isaacs after they had both demolished the tea and done considerable execution among the scones and the beautiful mealy potatoes, over the consumption of which also they had been by no means silent. They then turned in for the night. Ernest liked his grass bed as well as any he had ever had in England, though he felt it rather strange to be sleeping in a house unfinished, without doors or windows, miles away from any other habitation.

The next morning, getting up early, he examined the country about the hut. In front he had almost the same view as from Papakaio. On following the creek up, and indeed close alongside of the house, he noticed a broad-bladed reed growing in the swampy ground. This reed was about half-an-inch or an inch wide, and grew out of the water from one to four or five feet. Intermixed with the flat-bladed stems were some round and hard, about the size and thickness of an ordinary walkingstick, but brittle and easily broken. On the top of this stick or stalk was a somewhat thicker outgrowth of a fluffy substance, very close. This substance when rubbed or broken apart, formed an excellent stuffing for pillows and beds, and for pillows was frequently used. The name of this reed was "Raupo." The natives use it for several purposes. They build huts of it, they thatch with it, and make "mogueys" of it. The "mogueys" are a kind of raft formed of great bundles of raupo tied together with flax. They are used simply for descending the rapid streams. It would be impossible to take them up stream, and it would not be worth while to carry them up by land, and moreover, they soon rot away. It is a very pretty sight to watch

the natives guiding them down the stream. They seem to manage them so skilfully with their small paddles. In the Waikoura, and in most other creeks, there was a kind of grass which Ernest often found a great nuisance. It grew from six inches to a foot high, was about an eighth or a quarter of an inch wide, and tapered away towards the head to a fine point. If the hand chanced to rub against its edge ever so lightly it made a cut in the skin like a knife would, only the impression was much more painful and stinging.

On going up the creek to the bush he started some wood-pigeons. They were very pretty birds. In the North the natives make very beautiful and skilfully wrought robes from them. Ernest afterwards heard from Walker, a friend of his, who had travelled all over New Zealand, that in some parts there is another species of pigeon called a Huia. A very rare bird, though, smaller than the pigeon, all black except the wattles, which are orange. It has also a white stripe across the tip of the tail, and the female has a finely curved bill. Besides the Pukeko, Ernest found another bird in the lagoons very like the Pukeko in shape and size, but with a great deal of white in its plumage. Both this bird and the Pukeko were generally called moor-hens.

It was while working by the side of this creek that Ernest first began to notice the insects of New Zealand. he soon discovered that there was no end to them. The greatest troubles to him were the sand-flies and the blue-bottles. The blue-bottle flies would blow anything almost: socks, blankets, especially if new, shoes, trousers: in fact hardly anything seemed to escape them. One very curious thing is that they never touch a live sheep, however badly it may be cut. In Australia, the very contrary is the case. The greatest difficulty is there experienced in preventing them from blowing live sheep if cut with the shears, or



if they have any sore. The plan adopted, both there and in New Zealand, if a sheep should by accident be cut in shearing, as often happens, is to put some Stockholm tar on the wound at once. This not only effectually prevents the flies from attacking the sheep, but also speedily cures the wound. The shearers often, unless they have inflicted a very bad cut, endeavour to pass a cut by, or forget to call attention to it; and consequently it is very fortunate in New Zealand, and especially in the mountainous parts where the sheep run almost wild, that the blow-flies do not touch them, for many escape without being anointed with the healing tar.

Besides these two troublesome kinds of insects, there are two others quite peculiar to New Zealand, and which, though not found where Ernest was living at this time, deserve some notice. One, the "Weta," takes up its abode in decayed trees: its appearance is anything but prepossessing, it might even be denominated *frightful*. It measures about fifteen inches, feelers and all. The natives eat the grub and seem to enjoy it thoroughly. The other, on which also the natives feed, is the vegetating caterpillar; a parasitical fungus two or three inches long grows from its head, and finally destroys the insect, though it keeps its form.

After strolling about in the bush some little time, Ernest returned to the hut, where he found the shepherd Isaacs dressed, the potatoes boiled, and the kettle calling loudly for the tea.

Breakfast finished, Ernest set to work putting up the hurdles for the sheep-yards; and this work, together with the digging deeper and widening the pool intended for washing, occupied him for the next few days. Then a man named Quarrie, a tall, gaunt Manx man, fiery and impetuous, but a good and steady worker, and on the whole a thoroughly good, downright man, came out to assist, as well as the other cadet,

Anderson. Anderson and Quarrie were not long in getting the shingles on the remainder of the roof, and putting in the doors and windows. One afternoon, just as they were finishing, Harry rode over, and, before getting off his horse, cast a critical eye over the work. Boy as he was, he was sharp, and knew good from bad carpentering when he saw it. He was not at all likely to refrain from expressing his opinion. He was good nature itself, and probably that was the reason he could not bear to see *bad* work.

"Halloa!" he cried to Anderson, "what kind of work do you call that?"

"Shingling," to be sure, roughly replied Anderson. "Can't you use your eyes?"

"That is just what I am doing, and I should call your work not shingling, but bungling," answered Harry, "for I can't look along it without squinting. Just see how badly you have put on the third row, not half-a-dozen straight out of the lot; and moreover, the shingles do not lap sufficiently. The rain will pour through that roof as if it were a sieve."

"What do you know about work? You hold your tongue, get off your horse, and hand us up a few more bundles of shingles," shouted Quarrie, half angry, half amused, for he hardly believed Harry to be in earnest, and besides did not consider that he knew anything about it. Then he added, "Make more use of your hands and less of your tongue."

"I shall be happy to use both for your advantage," said Harry, good humouredly, jumping off his horse and running up the ladder with a couple of bundles of shingles. He then removed the saddle and bridle from his horse, and tethered it carefully in a nice spot where there was plenty of fresh grass, and afterwards joined the others in their work. An hour or two later Mr. J. rode up to examine the work, and to do a little personally. Eleven years of colonial life had taught

him, active-minded and active-bodied man as he was, a great deal. No kind of work came amiss to him, and he was an excellent judge of the work of others, and had a keen eye for their defects as well as their good points. He was not long in detecting the flaw in the work : and to Anderson's and Quarrie's discomfort and annoyance, but to Harry's glee, he had the shingles all taken off in the offending row and properly replaced. This involved a lot of additional work, and poor Anderson and Quarrie had to work on an hour or more beyond the usual tea-hour to get the roof finished. Harry, however, made no remark, pleased as he was. The truth of his remarks had been shown, and that was all he wished : the result being good instead of bad work : he rode home in a very contented frame of mind with Mr. J., with whom he was rather a favourite. Anderson and Quarrie were ordered to return to the home-station the next day, so Ernest was again left alone with the shepherd, Isaacs, who had, of course, to be away from the house most of the day.

Towards three the next afternoon, as he was resting, after a hard spell at digging, lying on the grass, reading and learning by rote some of Campbell's poetry, choosing out those little pieces which struck his fancy most, he suddenly heard a sound of approaching steps and, looking up, saw coming straight towards the hut from across the plain, five or six natives walking in single file, each with an American axe on his shoulder. Several large dogs too accompanied them. With the exception of his first two brief acquaintances with the Maori boat-crew, first on his landing himself, and secondly on his landing the timber, Ernest had never seen any natives before. His imagination, however, had been deeply impressed by a tale which Mr. J. had told him of one of his friends in the early days having been left alone, and having gone mad through fear of the wild natives, who were supposed to live on the West

Coast. Ernest afterwards found that there were no natives on the West Coast of Otago, but at that time many people believed that there were. Moreover, he did not know that there was a small Maori keike or village about three miles and a half from the Waikoura in the Waitaki river bed. Moreover, when at home, his delight had been to read such tales as "The Settlers," and the "Last of the Mohicans," and many other books of the same kind, in which dreadful accounts are given of the scalping and the carrying off into captivity of people. Then he knew nothing much of their character and habits. At seventeen, too, a boy is much more likely to think of these wild accounts when suddenly surprised, as Ernest was then, than of what was most likely and reasonable. At once he sprang to his feet in terror and astonishment. His first impulse was to seize the shepherd's wood-axe and retire into the hut: but on second thoughts, seeing the number of the natives, the hopelessness of his position in case they should use violence, and recollecting that the natives were on friendly terms, he determined to go forward and meet them, especially as a word of greeting then flashed across his remembrance. He stepped boldly and leisurely forward, with hands in his pockets, and saluted the leading Maori with "Tenakoui," "Good-day," and was delighted to meet a ready response. The Maories to his surprise could chatter broken English freely. They informed him that they were going up to the Waikoura bush to cut firewood for their "keike." They chatted pleasantly for some time, and then went on to the bush, which was only about half-a-mile from the house up the gully. Ernest saw no more of them at that time, but he often afterwards visited their "keike." It consisted of several mud huts thatched: the walls were very low, and the chimney built so as to allow as much smoke as possible to enter and remain in the hut: every one who

knows what a painful thing smoke from a wood-fire is, and how it makes the eyes smart, will see how delightful one of these retreats must have been to live in. The natives in and about these huts seemed very dirty, and the huts themselves were built right in the river-bed\* though the soil was fortunately dry, consisting of shingle and sand. There were also a few other huts, round, large at the bottom, but ending in a point at the top. These were made of raupo entirely, fastened together with flax. They had no chimney, and only one small hole through which the inmates had to go on all fours to enter. The cooking was generally done outside; three sticks fastened together at the top formed a kind of stand to hold the pot, which was hung from them by a bit of flax. These last dwellings always reminded Ernest of pigstyes: but they must have been very convenient for these few Maories who frequently moved up and down the river, and therefore preferred such easily erected dwellings.

December had now arrived. The Waikoura house and washpools were quite finished: the married shepherd installed: and the sheep-washing commenced. Ernest found this latter rather rough and wet work; still on the whole he enjoyed it, but he disliked the meals, that is, not the food (for that was always very good, though plain) but the manner of taking it. For instance, there were only four or five pannikins between a dozen or fourteen men.

With the exception of Mr. J. the sheep-washers were all ordinary working men. Even this would not have mattered, but some of them were not very clean, and all indulged in smoking, a habit detestable to Ernest. It was not, therefore, pleasant to have to share a pannikin of tea, that is, to drink out of the same

\* *River-bed.* The Waitaki like many other New Zealand rivers is bordered on each side throughout its course by steep banks, and the whole space of ground thus hemmed in by the bauks is generally termed loosely "the bed," though seldom, if ever, entirely covered by the river.

pannikin with two or three others, especially if one, as was often the case, happened to be a chewer, as well as a smoker, of that to Ernest terrible, air-spoiling, clothes-defiling nuisance, tobacco. However, his feeling of disgust soon wore off: habit, in this case at any rate, becoming second nature: though Ernest never got reconciled to the dirt. Mr. J. used to ride over to the sheep-washing every morning and ride back in the evening to the home-station. One day he brought an extra horse saddled and bridled. In the evening he told Ernest he wanted him to ride back with him, as he had work for him at home. On the way he informed him that news had come of the death of a very dear relation of Ernest's, and he thought he might like to read his letter at home. This news was a bitter blow to Ernest:—his favourite relative gone. Certainly he had been told to expect it before he left, but boys do not and in most cases cannot realize these things. On reaching the home-station Mr. J. handed him his letter and left him to read it by himself. For more than two hours Ernest gave himself up to his grief and to reading over and over again the account of his favourite's end. Her last words had been to call for him. At length Mr. J. broke in upon his grief, speaking kindly to him and urging him to join him at the tea-table. Poor Ernest went, but could not eat anything, and continued ill and sleepless all night. At daybreak he got up, dressed, and strayed over the hills for a couple of hours enjoying the breeze and thinking of all his home-friends. He came back much refreshed and in better spirits. Still for many days he lost all his usual cheerfulness: but boyish spirits, time, and the kindness of Harry and Mr. J. prevailed, and he soon went about his work as usual. During this time Mr. J. gave him a good deal of riding to do, helping to get in cattle, going to out-stations, &c. This Ernest soon began to enjoy very much. Up to this time he had

been of very little use on the station, but Harry's example had incited him to try his utmost to get into the work, and he was beginning to understand it and to show himself a reliable and active hand.

One day he was sent on foot to Oamaru, to give an order at Trail's store and to see to some things in the woolshed. He thought he would try walking by the beach; so when he got to the "Saddle," he struck right across the flat through the long grass, cabbage-trees, and flax. When he got to the edge of the plain he still found that he had to keep to it for some little distance, since it was not easy to get down the clay cliffs to the shingly beach below. He started lots of birds, and one or two stray sheep, which seemed to have a particular fancy for most unsafe looking points jutting out from the rest of the land. The sea-birds seemed to be of almost endless variety, some of them very tame. At length he came to a large gap in the land with very broken sides. This place he afterwards found formed the mouth of the "Boundary Creek," a small creek used for washing the sheep, and especially for dipping them in tobacco when scab got among them. Down this break he scrambled, and after ferreting about and finding one or two eggs and some young birds, he got on to the beach. The shingle was very tiresome to walk on, the feet sinking deeply into it, and he was heartily glad when, as he got near Oamaru, the cliffs lowered sufficiently to enable him to clamber up on the hard grassy ground again. However, he was fully occupied the whole time he was on the shingle, looking at so much that was strange to him. The birds alone took up a good deal of his attention; there were one or two albatross, plenty of Mother Carey's chicken, and a bird peculiar to New Zealand, the mutton bird, which the natives kill and preserve in its own oil. Then he noticed a lot of porpoises out at sea, and presently a whale began to

spout. Of course he had seen several whales and any number of porpoises during the voyage, but he had never before seen any so close to the land. He frequently saw both these kinds of fish while riding to Oamaru, but he was never lucky enough to catch sight of either a seal or a dolphin, though there are several species of both off the coast of New Zealand.

Oamaru at this time, as far as buildings were concerned, was made up of one or two weather-board houses which are easily enumerated. First on the bluff was the government store already mentioned. Then away back from the sea, on the flat near the edge of the hills was the house of the government man, Mr. Hurstfield. In front of this, nearer the sea a good piece, and situated on the edge of what was afterwards laid out as the main street, was a small building containing about four bedrooms or half-a-dozen at most, with one large dining-room. This was the principal hotel,—the run-holders' hotel. About fifty yards behind this was a small one-roomed mud hut. This was Trail's and Mr. P.'s mud-wharré, used by both (and, before the hotel existed, by all comers) as an eating-house. A short distance in front of this, for it was side on to the chief hotel, lay the men's hotel,—the "bullock-drivers' house," as it was often denominated. In the same line with the chief hotel was a large store kept by Messrs. Trail and Roxby, two very nice gentlemanly men, who seemed to prefer that life to sheep-farming. Then there were four or five mud Maori huts used by the boat crew right down on the very edge of the beach, and finally some few hundred yards nearer Papakaio was a weather-board house belonging to a chemist and general store-keeper, Francis. These buildings at that time constituted the whole of the town of Oamaru. Soon afterwards other houses began to be erected: the doctor's for instance, and Sumpter's the estate-agent, and many more. Now



it is a thriving town, and trains run regularly to it from all parts.

Shortly after this shearing began. This was the last year Mr. P. sheared at Oamaru. He afterwards built a capital wool-shed at Papakaio, between the station and Crusoe cliffs, where Mrs. V. lived.

Ernest was despatched to the shearing. His work was to pick up fleeces, clear them of dirty pieces, roll them, and hand them to the packer. It required some little skill to pick up a fleece properly so as to be able in an instant to fling it out quite flat on the table ready for inspection and rolling. Ernest had a good instructor in Mr. J., and he and Harry soon learnt their work. The wool was packed in bales. The bales were placed in an oblong box made to the right size. To keep the bale open and properly stretched, screws fastened it to the sides of this oblong box. The packer placed the fleeces neatly in the bottom of the bale into which he himself first got, and then he trod them in, firmly ramming them down also with a spade to press them as closely as possible. Each bale as it was packed was sewn up and rolled out of the box ready for shipment: but first it was marked with the owner's brand, and numbered in the order of its packing, locks, lamb's-wool, washed and greasy being all separately marked. This marking was done by means of plates of tin, with the proper letters and figures cut out on them. These were placed on the bales, and the open spaces were then merely painted over with ink. The ink was bought in powder packets and mixed as required in vinegar.

In those early days there were no screw presses in New Zealand. It was also most difficult to get shearers. The price that year for shearing was twenty-five shillings per hundred. A very medley lot of shearers were secured by Mr. J.—Maories, sailors, and one or two regular shearers. One of the Maories, Kapiti, who probably took his name from the Island of

Kapiti, opposite the mouth of the Waikanae, off the coast of Wellington,—an island of steep hills, once a famous stronghold of the natives,—was a fair shearer, getting through about fifty wethers a day; but the others were very poor hands, none doing more than five-and-thirty, and one old man only doing nine. Ernest was greatly amused watching him. Each time he opened his shears he opened his mouth (it was a pretty big one) wide, shewing all his teeth, and as he closed his shears he closed his mouth, making a hideous grimace, and twisting his tattooed face into every possible form. Every now and then some of the sailors could not help stopping in their work to look and to laugh at him: and as for Harry and Ernest, they were in fits of laughter the greater part of the day.

Ernest quickly learnt to be rapid in picking up a fleece neatly, cleaning it of dirty locks, and rolling it neatly and tightly. A few days at this work, and then he was told to drive a flock of shorn wethers to the home-station, and to watch them on the plain. There were about three-hundred in all. This watching of the sheep and keeping them together was called "tailing." Ernest thought it very miserable work: very lazy too, at least at first. Starting from the wool-shed, he got on very well the first quarter of a mile as the sheep ran straight along the track: but they soon began to feed, and then Ernest first experienced the pleasures of sheep-driving without a dog. Talk about pigs! they are nothing to sheep. If a single sheep gets away from its fellows and determines to go one way, nothing on earth will turn it. The only way is to carry it neck and crop to where you want it to be. Ernest was not so much put to it as that in this case, but he had to keep running backwards and forwards from side to side of the sheep, shouting and rattling a bunch of flax to frighten them together as much as possible. He was fairly tired out when he got to the station. The next

two days the sheep fed about near the station and kept well together of their own accord, so that Ernest had literally nothing to do but walk about or lie down and watch them, the heat disinclining them from straying far. The third day, however, a breeze sprung up and the sheep began to stray, and not all in the same direction: some went one way, some another. The more he tried to keep them together and the more he drove the leaders back to the rest, the more they seemed determined to get free. He wanted them to spread well so as to have every opportunity of feeding, for Mr. J. had pointed out to him that the more freedom (in moderation) he gave them, the easier they would be able to fill themselves, and consequently the quieter they would be. The running propensities of his charges compelled him to be on his legs walking and sometimes running the whole of the day. When evening came, as he could by no means induce them to go near the yards, he was at length obliged to leave them and ask the aid of one of the men at the station, Fricker, the son of the married couple, who had a cattle dog. Fricker cheerfully helped him, being delighted to shew the "new chum" (as each new comer is called) how to work a cattle dog. After penning the sheep, he told Ernest that he ought to get Mr. J. to give him a dog, and he mentioned a station dog which was used for general purposes, and which no one was then employing. Ernest asked Mr. J.; and Mr. J., with a few cautions as to not using the dog too much or too freely and driving the sheep about too much, at length consented to his having it. The next day Ernest marched proudly out leading his dog, "Wave," by a piece of rope, patting and fondling her to win her good-will. For some time the sheep fed quite quietly, just as if they knew that there was a dog near to fetch them back if they should stray too far; but their good behaviour did not last long. They soon began spread-

ing in all directions, but chiefly right away out in the plain towards the river-bed. Ernest did not trouble himself much about them for two reasons: first because he believed that the more they spread in the early part of the day, the less likely they would be to wander far eventually, and the sooner they would rest. The second reason was, that having found Fricker so useful a help the night before, he felt that he could rely on him again at a pinch. But he did not know newly-shorn New Zealand wethers. They soon showed him that they were equal to going, and intended to go any distance they chose, and that they chose to go a good long distance that day. Their numbers had increased, for daily as they were shorn additional sheep were added to his flock, and he now had over a thousand. Moreover, they were not all of the same mind: some seemed inclined to visit the river-bed, which lay at the far side of the plain from the house, and near the Canterbury hills; others seemed to fancy the hills at the foot of which the house was situated, and others were resolved to make for the sea-beach, doubtless thinking that they were in a proper condition for a bathe. Ernest now began to get very nervous: he had allowed the sheep to get too far astray for it to be possible for him to walk them together himself: some were three miles out in the plain and others were close under the hills. He had been making great friends with "Wave," but he was still afraid to try her, for fear that instead of helping him she might run away. He endeavoured to drive those that were making for the hills, so that they should go out into the plain towards the others. What was his dismay to find that he was only separating them, and that they were quietly running round and past him in two divisions. At length he was fain to try "Wave." With a word of encouragement he let her go. To his great delight she brought the truants together, and headed them

down the plain towards the others. The leaders of these others were now nearly four miles out, and Ernest saw that if he did not make haste he would lose them altogether, and might not get back before night, for he had been a long time contending with those which had been making for the hills. However, he was a good walker and, starting off at a rapid pace, in less than an hour he had come near enough to the leaders to be able to send "Wave," who now followed him cheerfully without rope, after them. Away she went and brought them back in double quick time to where he was standing. He then determined by quietly dogging them to *make* them feed back towards the yards, because he did not wish to drive them all the way without letting them feed. Hardly had he begun to carry out his plan when he caught sight of a huge cloud of dust rising in the plain, and at the same time he heard a thudding noise like the tramp of many horses. This noise seemed to proceed from the cloud of dust. He was not left long in uncertainty as to what it was. The cloud swiftly approached him, and as it approached the noise grew louder and louder. In a few minutes he was able to distinguish moving forms amid the dust, and then the horns of animals. This was the cause of the dust. About three hundred head of wild cattle were coming down on him at a swift trot. What was he to do? There was no shelter or protection of any kind near. He was alone in the centre of a large plain, only accompanied by a little sheep-dog! The cattle steadily advanced till they got within about twenty yards of him. Then they ran round him forming a complete circle, pressing and crowding upon one another, their horns making a terrible rattling. Just imagine his position. A boy, only just seventeen, in the midst of a large open plain surrounded by three hundred or more wild cattle, which seemed determined to trample over him. He was in dreadful fear; but

his courage and presence of mind did not entirely desert him. He remembered an account in "Verdant Green" of how wild cattle had been frightened by a shrill whistle. He had no whistle, but he made a furious run towards the cattle, setting the little dog on them and shouting at the top of his voice. They all at once turned tail and galloped off. How thankful he was, and how glad to get the sheep safely into the yards, you may well imagine. He did not know it then, but the truth was they always run wildly after dogs, though afraid of them, and it was chiefly his little dog "Wave" which had attracted their attention, though these wild cattle, if they see a man on foot, will often run after him even if they are a mile away: curiosity no doubt prompting them, for they never do any harm. Ernest found out afterwards that these cattle did not all belong to Mr. P., but a great number of them belonged to a Mr. Macfarlane, and Mr. P. had allowed him to leave them for a few weeks to rest before proceeding on their journey up country.

After this Ernest used to let his sheep spread out well, but always made them go one way and generally towards the river bed, but never into it, on account of the "tutu." Sometimes they used to feed out close to the bed, and then Ernest would wander along by the river side. One day he dropped on a petrified log of wood. It was a good sized tree-branch about ten feet long. On breaking off bits he found they formed excellent stones for sharpening knives. He then remembered that he had been told either by Captain Fritz or some other old New Zealander whom he had met, that there were plenty of curiosities of a similar kind in the different river-beds of New Zealand, and that in the north of Canterbury at the mouth of the rivers were to be found remains of animals which measured nineteen or twenty feet, like crocodiles or alligators. Long before the shearing was finished

Ernest was heartily tired of the "tailing." It was such slow lazy work now that he had the dog to do any extra running for him, and had got accustomed to the way of managing the sheep well. He was therefore well pleased when one morning Mr. J. asked him and Harry and Anderson, whether they would like to camp out for a few weeks, as he wanted to form a new out-station on the banks of a stream called the Waireka, about fourteen miles in a straight line from the home-station, but about eighteen by the road. All three were delighted with the idea. For some reason, whether to try them, or not, I do not know, but Mr. J. left the whole arrangement of making preparations for the journey and the stay in their hands, merely telling them that they could use a small cart and a large bony horse called "Farmer." They had to pass through Oamaru. It was fully eleven o'clock in the morning before they considered themselves ready to start. Anderson, as the eldest, was to drive. They started off in high spirits, and in about two hours reached Oamaru. The pangs of hunger now admonished them that the dinner hour had come. Accordingly they loosed "Old Farmer" from the cart, tethered him out, and went to Trail's little wharré to dinner. Trail was a tall thin gentlemanly man of about forty who kept a large store, and who also either for the convenience of, or in conjunction with Mr. P. and a few other friends used to keep a black cook in the mud wharré already mentioned. All our friends knew about the matter was that they always seemed welcome there, and the black cook always had a good supply of meat and "dough-boys" on hand excellently done, and would have been distressed if they had turned into the hotel. They never had to pay anything. Mealy potatoes, mutton, and dough-boys seemed obtainable there by all, gratis. Old "Tom" was always pleased to see any "cadets." Harry was an especial favourite of his, and

he grinned from ear to ear in welcome as he saw the three approaching.

"Going to camp out?" he cried.

"Yes," said Harry triumphantly, "we have everything neatly packed on the cart, and we expect to run our tent up by six o'clock."

"You will have to take to smoking out there. You and Mr. Ernest had better practise to-day. Here is my old clay; I can recommend it for a good old pipe, and no one can say it is not coloured," and he handed it to Ernest. Ernest took it into his hands, turned it over and over dubiously; the colour, he thought, was there sure enough, the pipe being as black as Tom's face (and he was a regular negro); but as to putting such an article into his mouth that was another thing. However, he had heard a great deal about the virtues of tobacco, its solacing effects, &c., &c., so he thought it would be no harm at all events to try. He took the pipe in his mouth and blew one or two whiffs, but found it so extremely disagreeable that he vowed he would never try again, and he never did. Harry was more successful, and was pleased, or pretended to be, with the first few whiffs he took. Anderson was an old smoker, having learnt in Jamaica, and he looked on at his younger comrades with a quiet and self-satisfied smile, as they attempted to smoke; now and then he would burst into a loud guffaw when either of them pulled a wry face. "Tom" soon had some boiled mutton, dough-boys, smoking hot mealy potatoes, and tea on the table, a rough wooden shelf fixed against the wall. The cadets did justice to the viands provided, and the inner man being well satisfied (or, to use Homer's words, "having taken away the desire of eating and drinking"), they became eager to proceed on their journey. "Farmer" was soon harnessed, and away they went. Immediately after leaving the wharré they had to surmount a hill, steep, but low.



Anderson did not think "Old Farmer" (who had been a powerful horse but, was now decidedly "screwed"), could take the cart up the hill with its present load. Harry thought he could, under his skilful management and driving, so he took the reins from Anderson and asked him and Ernest to stand at the back of the cart, one on each side to help by pushing. "Farmer" made a successful rush up the first part of the hill; but unfortunately while Harry was endeavouring to turn him sideways on to the hill, so as to give him a rest and to work him up gradually, he stepped into a small hole and fell, the weight of the cart dragging him backwards. Anderson and Ernest were no use then behind. They frantically endeavoured to stop the descent of the cart by putting a large ram's horn (possibly the head-gear of the animal, part of which they had just eaten under the firm persuasion that it was a wether, at any rate it was suspiciously near the gallows belonging to the wharré) the only thing they could lay their hands on at the moment, under the wheel. Of course it was shattered, and down the cart went to the bottom of the hill. Luckily it was smooth and grassy, and the descent short: so "Old Farmer" was not much the worse for it. Anderson was, when once he had ascertained that all was right, really delighted because Harry had failed, where he had not ventured. He coolly sat down to finish his pipe and to smile derisively at Harry, who for a time was very angry, though his good-humour soon returned, and when he and Ernest had got "Old Farmer" on his legs again, and found that he was not hurt a bit, they sat down and indulged in a hearty laugh. Then they took a bag of potatoes out of the cart, and one or two other heavy articles, and, with the help of the old black cook, carried them to the top of the hill. They then harnessed "Old Farmer" and got him up to the top of the hill with the cart and the remainder of the things, and loaded up afresh. "Old

Tom " had been really in high glee at the discomfiture of his young friends, though he did his best to assist them. Just as they were starting, he walked mysteriously up to Harry and said,—

" You have everything now ?"

" Oh yes," said Harry, " thank you ; and we are much obliged to you for your help. But what on earth are you looking so knowing about ?"

" You have everything, eh ? You don't want no flour, then ?"

" Halloa, Anderson ! what a muff you are !" cried Harry, " I thought you had looked after everything of that kind."

Anderson looked a little put out, but quietly replied, " Oh, I forgot it."

" Forgot ! !" said Harry. " What are we to do now ? It is close on four o'clock and we have ten miles to go yet."

" Well," said Anderson, " we will toss up who is to go on with the cart."

" All right," said Harry, " though I think it is only right that you should go back for the flour."

The lot fell to Harry, and away he went to Trail's store for twenty pounds of flour.

Anderson and Ernest went on slowly with the cart. They soon lost all traces of a road of any kind, and wandered over the hills till six o'clock. Not seeing the place by the Waireka, described to them by Mr. J., or the Waireka itself, or any other creek, they thought it wisest to encamp and wait for Harry, putting up a signal on the highest point at hand so that he should know where to find them. Choosing a sheltered gully where there were several cabbage trees, and a swampy raupo creek (with no perceptible water), which appeared to lead down into a larger swampy creek some twenty yards broad, judging by the raupo, and where they thought they would be sure to get some water,

they encamped. The larger creek ran in a small valley separating the range of low hills on which they were, from a range of rather higher hills which they afterwards found looked down on Mr. Atkinson's run. They quickly unharnessed and tethered out "Old Farmer," pitched the tent and lighted a fire. The next thing was to get water. They searched down both creeks for more than half-a-mile; not a drop of running water appeared, though the whole bed where it might have been expected was wet and spongy. In despair they dug a hole with their hands at the junction of the two creeks. This hole gradually filled with a liquid exceedingly like ink, and having a by no means pleasant odour. The colour and smell were most likely produced by the rotten raupo through which it had percolated. This delightful liquid they strained through their pocket handkerchiefs as best they could. Then they put it in the kettle to boil. By the time tea was made and chops fried, darkness and Harry arrived together. There was bread enough for that night and the morning's breakfast, so after discussing their plans for the morrow, they wrapped themselves up in their blankets and lay down on the dry raupo they had cut for beds, and were soon asleep.

Before five next morning they were up and stirring. Breakfast over, Harry and Ernest started away to fetch, if possible, some pure water, with a bucket and a kettle, expecting not to have to go very far for it, and intending to move their camp to it. After wandering to and fro over the hills for about two hours, they mounted a hill which rose considerably above its neighbours. From the top of this they obtained a wide view. In front of them, and immediately at the base of the hill, ran a considerable creek, the Waireka, in fact, winding in and out in a very narrow plain or valley. A little to the right on the opposite side of the creek was a large swamp. Right in front of them

rose a table-land of some extent: to the left was a lot of swamp and manuka scrub, and beyond that a large herd of cattle was feeding; these they afterwards found belonged to a neighbouring run-holder, a Mr. Atkinson. The country contained no timber, simply grass, a few cabbage-trees, and a little manuka scrub. With the exception of the tiny little Waireka plain and the table-land in front, the country seemed, so far as they could see from their view-point, formed of low undulating hills; but there were in reality many steep gullies, here and there a steep cliff, and other portions of table-land. To Harry and Ernest the whole view appeared delightful. They ran down the hill to the Waireka, bathed their faces, feet, and hands, and after resting for a time, filled their kettle and bucket and trudged up the hill. Arrived at the top, Ernest sat down on the edge of the bucket to rest, but losing his balance fell over, bucket and all. Down the hill he had to go again to fetch another bucket-full, much to Harry's amusement. This time he took no rest, and after a mile-and-a-half's trudge (for though they had been walking so long they had not got far away from the tent) they reached the camping-ground and poured out Anderson his allowance of water. He had professed to be able to make bread, so they fully expected to have some ready for them, but found none. Anderson put the blame on the want of good water, but it was evident that he had made a mess of the first batch of flour. Inexperienced as they were, it took them till evening to bake enough bread for the next day, so it was no use to attempt to move the camp till the morning. This night they slept through so soundly that it was nearly nine next day before they awoke. While they were eating their breakfast Messrs. J. and Atkinson appeared. They rode up to the tent laughing heartily.

“How did you come here?”

"What possessed you to pitch your tent in this out-of-the-way place? We have been looking for you everywhere," were the questions and remarks with which they laughingly assailed these three unfortunate cadets, who could for some time only look foolish, though they afterwards tried to explain all their mishaps. Mr. J. said that had not Mr. Atkinson and he luckily caught sight of the tent and ridden over to see whose it was, they might not have come across them for a week or more. They were looking for a lost horse, "Ariel," which by-the-bye never turned up, though often searched for.

Having packed up their things they started on their journey, and were very thankful to have Mr. J.'s guidance across one or two swampy creeks to the Waireka to the spot where they were to encamp. On the way Mr. J. told them that he had dropped on an old Maori, while looking for "Ariel" with Mr. Atkinson the day before. Mr. J. knew him well. His daughter had lately married, and he had been living with his son-in-law, but he could not get on with him, so he left him and came to live out on the Waireka by himself. He had not a thing on of any description. Mr. J. asked him if he had any eels.

"Oh no! can't catch any. Bad time."

Mr. J. knew very well that that could not be true, as the old fellow must be living on them. Having given him some tobacco, he left him, and presently about a quarter of a mile further up the stream, in a nice little nook, he lighted on an old blanket, fixed up as a tent, and hard by, hung on ropes of flax, strung from cabbage-tree to cabbage-tree, a whole host of eels drying in the sun. The old Maori was very savage at his lair having been discovered, though the fact of his having told a lie about it did not seem in the least to disconcert him.

Mr. J. had hardly finished telling them of this little adventure when they arrived at the last crossing of the

Waireka close to their destination. The creek was impassable at this place for a horse and cart, the banks being undermined. They therefore unloaded the things and crossed them on their backs. When the tent was set up, Mr. J. told Harry to drive to Oamaru, and to return next day with a bag of flour and a bag of potatoes and a few other necessities. The work these three cadets had to do was to keep two sheep boundaries, and to build a new hut of three rooms for a married shepherd. This Mr. J. had thought good occupation and training for them during the slack time of the year. They would have done better, though, had they had some one to direct their doings for the first week or so. The arrangement they made was as follows. Two were to keep the boundary and work at the hut, which was to be built about a quarter of a mile higher up the Waireka than the spot where the tent was pitched, while the third did the cooking. The cook was to be changed each week, so that each cadet would have one week's cooking and two weeks' shepherding and hut-building alternately. Anderson took the first "spell" at cooking, and was to try his second experiment at making bread. He assured Harry, who expressed some doubts on the subject, that he would make most excellent bread.

"Well," said Harry, chaffingly looking up to tall Anderson, who was six feet in his stockings, "if you make it rise as high as yourself we shall be content; but for once in a way, whatever else you do, do not touch the flute. If your attention is taken up with blowing air into that, the bread will be anything but the 'best aerated,' it will be as heavy as lead."

"Don't fret, my youthful friend," said Anderson, "I only hope when your turn comes we shall have as good bread as we shall now."

Harry took one boundary, Ernest the other. They arranged to meet at the hut about ten and to commence

work. They were both pretty punctual to the time appointed. The first work was to measure out the extent of the new hut. This they soon did with the aid of a line and a couple of spades, taking up a sod all round. Then they opened a clay pit hard by, intending to make the hut half of clay, half of sods, though eventually they made it all of clay, as being warmer, less likely to be destroyed by rats, and more durable. Three hours' hard work at this made them very hungry, so they knocked off to get lunch. Coming round the corner of the hill in full view of the tent they could see the camp-oven set, on a three-legged stand of sticks, over a blazing fire, and they could see the tent, but they could not see Anderson. Soon they heard the sounds of the flute "tootling," as Harry called it. From this they discovered that Anderson was leaning with his back towards them against the far side of the tent, playing his favourite tunes.

"I knew it would be so," said Harry, "it is all up with our bread: 'actum est de pane.'"

"How do you know?" said Ernest, "better look first: he may only just have put it on."

"Look! why is it not enough to see that roaring fire? It would spoil any bread."

Going quickly and quietly up to the camp-oven, he removed it from the fire, and lifting the lid, disclosed to Ernest's horrified gaze a large round black cinder in the bottom of the oven. He then turned the oven over (Anderson unconsciously tootling away all the time, quite oblivious of the bread, and utterly unaware of Harry's and Ernest's return), caught the cinder in his hands and hurled it rapidly with all his force at Anderson's head, saying, "Take your bread!" and then both he and Ernest rolled over and over on the ground convulsed with laughter at Anderson's startled and dismayed appearance, as he jumped up when the cinder struck him full on the side of the head: his long

lanky form starting up, in shirt-sleeves half-tucked and not yet quite clear of the remains of flour and dough (which had adhered to them while he was mixing the flour for baking), no hat on, and a flute in one hand, his face sooty from the contact with the cinder-loaf. The "un-hit" side of his face was white with rage for a moment or two, but he quickly recovered his usual calm frame of mind, and quietly made his customary reply, "Oh, I forgot the bread." Harry and Ernest were not likely to fret over this, and though they soundly abused Anderson all the time, while he unheeding continued to blow away at his flute, they set to work to make some "fritters," a name given to a cooked article in appearance rather like a thin heavy pancake. English people would probably say that these "fritters" were paste fried in grease. They were made in the following manner. Flour mixed well with sufficient water to make it pour from a pannikin readily, then a little salt well stirred in. This mixture was next poured into a frying-pan prepared with a proper amount of boiling grease, and turned at due intervals as pancakes are till done. This kind of food was generally resorted to in extremities like this: its chief recommendation being that it was speedily ready. These "fritters" were always necessarily demolished hot, for two very good reasons: one was that they were never made except by very hungry people, who could not wait, and the other was because none could possibly eat them cold: they were so frightfully dark and heavy, and always made one imagine that he was eating what ought to have been used for putting pictures in his scrap-book or paper on his walls.

Instead of going to the hut in the afternoon, Harry and Ernest and Anderson determined to make a supply of bread sufficient to last two or three days. As Anderson had made such a terrible hash of it, and



Ernest had never tried his hand, Harry offered to bake. Anderson and Ernest were despatched for scrub for the fire, while Harry mixed the flour to make scones, for he was afraid to attempt a loaf, and none of them liked the much praised "damper." Harry's work was fairly successful. He turned out in a few hours a large supply of very wholesome looking eatable scones. Anderson and Ernest were well pleased with Harry's culinary success, and Ernest openly and Anderson secretly wished that Harry would undertake the cooking altogether, that they might be sure of something to eat whenever they returned from a hard day's work. Harry, however, did not care to turn cook, for he preferred the other work. Anderson and Ernest had, of course, quickly obtained sufficient wood for Harry's use that afternoon; but as they had begun carrying fire-wood they thought they might as well lay in a store of it, so they went on carrying back-load after back-load all the afternoon till they had a rattling good pile. The bush was about five hundred yards from the tent on the far side of the creek. It was all manuka, and of a very small kind, growing on very wet ground. The surface being formed of a kind of moss which gave to the foot like a sponge, the whole ground seemed to tremble for some distance as they trod on it, just as if the moss were very thick, but only floating on water. At first they were rather afraid of venturing far on to it, but it bore them very well, though unsafe for cattle. The manuka is a very pretty wood, and very useful for furniture and ornaments. The other kind of wood they used to burn was "Totara." In those parts this was never found growing. It was always in dead logs very dry, and often burnt, probably by grass fires. It is also a very pretty wood when polished, and makes excellent furniture. It is rather dangerous as fire-wood, for it flies in all directions with a great cracking noise. Both the totara and manuka are hard woods,

but the manuka is the hardest. Both do grow in fair-sized trees in some parts of Otago. There were lots of totara logs on the hills and plains about the Papakaio and Oamaru districts, but none growing except at a small out-station called Taranaki, after the North Island Taranaki. They also burnt dead "goai" logs.

Remembering Mr. J.'s encounter with the Maori, our three cadets determined to fish for eels by moonlight at the earliest opportunity. The plan they adopted was to tie a piece of mutton to a flax line. This was dropped into the river, and in a few minutes an eel was sure to fasten on to it: it was then easily drawn out. By the way in which the eels pulled, Ernest at first imagined that he was catching enormous fish, but he saw on landing them that a very small eel can give a pretty good tug: most of these were about two feet long. The usual, in fact, almost the only time for catching them was night. There were generally plenty of rats about, and if the eels were at all slow at biting, or if the rats became too troublesome, as they sometimes did, Ernest used to break the time by throwing at them, especially on moonlight nights when they could be easily seen.

At the Waikoura he used to catch crayfish, but in no great number, and very small. In the lagoon at Omarama, where he afterwards went, just above the home-station and between it and the new men's hut, there were no fish, but there were lots of mussels' shells, lying some at the bottom and some on the swampy ground at the side.

The cadets found that here as well as about Papakaio and Oamaru most of the plants had no flower. There were abundance of ferns, and in some parts plenty of "tutu." The flax in the manuka scrub was the tallest they had ever seen, nearly eight feet high. This flax is used by the natives for making all kinds of things, baskets, cloaks, mats, and by the settlers for ropes, and

also very largely by the bullock-drivers as crackers for their whips. As crackers it does not act quite so well nor does it last so long as silk, but still it is a most useful substitute, and is very readily obtainable. The inside of the leaf is first well scraped, then a slit is made across the centre of the outside; after this the outside, by pressing the back of a knife against the inside, peels off, leaving the fibres beautifully white and clean, that is to say if it has been well scraped. If well scraped the fibres will keep good for any amount of time, but if badly scraped they soon rot and become useless. There are different kinds and qualities of this flax,—some strong and long: some short and almost useless, being so rotten. The flax growing on the sides of the mountains is often very strong, but it is always extremely stunted: sometimes too it is exceedingly rotten. The flower is in the shape of a cup, and is full of honey or rather a sweet thin liquid, very pleasant and refreshing to drink. Just above the root and before the blades begin to separate, the stems are whitish, and if opened will be found to contain a large quantity of gum, which is very useful as a cement; for mending china or anything of that kind there is no better cement.

Towards the end of the week the cadets had a visitor in the shape of one of the shepherds, an old Australian, Clifford, whose hut was situated in the hills about four miles from their tent, and whose boundary joined theirs on one side. They had already by Mr. J.'s advice called on Bill Smith, an old shepherd and bullock-driver, whose hut was in the hills adjoining their other boundary, about three miles from their tent. Bill Smith was married to a half-caste, and like Clifford had a large family, and kept several cows: but Bill being an older hand on the station and a bit of a trafficker, was considered to be a cut above Clifford in the way of "cuteness" and of means: there was a great jealousy

between the two. The cadets had been advised to call on Bill, because he would, Mr. J. said, probably give them plenty of milk and butter. From the way in which Mr. J. put this matter before the cadets, they imagined that most likely an arrangement had been made for them to have a supply : at any rate, not being over-burdened with cash, they were in no position to pay for it, and it never entered their heads to do so. Milk and butter were, of course, welcome additions to their usual fare, which consisted always of tea (without milk), mutton and potatoes : the only change in the day being, as Clifford used to phrase it (considering it a prime joke) "potatoes and mutton for breakfast, and mutton and potatoes for dinner." Bill Smith had been very liberal, and had given them two or three bottles of milk and about a pound of splendid fresh butter, but it was evident that he had hardly resolved, or reckoned on supplying three such hungry men as our friends, the cadets. However, he frequently afterwards, on occasions, would send them a bottle of milk and a pot of good butter.

Well, Clifford, a short, sharp, active little man, with a rattling tongue, a fiery spirit, but a good-natured heart, versed in all his neighbours' affairs, dropped in (to use his own expression) to see what the new chums were like and what they were doing. After a long chat and many questions, which the cadets did not much admire, he rose from the ground (of course there were no seats) to go, but before leaving he kindly, but as Ernest at the time (new-chum-like) thought, too familiarly, turned to Ernest and said,—

"Well, mate, you have not very comfortable quarters here. If you choose to step up along with me and are not afraid of a good walk, I can supply you with a little milk and fresh butter, and I dare say that on the way I can give you a few wrinkles that 'll be useful. My missus too shall give you a bottle of yeast and tell

you how to make more, and how to manage your bread properly."

Ernest never refused a good offer; so, in spite of the then to him unpleasant familiarity of the shepherd, acknowledging his real kindness, he gladly accompanied him. Clifford pointed out to him on the way all the favourite places for the sheep to cross the Waireka and get over the boundary. In one or two places where they had shown themselves most determined, he had erected neat little wind-mills, the wooden sails of which were so contrived as to strike a large piece of corrugated iron as they spun round, thus making a sharp and loud noise and deterring the sheep from crossing over. It was here that Ernest first noticed how beautiful the "Totara" wood was when polished, for the wood of this wind-mill by constant friction had got quite smooth and polished, and showed out the grain beautifully. Clifford further beguiled the way by relating one of his Australian adventures.

"Ah!" he said to Ernest, "you may think yourself badly off here and in a very rough state"—(Ernest by-the-bye had never even hinted at anything of the kind, in fact such a thought never struck him, for to him everything had seemed quite natural and as it ought to be)—"but you are a great deal better off than we used to be in Australia, according to the old song, 'You can live and not be killed,' that is, you have nothing to fear from treacherous blacks.

"Now in Australia things were different. You never knew when you were safe there. I remember when I was sent on my first job to assist in tailing two flocks of sheep at an out-station. The out-station hut was occupied by my mate, myself, and the hut-keeper. We had heard that lately the blacks had been very bad in those parts, chiefly because the settlers had not dealt very well with them, and consequently they took vengeance on all they came across. It was some time,

however, before we heard anything of them. The first four or five months passed quietly enough, till one afternoon just before I was thinking of turning my sheep homewards, there seemed to be a disturbance among some of them which were feeding close under some scrub, and I fancied one seemed to have suddenly gone into the scrub. I walked over to the spot and searched all about, but could see nothing. On my return to the hut I told my mate. He said that he had lost two sheep the same day, and that he felt sure the natives had taken them, because he had caught sight of a native hanging about the 'tailing-ground.' It was at once arranged that the hut-keeper should look after my sheep while I went to the home-station to get a gun, some ammunition, and, if possible, some assistance. The run-holder, on my arrival at the home-station, laughed at my fears, but lent me a gun, supplied me with abundance of ammunition, and said that he would be on the look-out to render any assistance in case of attack. He would not send out an extra hand, as he did not believe the natives would attack an out-station, unless provoked. I represented to him strongly that my mates and I did not at all relish the position. It was no use: he would not see the force of my arguments: my tongue was not like that of Judah's and it did not prevail. On my return, when crossing an open plain about four miles from the out-station, skirted by trees, I observed a lot of 'nigger-heads,' where I had never seen any before. 'Nigger-heads,' you know, are what you in New Zealand call 'Maori-heads;' they grow in pools and swampy ground, being composed of a multitude of small black roots twined round and round one another in every way, forming one big root standing out of the ground generally a foot or more, covered with long waving grass, and looking in the distance for all the world like a collection of black heads. Well, says I to myself,

this is a rum go ; I don't remember any 'nigger-heads' there, or any swamp, or anything of the kind : there was nothing but a dry plain, and I am sure there was no lagoon. Howsomever they do look like 'nigger-heads,' wonderful nateral, if not the real thing, and perhaps I am mistaken. Still I always like to be on the safe side, so I'll just veer off quietly to skirt that wood to the left. It is a bit longer round and may be I'm a fool for going so far out of my way and being frightened, but I should be a worse fool were I to be sucked in by those black chaps. No sooner said than done. As naterally as I could, and with as little show of fear as possible, I edged away to the wood. It was well I did, for when I was within a hundred yards of it and almost parallel with the nigger-heads, a boomerang whizzed over my head. I was up to that dodge, though, and by a zig-zag movement avoided its back stroke, so it returned harmless to its sender. It was quite clear now. Those 'nigger-heads' were nothing more nor less than Australian blacks. They must have been coming across the plain, when catching sight of me before I did them, they had resorted to this plan of ensnaring me. I took to my heels like a shot, and made for the wood as fast as lightning. The blacks rose in a body, and with yells, boomerangs, and spears pursued me. There were about fifty of them altogether, I believe, though at the time my fears made me think that there were over a hundred. In a minute or two I was behind a tree, the blacks coming on at full speed. Taking steady aim, I dropped their leader. This rather stopped the other gentlemen, who were a little stumped by the fall of their leader. Taking advantage of their confusion, I passed on and got a good distance away before they again gave chase. They did not wait very long ; but came on again quickly, though more cautiously. I kept steadily making for the hut, dodging from tree to

tree. Each time I left cover, spears were hurled at me, and soon the wretches pressed on closer and closer. I was getting winded, and was beginning to find the running too much for me, and the spears seemed to fall unpleasantly close. Again I stood my ground, and dropped another dead with one barrel, while at all risks with the second barrel I severely wounded a third. This execution gave me a good rest, and enabled me to load again luckily, for had the blacks pushed on immediately after I fired my second barrel they must have settled me. I was right, however, in reckoning that two of their number being suddenly put out of the field would astonish them and frighten them. They now held a 'corrobory,' " (so Clifford asserted they styled a conference in the English tongue). "I made off double quick, though I kept on the watch all the time for fear of pursuit, and still continued my old plan of dodging from tree to tree, till breathless and exhausted I reached the hut. My two mates were very much alarmed by what I told them. The hut-keeper, an old hand, said that he had been afraid from the time that the sheep first began to disappear; but directly the native women came to the hut to beg for flour and other things, he felt certain that before long an attack would be made, and that that was the reason why he had urged my going to the station for help. Whether he had annoyed the women in any way I do not know, but I have strong suspicions, as he seemed so much alarmed, and appeared so fully to have expected an attack even before he knew of my having shot any natives. However, there was nothing for it now but to go on as usual and to keep a bright look-out. The hut-keeper did not at all fancy the idea of being left alone, when the morning came, and we had to let our flocks out from the yards. We arranged to come back as early as possible, not to go further than necessary, and to keep our flocks within shouting distance of one



another. All our precautions were in vain. In the evening when we returned we found the hut-keeper lying a few yards from the hut with a spear through his back, quite dead. He had evidently been carrying a log of wood in for the fire and had been speared from behind. We took the poor fellow's body, laid it out as decently as possible, dug a grave at the foot of a large tree a short distance behind the hut, placed the body in the grave, and hurriedly covered it up, the whole time keeping our guns at hand, and taking sentry by turns till the sad work was fully finished. That night was a long, dreary, mournful night. We thought it would never end. We could not go to the homestation, leaving our flocks. Moreover, from what the station-holder had told me, we were daily expecting one or two to ride out from the station to visit us. We therefore determined to wait on, but to keep, if possible, a stricter watch. We had to take it in turns to bring our flocks home an hour or more earlier (that is, I was to bring my flock home earlier one day and he his the next, and so on), that we might get the cooking, washing, &c., done, and the firewood cut. All went on quietly for more than a week, when one evening after penning my flock I came to the hut from the back. I noticed as I came up that there was no smoke coming from the chimney of the hut; yet it did not strike me that anything might be wrong. But when I got round to the front, a terrible sight presented itself to me. My poor mate was pinned by a spear against the side of the window. He must have been pursued into the hut by the blacks, for he had a spear wound in his leg, and he must have done some execution amongst them, for some distance from the hut there were traces, in many parts, of blood. I think that perhaps after shooting one or two he had incautiously raised himself too high and leaned out of the window to get a better shot, thus exposing himself

to the aim of the blacks, who are exceedingly sharp. It was just growing dark, and I was all alone, miles away from any human habitation, with no company but the murdered man's body, and in deadly fear that any moment I might be killed too. That body! I shall never forget it. It looked perfectly hideous, fixed up looking out of the window, stiff and staring. It quite makes my blood run cold now to think of it. In a few minutes my mind was made up. Filling my pouch with fresh ammunition, taking my gun, and hastily snatching a hunch of bread and some meat, I started off for the home-station. I strayed off the right direction (there was no path), and at last worn out I fell down, and, I suppose, dropped sound asleep. At any rate I did not come to my senses till near mid-day. I found that I had strayed away to about five miles to the right of the home-station. I soon covered that distance and reached the station. The station-holder was away, and was not expected back till the evening. He had taken all the hands with him but one, so that nothing could be done that day. The men were furious when they heard of the murders. The run-holder too felt anger, and some remorse, as I should think, for not having paid a little more attention to my words, and for having neglected to send out additional help. And well he might feel remorse, for he was to experience a terrible retribution. Now he made up for his slackness in defending his friends and servants by the most savage butchery of his enemies. At day-break all the hands on the station (except two, who were left to guard it and the women on it) started off, fully armed and with the determination of wreaking a savage revenge. The distance was about fifteen miles, and in less than two hours they reached the hut, but what was their dismay to find nothing but a blackened heap of ruins and the charred remains of the dead shepherd. The sheep were all gone, the yards broken

down and partly burnt; in fact everything had been destroyed, and evidently by a large party of blacks. Our men numbered about eight, including the station-holder,—all strong, powerful men, well-armed with revolvers and rifles. A pursuit was determined on at once; so after committing the dead body, or rather what remained of the dead body of the murdered shepherd to the ground, away we went: at first at a gallop, for the tracks were very plain. Here and there we came across sheep, some dead, some alive and feeding in freedom. After an hour's hard riding the tracks became less and less distinct, and the blacks seemed to have separated. It was resolved to stick to what appeared to be the track of the main body. This track soon began to lead directly towards the station. Another hour or more passed and we fell across a dying black; one who had probably been wounded by the shepherd and had managed to drag on life for a day or two, but had at length become exhausted with his wounds and dropped behind unnoticed or uncared-for by the others. We made no stop, however. A shot from the run-holder's revolver put an end to his misery. And now the track evidently bearing direct on the station, and the tracks of the others having been observed to join the main track, and the whole body undoubtedly having gone in the same direction, we no longer hesitated, but dashed on through scrub and plain at a hand-gallop, the run-holder leading by at least a hundred yards, and all eagerness to reach the station, fearing now for his wife and sister and children. Well he might. The station was soon in sight, and it was very conspicuous, conspicuous for it was in flames: blazing hay-stacks and sheep-yards and stables made a large conflagration. In the midst were seen more than a hundred blacks yelling and running about like so many demons.

“ ‘Shoot down man, woman, and child! spare no one!’ shouted the run-holder; and on he dashed at top speed

right into the midst of the astonished and terrified blacks.

“Down they went under the shots of the men, offering at first hardly any resistance, they were so surprised. There were over a hundred of them, though; and when they had recovered from their first panic, some as they ran stopped every now and then to hurl their spears. Three of the men were struck down, one was killed; but after a brief struggle and another united and well directed volley from our men, the blacks gave up throwing spears and trusted entirely to their heels. I and two others were left behind, but the run-holder and a cadet followed the blacks till almost dark, shooting all they came up with, till a spear pierced the run-holder to the heart. The cadet instantly shot the thrower of the spear, but gave up all pursuit and returned to the station. There was a sight far more fearful and ghastly than the out-station had presented. The dead bodies of the run-holder's wife, sister, and children were lying stark on the ground, all in one little heap where the blacks had thrown them. Further on were the bodies of the two men who had been left to guard the station, regularly riddled with spears. Then there were at least some twenty bodies of blacks, men, women, and children, lying in the smouldering ruins of the houses, stables, and stack-yards. Everything looked hideous and dismal.

“The next day the neighbouring run-holders and their men assembled, and pursued and shot down the blacks right and left, sparing neither age nor sex, but destroying them all as if they were so many venomous reptiles. This terrible slaughter sickened me of shepherd life in Australia; but I was bound to stick to it for some years more, and then I went to the gold-diggings, and after a run of ill-luck there came here. However, neither my shepherd nor my gold-field life was to end without my seeing and hearing of more

bloodshed. At present, I expect you have heard enough of my yarns, and at any rate here is something before us now sufficient to take away any man's breath."

They had now leisurely accomplished about three miles of their journey. Hitherto their road had lain along the Waireka flat, which grew narrower and narrower as they ascended the river. Now they had come to a point where a spur of the hills on their side of the stream ran right down to the stream ending in a sheer cliff of about ten feet high facing the stream, but sloping to the plain gradually on the inner side, where a little foot-path was to be seen winding up. It was the hill that now faced them that had been the cause of Clifford's remark.

"Now," he added, "comes the tug of war; this is 'Constitution hill,' and we must mount it before we earn our tea. Are you a good climber?"

"Pretty fair," replied Ernest, "I am getting better daily since I have been having a little practice."

"Well, this will try your lungs," said Clifford.

And doubtless it did, though Ernest thought that the Christchurch hill was worse, and he afterwards had to climb far steeper and higher places. He found that one of Clifford's failings was always to exaggerate the amount of his own work, the length of his boundaries, the height of his hills, &c., and to depreciate those of others. In other respects he found him to be a trustworthy man enough on the whole, and thoroughly hard-working and good-hearted.

Arrived at the hut (three-roomed, of the usual style, but neatly whitewashed inside and out, and made as comfortable as industry and cleanliness could make so miserable a dwelling), they gladly sat down to rest, and were soon provided by Mrs. Clifford with a very excellent repast, such as Ernest had not had since he left England. It was simple enough, certainly. Some smoked mutton-ham, of excellent flavour, splendid

fresh butter and eggs, milk fresh from the cow, cream, and well-brewed tea. But most of these things were Ernest's delight, and were hardly ever to be obtained in those days in Otago. Mrs. Clifford was a sturdy Irish woman, bright and cheerful in manner, and extremely cleanly in habits. Though she had five or six children to attend to, cows to milk, and butter and cheese to make, she managed to keep the children and everything about her looking clean and neat. Clifford certainly helped her immensely in some of her work, but in busy times she had often to do without his aid. She seemed quite pleased to instruct Ernest in the mystery of making yeast, bread, &c. The way she advised Ernest to make yeast, as he had no hops, was to make it of potatoes and sugar. This made very good bread, but it soon turned sour; it would not stand keeping many days. The hops, of course, when obtainable were by far the best. After Ernest had finished his lesson with Mrs. Clifford, Clifford took him off to show him his premises. He had a very neatly kept and strong cow-house and yard, a fowl-house, and an excellent garden, nearly half-an-acre in extent, really well kept, and, though not perhaps quite equal to that well-known one of Alcinous', yet producing all kinds of vegetables and a few fruits, such as currants, gooseberries, &c.; the season, however, was now past. He then showed him his larder, which was simply an addition to the end of his hut of cob thickly thatched, and made in such a way that a breeze could at all times sweep through it. The meat was protected by gauze being hung round it at some little distance from it. After commending all Clifford's ingenious arrangements, Ernest said,—

“How is it that yours is the only hut I have seen whitewashed? Where do you get the whitewash from?”

“Oh,” replied Clifford, “you see those hills straight over there,” pointing to some rather high ridges in the

direction of the tent, with broken sides. "Well, those are what we call the 'White Hills.' That range is composed of a white chalky and rather greasy substance, which when dissolved in water makes excellent whitewash: and not only that, if you take a little trouble you will find there are several colours and shades of it. I have found it of great use, though of course it is inferior to regular whitewash. I have sometimes on a pinch used the coloured kind for ruddle, and found it answer fairly."

Ernest determined to look at this range at the earliest possible opportunity. He knew nothing of geology, but was simply curious to see anything of the kind. Before he left, Clifford loaded him with butter, butter-milk, and a bottle of yeast. Anderson and Harry on his arrival greeted him with loud welcome, Anderson especially rubbing his hands and slapping himself in his odd way with delight. Things went on very quietly till the second day of Harry's first cooking week; when Anderson and Ernest announced their determination of not returning to dinner or to hut-building for that day, because they wished to explore the neighbourhood, and especially to make a straight cut across the hills for the Waikoura, to see how Headland, the new married shepherd, was getting on. Harry rather objected to their going.

"Well, the fact is, Anderson," he said, "you and Ernest will be losing your way and not returning, and I shall be left alone."

"Oh no!" said Anderson, "besides, what if you are? surely it would not make much difference for one night. In any case you have old Farmer tethered close by you for company."

Whether the mention of "Old Farmer" put any notion into Harry's head or not, is not quite clear, but at any rate after that remark he seemed better satisfied, and merely replied,—

"Well, there is one comfort, Anderson : I shan't have to provide for filling your long barrel with scones for one meal at least, if not three."

Anderson good-naturedly laughed, and started off with Ernest, each carrying a couple of scones and a slice or two of mutton for dinner, for they hardly expected to reach Waikoura till the evening : not that it was really so very far, but they had no notion of the actual distance, nor did they know exactly where it lay : they only had a general idea of the direction. They chiefly guided themselves by keeping well to the left of the Big Hill, which was situated facing the plain, and about four miles from Papakaio, the home-station, and therefore about half-way between it and Waikoura, which was eight miles from the home-station. Knowing nothing about the direct route, or the general run of the country, in the usual blundering way of new chums, they evaded, in a most marvellous manner, the leading ridges,—that is, those ridges which lead on with hardly a perceptible break, though with a great deal of winding, from one station to another. They crossed innumerable gullies : some gave them a perfect struggle to get through ; the fern standing thick and close and reaching in some parts above their waists : other gullies were covered with tall "tutu."

At twelve o'clock, seeing no signs of the Waikoura, they threw themselves down beside a creek, where the water trickled over a rock into a basin beneath, making a pretty trickling, tinkling sound as if striking on metal ; took their scones and mutton out of their handkerchiefs, and setting to work soon demolished them, *i.e.* the scones and meat, not the handkerchiefs. After half-an-hour's chatting they fell asleep, and it was full four o'clock before they awoke. They then went on, and almost immediately found themselves at the head of the Waikoura little bush. They thought the wisest and safest plan would be to follow this down : they



could not have done worse: they had undertaken a task far greater than they had expected. A good two hours' struggle over rocks and through low scrub, frequent crossing of the creek, sometimes by a fallen tree, sometimes by jumping from boulder to boulder, and resting every now and then and examining anything that struck them as worth notice, brought them at length within sight of the hut and on pretty level ground. Headland was out. His wife was there, however. She provided them with a pannikin-full of good tea, some scones and treacle, made by herself from sugar. When Headland came in, he said it would be useless for them to attempt to return that night, and that they had better sleep in the room provided for the men at sheep-washing time, only he could not spare them more than one blanket each. They were only too glad, tired as they were, to get any accommodation, and they set to work at once to cut some grass to lie on. This done, after a long talk with Headland, they went to lie down, and slept soundly till late the next day. Headland had been a printer's assistant at home. He was a regular cockney, desperate as regards his "h's," knew nothing whatever about sheep or dogs, but like many others soon learnt enough to be of service as a boundary-shepherd: the work during a greater part of the year being simply to walk two or three times a day along a certain boundary and to turn back any sheep approaching. This was done for one of two reasons: either to prevent separate flocks belonging to the same run-holder from mixing,—for instance, wethers with ewes,—or to prevent flocks of different run-holders from crossing off their owner's grounds. In many cases there were no natural boundaries sufficient to prevent sheep from crossing. Often a ridge of a hill formed the boundary line, often a dry creek, or a very tiny one with but little water, which the sheep could easily cross: rarely were the runs

divided by streams sufficiently large to act as a secure boundary.

In the low countries, such as the Papakaio district, which consisted of low hills and plains, the shepherds had to be constantly on the alert, although the runs were by no means fully stocked. Sometimes it was even necessary to "tail" the flocks all the year round, that is, as we said before, to have a shepherd following them the whole day.

Leaving Headland's soon after breakfast, and knowing now exactly where to make for, Headland too showing them the commencement of the leading ridge, they were surprised to find how quickly they got to the "White Hills," farther than which they could not go by any leading spur. Crossing these they got on to the table-land above where the tent was pitched. This table-land round the edges was very much broken, there being in parts large holes and chasms, some quite deep enough to make it difficult for a man to get out should he chance to fall in. Ernest looking into one of these saw two sheep, very thin. They had apparently fallen in some days before, as they seemed so thin and empty. Anderson let Ernest down on to the little ledge on which the sheep were resting. This was by no means the bottom of the hole, which seemed to take a turn and then to go a great deal deeper, but Ernest could not see how deep. He caught and handed up the sheep to Anderson,—no difficult business, they were so very fleshless and light. When lifted into the open air again and set upon their legs, they seemed not only almost unable to stand, but also quite dazed with the light. Anderson, after getting the sheep up, next put down his long arms for Ernest and helped him out. Then they both went on to the end of the table-land overlooking the plain of the Waireka and the tent. Here Anderson exercised his lungs "coo-eying" to Harry, in hopes of getting an answer,

but to no effect. The reason was apparent when they reached the tent. Harry was nowhere to be found. A further search showed that he had not only gone, but had taken "Old Farmer" also. They thought that perhaps he had gone for more flour, because that necessary was now running short. The next day came and went, and the day after, and still no Willmott appeared. After waiting a week, Anderson said he would go the home-station to enquire after him, and also to see if the English mail had come in. When Anderson returned, as he did in about four days, he told Ernest that Harry had been too nervous to stop by himself, and as he disliked the camping out and solitary life so much, and was very useful at the home-station, Mr. J. had retained him, and not considering that the cadets had any further use for the horse, had kept him too. Anderson and Ernest were now reduced to keeping the boundary, building the hut, and cooking entirely for themselves. They thought it therefore advisable to make some slight alterations in their plans. The cooking of bread and of joints of meat was to be done in the evening by both together; and every day at twelve, one or the other was to prepare dinner at the hut, sufficient provisions being carried there at breakfast time, so that they did not need to return to the tent till the evening. One day in the week was to be devoted to a general washing. But first of all, having shirked clothes washing for a long time, and having a lot on hand, they determined to give up three or four days to that, so as to ensure a fair start for the future. A good store of soap had been laid in, in anticipation of this important event. They scrubbed away till their hands were sore, using no end of soap, but seemingly making very little difference in the appearance of the linen, in fact, if there was any difference, it looked rather dirtier. Anderson had placed a board over the creek for the purpose of

crossing readily. This plank Ernest used to put his heap of soapy clothes on, while he rinsed them one by one in the running stream. Just as he was finishing off the last of the shirts he had soaped or intended to soap for that day, he unfortunately placed his hand on the side of the plank; over it went, and down he plunged head-foremost into the creek. The banks were undermined, and as he rose his head struck against the bank without coming up to the surface of the water, the bank preventing it. It was some seconds before he could get clear and scramble out. At last he landed dripping wet on the side of the creek. Anderson, who was hanging his clothes up on a long line, his pipe in his mouth, was thoroughly enjoying Ernest's mishap, and to add to Ernest's discomfiture Mr. Atkinson rode up the very moment he came spluttering from the water, and joined in Anderson's laughter. Ernest soon changed, and then Mr. Atkinson, who had been a working man, and was an old colonist, said, smiling,—

“Why did you spoil those things? Any of the shepherds' wives would have washed them for you with pleasure for a trifle.”

He did not know that Anderson and Ernest were not over-burthened with money, and at that time were earning nothing but their food. Moreover, the shepherds' wives all appeared so comfortable and independent that they hardly liked to ask them. After a little more chat and a little more advice, Mr. Atkinson rode off home, first leaving a lot of butter and some milk as a present. For this the cadets were very grateful, as of course anything of that kind was a great treat. The cadets did not take Mr. Atkinson's advice about the clothes, at all events not at once. They preferred doing the work themselves: in fact, though not very successful, they enjoyed it. About four days altogether was consumed in this scrubbing business, as they had

several dozens of shirts, besides collars and socks. A year or two in New Zealand taught them afterwards to keep a much smaller stock of things on hand, but these were their "outfit" things. An "outfit" is one of the most absurd things possible for young people to be burthened with. It is far better to have the money and to buy when necessary.

The hut would now have made small progress had not Clifford come down and helped. He visited the tent the next day after the washing was finished, and while the clothes were still hanging on flax lines in lank, wrinkled, and yellowish array. He listened with interest to Anderson's account of Harry's running away, and then said that having done a good deal of cob work and cob hut building he would come down for a few hours daily and show them how to set to work. When he caught sight of all the shirts, towels, socks, &c., dangling in the wind, he said,—

"Why did you not ask my old woman to do those for you? She hasn't much spare time, to be sure, but she would have done her best to help you out there, and I think she would have made a better job of it than you have."

"Well, the fact was we did not like to trouble her, or, to speak the truth, it hardly entered our heads to ask any one when we first began; and, moreover, we thought we should have succeeded better," said Anderson; "besides, there were such a lot to be done."

"Nonsense! for the future, mates, my old woman will do any little washing you may want weekly, provided that you fetch the things backwards and forwards; but I do not know what she'll say to your style of washing when she sees it.

"What's that?" he cried, suddenly breaking off, "is it a scarecrow you have hung up?"

"What do you mean?" said Anderson.

"Why, that awful looking object on the gallows." (The gallows being a pair of poles set upright with a

third pole across the top, to which in the centre was fastened a hook. From this hook at that time there was suspended the carcase of a sheep.)

"That's a wether we killed this morning, as we were out of meat."

"A wether!! I should never have guessed it. What a dreadful dirty mess you have made of it!"

"Well," said Anderson, "it does look rather rummy, but you are too hard on us new chums, Clifford; we took the greatest care to skin and dress it nicely, and we were over two hours doing it."

"You have a sight to things to learn yet, I can see, mates," said Clifford, putting his pipe, which he had just been clearing of old tobacco, into his mouth, and giving it a blow to see that it would draw freely, before filling it afresh; "however, I'll soon put you to rights, and show you a wrinkle or two. Next time you want a wether, tell me, and I'll come down and show you how to kill and dress it. And, as you may not object to a lesson at once, if one of you chooses to come up to my hut, I'll teach him a little to-day. I am bound to kill a wether for myself." Ernest agreed to go, and in the evening accompanied him.

But now they set off to the hut, and Clifford showed them how to prepare the clay for cob, and what quantity of grass to cut up and mix with it. From that time he worked steadily at it with them for several hours daily until the walls were quite finished, and the roof, which was of iron, put on.

In the evening Ernest accompanied him to his hut, where he spent the night.

Being seated round a cozy fire with Mrs. Clifford, Ernest, and his two eldest children, Clifford's thoughts naturally reverted to his old life in Australia. Ernest also was anxious to hear something more about his adventures, and urged him to spin a yarn. Clifford was nothing loth, though he said he had nothing

personally to do with the story he was going to tell, he had merely happened to be in the neighbourhood at the time that the events happened. He began somehow thus:—

“I had been on a station on the Murray river some little time, when a new family, the Hunters, came and settled down close to us. The father started a store, the son kept a small run or farm, a few sheep, some milch cows, and several horses for necessary work. The daughter kept house for them, while a cousin, a big, powerful man, named Hawkins, assisted them in the general work. They were only just beginning, and had not more than one house of three rooms, besides the store, and out-buildings, &c. They were soon very much liked and respected by all their neighbours, because they were steady workers, and pleasant and agreeable to those who had dealings with them. It was thought too that they were in a fair way to do well. Suddenly we heard terrible news about them. It appears that old Hunter and his son were going out in the morning on foot to get in the horses, when they passed a tall, fair man, who wished them ‘Good morning.’

“‘I didn’t like the looks of that chap,’ said old Hunter to his son.

“‘No, no more did I,’ replied Fred Hunter.

“‘Well, then, I’ll tell you what it is,’ said old Hunter, ‘I shall not feel comfortable unless you turn back and look after him. I can manage the horses by myself, and if I should have any difficulty, Bill Hawkins will help me, for he is milking the cows in the yard to which the horses will run.’

“‘All right,’ said Fred, and away he went.

“On reaching his house, he saw the stranger seated at the table, his back towards him, and his sister giving him some breakfast, as it was usual in Australia as in New Zealand to give meals to any wayfarers as they

passed the stations. The stranger being seated with his back towards him, Fred noticed the butt of a revolver sticking out of his pocket. This convinced him of the meaning of the stranger's errand, so at once, saying carelessly to his sister,—

“ ‘I came to fetch my gun which I had forgotten,’ he passed into his bedroom, and in a minute returned with his double-barrelled gun. He then said a few words to the stranger, and, placing his gun within easy reach against the mantel-piece, sat down opposite him and said,—

“ ‘Where do you come from, mate?’

“ ‘From H——.’

“ ‘On what horse?’

“ ‘On shanks’ mare, to be sure.’

“ ‘Surely, you did not come all that distance on foot, it is near three hundred miles: if so, you must have a good pair of legs.’

“ ‘Yes, I have, and what’s more, I have useful arms; and I did not come here to be questioned by you. I’m B. the bush-ranger.’

“Fred was quite taken aback. B.’s name was quite familiar to him, as a name of terror throughout Australia. Fred had only been asking ordinary questions in a casual way, and had not had the slightest idea of saying anything offensive, much less of making an enemy of such a man as B. He observed the bush-ranger putting his hand behind him, and guessing the reason, from what he had seen on first entering the room, he rose as if to go, and taking hold of his gun said,—

“ ‘Well, mate, I see you’re in a bad temper, so I’ll wish you Good morning;’ and at the same time he beckoned to his sister to run out.

“ ‘Take my good wishes, then, with you,’ said the bush-ranger, drawing from his pocket, and pointing full at him, a revolver. Fred dropped back into the



chair, a bullet having pierced his left shoulder. He levelled his gun, and discharged the contents of one barrel right at the bush-ranger. The charge was only duck shot, but at the short distance it told fearfully on the bush-ranger, and blood flowed from his side in great streams. Fred discharged the other barrel, while the bush-ranger returned the compliment by giving him three more bullets. Then they closed, and rolled over and over one another on the ground. Fred's left arm was quite disabled owing to the bullet-wound in the shoulder; and though the bush-ranger was wounded badly, Fred was still worse off, for the last three shots had also taken great effect, one having struck him in the side, another on the knee, and a third cutting his wrist. However, for a long time he held the bush-ranger firmly, and prevented him from using knife or revolver. At last, the bush-ranger by a great effort, threw off his hold, got above him, and plunged his knife into his breast. At this moment, through the open door, Bill Hawkins flew in. The bush-ranger at once tried to disengage himself from poor Fred who was dying fast, and to aim his revolver at Bill, but Bill was too quick for him, and in a moment the revolver was wrenched from his hands, and soon Bill and poor old Hunter had fastened his hands behind his back and tied his feet together. They then had time to look at Fred. Poor fellow, there was no hope for him. They began dressing his wounds, but he begged them to leave him alone, and in less than half-an-hour he passed quietly away."

Here Clifford seemed quite overcome by the remembrance of this tragedy, and Ernest not feeling very curious about the fate of the bush-ranger did not press him to continue, and they shortly after retired to rest.

The next morning they were up betimes, and having taken breakfast, Clifford and Ernest went to search for a mob of sheep. They soon came across a small lot of

about a hundred. These they brought to the yard. Clifford then caught a wether, tied its legs, and let the others go. He next, in a practical way, showed Ernest how to kill and dress it.

Anderson used once a month to go in for the English mail to the home station; and one day, soon after the walls of the hut were finished and the roof on, the only things still undone being the hanging of the doors and inserting of the window-frames, and the white-washing the walls inside and out, Anderson said he thought it must be time for the English mail to be in again, and he should like to go in, and at the same time he could see about having the doors and windows sent out. He asked Ernest as usual whether he would mind staying by himself, as of course he would have to stop in the tent by night several miles from any human being, and by day he was not likely to see any one, since Clifford, having finished all he had to do at the hut till the doors and windows arrived, had no further occasion to come down, and moreover he wanted to do a little business of his own about the stock-yard, cow-shed, and garden for the winter.

Ernest at once said that he did not mind at all, provided that Anderson would not take more than a couple of days.

"I am sure to be back the day after to-morrow," said Anderson.

"Which way do you intend to go?" asked Ernest.

"Well, I was thinking of trying to cross the big swamp and get over the leading ridges by the Big Hill to the Papakaio plain."

"All right," said Ernest, "I shall look out for you to return by that way; only take care you don't get bogged."

A week passed away, and no Anderson appeared. Ernest saw no one. Even Clifford did not pay his usual visit. Atkinson's stockman, who sometimes came

round by the tent and had a little chat, failed to show himself.

As Ernest was going his rounds the first morning of the second week, his dog suddenly started off on the scent of some animal. The dog went at such a pace that at first Ernest could hardly keep up, but soon, though it never slackened its pace, it took to winding about in all directions, its nose close to the ground, and this enabled him to keep pretty near. Presently the dog disappeared round a point, and a minute afterwards Ernest heard a growl and a squeak. He hurried forward, and then just at the foot of the spur he saw his dog, a large powerful animal, with his teeth firmly fixed in the neck of a little pig. Before he could get up to the dog, the pig was dead. It was a very small one, but plump, so Ernest bled it, and was carrying it home as a great prize, when he encountered Bill Smith and another man, followed by two savage-looking dogs, pig-dogs evidently.

"Oh, ho!" said Bill, "you are before us this morning; we are going up to the head of the Waireka pig-hunting: would you like to join us?"

"Oh yes!" said Ernest, "certainly, I should like it above everything; but what am I to do with this pig?"

"Put it on that rock; that is a good mark, you cannot miss that, and when you come back you can carry it home."

"All right," said Ernest, and, hastily depositing the pig, he joined Bill and his mate. His companions, he found, were armed with long stout knives, very sharp, but they had no other weapon. They had gone nearly three miles when they caught sight of a drove of about twenty pigs.

"Now," said Bill, "you must keep in your dog, because he does not understand pig-hunting, and he will only spoil our fun, and perhaps get hurt if he comes across an old boar."

There were two very big boars in the drove, but of course Bill's object was first of all to capture one or two of the little pigs alive and afterwards to kill the best of the larger ones. The little pigs were soon caught, Bill's dogs laying hold of them by the ears and holding them down till the three hunters came up. Their legs were then tied with flax, and they were left just where they were caught. The next thing was to kill one or two full-grown pigs, if possible. The dogs were quite eager for the chase, and rapidly closed in with one splendid fat fellow. For a time it managed to frustrate their attempts to hold its ears; but at last one dog did succeed, and immediately the other seized the second ear. As quickly as possible Bill ran up, and plunging his knife into its left side, after catching hold of one hind leg, quickly despatched it. The work seemed so easy and so like butchery after once the dogs had got hold of the pig, that Ernest did not care much for it. Two good pigs were killed that day and two little ones caught. The little ones were carried home, and the big ones, after being cut up, left to be fetched at leisure. Bill told Ernest that sometimes if a boar turned rusty pig killing was most dangerous and exciting work; but from what he had seen Ernest could hardly imagine it.

He carried his own prize home over his shoulders, cut it up and salted it, and found it a very good change from the constant mutton.

Another week went by, and still no one came to see Ernest. At last he determined to call at Clifford's. On arriving there he found Clifford was out. Mrs. Clifford said that he had been very busy, and had been called to the home-station. She knew Anderson was all right, because Clifford had seen him there.

About a fortnight after Clifford came down to the tent to see Ernest. He gave him pretty nearly the same news Mrs. Clifford had, and he knew nothing

fresh. He wanted Ernest to help him in firing part of his feeding ground, since it had been pretty dry for some weeks, and the autumn is the best time for burning. He brought with him also a young Irish shepherd, Macaulay. They wanted to light the fire and get it to burn a certain portion of country, and to put it out again before night. The lighting business was easy enough. Each taking a certain portion started his fire, and with a few dry cabbage-tree leaves as a torch, walked along till all three fires joined, the torch setting fire to the grass on the way. The grass was very dry, and in some of the gullies the "tutu" and fern stood very thick. These gullies blazed up tremendously, and it would have been impossible, even if they had wished, to put the fire out in them, the flames being from eight to ten feet high in them, and throwing out a great heat. Clifford had beforehand marked out the line on which they should attempt to beat out the fire. He had chosen the leading ridge to Bill Smith's. In the gullies below, the grass, fern, and "tutu" were almost impassable, they were so thick and tangled; but on the ridge the grass was much thinner; the only danger was that the fire might not be put-out-able at the head of the Waikoura, where there was no thin grass, and if it crossed there it would burn over all the hills to the Big Hill.

Before the fire was started the sheep were all gathered over the ground to be burnt, and placed to windward. The "back-burning" of the fire, which though very slow, is always the most steady and most effective, was at once put out, so that the three felt they could leave the sheep in safety. They then crossed to the head of the Waikoura, and started a fire in the thinnest place they could find. Before it burnt far or got any great heat they put it out and lighted another, and so on till they burnt a good broad strip over the most dangerous part of the ground. They were not finished a moment

too soon ; the main fire came roaring quite close at that end within a few minutes after they were ready, but was effectually stopped by their burnt patch. They then separated, and taking their green cabbage-tree tops and old potato sacks, wet, as beaters, they took their stations on different parts of the ridge waiting for the fire. In some parts it burnt up much more quickly, of course, than in others, and these places were put out first. It was two hours after dark before they had finished. Each then went to his home covered with and blackened with burnt grass and worn out with beating, for it is very heavy work to wield a cabbage-tree top or a wet bag for any length of time : the fire too was at times pretty scorching.

Six weeks more passed away without further tidings of Anderson, and then Ernest went again to Clifford's, having seen no one except Mr. Atkinson and Bill Smith in the interval. He told Clifford that he intended to go in to the home-station and enquire how long he was expected to remain in the tent by himself.

Clifford said, "I know what it 'll be : you will not come back either, and I shall be left alone for weeks to keep your boundary and mine too : but I'll be hanged if I'll do it. No, no, mate ! you must stop and have a little patience."

"I don't see that," said Ernest. "Before we came, you and Bill Smith had to do it all between you, and surely you can do it again. You have both had very easy times lately, only keeping one side of the boundary instead of going all round."

"I can't do it again for long," said Clifford ; "it is too much for any man : there are more sheep now, and of course they want more room. Besides, I dare say you have noticed that they have been terribly restless of late."

"Yes, I have noticed that : I am obliged to be up earlier, and even then can hardly get over the whole boundary in time to prevent them from crossing."

"How then can you expect me to do the distance doubled, mate? Come, now, be reasonable."

"That's just what I want you to be. How can you expect me to live any longer in that tent by myself, seeing no one by day, and over-run by mice, blow-flies, and fleas by night. It is not so many nights ago that I killed one hundred and seventy-three blow-flies before I could get any peace. Besides, what have you to complain about? You often go into the station, and I have made no objection. It is not as if I were intending to stay away altogether. I shall be back in a couple of days."

"Well, well, mate, if you will promise, I'll say no more about it; but 'honour bright,' remember."

"You may depend on me," said Ernest.

"About those mice, fleas, and flies, mate. You have had the tent pitched too long on one spot," said Clifford; "before you go, I'll just step down with you and we will re-pitch it. In fact, if you like we'll start at once." Away they went, and on reaching the tent, they first took a survey of the ground. Clifford chose a little higher and harder piece of ground than the original camping-place, and then proceeded to pull down the tent, telling Ernest not to meddle with the bedding or the articles of food inside. Having put the tent up afresh on the new ground, he made his dogs sit down, one at each end of the place where the old tent had been, and Ernest took one side while he took the other. Then he lifted carefully one bedstead. Out ran several mice. These the dogs and Ernest soon killed. Gradually they lifted every article in the tent, catching one mouse and sometimes two each time: till they had killed in all over a score. Then they dug out their holes and killed a lot more, and destroyed several nests. After this, Clifford and Ernest heaped up the manuka tops that lay under the bedsteads, and the bedsteads themselves, and set fire to the whole lot,

making a thorough cleansing of the place. The blankets were next hung out to get a thorough airing.

"Now, mate," said Clifford, "I think it will be long before you are troubled again with those gentlemen, but directly they commence again, you alter the position of your tent."

They now constructed some new bedsteads. This was an easy task. They cut down three cabbage-trees, two were for the sides of the bedstead, and the third cut in half acted for the top and bottom, the whole serving simply as a frame-work to tack a few old potato sacks to. Beneath the sacking a lot of manuka tops were placed just to keep it off the ground and to give some kind of a spring to the bed. A couple of blankets completed the whole arrangements for bed and bedding.

When Anderson slept in the tent he always preferred a hammock, which he slung from the ridge-pole, but of course there was not room for another in their small tent.

This cleansing work being thoroughly finished, and all preparations being made for Ernest to pass the night on his new camping-ground, Clifford wished him good night, good-bye, and a speedy return from Papakaio: and uttering a parting "honour bright," left him.

The next morning early, Ernest started for Oamaru, which he reached about nine o'clock. Old Tom furnished him with a good breakfast, and told him that Anderson had been sent to Moeraki for some sheep and was not likely to be back for at least a week. At Papakaio, Ernest found some English letters waiting for him. Mr. J. told him that he might stay a few days if he wished; but he preferred to stick to his promise to Clifford, and only asked that he might soon have a change of work. Mr. J. promised this, and Ernest returned to the tent satisfied. In about a week Anderson came out with the doors and windows. The



sheep had been very troublesome all this time on Ernest's boundary : he could not understand the reason, and could hardly keep them safely, even with the utmost vigilance. Anderson and he talked over the matter, and determined to get up early the next day and drive the leading flock of troublesome ones well to the centre of the run, thinking that if this were done once or twice the sheep might be less likely for a time to attempt to cross the boundary. The next morning they carried out their intention, and, having caught about a thousand of them close at the edge of the boundary, proceeded to drive them rapidly in to the centre of the run, collecting all stragglers on the way. They had not gone a mile when, to their astonishment, they heard a great bleating in front of them, and, just mounting the opposite ridge, was a large flock of sheep evidently being driven : soon the drivers appeared,—Bill Smith, and friend Clifford : friendly for the time, through mutual interest. They were fairly caught by the cadets : there was no getting out of it : for some time past they had been driving the sheep down on Anderson's and Ernest's boundary in order that they might have time, Clifford to attend to his garden, Bill Smith to make some cattle-bargains. They tried to laugh the matter off. The cadets were not at all pleased : though they could not help being tickled by the discovery of the trick. They felt grateful to Bill Smith and Clifford for all the kindness they had shown them, but they thought this trick shameful, and they said so plainly. They blew those shepherds up well, and would not listen to their trumpery excuses. They regretted too that they had not tried to discover the reason of the sheep troubling their boundary before adopting the plan they had,—the very plan, as it turned out, of Messrs. Smith and Clifford. For they saw, of course, that if such cross purposes were to continue to be worked, the poor sheep would have little chance of

food. However, now that the discovery was made, the trick was not likely to be repeated.

Shortly after this Anderson and Ernest were recalled to the home-station, tent and all. Clifford was moved down to the new Waireka hut, and a new shepherd put in his place,—the young Irishman already mentioned, Macaulay. Clifford was now able to keep more cattle, and was in high favour at the home-station on account of the great activity he had shown in helping with the hut, &c. Anderson left the station altogether, and took to carpentering on his own account at Oamaru.

By the time they reached the station they had been camping out for more than six months; and during eight or nine weeks of that time Ernest had been entirely by himself, having to do his usual daily work of shepherding and clay-mining and building, as well as his own cooking, baking, and washing, for he never accepted Clifford's kind offer. The only thing of importance that had happened in New Zealand during that time,—the only thing, that is, Ernest took much notice of, was the breaking out of the Maori war. It began first after the cadets had been in the tent about three weeks. This was the *great war* of 1860. The cause of it must be sought for in earlier times. It was this. The natives in the early days had in 1841 been promised for certain lands at Taranaki, blankets, tobacco, axes, &c., &c., all articles much prized by them. These things were not given them. They began to grumble, and fearing a disturbance, Mr. Carrington, the chief land-surveyor, wrote to Colonel Wakefield, who at once sent off a small vessel with the goods. Vessel and all went to the bottom in the Straits, so after all the natives never got their pay. That, however, was smoothed over, till a chief called "The Parrot" (Te Kaka) claimed the land as his, because he had conquered its owners. Governor Hobson at once paid him £150, two horses, two saddles,

two bridles, and one hundred red blankets. In addition to this, the natives were to receive back one-tenth of the purchased land after it had been surveyed. This tenth was allotted off in the centre of the whole lot. For this miserable pittance, then, the chief gave up his claim. However, really and truly it was a good bargain for him; for, in the first place, he had no more right to the land than the English, since he rested his right on conquest; and in the next place, the land untilled and unsettled would not be worth more; and further, there were hosts of other claimants, so that it was very difficult to know, in fact impossible to know, who did own land.

Well, this land was soon taken up by English settlers, built on and improved by the sowing of crops, fencing, &c. But unfortunately, before the little settlement became very large or strong enough to resist encroachments, a lot of slaves were let loose at the earnest request of the Reverend John Whitley, a Wesleyan missionary. They demanded all the land, when they found the English considered they had a right to some of it. Then the Home Government sent Mr. Spain to look into the affair. He thought the New Zealand Company were the rightful owners, but Governor Fitzroy upset his decision, declared all the English to be trespassers, and gave back all the land to the natives. This was in 1844. Afterwards a little of the land was repurchased for a large sum. Then a land league was formed. Its promoters desired to stop the natives from selling land to the government. The result was that when one native did sell, and the government surveyors arrived to measure off the land, a disturbance took place, which ended in war.

During the whole time Ernest was in New Zealand the war was conducted in a very desultory manner, and was looked on by many in Otago as a perfect farce, and an unnecessary burden to all the provinces; for all had

to be taxed to pay the soldiers, while none but the provinces immediately concerned were likely to receive any benefit. Otago being the largest and most populous, though most remote, of the provinces, had to bear a large share of the charge. The accounts in the newspapers were so ridiculous that they were scarcely credible. For instance, a strong Pa belonging to some powerful chief would be the object of the soldiers' attack. For three months perhaps nothing particular would be heard of the war except that the soldiers were making a good road to the Pa, and that when the road was made, the war would be ended, for the Pa would soon be taken. Then came an account of a "terrible conflict," three soldiers killed and sixteen wounded, the assault on the Pa having ended in a repulse, but a breach had now been effected, and shortly the Pa must be taken. Finally the Pa is taken, but only a poor old woman, too ill to move, was found in it. This sort of thing went on from year to year. Many in Otago hardly believed there was a war, or that the accounts could be correct, they seemed to be so extremely absurd. The colonists all declared that if the soldiers were removed, and they were left to themselves, they would soon end the war. No doubt they would have soon put an end to it, for many would have volunteered, and the war would have been carried on after the Maori fashion, but with the utmost vigour: but then perhaps great cruelties would have been practised, cruelties such as the soldiers would not have been permitted to indulge in. This might not have been the case, but it is more than probable it would, for the settlers were greatly enraged, and were determined to assert their claim by pure force, if the Home Government would have permitted them.

One great gain the colonists got by the residence of the soldiers was the making of good roads, and rendering the access to the Maori much easier. Some settlers,

too, who contracted to supply flour, meat, potatoes, &c., reaped a rich harvest.

To return to Ernest. His work was soon wholly changed. He had to help at fencing in paddocks, planting "blue gum trees," getting in and branding cattle, &c. This work he liked much better. Mr. P.'s house was now nearly finished, and the whole station looked far more respectable. The addition of Mr. J.'s weather-board bedroom and sitting-room had been made to the old station dining-room. The stone house for the men had been built, and two wells dug.

One part of this work gave great offence to many bullock-drivers. This was the fencing-in of the old road and compelling the drays to go out into the soft ground in the plain at the bottom of the paddock instead of keeping along the old high road near the foot of the hills.

Some of the drivers declared they would not put up with it, and openly asserted their intention of pulling up the fence and levelling the ditch. Shortly after this, late one afternoon, five teams drew up on the old road right opposite the fence. Mr. P. at once sent Ernest with three or four men to stop these bullock-drivers from doing any mischief. Both parties from different sides of the ditch entered into a little friendly chaff, which they carried on for some time. Then the bullock-drivers unyoked their teams, all but one, and went to Mr. P.'s hut and put up for the night, receiving their food, lodging, &c., free, as if they had paid for it, and taking it quite as a matter of course. As soon as it was dark they went out, quite with the knowledge of the men, who, having no direct orders, did nothing to prevent them. Then they pulled up the two fences, levelled the ditch, and with their yoked team drew the wagons or drays, one by one through Mr. P.'s paddocks to the road beyond. The next morning Mr. P.'s men had to repair the fences, and Mr.

P. had to make an arrangement with the run-holders to do something to the lower road to make it more passable during the winter months, on condition that the bullock-drivers should keep to it. Thus this little matter, which promised at one time to lead to a great disturbance, was amicably settled.

There was one other little affair connected with it, though. This was with a man named Geddes, a coal merchant some distance up the country. Towards dusk one day, Ernest's attention was attracted by a loud shouting and a cracking of fences. He went out to see what it was, and caught sight of a man galloping through the last paddock towards Oamaru. When the man (who turned out to be old Geddes, very drunk) got to the fence, where the old road used to lead out, the horse stopped dead (having encountered a stiff fence and a ditch), and deposited old Geddes where he wanted to be, but not in the way he wanted to be, on the other side. Nothing daunted, the old fellow tumbled back again through the ditch and over the fence, and after a few ineffectual attempts at length succeeded in mounting again. He was in no humour to be stopped, so he clapped spurs to his steed and shouted in a drunken tone, "Over, over!" The old horse, a very veteran, who had seen rough days, and bore the proofs in the shape of ring-bone, and almost all other ills to which horse-flesh is heir, evidently did not consider his master to be in a proper frame of mind. At any rate he had no intention of jumping, yet, urged by the spurs, he pressed and leaned heavily against the fence. At last the top rail gave way, and snapping, horse and rider rolled over into the ditch. By this time Ernest and one or two men had got down to the scene of action. Seeing that Geddes was hopelessly drunk, they said nothing to him about the damage, but helped him on to his steed, and to use the expression of an old Scotch shepherd, who lent his aid, let him

"gang his ain gait." He galloped off at once, shouting "On, on!" much to the amusement of Ernest and the men. The next time Ernest saw him was up at the Omarama, at a cattle-branding. Geddes had come up on some business to see Walker, the owner. He joined in helping to draw in the slack of the rope from the outside. "Shep," Walker's sheep-dog, was very jealous of strangers, so when he saw old Geddes fully employed stooping and straining with all his might at the rope, he trotted quietly behind him, gave him a tremendous nip that made him jump into the air, and then ran away. This trick "Shep" repeated three times. Even Walker could not help laughing, though he was very angry that his dog should have been so badly behaved.

"Shep" always was very troublesome in this way. One day later on, Harold and Ernest were killing a steer, when Simmons (who at that time was helping Miller, who held the next run above Walker's) came up. Ernest stepped forward to shake hands with him, but "Shep" was quicker, and with a sudden bound sprang on poor Simmons, caught him by the thigh, and after inflicting a deepish wound, tore his trousers right down to the bottom. Harold Walker at once flogged "Shep," chained him up, and then consoled with Simmons, and afterwards gave him a pair of trousers from the futtah.

Two or three days after Geddes had broken down the Papakaio fence, Mr. J. told Ernest he wanted him to drive five or six horses to Dunedin, a distance of about ninety miles. He was to ride a different horse each day, and was to be especially careful about one little pony belonging to Miss V., "Rob Roy." Mr. and Mrs. P. were living in Dunedin till their new house was thoroughly finished: they now wanted their horses to ride. Ernest was delighted with having this job. He started from Papakaio at the same time as the post-

man, who, in fact, was to act as his guide. It took about three days to drive the horses to town. The last day he had to pass over the "mountain," as the hill between Waikouaiti and Dunedin was called. He had heard a great deal about the difficulty of finding the way over this mountain; and as he knew that he would probably have to return in about six weeks by himself, he carefully noticed the hills and gullies along the whole way. There was a bridle path right from Oamaru to Dunedin; but as there were lots of other tracks made by sheep and cattle, it was easy for a stranger to lose his way. This last day's journey was almost wholly over the mountain. Leaving Waikouaiti and crossing the river, the traveller begins immediately to ascend low ridges gradually leading up to the highest range. The whole of this country was rugged, and covered with a large quantity of timber in certain parts. The gullies on each side of the leading spur seemed to be almost inaccessible with trees and tangled scrub. A wood was quite a new sight to Ernest, as all the Oamaru district (with the exception of an odd and insignificant patch of bush here and there, such as at Papakaio and Taranaki, about three miles from Papakaio) was quite bare of timber of any kind. Cabbage-trees, grass, fern, and flax, were the only natural products of the Oamaru district.

Ernest had very little trouble with the horses all the way, and he reached Mr. P.'s house, where he stayed several weeks and enjoyed himself very much before returning to the station.

The day after his return, a lot of cattle had to be branded, and while they were engaged in this work, a cow got very savage with Harry for roping her calf. She charged him, and had he not fallen she would certainly have tossed him: he fell right on his back with his legs in the air. His fall was sudden; his breeches were tight: crack they went right down the



legs and across the seat; the men outside were in fits of laughter: the cow was utterly astounded: wheeling short round she made a dash at the gate. The rails were up, but not pegged. Ernest was keeping the gate and was laughing with the rest. The cow hardly gave him time to "change his tune" (to use Harry's expression), but he did change it. He never attempted to stop the cow at all, but took to his heels: she burst through the rails and gave chase: he tried to cross the Papakaio creek (a small and at that part muddy ditch) by a plank instead of jumping it: the plank slipped, and fortunately for him he fell over into the creek. The cow jumped over him, and with a sniff and a snort and a kick up of her heels made off for the plains, leaving Ernest to pick himself out of the mud.

Shortly after this, Warrington, a new cadet, but older than either Harry or Ernest, while riding out to a cattle-hunt on a beautiful little mare, "Nina," much liked by all on the station on account of her easy pace, was thrown and his collar-bone broke. This accident disabled him for more than three weeks, during which time Ernest got a large share of riding. At one time several head of troublesome cattle, and among them a bull, were in the yard. The bull was to be taken to the Waikoura mob, as the herd running near there was called. Young Fricker, one of the stockmen, had to drive him there: no easy task. The instant the gate was opened this young bull bolted out, and, taking no notice of the road, made straight over the paddock fences, jumping them like a horse. It was soon clear that Fricker would never be able to drive him by himself. Ernest was despatched to help, on a very good stock-mare, "Music." The bull quickly showed that, do what the riders would, he was determined to go his own way. The bull began to charge, got his horn underneath Ernest's leg, and lifted him nearly off the saddle, after making a long line of blood on the mare's

side by goring her. Ernest doubled the thick end of the lash of his whip and used it freely over the animal's head. The whip was soon knocked to pieces: but to no purpose, for the bull still kept pressing on the mare and endeavouring to get his horns under her. Then Ernest took the handle (these handles are generally about a foot or eighteen inches long and always loaded) and brought it down over the animal's nose, and also just between its horns; a few blows on each of these places made the bull pause and draw off. It was touch and go with Ernest. He could only keep his position (going along at full gallop, with one leg suddenly shoved over the horse's back by the bull's horns) by clinging to the mane with one hand, while he belaboured the bull with the stockwhip in the other. Fricker being a far better hand with the whip than Ernest, and having a better whip, it was determined that Ernest should act as a decoy to the bull by riding close in front of him, and inducing him to charge in the direction in which they wished him to go, while Fricker galloping up behind was to use his whip. By this means they not only made the bull go a considerable distance on the right road, but also soon completely cowed him, so that Fricker was able to drive him the rest of the way by himself.

"Scab" having broken out among the sheep, it became necessary to dip them in tobacco-water. The place fixed on as most suitable was the "Boundary Creek," a creek with a large bed and high banks, but not much water, about half-way between Papakaio and Oamaru. A large dip was built there, and two or three huge iron tanks, holding about four hundred gallons each, had been set up, and chimneys built against them, so that each might have a large fire to boil it. As soon as the water boiled the tobacco was put in, the essence being drawn from it by the boiling water, just as the essence is drawn from tea.

The tobacco, which was sometimes in flat cakes and sometimes in twisted sticks, had all to be pulled apart first, leaf from leaf, so as to let the water get at it more easily. This was a long and tedious job. Tobacco for sheep-dipping was always far cheaper than tobacco for smoking; for, though perfectly good for smoking while it remained in bond, yet when purchased for dipping from the government stores, it was spoiled for smoking by having spirits of tar poured over it. For sheep-dipping tobacco was almost a necessity, the nicotine being a very powerful remedy; consequently no duty was charged on it: but tobacco for smoking, being a luxury, had always a heavy duty on it.

Each tank-full was made much stronger than the actual strength required in the dip, because the water, being at boiling point in the tank, needed to be cooled in the dip before it could be used, consequently a lot of cold water was then mixed with it till it was reduced to the right strength and heat. The greatest heat allowable was one hundred and thirty degrees Fahr. The temperature was never allowed to go below one hundred and ten. Once or twice unfortunate mistakes were made. The thermometer was not carefully enough watched, and the water was allowed to get too hot, so that a few sheep got scalded. But accidents of this kind were rare. At first the right way of building the fire-places for the boilers was not understood, and then it took from six to eight hours to boil a tank, and men had to take it in turns to watch the fires all night; but afterwards a tank could be boiled in an hour and a half or two hours. A tent was pitched on the spot, and the blankets used to be taken there for the men and for Mr. J. and others every Monday, and they were brought back on Saturday. It was now spring-time, and the roads were very muddy. An Irishman had to drive the horse and cart with the blankets. One day he was very careless about it and splashed the blankets

with mud. As luck would have it, Warrington's blankets got the greater part of the mess, and were really in a filthy state. He was very angry, and made some remarks to one of the men rather disparaging to this Irishman, adding that he should like to punch his head. This man, of course, repeated his words: in fact, Warrington told him to do so, because he intended to punish the Irishman. Meanwhile, Warrington and Ernest were washing their hands at the window in their bedroom. The Irishman came up to the window and began abusing Warrington, calling him all kinds of vile names. Warrington, busy washing his hands, said,—

“Now, the quicker you leave off your abuse the better it will be for you.”

“Will it?” replied the man, with added oaths and epithets.

“One more warning,” said Warrington (making the soap froth on his hands). “Be off, or I’ll knock you down.”

“Two can play at that game,” was the answer, accompanied with another shower of filthy language. The next instant Warrington was out at the door, and the man Paddy received two tremendous blows from his fists, right in the eyes: a third well-directed blow under the ear levelled him to the ground.

“There,” said Warrington, “you’ve got more than you bargained for, but not as much as you deserve.”

Paddy picked himself up from the ground, and (whether confused by the suddenness of the blows, or the soap in his eyes, or afraid, is uncertain) took himself quietly off without a word. Everyone thought the fuss was over, and that Paddy had accepted his punishment as richly merited. Warrington and Ernest passed from their bedroom through the kitchen or old dining-room into Mr. J.’s new dining-room, where they found Mr. J. While at dinner they began recounting

what had happened. In the middle of their tale they were startled by a savage voice shouting, "Warrington! Warrington!" loudly. Ernest went to see what was the matter. In the kitchen and at one side of their bedroom door was Paddy, an axe in his hand, screaming at the top of his voice for Warrington (who, as he fancied, was in the bedroom) to come out, but not adding that he was prepared to knock him down with an axe, in fact, to murder him. Ernest told him that Warrington was not there, but standing behind himself and Mr. J.; and after a time he persuaded Paddy to leave; but his attempts at persuasion would not have had any effect had they not been preceded by a burst of laughter on his part when he first caught sight of Paddy's wild and strange-looking figure: his face, never very beautiful, bruised and swollen, his hair on end, his torn shirt-sleeves and trousers, his frantic gestures, all formed a very ludicrous picture; and, in spite of the serious and terrible deed poor Paddy was intending in his fury to commit, Ernest could not help laughing heartily. That laughter brought Paddy a little to his senses, made him half ashamed of himself, and prepared him for after-persuasion.

"Now, Paddy," said Ernest, when he had recovered from his fit of laughter, "Warrington is not in that bedroom, and you may call till doomsday, but he won't come out of that door. So your best plan is to be sensible: go to the hut, wash your hands and face, and eat your dinner like a man. The meat will soon choke that ugly devil, who makes you hold that axe."

"Och! sure, an' if I don't make him pay for it, it's a caution: the nasty, dirty toad, to knock a man about like this for nothing: by jabers, let the beggar only come out!"

"Oh, it's no use your ranting away in that style, its only waste of breath; you know you deserved your beating."

“Desarved the batin’, did I? what for?”

“Why, for being so careless, and afterwards so impertinent. You could not expect any man to stand the abuse you gave; so be off with you now, drop the axe, and let’s hear no more of this.”

After a little more urging, Paddy departed to the hut, still muttering imprecations and threats of revenge on Warrington. During the whole row, Mr. J. had purposely kept in the background; but next morning, when Paddy had somewhat recovered, he paid him off and dismissed him.

There were several unbroken horses running in the Papakaio mob; one a little mare of eight years old which had never had bridle or saddle on. She was a very pretty little thing. A man was hired to break in two or three horses, including this mare. Breaking-in in New Zealand is, like most other work there, far more roughly done than it is in England. Hardly any time or trouble is bestowed on the due mouthing of the horses, consequently they are often terribly hard-mouthed. In three days, after bringing her in and roping her with a lasso, for it was impossible to catch her in any other way, the breaker considered her ready for mounting. He rode her twice for short distances, and then as he had to ride the other two horses he was breaking as well, he asked Ernest to exercise her for him. Ernest was rather glad of the opportunity. The first day she went very well, and though she tried to throw him two or three times on the open plain by buck-jumping and rearing she did not succeed. The second day, however, the instant he began mounting, and before he was fairly seated, she bolted and galloped through the opening (which the bullock-drivers had made in the fence on the old road, and which had never been quite closed up again). It was impossible to stop her, for not only had Ernest not rightly secured his seat in the first instance, but also

she had no mouth at all, and did not care an atom for his sawing at the bit. Up the side of the hill she went in full view of the shearers, who were all in the shed, which had recently been finished. This hill was formed of short steps or terraces, and was very steep. Before she got up far she slipped and stumbled; Ernest, already rather loosely seated, fell off, and the mare rolled to the bottom of the hill, breaking the pommel of the saddle. By the aid of the horse-breaker and some of the shearers, Ernest secured and mounted her again. He and the breaker then rode to Waikoura, from thence to the Maori keike, ten miles from Papakaio, and then home again. In getting off he was a little nervous (though the breaker stood at the head of the mare), and forgot for the moment that the stirrup was too small for his foot with hob-nailed boots on; consequently his foot caught in the right stirrup as he jumped off, and he fell with his hands and head on the ground, but his feet, or rather his right foot, stuck in the stirrup. Fully expecting every instant to have his brains dashed out by the mare's heels, he tried to free his foot. The mare struggled to get away from the breaker and kicked out, but she luckily missed Ernest, and the breaker, a powerful man, held her firmly by the nose, as well as by the rein. At last one of the station-men ran up and freed Ernest's foot for him. After that day he was always exceedingly careful to make quite sure that both his feet were clear before he attempted to jump off. Generally in the afternoons he rode one of the young horses or the little mare, but in the morning he was working in the shed. Quite a different lot of shearers had been obtained this year,—a far superior lot. Kapiti, however, was among them. One man could shear ninety wethers in the day, and if he was shearing ewes he could do one hundred and fifty in the day. Many of the shearers could manage over a hundred a day, but with wethers

the average was between sixty and seventy. The greater part of the New Zealand sheep are merinos, and they are small. The ewes have many of them at shearing time no wool on the legs or under the belly, and hence are called "bare-bellies." Of course these "bare-bellied" ewes, being small, light, easily handled, and having so little wool, and that on those parts of the body which are most easy to shear, are very quickly shorn. But there is a great deal of knack in handling sheep: some men are very clumsy, and waste half their time struggling with the sheep, while others have no trouble at all, the sheep being in their hands quite passive during the whole operation.

This was the first time Ernest had seen a Maori angry. One of the sheep in Kapiti's pen was noticed to be badly cut. Kapiti declared he had not cut it, but that some other man, a sturdy-looking Englishman called Jack, had put the sheep into his pen after cutting it. Jack declared he had done nothing of the kind. Kapiti danced round him in a great fury, flourishing his shears, shouting to him to come on and he would punch his head, and shaking his fist in his face. Jack took no notice whatever, but went on quietly shearing, till Kapiti caught him a crack in the face. Even then the man did not get very angry. He was evidently accustomed to bouts with these Maoris. He just finished his sheep, let it go, put down his shears, and in true colonial style, licking his hands and doubling his fists, interrupted Kapiti's cackling by a gentle tap on the nose. Then, at once, all the Maori noisy bounce fled, and Kapiti quickly subsided.

Of course the flocks of sheep were not all washed at once for shearing; because if they had been, as it was sometimes three weeks before shearing was finished, or even at times five or six weeks, the latest shorn flocks would have been quite dirty again. The flocks, there-



fore, were washed in relays. About three days of fine hot weather was required after washing for the wool to dry, and the yolk to rise to enable the sheep to be shorn with ease. If the yolk has not risen the wool cuts dry and crisp, and the shears will hardly run in it. In consequence of this, there was a constant washing of sheep going on together with the shearing, and sometimes in all the work on the station as many as forty hands had to be employed. Ernest was sent with Harry, Quarrie, Kapiti, and several others, to put up hurdles, and wash a flock in one of the branches of the Waitaki. All the streams of the Waitaki run at a furious pace and look like muddy milk; they are always in a state of foam, and it is impossible to tell their depth except by actually going into them. Kapiti, however, knew every inch of the river, and took the sheep-washers to a safe stream about up to their waists in the deepest part. Mr. J., Harry, Kapiti, and Ernest did the greater part of the wading necessary. They had to be in the water the whole day. It was bitterly cold, although the weather was hot, for the Waitaki in summer is almost entirely snow-fed. While they were eating their bread and meat in the middle of the day, Harry discovered that there were lots of whitebait in the river. When Ernest was sent with Quarrie for the hurdles again about a week after, Mrs. P. made a couple of nets like butterfly nets, and with these they caught in half-an-hour enough whitebait for the whole station for breakfast. The river was such a distance away however, that not often did they trouble to go there, tempting though the whitebait were.

When the dipping of the sheep was finished, it was for a long time after necessary to "tail" several flocks, so as to prevent their mixing with other flocks and so spreading the disease.

After shearing, therefore, Ernest was appointed to one flock of about one thousand ewes and their lambs.

Now, for the first time, he got paid for his work. The arrangement he made was to receive fifty-five pounds a year and to be found in everything but clothes: a very small item where moleskin trousers at nine shillings a pair, and blue shirts of 'rough serge, with heavy hob-nailed boots at from ten shillings to fourteen shillings per pair, form the greater part of a man's attire. He had to keep the sheep on the edge of the hills and on the plain between Papakaio and the "Big Hill." His quarters were at the foot of the "Big Hill," in a small one-roomed hut made of sods. The roof was rather dilapidated and let the water through in several places, and the walls were more or less broken by the cattle having dug their horns into them. There was an old stretcher in one corner and a deal box in another, together with a camp-oven and a potato pot, all left by the former shepherd, a German, Schluter, whose daughter had lately married another German, Christian, who kept an inn up the Waitaki, and with whom Schluter had gone to live.

The "Big Hill" was a hill in shape almost round, rising up in the midst of the other hills, but facing and sloping down to the plain. It towered high above all its neighbours. The front part of it was about the same height as the front of all the rest of the range, but this front was almost separated from the highest point, apparently having been torn from it, as the inside of it was quite steep and broken, just as the outside of the highest part was also a sheer quartz cliff. The space between was all broken ground, principally of quartz gravel, and it formed a Maori burying-place. It was a very weird-looking spot. Over one of the Maori graves were two spears and a pair of paddles stuck in the ground.

The first few days Ernest had a good deal of trouble with his sheep, but after that he managed by careful working, and using the dogs as little as possible, to get

them quite quiet, and he accustomed them to come regularly to their camping-ground at a certain hour. The only thing he had to be careful about was being up at daybreak to stop them from racing on to the hills. By proper attention at the proper times he found that he had little to do; so he often occupied himself lying on the hill-side in view of his flock reading sometimes Shakespeare, and sometimes Sir Walter Scott's Novels, over and over again, for he lived for a whole year at the Big Hill, hardly seeing any one. As soon as he got leisure, however, one of his first works was to build a house for his dogs: then he made one for some fowls, which he procured from the station. Both of these erections were made with sods and manuka scrub. His chicken he found constantly carried off by the hawks in his absence, so that he was never able to rear any. He was supplied once every two months with a load of pine firewood from the station, but he used often (once or twice a month at least) to walk along the leading range from the Big Hill towards the Waireka, for about two miles to a small manuka bush at the left hand of the range in a deep gully. Here he would get two or three back-loads of manuka, carry them all to the top of the hill, and then carry one all the way home, fetching the others at his leisure on other days. The manuka he found better than the pine for making ashes to put on the top of his camp-oven to cook his bread and meat. By the practice he got here he became a pretty good bread maker and cook. His loaves hardly ever failed to rise well; before he left Papakaio he obtained a lesson from Mrs. Hunt, a splendid maker of bread, and this was one great secret of his success. He managed the washing of his trousers and shirts better also, but he always found button-sewing a grievance and a difficulty. The needle much more frequently penetrated his finger than it did the hole in the button through

which it ought to have gone. Towards the end of his stay at the "Big Hill" on Christmas Day it rained very hard, and, as on rainy days the sheep were always more restless, and more desirous to gain the shelter afforded by the hills, Ernest had to be up earlier than usual and to stay out later. He rose about four (it being then light, as it was about Midsummer), and, taking a crust of dry bread in his hand,—for the sheep having been very restless the night before, he had not been able to make the usual provision, and he had no meat, and in fact nothing to eat with his bread except treacle, which he could not well take with him on his walk,—he trudged off after the sheep. They had got farther along the hills than he had expected. One or two had got into the "tutu," and required bleeding. It was twelve o'clock when he reached the hut again, famished, and aware that there was nothing for him to eat. On entering, to his surprise, on the rough wooden table, or rather box, he saw three neat little packets tied with blue ribbon, and a letter also tied with ribbon, addressed to him in a lady's hand-writing. Opening the letter he found that it came from Mrs. V., wishing him a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and begging him to accept a cake, a plum-pudding, and a Bath chap. Mrs. V. was an old colonist, having come out in the same ship with Captain Cargill. She was also a very kind old lady, and lived at Crusoe Cliffs, a mile Big Hill side of Papakaio, and about three miles from Ernest's hut. She invited him also to tea. He was, you may be sure, delighted with the presents and with the invitation, but far more than all was he pleased to feel that he was not utterly alone or forgotten. Really and truly the whole thing came on him in every way by surprise: he had not even known that it was Christmas Day: he had forgotten all about it, and the weather was not at all calculated to remind him, for then it was hot and

muggy, though wet, and for many days before it had been broiling hot.

A few evenings after this, Ernest had just seen his sheep all right for the night (it being about an hour before dark, by which time they were always pretty well settled, though he used always to take a look the very last thing), when he was startled by hearing tremendous bellowings which sounded close to the hut, and as if the animals uttering them were approaching nearer. He looked out at the door but could see nothing. He then ran across to the creek, the banks of which formed a higher ground than the site of the hut. Then he saw coming across the plain from different directions, as if with the intention of meeting at a huge solitary cabbage-tree that stood out in the plain near the mouth of the creek,—or rather near the spot where the creek disappeared underground,—two bulls, clearly hostile to each other. One was the animal which had given Fricker and Ernest so much trouble a year before, and which had since, in another encounter, killed the mare "Music" by ripping her up the belly (though he did not touch the cadet who was riding her at the time, and who was thrown to the ground). This bull was a very powerful animal, well-proportioned and of a beautiful roan colour. The other bull, rather larger and older, was spotted red and white. When they got close to the cabbage-tree they began eyeing one another more closely, tearing up the ground with their fore-feet and with their horns, lashing their tails and bellowing terrifically. The first encounter seemed to make the ground echo, they charged so furiously. At once their horns became interlocked: for nearly twenty minutes they struggled without either seeming to get the advantage, till the roan by a dexterous twist of his head thrust the other staggering aside, shook his head free of his horns, and swiftly drove his own horns into the enemy's flanks. This ended the conflict.

The old bull uttered a groan and limped off towards the hut, pursued for some distance by the roan, who however, soon left him.

Ernest, having had little to do with cattle on foot, now began to feel alarmed. He had already observed that the cattle were rather fond of digging their horns into sod walls and embankments, and he trembled for his own hut in the present excited state of the bull's feelings. He returned to the hut and took the dogs in with him, for he was afraid that the old bull might be infuriated at his beating, and might revenge himself on him. Slowly the poor old animal limped straight up to the hut, Ernest watching all the time with anxious eyes. When it reached the hut it began butting its horns into the corner sods. Ernest, fearing that it would at that rate soon have the whole building about his ears, made a sudden dash out with both dogs, flinging at the same time one or two heavy pieces of manuka scrub at its head: the bull made no resistance, but limped almost sorrowfully away. Ernest did not know till afterwards that running free as they did in New Zealand among all the cattle, the bulls, unless provoked, were the quietest animals of all; except, of course, the very wild bulls that are found at the foot of the mountain ranges in some parts.

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LETTER FROM ERNEST TO HIS MOTHER,  
"Big Hill," Waitaki, Otago, New Zealand,  
November 26th, 1861.

My dear Mamma,

The ladies came here 'picnicing' the other day. They had a tarpaulin spread for them about half-a-mile from the hut. I believe it was rather a dull affair. I was at the Maerawhenua at the time, but the man who

drove them told me that they made a "terrible zight o' fuss about nothun." "They might just as well have had it at the Cliffs," he said, "and then it would not have taken so much time."

The man's costume consisted of a pair of trousers, very bright-coloured, the pattern about a foot square, a white waistcoat *flowered*, black coat, red neck-tie, and a straw-brimmed hat! A benign smile, nearly approaching a grin, set off his dress to admiration, and made him look as ridiculous as a man possibly could look. If, as I said in my last letter, Arthur cannot get a place in England before Pelham starts, I think his best plan would be to come with Pelham: that is to say, of course, if he is still in the same mind after he has read my last mail's letter. He will only be spending money in England if he stops with no employment; and *here*, although he cannot make much and will have to work very hard, still it will be better for all than that he should remain entirely dependent on you and papa.

Although I know you do not wish him to come out, yet I cannot help saying I wish he would.

Perhaps it is rather a selfish wish, but of course he would be a companion to me such as no one else out here could be. It is not *entirely* a selfish wish either, for it is partly for his own good and partly for yours, though you may not think so. The outfit, &c., would be expensive: yet after that, if you are not easily able, you need never give him another penny. But, of course, he must fully make up his mind to work hard and do his best in the face of all difficulties. I do not wish him to come out thinking that he will be able to do great things with little or no trouble, and to return to England in a few years with a fortune: very far from it. He will have to work in the sheep and cattle yard, milk cows, herd sheep, carpenter, put up fencing, dig ditches, plant and dig potatoes,—not as at home, go into the garden for half-an-hour, and when he has enough

for dinner or is tired, come back and think that he has done wonders; but work all day at the same stupid things for a week together. He will also have to ride a little, and walk most likely a great deal. At sheep-washing time, he must go up to his neck in water and work all day for two or three days together from six in the morning till eight at night in wet clothes, and no fire to go to, or at all events a precious small one. In shearing time, he must be up at 4.30 a.m., fill the pens, count out shorn sheep, look after the men, roll up fleeces and help to put the bales on the dray, &c., &c., till seven p.m. every day for three or four weeks, and *that* is very hard work. If, after all this, he chooses to come, why, I shall be very glad to see him, for I think that the two of us together might do a great deal more than one in proportion, and end both of our exiles the sooner. I believe that Harry has sent a list of things to be got for Pelham, so I shall not mention all the things Arthur may want. Only please to get what I named in my last letter, also a waterproof coat like the one you sent me, with leggings to match; woollen cord trousers, like those which Peters made, *and no other sort*, unless he has, as I expect, some old things, which of course he had better bring. As many old shirts as will only stand one wearing will also be very useful; old socks, too, for the voyage: for it is a great nuisance to have everything dirty when one lands. A good telescope and a small opera-glass like Harry's. Four pairs of woollen-cord trousers and no cotton-cord breeches, for cotton-cord always splits, and I am sure Arthur would never wear breeches if he got them, they are such ugly things, and so very uncomfortable; one cannot stir a peg without fear of seeing them split in all directions, and fall to the ground. The voyage will be sure to be middling miserable, unless he has people he knows on board to speak to, especially in the tropics, for there is nothing earthly to do. One feels



intensely hot, parching with thirst, and has nothing but some dirty water to drink, for wine-and-water only makes one more thirsty. He would find a few bottles of raspberry vinegar useful, if you could spare some, and he might bring a pot or two of different jams out with him. Jam is a thing we never see here, unless in a lady's house, and I for one seldom enter one. So if you could spare a few pots they would be very acceptable. Do not bother about them, however, if it is any trouble. I asked you to send me out one of those brown holland hats, but I suppose you either did not understand what I meant, or forgot. Arthur had better bring two with him, one for himself and one for me. I cannot get any equal to them out here for the hot weather, except cabbage-tree hats, and they cost thirty or thirty-five shillings of the *common* sort; but if I sent to Melbourne for a neat one, *and* one that would fit me, it would cost three guineas! The brown holland hats which I mean had only just come out before I left, and you got one each for Frank, George, and me. They have a straw brim only, and the top part is of brown holland.

About sheets, blankets, counterpanes, &c., you know a great deal better than I what to get. Do not spend any extra money on a flash box, for it will be sure to get knocked to pieces, and a round top is very awkward in a cabin. He had better have his keys with him, and not, as I did, have them sent in a letter from Bristol just as the vessel was starting. It is a great thing to come out in a fast sailing vessel. The "*William Miles*," I believe, came out in three months. She sails from Bristol. What I have said to Arthur about the work he will have to do was not to discourage him, but only to let him know what he might expect. I have drawn the worst prospect, but I do not promise him better: because if he came out with other ideas, and was not satisfied, it would be all my fault. I have

no fear, however, of his being dissatisfied, if he is prepared to work.

It is very amusing sometimes to watch the device a paradise duck and drake use to draw one away from their brood of ducklings. They fly right in front of one, about ten or twelve yards off, and run along the ground, flapping their wings as if they were broken. I tried to kill a drake with my stick to-day when it was doing that, and had two or three "awful skims," as Johnny would say. I noticed that when I had chased the drake and duck for some distance from where the ducklings were, the duck flew back and hid them somewhere while the drake still led me on.

28th Nov.—Warrington came by to-day, and he told me that Jeffreys was going to send a man to live with me and to help me with the sheep. I shall be glad, for it is very slow work to see nothing but sheep and cattle feeding, and men and drays passing along the road at a distance. Besides, there is a mob of sheep at the "Boundary Creek" not at all larger than the one I have, and there are *two* men looking after it, and they have their grub cooked for them, and netting to put the sheep in at night, and I have neither. Mr. P. asked me nearly three months ago to thank you and papa for the ham and Bath chaps you sent them, when I wrote next; but I had forgotten all about it till this minute. The size of my head is twenty-one-and-a-half, or twenty-one-and-three-quarter inches, I am not certain which. All the caps you sent me, except the Scotch one, were too large.

8th December.—It would be a good thing to bring out a lot of those 17s. 6d. boots, made to order, very strong. I will give Arthur a pound a pair for as many as he likes to buy in England and sell to me. They might be improved upon by having *two* tongues, and instead of the upper leather being sewn across the instep, as in those which you sent out to me, tell

Collins to leave it open there ; because if it is sewn, the water gets in at the part you lace up, and is not able to run out. Therefore it soaks through and wets one's feet.

I was looking at those saddle straps you sent me for the first time about a week ago, and I found that they were sadly cut in several places, and the buckles were very badly sewn on. They look as if they had been made by some *shoemaker* in a hurry. They are all very well to look at till one takes them up to examine them closely. However, I can soon sew the buckles on properly, and then they will do very well. I have got rid of the black gaiters at last. They were too *swell* for me. There are a great many robberies going on about Dunedin now, and at the diggings. There were sixteen men tied and robbed by the bush-rangers one day a short time ago.

Mr. and Mrs. P. are going to start off for town (Dunedin) to-morrow, Monday, and they will stop for a month. They ride over-land. I went into Papakaio last night to see if I could buy Mr. J.'s saddle, but he would not sell it. To-morrow I am going about forty miles up country to get my mare. I expect to be away two days. I have a man now looking after the sheep with me.

10th December.—I did my up-country work in *one* instead of *two* days. I started at five a.m. and got back at nine p.m., after a ride of eighty miles or more. I was rather disappointed in my mare, and shall try to make an exchange with Mr. J. He came here this afternoon with Mr. V., and as it looked like rain they went back immediately.

11th December.—Mr. J. came again to-day to take the man who is with me to the hills' run, to show him where he wanted a hut put up. He told me that he and Mr. V. went back to Papakaio in twelve minutes yesterday, and got in before the rain came on. It is a

long *four* miles, and takes me, at my fastest walking, an hour and five minutes. So they must have gone at a break-neck pace. I exchanged my mare with him for a mare and foal and five guineas; and I do not think I have got a bad bargain, for I can sell the mare without the foal any day for forty pounds, and I did not expect more than forty-five or at most fifty pounds for the other mare. I have little or no news besides what is contained in this letter, so I shall consider it written to all.

Hoping you are all well,

I remain,

Your affectionate Son,

ERNEST.

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About a month before Ernest was going to leave the "Big Hill," he was asked to come into the home-station for a few days, and a shepherd was sent to take his place. It was a very foggy day, and, when he reached Papakaio about twelve o'clock, he found Mrs. P. and the Misses J. in great distress because they wanted to go for a ride to Oamaru, and though they had despatched a man to ride in the horses at nine in the morning, he had not returned. At nine in the evening the man did return, but without the horses. He said he had been all day looking for them without success, that he had lost his way in the fog, had got to a cabbage-tree and could not get away from it for a long time: he found himself going round and round it, though he fancied he was riding away from it; at last he had got clear of it, but only to repeat the circular motion round a flock of sheep. In this gyrating way he had spent the whole day. At last, when he did come on the dray-track, he was quite at sea as to where he was or what direction he ought to take. Fortunately he chose the right direction, or else he would have been out the greater part of the night. Ernest, who

knew thoroughly the haunts of the horses, was sent next day to find them. He gladly mounted a young newly-broken colt, "Plantagenet," (rather a large-boned, awkward, wooden-mouthed animal) and made away for the river. The fog still continued, but was not quite so dense: there was too a very slight breeze only just perceptible. This acted as a guide to Ernest over the plain, for he kept in the right direction by observing the motion of the tussocks of grass as they were gently waved by the wind. In about an hour he reached the river bed, the edge of which was about seven miles from the station. The fog then began to clear rapidly, and in half-an-hour afterwards he was able to see pretty clearly up and down the river. Presently he caught sight of the horses. They were on a large island. Between him and them was a large branch of the Waitaki, which was then rather swollen and, as usual, muddy and foaming along at a terrific rate. He could not find his usual ford, and while he was searching about for it his eyes fell on a man lying on a gravel-spit in mid-stream. It was a good thirty yards of water that lay between Ernest and the man, but he felt bound to try to cross over to him in case he should not be quite dead: the water was washing over his head. By crossing a little stream lower down he got end on, instead of sideways on, to the spit: the water between him and it there seemed to form little eddies whirling round at a great pace, and it was difficult to tell whether the water was deep or shallow. Ernest, however, thought from all appearances that it would not be very deep, and he was right. The water washed over the saddle, but that was all, and he managed to get alongside the man, or rather the body. It had undoubtedly been in the water some time. The nose and part of the face were eaten away, probably by eels; but the body did not smell, nor was it the least unpleasant, save in appearance. Its preservation was

most likely due to the extreme ice-like coldness of the water. The hands and arms were bare and white, the wristbands of his shirt being unfastened, and being turned part of the way up the arms. There was no coat, the waistcoat (of check cloth, black and white) and the shirt were unbuttoned and the chest exposed. Ernest saw that it would be impossible for him to do anything with the body, as of course he could not lift it on the horse and carry it over the stream with any chance of safety to himself, and moreover the young horse would never have allowed the body to be lifted on. He determined therefore to get the horses first off the island and then to give information at the home-station. The sight of the corpse made him the more careful as to where he crossed the stream, and it was the feeling of not liking to go home and say that he had been afraid to cross, that alone made him attempt to do so. At last he thought he had discovered a ford. The stream ran very rough, and that is sometimes a sign. He forced the horse in, for it was unwilling to enter. He had hardly gone two steps before he found that the horse was out of its depth, and he and it were being swept swiftly down the stream. He had never made a horse swim before, and at first he felt very giddy and almost fell off, the pace downwards seemed to take away his breath, and to make everything all round swim before his eyes. However, having before heard that if this kind of feeling were given in to, drowning was certain, he nerved himself to overcome it. The remembrance of the corpse too helped him as well as the fear of losing his presence of mind. He recovered himself instantly. Well was it that he did. The colt, unused to swimming, and not at all relishing it, attempted, as some horses do, to roll over and over. Ernest clapped the spurs sharply in and jerked the reins: this righted the colt, and Ernest again slackening the reins, it swam bravely on, but when it got near the bank, the landing

place proved to be very steep, and in mounting it the colt was obliged to rise almost perpendicularly on its hind legs. For a time there seemed a doubt whether it would be able to struggle up the bank: the water foamed over Ernest's body and even over his shoulders, and had he not wisely and coolly at once let go the reins and, throwing his arms round the horse's neck, thus given it freedom to struggle up, and himself a means of staying in the saddle, in all likelihood he himself would have been drowned, and most probably the colt too, for no animal in that position could have stood any tugging at, or hanging on by, the reins. The least jerk or strain on the reins would have thrown the colt over on its side into the river, which was rushing past in a great body at the rate of ten miles an hour. To describe Ernest's feelings through those moments would be quite impossible. He almost gave up all hope. Twice the shingly bank gave way, and twice the horse slipped back to its first position. At last, by a great effort, it struggled on to dry ground. How thankful Ernest was! He could scarcely believe he was safe. Soon, however, the thought came on him, "How am I to get back?"

For a time he entertained the idea of staying on the island all night, thinking that surely next day men would be sent to search for him, and he might then be put across in a boat or moguey. A bright thought struck him, as he mournfully reflected on the dreary hours he would have to pass, for it was not yet mid-day.

"The horses will be sure to know where to cross, if there is a ford, and if there is not they will at least get to a good landing-place, and my horse can swim as well as they can."

Acting on this thought, which he expressed aloud, he drove the horses gently round the island to the points he considered most likely. The first two or three places they objected to, but at length they took a

place where the water ran quite smoothly and where the stream was twice as wide as in other parts. Here they crossed without difficulty, the water only just pouring over their backs. Ernest gladly followed them, and still more glad was he when he reached the main land.

On arriving at the station, he gave information to Mr. P. who was a magistrate. He then rode home to his hut, while Mr. P. sent a man down to the newly established police station at Oamaru. Two days afterwards, while Ernest was cooking his dinner, a trooper rode up and questioned him about the corpse. Ernest told him that if he would wait half-an-hour he would ride over to the river with him. The trooper was a gentleman, an Irishman, and a very pleasant fellow.

"What a place for a man to live!" he said, eyeing the hut all over, and then casting a glance towards the Maori burying ground,—

"I would not live here by myself for a thousand a year."

"Oh! I don't mind it," said Ernest, "I have plenty to do, and a few good books to read, so the time flies by quickly."

"But what misery to be cut off from every one, and to live in solitude!"

"Well, I was getting almost tired of it, especially since it struck me that it was rather a waste of life."

"I should think so. By the bye, I tried to find your hut two nights ago, on the very day that you discovered the corpse, but in the dark I came across what appeared to me a terrific abyss. I saw nothing of it this morning. This made me turn tail. How was it I did not come across it again to-day? I could not have gone wrong, for I am positive that I pursued almost the same direction."

"You must have come across the open part of the Big Hill creek. After leaving the hills it runs, or



rather stagnates, and here and there, where there is a break and a fall in the ground, drips, along a deep ravine, with steep clay and quartz gravel cliffs on each side: these cliffs gradually decrease as it gets further out in the plain, and at last cease where the bed disappears underground. I dare say you noticed that now and then the ground sounded hollow under the horse's feet."

"Yes, I did, and I suppose last night I came un-luckily to the steepest part of those cliffs, for in the dim light of the moon, as I looked over the edge it appeared a terrific abyss with no bottom perceptible: it quite frightened me, I assure you."

By this time Ernest had his horse ready saddled (he had lately bought a horse, as he thought, now that he would be leaving the shepherding, he would find one of his own useful), and the two started off together. Arriving at the river bed, Ernest found things vastly changed from what they had been a few days before. Owing to the warm rains that had continued during that time, the Waitaki was swollen very high, the course of the main stream had altered where the body of the man had been, and there was nothing to be seen of gravel-spit or body. When Ernest could not show the body, the serjeant seemed hardly to believe that he had ever seen it, but Ernest's manner and words convinced him. He told Ernest that every one on the Waitaki had been glad when they heard the body had been seen, because it was the body of a well-known bullock driver, who was much addicted to drink, and that about four weeks before, having received his wages for the season, he went the way of drinkers on such occasions, that is, he went (to use a colonial phrase) "on the spree," i.e. to a public-house to drink and muddle away all his earnings. The public-house (or accommodation house, as such places were called), which he selected was situated on the northern bank of

the Waitaki, opposite the Maori "keike," which was situated on the southern bank: the owner of it at that time, who was also the ferryman, had not a good reputation. The bullock driver after drinking there for a few days got almost frantic. He wished to be crossed over the river. The ferryman refused, most likely, as was thought, because he wanted him to spend all his earnings at his own inn. The driver, who was a good swimmer, finding the ferryman was determined not to cross him over, left the house, swearing that he would swim over. The ferryman was believed never to have troubled about him, but to have let him go, not caring what became of him, or at any rate not believing that he would dare to attempt the swimming. He did try, however, and was seen to swim bravely across till within a yard or so of the land, the water appearing to have sobered him: the current ran very strongly in great waves just at the spot where he was trying to land, the bank being perpendicular and rather high: so strong was the current that it rolled the swimmer over and over, so that he lost all power and was swept away down the stream. Ernest found the body at a spot about six miles lower down, and it must at that time have been in the water over three weeks. Both Ernest and the serjeant were greatly disappointed, for they would have liked not only to give the body decent burial, but also to have had an inquest held on it, and a thorough investigation made.

Shortly after this, Ernest left the "Big Hill" for good. One of his first tasks after reaching Papakaio was to ride across the ranges to Every's to fetch two bullocks. His road lay past the Taranaki cliffs and over the Waireka. Just as he was getting to the Waireka ford, he observed a shepherd running towards him, shouting and pointing. He looked about to see what he could mean, and caught sight of a couple of large dogs which the shepherd was evidently pursuing. He crossed over, galloped up to

the shepherd, and learned that these dogs had been worrying the sheep. He at once gave chase. The dogs separated, and one at once jumped down the steep side of the Waireka and swam across. In a few minutes the other followed his example lower down. It was impossible for Ernest to cross anywhere but at the ford. He lost a lot of time, therefore, in getting over, and by the time he had crossed, one dog had gone straight up the cliffs opposite, and was out of sight, but the other, a large spotted dog, half mastiff, half bulldog, was trotting along towards Oamaru by the bridle path, which then passed between two high cliffs. There were several Maori-head lagoons in the flat between these limestone cliffs, and when Ernest came galloping on to the dog, it took refuge in one of these. While Ernest was trying to drive it out, the old shepherd came up with his dog, and in a few minutes Bill Smith also joined them with his dogs. The three dogs were not long in turning him out from his hiding-place, aided as they were by the three men, who kept hurling stones into the lagoon wherever they heard a rustling in the grass. Again Ernest gave chase. He had nothing in his hand, as his horse was a very free goer, requiring neither whip nor spur. When he came up with the dog, he was compelled for want of something better to take off his stirrup leather and iron, and as he galloped alongside of the dog he tried to knock him down with it. He managed to knock the brute over two or three times, but it was a heavy powerful animal and not easily killed. Its pace soon began to flag, and then it took to dodging. Ernest thought he could manage it better on foot; so taking off his great coat, and fastening his horse to a flax-bush, he made a rush on the dog, which was sitting panting, with its tongue hanging out of its mouth, only a few yards off. The dog returned the compliment, and sprang on to Ernest, who received him on his great coat and tried to

envelop him in it, but it was no use, the brute slipped away, and all Ernest could do was to give it a parting rap over the flanks with the iron. His coat was torn, and the dog, thoroughly cowed, for his teeth could make nothing of so much fricze, again hid in a lagoon. Again Ernest started him from this, but could not overtake him before he passed over the Oamaru hill and down into one of the houses. Ernest had not been to Oamaru for over a year, and he hardly recognised the place again, there were so many houses. He followed the dog to this house and discovered that the doctor was the owner. Having found out this, and believing the Doctor to be out, he got over the fence again and was quickly mounting, when who should rush after him but the doctor, no hat on his head, and very tipsy.

"You have half-killed my dog, sir! you shall pay for it! I'll have you up before the magistrates to-morrow," &c., &c., all uttered in a very thick and uncertain voice, and with much waving of hands and gesticulation. Ernest quietly replied,—

"Very well, old fellow, I too shall bring my sheep bill, for Mr. P. who is one of the magistrates, you know, is sure to consider that, especially as the sheep belong to him, and there are several of them, so that my bill will more than cancel yours. The fact is, I'm very sorry to have hurt your dog, but you must endeavour to keep him off other people's sheep. If I could have caught him I should have killed him, and as it is, I should not be at all surprised if Mr. P. insists on his being killed, for not long ago some dogs (the culprits have never been discovered) drove seven hundred and more of his sheep over the cliffs at the head of the Papakaio gully, and they were all killed or smothered."

The doctor did not listen patiently to this harangue of Ernest's, but kept interrupting him with oaths of vengeance. However, he understood what was said sufficiently well to confine himself to denunciation,

and meeting Ernest about a fortnight after, he made an apology for his rudeness. Ernest then asked after the dog. It had quite recovered, and had never attempted to leave the house since.

Ernest had not been at the home-station many days, when a heavy rain began, which was afterwards known by many as the "fifteen days' rain;" all the rivers were unusually flooded: many run-holders were stopped at Oamaru on their way to Dunedin: the postman was unable to perform his usual fortnightly journey, and in fact everybody for a time was fastened at home by it. About the tenth day, a stranger to Ernest, dripping wet, of course, stoutly built, yet wiry, and mounted on a stout cob, rode up to the Papakaio fence, jumped off, hooked his bridle over the fence to secure his horse, and walked briskly up to Mr. J.'s house. Mr. J. recognised him at once as a Mr. Walker, who had lately bought a share of Robison's run at Omarama, about seventy miles higher up the Waitaki. He informed Mr. J. that the death of his father, Colonel Walker, made it imperative for him to go to Tasmania at once by the steamer, which was to start within two days. Mr. J. said it would be impossible, considering the state of the roads, to do it in the time. Walker, however, was determined, and said he had only called in to get a glass of brandy, and to take any letters there might be, since the postman was afraid to face the rivers. Some did not care to entrust their letters to him, thinking that he would never reach his journey's end, but Mr. J. and Ernest sent theirs by him. Walker afterwards told Ernest about the whole journey, and we will now insert an account of it.

"On hearing of the death of my father, I deemed it necessary to cross at once to Tasmania; so saddling my good old horse, 'Thunder,' who had had to swim over most of the rivers of New Zealand with me on his back, I started off determined to bid defiance to the rain and

the rivers. The first obstacle of any importance that I encountered was the river that runs down from Dansey's station, the Otakeike. This was a mere matter of swimming, and there was no great difficulty. I have often crossed before and since, when there was not a drop of water in its bed. The next was the Maerawhenua. This was more formidable. It was greatly swollen, and I saw that I should have a good quarter of a mile's swim: the crossing was near the mouth of the river, where it runs into the Waitaki. I had no desire to be carried into that river, of which I had already had some experience. I noticed also that two stone houses lately erected on its banks were no longer to be seen. However, cross I must; and after going up the bank a little till I got to a place where the stream ran from my side towards the other side into a bend and apparently a good landing-place, I plunged in, and, after being carried a long way down, 'Old Thunder' got footing safely on the shingle on the opposite side. I then rode up to what had been Gardiner's the overseer's house, but it was quite deserted, and it was filled with water. The water was at least four feet deep in it. Leaving this, I went on to the woolshed, where I found Gardiner and his family.

"'Where did you come from?' was the gruff old Scotchman's salute.

"'From Omarama,' I promptly answered.

"'More fool you! None but a madman would try to swim that river (pointing to the Maerawhenua) now. However, you must be cold and hungry. Come along and take a nip, while we are getting something for you to eat.'

"'I must get to Oamaru to-night, so I can't stay long, thank you, but I shall be very glad to accept your offer.'

"After my dinner, in spite of the rain and the grumbling of old Gardiner at my folly, I pursued my

way, and reached Papakaio (as you know) and then Oamaru, having accomplished a good eighty miles that day. First I looked well to 'Old Thunder,' saw him well fed and comfortably bedded down for the night, and then I got a change of things from the stores, and had my own things dried, and pegged away at some supper. I found several run-holders waiting for the rains to cease and the rivers to go down, and grumbling at having nothing to do, and no amusements. They all, with one voice, declared how impossible it would be for me to reach Dunedin, and advised me, as I valued my life, to stop. However, no persuasion could stop me, and on I went the next morning, having got up before breakfast and looked well to 'Old Thunder.' I soon reached the Waireka, which, as you know, Ernest, is rather a ticklish river to cross when flooded. The crossing is only just wide enough for a dray to pass through, and the banks on either side above and below are perpendicular and high, so that once carried below the crossing, you are a gone man, no matter how good your horse, for it is impossible for the strongest swimming horse to make headway against such a stream: the most a horse can do is not to lose ground. Other rivers were far wider and required much more swimming, but this little stream I considered the most dangerous. I knew 'Old Thunder' was a powerful swimmer, and over so narrow a brook could afford to swim against stream a bit; so heading him rather upwards, but giving him every possible freedom, I went in. We only just managed to make the landing. One of the Campbells of Kakanui, who happened to be passing at the time, watched me cross, and then came up and asked me to dine with him and his brother. I did so. They endeavoured to persuade me to stop; one saying there were seven rivers to swim, the other correcting him, cried out, 'No, there are only six; for the Kakanu and the Island stream are one.' The

Campbells were determined to accompany me to the bank of the Kakanui to see me safe across. This was the longest swim I had. When I had crossed both streams, now united, I waved my handkerchief and shouted to the Campbells, and then rode on. On reaching the Otepopo and swimming the stream, there being still a lot of back water to cross, I thought I would relieve 'Old Thunder' by wading by his side. I put the rein over my arm and for a little distance waded along quite comfortably: but the water gradually deepened; still I kept on wading, thinking that it would get shallower again, till at last I had to swim. 'Old Thunder' swam faster than I did. I could not free the reins from my arm, and was dragged underneath him: when we landed, my head was between his hind feet; he was quite quiet, and I freed myself, puffing from my immersion. Mounting, again I went on. After crossing the range of mountains between that and the Shag river,—the 'Horse-range,'—I got to the Shag river. Here 'Old Thunder' first began to show signs of flagging. I therefore, finding him faltering in the river, threw off my great coat, jumped off, held his mane by one hand and swam beside him. We reached Waikouaiti accommodation-house at dark, thoroughly wearied out. 'Old Thunder' being supplied with a good hot mash, being well rubbed down, and having plenty of warm dry straw, I changed my clothes, but till I offered the landlord a pound I could not get him to dry them; even then the old fellow was very grumpy. Two or three run-holders were here, waiting to go to Dunedin, but were stopped by the river. Worthington was among them. On going to 'Old Thunder' in the stable next morning before breakfast, I found him looking as fresh as a lark, notwithstanding his long two days' journey, eighty miles the first day, and sixty the second, besides swimming eight rivers. After breakfast, Worthington, a



friend of his, and I, rode down to the Waikouaiti river. Worthington and his friend wished to make their horses swim over first, and then to cross themselves in the postman's tub. I pointed out to them that the river was running right in to the bank from which they intended to start their horses, and that consequently, unguided, the horses would only be carried back to land a little lower than the spot they started from on the same side. They were obstinate in carrying out their own plan, in spite of all I could say to dissuade them. I waited quietly to see the result. The horses started well, better indeed than could have been expected, but a few moments proved the truth of my remarks. The river was running too strongly against the horses and they were carried back to the same bank again. Three times they were tried, and each time with the same result. I then endeavoured to induce Worthington and his friend to swim across with me, but they were afraid; so I rode in with 'Old Thunder,' and got safely across, being able to guide my horse in such a way that he did not feel the full force of the current against him. I called to the others to come after me when I was on shore, but they were still unwilling. I had nothing for it but to go on reluctantly by myself. I was not well acquainted with the road, and soon after I began ascending the mountain, which was full of different tracks, I got astray. Fortunately Worthington, who knew every inch of the ground, managed to cross the river after I left, and, noticing by my horse's tracks that I had missed the road, hurried on after me and overtook me before I had time to go far. He brought me back, and before night we reached Dunedin. The steamer sailed the next day. We nearly got wrecked by the stormy weather, but we at last reached Tasmanian land in safety."

Such was "Old Walker's" account of the journey, in the course of which he had shown such courage and de-

termination. His father was a colonel in the army, and possessed large government grants of land in Australia and Tasmania. One large grant he held in Tasmania of three thousand acres, where he had a good house and well laid-out grounds. This place was called "Rhodes." There was no pluckier fellow out than "Fred Walker," and though he was not a favourite with some run-holders and some workmen, chiefly because of his straightforward, downright way of looking at and doing everything; yet by those who wished to act reasonably and to work honestly, he was liked for his sterling good qualities.

To return to our history. A short time after the rains were over, as the autumn was coming on, Warrington, Harry, and Ernest were set to fence in the stacks by the new woolshed, and to prepare the threshing machine. Ernest, having carried some hurdles down, was examining the threshing machine, and began to set one of the cog-wheels going. As it turned he was reminded of a schoolfellow of his having squashed his finger in the cogs of a windlass. He at once eagerly called to Warrington, who was leaving the shed where the machine stood,—

"Stop a bit, Warrington! I'll show you how Ted Jones crushed his finger once—"

Poor Ernest got no further. In his eagerness his hand caught in the cogs, and the top of his right forefinger was torn off, the bone of the rest of the finger being also crushed. It was the work of an instant. Ernest himself could hardly believe it. He did not feel much pain, for the hand seemed quite benumbed: but the blood poured out in torrents. Warrington and Harry led him up to the house and bedroom and bathed his hand. The blood still continued to pour out, and Warrington saw that Ernest was getting faint. At once, much to Ernest's disgust, for he had never tasted any before, he forced a glass of Scotch whiskey down his

throat. This dose of Warrington's made Ernest revive a little. Harry, who was skilful in everything, neatly bandaged up his hand. Warrington caught and saddled "Bobby," a fiery little white horse. They mounted Ernest, and he started off for an eight-mile ride to Oamaru to see the doctor. The doctor was out riding with his wife. After two hours he came in, examined the finger, told Ernest the top joint and part of the next was quite gone, and he was afraid that he would have to cut off the rest, it was so badly crushed. Then he bandaged it up again. Ernest rode home singing or rather shouting out snatches of songs and pieces of poetry, as was his custom. On nearing the station he was greeted with shouts of laughter. It was then getting dusk. He found the laughers were Warrington, Harry, and Mr. J. When they first heard his noisy approach they thought a tipsy man was coming, and could hardly believe that Ernest's spirits could be so high after his recent accident. The fact was Ernest felt little pain, although his wound looked so ugly, and his shepherd life had accustomed him to singing scraps of poems, Shakespeare, &c., to the winds, so that at all times such noisy mirth was a relief to him and a great pleasure. Another cause of Harry's and Mr. J.'s laughter was, as Harry told Ernest at once, that they had buried the top joint of his finger in a tin matchbox with all proper funeral rites. Ernest was now laid by for some time, *i.e.* for nearly four months, from all active work except riding. The doctor, who was generally tipsy, insisted on cutting off his finger, every time he came for the first week, but Ernest stoutly refused, and in the end prevailed, so that he now enjoys, and finds the profit of, his maimed fore-finger. He found a little difficulty in guiding a horse with the left hand alone, yet he soon got into it. Writing he could hardly manage at all, still he did not fail to send his usual monthly letter home,

though, of course, much shortened. After he had quite recovered, he was riding the horses into the stock yard one day, when Fred Walker rode up to him and said,—

“I heard that you were wishing to leave Mr. P., and to get a berth elsewhere.”

“Yes,” said Ernest, “if I can see a suitable opening.”

“Well, you know I have lately, conjointly with Sir Henry Young, purchased half of Robison’s run at Omarama, and I am living there as managing partner; and now since my father’s death, having come into a little property, I hope to buy Robison out, and have the whole run in my own hands. I shall often be away, and I want some trustworthy person to look after things for me, to see that the men do their work on the home-station, and that the sheep and cattle are cared for. Would you like that berth?”

“Very much,” said Ernest.

“I cannot offer you more than sixty pounds a year to start with, as I am at present tied to my partner.”

“I shall be willing to take that.”

“When can you come?”

“Next month.”

“That ’ll do. Good-bye.” Thus ended this short conference.

Walker was a man of few words, and never wasted time in talking. Ernest was glad to get anything. He had been earning fifty-five pounds a year as shepherd; but this was a much better berth. He would live on the home-station, have his cooking and washing done, and, of course, horses and everything found him.

Gladly, then, when the time came did he pack his boxes, put them on the dray, get on his horse, and ride off. He made a two days’ journey of it, for it was about seventy miles. The stock-yard and woolshed of the Omarama station were just at the north point of the

hill, which there terminates the range of mountains whose south point is Mount Ida.

A little below and close on the stream was the inn or "accommodation-house": higher up the stream was the wash-pool or dip for scabby sheep: higher still, but close at the foot of the hill, was the men's hut, and further up on the side of the hill and in a hollow was *the house*, made of brick, and surrounded with a garden. Within a year or two the men's hut was pulled down, and a new and larger one built round the point of the hill a quarter-of-a-mile higher up the stream, and a road was cut round to it; in some places the solid rock had to be penetrated. Ernest did a good deal towards this road, working at it for days by himself. Sometimes, also, another cadet named Whitfeld helped him. They had frequently to blast the rock, though a good deal of it gave way to the pick and hammer. The new woolshed, sheep-yards, stock-yard, and paddocks were also made round this point on the flat in front of the men's hut; the chief reason for removing them being that the station might not be so infested by passers-by and loafers. At one time, especially during the great rush to the Lindis gold-fields, there were an innumerable host of pedestrians constantly dropping in, and the feeding and housing them became a great tax on the station. In many cases, of course, these travellers brought their own tents, and were willing to pay for mutton, beef and flour, cooking it for themselves; but in many other cases, they were neither willing nor able to do so, and the station owner was almost obliged to feed them. For the former lot Ernest was often employed for half-an-hour or more of an evening cutting and weighing meat, weighing out flour, tea, and sugar, always charging the highest prices, as of course Walker really did not care to sell. For the latter, he also frequently had some trouble to find sleeping room, and to arrange with the cook about preparing for them, for the cooks often got

very rusty about it, and declared they could not manage the work.

Ernest found the station in a wretched condition, Walker not having been there long enough to do much, and Robison having been compelled to be away in England. The wool-shed and stock-yard and sheep-yards were of the roughest kind, and in utter disrepair. The men's hut was not much better. Walker's own house was a very fair one, as times went, consisting of four rooms on the ground floor and two above. The front room on the right hand side was used as a sitting-room, the back room as a kitchen; the front room on the left hand side was Robison's bedroom, when he was at home, but when he was away Walker used it as a private sitting-room: the back room was a store-room at first, but afterwards the married couple occupied it as a bedroom: the room above the general sitting-room was Walker's bedroom, and the other above Robison's bedroom was used by the cadets. Strangers were put up wherever room could be made: Walker not agreeing to the very common plan of turning out the cadets for the convenience of travellers,—a plan which had greatly disgusted Ernest at Papakaio. The nearest timber was at least fifteen miles away in a small gully in the snowy ranges, so that the station was badly off in that respect. Neither Robison, who was the first occupier, nor Walker who joined him afterwards, had as yet been able to stay long at a time on the station; and one of Ernest's first duties, therefore, was to take a couple of men with a dray, a team of six bullocks, and the necessary tools, axes, spades, &c., and try whether the bush under the hills, or rather mountains, was easily get-at-able. Robison had certainly taken his dray there before, but as he was in England he could not be asked as to the difficulties, and those who had heard of his attempts reported the difficulties as very great from swampy creeks, &c.

One Monday morning, shortly after his arrival at Omarama, Ernest started away with his team and men: crossing the Omarama at once, he took his way right across the plain to the Ahuriri (pronounced "Ahooreedy") a river about three miles off, running in that part at the foot of a low and broken range of hills separated from the main snowy range by a plain some miles in width, with here and there a slight rise. Ernest had been warned of the danger of crossing the Ahuriri, and had been told that the last cadet, a young fellow of about nineteen, Blathwaite, one of the first whom he remembered meeting when he landed at Oamaru, had been drowned there. It appears that Blathwaite and his brother had been in the habit of visiting a friend, Worthington, who had, by the sheep inspector's orders, encamped on the other side of the river for some months, owing to his sheep being infected with scab. One day, after heavy rains had kept the two Blathwaites in for some time, they wished to go and see their friend. They were advised not to go, as the men on the station knew that the river must be flooded, the Omarama itself being very high. There was really no necessity for their going, since they only wished to have a chat. However they went. The youngest made the first attempt to cross the river, but he had not got far in when, probably through being afraid and being made giddy by the swiftness with which the waters rushed passed him, he was swept off his horse and hurried down the stream. He was carried to a small spit where the water was not much more than knee-deep. Here he managed to get his legs, and then he piteously turned to his brother imploring help. The brother was not equal to the task of rescuing him. He had no nerve. The very sight of the muddy waters, foaming and roaring past him, bearing along sticks and roots and plants, turned his head. Not being able to witness his poor brother's

eries, he galloped to the station for aid. The distance was at least three miles, for they had tried to cross rather high up the plain. More than an hour passed before the men from the station arrived on the spot, and then nothing was to be seen there of poor Blathwaite. When Ernest, however, reached the river on the present occasion with his men and the dray, he found it very low, and obtained a good crossing without difficulty. Directly they arrived at the low range of hills they had to cut a siding, that is to cut away the side of the hill a little to make room for the dray to pass along on the level. This was not a very long task, for the ground was very easy to dig. Almost immediately afterwards they were obliged to cut a crossing through the banks of a creek. They encountered several creeks on their way, some rather soft and boggy, but most of them with a hard gravelly bottom, and only a few of the banks were steep and high enough to need cutting. Still, they had plenty of spade work for the three to get through, and it was almost dark by the time they got to the bush. At mid-day they were very hungry, and having no proper utensils for cooking handy to be got at, they lighted a fire, and sticking pieces of scrub through their raw meat, held it over the fire till it was sufficiently done to make it at all eatable. Ernest did not expect to like his share at all, but whether it was hunger or whether it was the novelty of cooking it for himself in this strange way, instead of as he had been used to do in a camp oven, or from whatever other cause, the meat seemed especially savoury.

Arrived at the bush, the driver unyoked the bullocks and began getting the tent ready, while Ernest and the other man lighted a roaring fire and cut the tent poles. Within an hour they were comfortably seated on a log of wood round their fire munching hot chops and bread, and drinking their tea, the usual drink for all



meals in New Zealand, at least on sheep stations, and in those days. Their attention was now attracted by the rats which seemed to swarm in the bush. They were so very active, running up and down the branches of the trees, and sometimes boldly running right up to the tent, till Ernest hurled a stone at one with such sure aim that it tumbled over dead, after which, the others for a time seemed a little less bold. As soon as Ernest and his men "had taken away the desire of eating and drinking," they set to work by the light of the fire to cut as much firewood as possible. It was so easy to get at and to cut, that before two hours were over they had more than a dray-load cut. They then loaded the dray ready for a start the next day, put on the fire a tremendous log to last all night, together with a lot of small scrub to make a good final blaze, and then turned into the tent to sleep, lulled by the mingled noise of fire and water, for the "Quail-burn" was a very noisy stream, pouring down over large boulders in its upper course. They slept so soundly that not even the rats disturbed them. In the morning Ernest had time to examine the bush. He found that it consisted solely of "Birch" trees, like most of the bush in the neighbourhood. It was really a kind of beech, but the trees looked so like birch that everybody called them birch. They would not last as posts for fencing more than three years, to be sound; but if well burnt they would often stand good for five or seven years.

Both on their way to the bush and on the road back they started lots of quails, and in the river bed of the Ahuriri grey duck and teal were in large numbers, but very wild. About Omarama birds were numerous. The blue mountain-duck was the bird Ernest admired most. It was of a delicate light blue, with a white ring round the neck, and it had very beautifully pencilled wings and breast. The Paradise ducks too were very

abundant. Walker has often knocked over three at a time, though they are difficult to get near, and sometimes exceedingly hard to kill. He used to get behind the fence of his paddock and so come on them unawares.

Ernest and his men reached home in good time and in safety, and the former made a full report to Walker as to the state of the country over which the track must pass, and as to the nature and size of the bush. Walker at once resolved to employ two men there for the winter to cut firewood, and to save as many posts and rails out of the timber as possible. Next week he started with Ernest on another expedition. This time they took an empty and greasy barrel with them to use as a rat-trap. The barrel was to be fixed in the ground firmly, and filled half-full of water, a narrow bit of board being placed so as to extend from a tree half-across the mouth, and fitted on the cask in such a way that any weight at the end, however light, beyond the actual weight of meat to be placed on it as a bait, would cause the board to tip down into the water. With this trap they caught lots of rats for a few days, but afterwards they hardly caught any, as the animals got shy.

On this occasion, the first thing to be set about after pitching the tent and making all things as comfortable as possible under the circumstances for the night, was to cut timber for a log hut. The hut was of the most primitive kind, simply long logs morticed out or half-morticed at each end for the length of the hut, and with short logs half-morticed in the same way for the ends. The gaps made by the unevenness of the logs were stopped up with clay, the whole being well thatched over. The chimney also was made of clay, and the doors of rough boards, "gaping with fissures," like *Æneas's* boats. One or two bunks also were made and filled with grass for bedding. The hut when finished, though rough, was very warm, except when

the wind blew in towards the door. All things being put into fair working order, Walker and Ernest rode home after two or three days' stay, leaving the bullock-driver to come after them with a load of firewood, and the two men to cut and stack enough for the next year. Ernest did not go again to the bush except when provisions were wanted. Curiously enough, he always had to go just after a heavy rain, when the river was very high, but he only once had to swim his horse.

Before the winter was over Robison came home, and as he and Walker did not get on at all together, it was arranged that Walker and his other partner, who lived in England, and who had been governor of Tasmania, should purchase Robison's share. The business was soon concluded satisfactorily to both parties, and early in the summer Robison left. Still, while he was at the station he took great interest in it and did good service, as he was a very clever and active man, though somewhat fickle. For five years he had been a Bank of England clerk, as his guardian compelled him to go in for banking, but he hated the work, and as soon as he came of age he gave it up and came out to Australia, and from thence to New Zealand, where he landed with very little money in his pocket, but he had pushed his way by energy. Ernest and he used to get on pretty well on the whole. He used to spin Ernest long yarns of how he had thrown some of the best wrestlers in Scotland. He certainly was a strongly built and active man, but he was unfortunate in having what he called a "game leg." It appears that once when he was driving cattle up to his run with a stockman some of the cattle strayed, and he left the stockman to drive the main lot on while he went back for the stragglers. Before starting he charged the man to be sure not to let the cattle dog leave him. He kept looking back the first few miles to see that the dog did not follow, and not seeing it, he concluded that the stockman was keeping

it all right, so that he soon forgot all about it. After he had got some distance he let the reins fall on his horse's neck while he lighted a pipe. Just at that moment the dog trotted up behind, and practising an old trick, began to bite the horse's heels; the horse, a spirited animal, reared, swerved, threw Robison, and dragged him for some distance, wrenching his leg badly. He went to several doctors about it, but none could do him any good. At last he submitted to have his leg fired. This had a great effect, but did not prove a genuine cure, so that he was always in pain with his game leg. He taught Ernest how to tenon and mortise wood, and to fit a framework of a house together, employing him on making the wooden framework for a corrugated galvanized iron hut: marking out exactly everything for him, and keeping an eye on him to see that he did not go far wrong in anything. Ernest was quite proud of his work, and was delighted when the time came to load the scantling and iron on the dray, together with the tent, tea and sugar, &c., and to go with Robison and two men to the border of Parson Andrew's run to set the hut up. When they got to the "Saddle," a terribly steep pinch, the bullocks refused to pull, and there was nothing for it but to partly unload the dray, and take up half the load at a time. This delay made it night before they reached their intended camping-ground. They had hoped to get the framework all fixed by night, so they had not brought much provisions with them, at least not much bread. Next day, before they had half got the framework settled, they had run out of bread and were obliged to borrow from Parson Andrew's shepherd, who lived close by on the other side of the creek. It blew great guns too, and they had great difficulty in steadying the frame. All these things combined made Robison in rather a petulant mood, and the frantic way in which he danced about made Ernest laugh. This exasperated Robison

very much, as, of course, while Ernest was laughing so violently he could not hold his part of the framework steady, especially in such a wind, and it was impossible to fix it until the sides were exactly square and the uprights exactly perpendicular. At last Robison burst out,—

“For goodness’ sake, Ernest, do go, if you can’t stop laughing; get us some dinner cooked, as you can’t employ yourself better.”

Ernest knew that although Robison had made himself very ridiculous, yet he, for his part, ought to have commanded himself more, so he went off gladly and quietly to the cooking, and brought Robison round to good-humour again by presenting him with a smoking hot dinner at the proper time. After this, Ernest joined in with the others in nailing up the iron, and they soon had the house well covered in. The men were then left to line it with clay and to stop up all airy gaps, build the chimney, &c. Old Skelton was appointed as shepherd. He was a short stout Scotchman, who was very fond of reading and quoting Burns and the Bible. He used to give scripture names to almost all the notable places on the run. A little rocky hillock rising within a few yards of his hut, he used to say was the rock which Moses struck, and he therefore named it Horeb. A very deep gully with steep rocky side he called the cave of Adullam. After telling you the scriptural names of any place he would burst into a gurgling kind of laugh, shaking all over and looking eagerly into your face. He was very conceited and very pig-headed, but withal good-hearted, and very fond of his dogs. These, by the bye, he petted too much for their and his own good.

Ernest was very much surprised to notice the difference between the climate of the district he was now in and the Papakaio district. Papakaio was much warmer. The first four months after his arrival in

New Zealand no rain had fallen. The air was very warm and dry, the thermometer sometimes rising as high as 130° in January, and the hot north-west wind which, when the C. first approached New Zealand, seemed to the passengers to come on them like a blast from a furnace, was continually blowing. The winters too there were very mild. Even at Omarama the snow seldom lay on the flats, though it is to be seen on the mountains all the year round. Ernest's first winter at Omarama, however, had been a very severe one. He had none like it afterwards. The snow lay for three weeks on the flats and for six weeks on the low hills. For three days many of the small creeks like the Omarama were frozen hard, and could be crossed by a team of bullocks with a loaded dray. The axles of both Walker's drays got broken coming up from Geddes' with coal. One dray while crossing Parson Andrews' creek, the Otamatakau, broke through the ice, and coming down on the bed of the river with a jolt smashed the axle right in half, it being brittle with the frost. The other axle broke going down a small dip a little the other side of the "Saddle" from the station.

The following summer shearers were very scarce, and it was not till the close of the season, that is to say, towards the beginning or middle of January, that Walker could get any one to shear his sheep. At last he did manage to engage a gang that was working in a shed on the other side of the Ohau. He was rather nervous about them, for they were reported to be a very rough lot. One man, a big Italian, named Mike, was said to have threatened to stick his shears into the manager if he did not pay him at once in full, on some dispute having arisen, and there was very little doubt but that he would have done it had he not been paid. There was no help for it, because it was so very late and the sheep must be shorn. Several of the men were what are called "old lags," that is, escaped convicts and ticket-of-leave men.

Walker engaged them at the rate of twenty-five shillings per hundred sheep. Unwisely he gave them the easy sheep and best cleaned to shear first. They worked on quite steadily till they finished these, but directly they commenced the wethers, which had been running on the sandy plains, they began to grumble, saying that their shears were being blunted, and the sheep were so big and strong, and sandy. When Walker came down towards the close of the day the murmurs became louder and louder. On his trying to repress them, one man threatened to punch his head; others to duck him. Ernest advised him to leave the shed and yards, and he took the advice. To Ernest the men had all along been very civil and still continued so, notwithstanding that he had some little difference with one or two of them about the counting of their sheep, and had adhered to his own count rather than to theirs. In the evening they went quietly off in the ordinary way to grind their shears, &c., the only noticeable difference being that they seemed to group together more than usual and to be quieter. Walker, however, told Ernest that he did not by any means think they would remain quiet, and he asked him to have "Old Peter," a powerful and fast horse, ready saddled and bridled early in the morning to ride to Oamaru for the police if needful. The distance was about eighty miles. The result proved that he was not mistaken, and his foresight, energy, and known determination probably saved him a great deal of trouble and also a great row. His determination of character was well known to these men, for some of them had been as convicts under the charge of his father, Colonel Walker, in Tasmania.

At nine o'clock, from the front door, where Walker and Ernest were standing, they observed the shearers coming round the point of the hill from their hut in a body. Walker said at once,—

"There they are; but we won't let them have the first word, we'll be beforehand. Come along!" and off he walked sharply down the garden path, followed by Ernest, to meet the men. They had barely got within speaking distance when Walker shouted out in a stentorian voice to the men,—

"What do you want up here? why are you not at the shed, ready for your work?"

This taking the bull by the horns evidently rather dumbfounded the men. After a moment or two of hesitation, Big Mike began to mutter in broken English, as he approached, something about the sandy backs of the wethers, the spoiling of shears, and the consequent necessity of increased pay. Walker replied,—

"I made an agreement with you to shear all my sheep at a certain rate, and I agreed for the highest rate going: you will not get a penny of your wages till you have finished all the work, and what is more, if you refuse to finish I shall summon you for breach of contract and damages."

"We do not care a hang for your summons," burst out several of the men together. "We will throw both it and you into the creek, so you had better come to terms quickly."

"Oh, that's your game, is it?" said Walker. "Well, you all know me, and perhaps you will care for my warrant, if you don't for my summons. There is a horse ready to start for Oamaru (pointing to "Old Peter" saddled and bridled, standing fastened to the fence hard by). You see I am quite prepared for you. I give you five minutes to be at work; if not at work then, expect the heaviest punishment the law can inflict for your offence."

Turning abruptly on his heel, he left them. Ernest walked on down to the shed, followed by the men, who in less than five minutes were busily at work. Walker having gained his point was wise enough not to



press it too far, for he saw for himself and learnt from Ernest how sulky the men were, and how ready to break out on the least provocation. So towards the close of the day he came down to the shed and said that as the men had at once attended to his words, he had thought it only reasonable on his part to consider their complaint, and that having considered it, though he never liked altering the terms of a contract, he had resolved, if the work were well finished, to give each man a bonus equivalent to an advance of half-a-crown a hundred for all the wethers he might have shorn. This prudent policy conciliated the men, and the work was well and quickly done, the men paid off, and got rid of quietly from the station.

One day, during the washing of the sheep, which was done in the Ahuriri by simply swimming them across one of the branches on to an island, after five or six hundred had crossed to the island they began to wander very much, and it became necessary for some one to cross the stream frequently and check them. This duty fell to Ernest's lot, and he waded across generally, but sometimes he rode. When he had crossed backwards and forwards several times, Walker said,—

"I will go now, Ernest, as you must be tired, for wading in this strong current up to your waist is heavy work. Where did you ford?"

"Just there," said Ernest, pointing carelessly to a part of the bank close to, and passing on to attend to other work.

"Are you quite sure?"

"Oh yes, of course."

In went Walker, and to Ernest's and every one's surprise entirely disappeared, horse and all. He had plunged into a deep hole a few yards above the spot where Ernest had actually crossed. He soon came up again, sticking to "Old Thunder's" back. Turning

coolly round as he rode on across, and pointing to his hat which was floating down stream, he shouted to Ernest,—

“I shall never take your advice again about fording a river, Ernest. You are a most expensive guide; you have cost me the value of a new bowler.”

Ernest was very much put out about the accident, and all the more because Walker took it so good-humouredly: however, every one was so busy that, beyond a little laughing among the men at Walker's expense, no further notice was taken by any one.

On Christmas day, before the shearing commenced, there being a lot of rams to be “tailed,” and the man appointed to the work being quite a new hand and unknown to Ernest, he went out about twelve o'clock to see how the sheep were getting on. He found them straying away up the side of the hill and no one looking after them. Guessing the cause, he walked quickly down towards Jackson's Inn. In the stockyard was a woman, dressed in a very tawdry manner, pale as a sheet, endeavouring, staggering with drink as she was, to catch a horse; outside the yard, scattered here and there in the grass, like Æneas's men after a feast, were several drunken men lying asleep. In the midst of them was a “roaring” drunkard, riding furiously about. After this man, Jackson, with his shirt-sleeves tucked up, was running, shouting to him to stop. To Jackson's persuasions the drunkard turned a deaf ear. Presently he rode right over one of the sleepers, hurting the poor fellow badly and making him groan and try to rise. The groaning seemed rather to startle the drunkard, and arrested his course. He reined up his horse, stared vacantly at the man, and stammered out in a husky voice,—

“Are yer hurt?”

This stoppage enabled Jackson to step up, seize the horse, and drag the man from it. He threw him with

great violence to the ground. Frantic with rage and drink, the man got up and wanted to fight Jackson.

"When you're sober I shall be ready for you," was Jackson's reply to his challenge; "but at present I could knock you to mince-meat, without receiving a blow myself; and therefore it would be cowardly for me to fight you now."

The drunkard, however, would not take "No," and rushed on Jackson, who dexterously caught him round the waist and laid him on his back.

"Now," said Jackson, "lie there and sleep off your drink."

Again the fellow tumbled up, but this time with a different purpose.

"I'll fetch the police, I will, the police! the police!! You've no licence, and you shall pay for this." And away he went down the road leading to Oamaru.

Now Oamaru was eighty miles from Omarama, and the utter absurdity of a drunken man, without hat or coat, with only one shoe on, and guiltless of stockings, attempting such a journey, was too much for Jackson. He turned off to his inn, roaring with laughter and glad to get rid of the troublesome customer at any price. The drunkard managed to get about half-way to the "Saddle," when he fell down by the side of the dray-track and dropped off into a sound sleep.

Ernest followed Jackson and asked for Ramsay his shepherd.

"Yes," said Jackson, "he is here. If you just look inside you'll see him."

Ernest did not care to be seen entering such a den on such a day, but as he preferred to be able to speak to the man from actual knowledge, he walked in. There on the floor, with several others, lay his shepherd perfectly overpowered with drink. The next morning, of course, the shepherd was dismissed. Ernest could not help thinking what a terrible curse to the country

these drinking-houses were. The roadside inns in those days were little more than drinking-houses. No comfort of any kind could be obtained in them. The bedrooms were dirty, the beds close packed, the blankets seemed never to be washed, sheets were never thought of, the cooking was simply vile. Men with sixty or seventy pounds in their pockets have often been known to go into one of these dens (they for the most part deserved no better name), and in three or four days, they have been turned adrift with nothing in their pockets, and nothing about them save a racking headache to prove that they ever had any money. Thus were hard-won earnings often spent. A profitable kind of houses these for brewers and distillers, but a very hell to those who most frequent them, and no comfort for those who seek them of necessity, who stay in them as short a time as possible, but for whose sole benefit ostensibly they are erected and maintained. Spirits were mostly drunk at these places, because beer could only be obtained in bottle, and then only at the exorbitant rate of three shillings a bottle or thirty-six shillings a dozen. The cause of this was probably the great cost of carriage. Spirits were about the same price as in England. Carriage made many things very dear. For instance, the usual charge for coal suitable for blacksmithing was from fourteen to twenty-eight pounds per ton at Omarama: the carriage varying at different times from ten pounds to six-and-twenty per ton. The price at Oamaru was three pounds ten per ton.

Walker, as most other run-holders did, used to get his coal up, and all his winter provisions as a rule, by his own return drays when they took wool down in the summer; but, of course, occasionally he ran short, and then it was cheaper to pay even these terrible prices than to run the risk of getting bullocks "tutu'd." When Ernest first went up to Omarama it was not

possible to hire drays for love or money, because there were none except those in use on the different stations. It was not till the last year of his stay at Omarama that horse-drays began to be started. It was only in the second year of his stay, after the Lindis gold-diggings broke out that the mail coaches began to run up to Omarama, which was appointed as a post-office. When Walker was not at home, Ernest and Whitfeld had to make up the out-going mails and to sort the letters received.

Just before Robison finally quitted the station, and while Walker was in town making arrangements about the wool and also about the settling of the purchase of Robison's share, MacMurdo, who with his partner Hodgkinson held the Ben More run on the other side of the Ahuriri, promised Paterson, a cadet and a cousin of the Juliuses, who held a run about thirty miles lower down the Waitaki than Omarama, on the Otago side (situated, in fact, between the two branches, the Ohau and the Ahuriri), a splendid white bull, if he would drive it away from the river-bed and yard it. The Juliuses had a few head of cattle which had escaped from their own herd, running with it. They thought it would be a good chance of getting all together, as Paterson was known to be a splendid hand with cattle, and these cattle were very wild. MacMurdo had really only made the offer as a joke, for he did not believe any one could drive the bull away: in fact, a short time before he had refused to allow Walker to shoot it, because he said it kept the river-bed and prevented any one from driving off the other cattle. Paterson and Barking Julius, as the latter was called (since he had an affection which caused him to be constantly uttering a barking sound), and one stockman came to make the attempt.

They stopped the night at Omarama, and the next day Robison, who was a great friend of the Juliuses,

went out with them. The four were returning with the cattle just at dinner-time, so Ernest and the men turned out to watch proceedings, for they knew that part of the bargain was that the cattle should be yarded the first night at Omarama. The cattle all came quietly across the stream, and Paterson was laughing and talking, congratulating himself on his easy prize, and riding rather carelessly behind, that is, not keeping them well enough together, as he ought to have done, when suddenly the white bull caught sight of the yards. Up went his head and tail, and back he turned and trotted slowly away, Paterson after him. Paterson had got within about ten yards when the bull turned round and pursued him. Paterson turned tail and galloped off, the bull after him, till he came to the wash-pool. He came on it quite suddenly and unexpectedly; the bull was coming charging against the shoulder of his horse: there was no time to turn. Paterson reined his horse up so sharply and tightly that he made him rear on his hind legs, and the bull passed right under his fore feet and fell head over heels into the wash-pool. It came out shaking itself and very much astonished, but not a bit daunted, it pursued its way at a leisurely trot across the Omarama and over the plain to the Ahuriri. Paterson again went after it, followed by Robison; Barking Julius contenting himself with looking on. It was no use, however: directly they got within twenty or thirty yards they were turned from pursuers into pursued, the bull facing round and coming down on them at full gallop, tail in air. At last they gave up the task, and Paterson was obliged, much to his chagrin, to confess himself defeated. The other cattle had in the mean time made off to their leader by another way. The Juliuses and Paterson were compelled to return home without having accomplished any part of their task, and having only worn out their horses for nothing.

About the time that Robison sold his share, his neighbour Parson Andrews also sold his run. Parson Andrews' run was small but very excellent, separating Walker's run from the Juliuses'. The parson had one quality which all men admire, pluckiness. He was said to have crossed the Waitaki in a cockle-shell kind of a canoe made of India-rubber, and capable of being folded and carried in the pocket. When he sold his run, he went to live in Oamaru for some time. There he built a canvas boat, which he used for the purpose of fishing for barracouta. This boat was so light that it could be carried by one man with ease, though it was a good length and would hold four or five people. Ernest saw it both at the parson's house and in use, and thought it was very well made. Sometimes the parson managed to persuade a friend to join him in his fishing expeditions, but most people did not possess much faith in his boat, and were rather afraid that it might prove no trustworthy barrier against the sharks, of which (as well as of many other kinds of more useful fish) there are a good number off the coast.

Shearing over, the autumn and winter was always a heavy time on the station. There was nothing particular to do except fencing and building the new woolshed and men's hut, and the making of the road round to them, and now and then to get a load of scrub out of the river-bed. This scrub, though standing, was all dead and burnt black with fire, probably on some first occasion of burning the flats. Those sent for it used generally to return like coal-heavers or sweeps, covered with soot and black from top to toe. It stood from six to twelve feet high, and made excellent lighting wood. Ernest used frequently, in fact, almost daily, to have to get the bullocks in for the driver in the morning, for if the drivers were sent after them they frequently contrived not to find them at all, and still more frequently

not till mid-day. Ernest generally succeeded in yarding them before breakfast, but to do this he had to be up at six o'clock and start before it was light to find them. He knew their general resorts, and in most cases got them at once, so that the bullock-driver was enabled to yoke them up directly after breakfast; but sometimes he had a long search after them. They were turned out to find their own food every night, and sometimes they strayed one way and sometimes another. If a patch of ground had been lately burned, and the young grass had begun to spring on it, they were sure to make for it. By watching the direction they took when unyoked, it was generally possible to drop on them in the morning without much trouble, as they seldom went more than three or four miles.

Another regular business of Ernest's was to take provisions or rations once a week to the shepherds, and at the same time to look them up, see that they were doing their work properly, and to hear whatever had taken place during the week.

Contrary to the custom of most run-holders in New Zealand at that time, Walker had introduced the Tasmanian and Australian plan of rations, or "rashuns," as the men called them. He would not allow his shepherds to kill their own meat. Sometimes Ernest had to take potatoes and firewood. When he only had the usual rations, he carried them on a pack-horse; but when he had to take potatoes and firewood, he drove a cart.

One memorable day he was driving the cart to the Omarama hut, a stone hut about eight miles up the creek. This hut was made with stone, because there was plenty of loose slatery stone handy, and there were no sods to be had, and good clay was also difficult to obtain. About half-a-mile the station side of the hut, the Omarama winds a great deal, and the track crosses it twice. The banks are steep all along in that part,



about six feet high. At the crossing they had been cut just wide enough for the dray to go through. Ernest was within a few yards of the first crossing, and was watching the two shepherds coming down the ridge to the hut, when he suddenly heard the rapid tramp of horses' feet behind. His own horse turned round a little and he did too, forgetting all about the bank, and not stopping. He soon saw that it was only a stray horse that had caught sight of his, and had galloped up to make friends. He was trying to discover the brand as the animal dropped into a trot on coming nearer, when he felt himself thrown off his balance, and the next instant he was plunged into the creek. Luckily his plunge was not altogether involuntary, for he had time to make a spring forward and so got clear of the cart, which had capsized, potatoes, flour, and all into the stream. In a minute he was on his legs, for the water was not above knee-deep. His poor horse was drowning fast, for it was kept down by the cart, and could not do more than kick and dash its head up and down. Ernest at once lifted and held firm its head, loosed the collar from its neck and cut away the rest of the harness. The horse then struggled up, Ernest holding its head all the time. He shouted at the top of his voice for help, which quickly came in the shape of the two shepherds. They soon got everything clear of the creek. The flour was by no means so much damaged as might have been expected. Ernest was dripping. Dalgleish's wife lent him a suit of her husband's things made of warm homespun, and he was soon cozily seated by the fire enjoying her good fare. Certainly he cut an odd figure, and the two shepherds, Dalgleish and his mate, laughed heartily at him. Dalgleish was a fine broad-shouldered man, over six feet high, so poor Ernest, who was not five feet eight, looked entirely swallowed up in his enormous clothes.

On the slope of the hills right on the far side of the plain exactly opposite Dalgleish's hut, but about three miles from it was a small totara bush, out of which Ernest discovered that a few splendid straining posts could be cut. The totara is a very durable wood, so Walker was very glad to hear of it, and at an early date sent Ernest and Whitfield to fell the trees. While working at these trees Whitfield found a kind of chisel made of *jade* or greenstone, or as the natives call it "pounamu." It was about half as thick round as a man's wrist and bevelled off at one end on each side like a blacksmith's chisel. In old days Otago and the western portion of the province of Canterbury were the places most famous for possessing this highly prized kind of stone. It was a curious thing that not far from this bush, which is on the side of the hill whose other slope runs down to the Longslip station, and just where both the dray-track and the river Ahuriri take a sudden bend after issuing from the Longslip gorge, about eight miles from Omarama station there is a large blackened space where there have at one time evidently been huge fires. This place is literally covered with bones, but the bones are so burnt and broken that it is impossible to tell to what animals they belonged. The bullock-drivers always used to say that this was a grand Maori feasting-place, and the bones were men's bones.

Soon after this, the government sent a hundred men to make a siding at the "Saddle," the steep pinch two miles and a half from the station, which we have mentioned before. The gold diggings were going ahead and were expected to turn out very well: the government was doing everything in its power to make the roads good. Except in a very few places, the whole way from Oamaru to Miller's run, the first run beyond the Omarama, the roads were naturally good, and the dray-track sufficed without any improvements. The road ran all along the banks of the Waitaki as far as

Parson Andrews' run, where the two tributaries, the Ohau and the Ahuriri, first formed the Waitaki. From that point the Ohau was the boundary between Otago and Canterbury. The dray-track did not follow the Ohau, but the Ahuriri.

To return to our subject. The government sent a hundred men to cut a siding, so that the road should no longer pass over the "Saddle," but along the side of the hill by a very gentle incline passing over a "Saddle" in the little range which just there runs out to the river from the great block of mountains. Walker agreed to supply them with meat at current prices, as they were on his run. Till then he had had no cattle, but had always killed sheep. There was nothing but mutton to eat from morning till night, and no milk or butter could be obtained on the station: though when Dalgleish came he had plenty at his out-but. Walker now purchased a lot of very wild cattle from Hodgkinson, but as he found that none of them were in good enough condition to be killed at once, he had to purchase a few fat cattle for a short time. Though he waited for some time, not one of this wild lot of cattle ever got really fat, and many of them when killed were perfect scarecrows. The first purchase he made was from Messrs. Miller and Gooch. They were both away, and a cadet named Simmons had to supply the meat. The beef was sent to Omarama as a whole carcase. It had been very badly killed, and looked anything but inviting, and tasted anything but savoury. Ernest was surprised to find too that no head was sent with it. It was toughness itself. On making inquiries he discovered that Simmons, being a very bad shot (some said also being the worse for liquor), in aiming at a fat barren heifer had succeeded in shooting the only bull in the herd. Hence the toughness and unsavouriness of the meat. The bull-buying and killing was a joke not only against Simmons, but against Walker also for

a long time after. The men working on the road and every one on the station were in a constant state of grumble till the last of the bull disappeared. It was a very paying animal though for Walker, since nobody could eat much of it at a time, and it was only as a resource from starvation that any one attempted to touch it.

This unfortunate bargain made Walker resolve to kill his own beasts. The mode at that early period was as follows. The whole herd of cattle, or a certain portion of it, was, if possible, yarded. Then Walker or his brother Harold, who came shortly afterwards, shot the animal selected. The yard was generally in a filthy mess, and knee deep in mud and dirt. The cow or steer, whichever it might be at the time, dropped into this "Slough of Despond," and had to be dragged to the foot of the gallows by eight or nine men, its throat being first cut right across to let it bleed. It seldom bled as it ought, owing to the bad way it was managed, both in cutting the vein across instead of slitting it, and also in other ways. Next all the men armed with knives, some blunt and some sharp, set to work skinning. Often a dispute arose as to how the different parts ought to be managed, and it usually ended in a perfect scarecrow being presented to the admiring gaze of the passers by, for the stockyard in those days was right alongside of the main dray-track. The time occupied was seldom less than two or three hours. Great was the difficulty in striking the joints so as to cut off the feet and lower part of the legs. A quarter of an hour was frequently spent over each joint, hacking away in every imaginable direction but the right. The sawing in half, after the carcass was hanging, was also another very long business. Ernest saw that this waste of time and labour would never do, as they would have to kill three bullocks a week at least, and the time wasted for eight or nine men would be equivalent to a day-and-a-

half out of each week. He resolved to do more by observation than by working next time, to see where the mistake lay, and how best to manage the skinning of the carcase, and the striking of the joints, &c., rightly. He had already seen that a clean yard was certainly necessary; so before the next killing day, he set to work with one of the men and a wheelbarrow and wheeled all the mud and dirt out of the yard, making a large heap, which he intended, as soon as convenient, to use for manure in the garden. "Old Walker" did not always stop after shooting the animal, so Ernest had to manage with the men himself. He found first of all that the old proverb was true, "Too many cooks spoil the broth." The next thing was, the knives were not sharp enough, and sufficient care was not taken to understand and to remember where to find the joints before striking with the knife. The most fruitful cause of delay was that each individual man kept asserting his own superior knowledge of the butcher's art. To obviate all this, the next time Ernest asked Walker to leave only two men with him, and he let these two men understand before commencing that he did not want advice, and that other plans having been tried unsuccessfully he now intended to adopt his own plan, and he wished them to carry out his directions without any superfluous remarks. With the help of these two previously instructed men he used to manage to skin and dress a bullock within an hour in a fairly decent way. Certainly the carcase looked decidedly less knocked about than of old, though still hardly likely to be acceptable to a London butcher. But when Harold Walker and Whitfeld came, both sharp and intelligent, the three used to manage the work very nicely indeed in a little over half-an-hour, all save the sawing down. They had good blocks and tackling too, so that they had no trouble in getting the carcase raised on the gallows.

Harold Walker, like his brother, could do almost anything well on a station. He could shoe a horse, weld any small piece of iron, fit on tires, &c., &c. He was a very good carpenter also; and he could make stock-whips to perfection. The handle of a stock-whip was generally made out of manuka, totara, or ash. It was from a foot to eighteen inches long. The lash varied, according to the use it was intended for and the person who required it, from ten to eighteen feet long. The shorter and lighter lashes were generally used in cutting out cattle from a mob or herd. This required not only hard riding, but a quick use of the whip, and therefore for such a purpose a certain amount of lightness and handiness in a whip was necessary. The longer and heavier whips were used for driving. A learner of the use of the stock-whip was often apt to hit himself in the face, and the whip then stung dreadfully. The general object for practising on was an empty brandy bottle, the aim being to knock off its neck; but sometimes a sheep-skin hung on a fence was used as a target. When a man could use a whip really well, he could break the neck off a bottle at almost every blow, and could cut a sheep-skin into strips, as if it had been done with a knife. The report made by the crack of the whip is like a gun going off; and if an animal be struck skilfully with it, it will make a cut in its hide from four to six inches long, drawing blood. It may seem very cruel to use such an instrument on cattle, but at times it would be impossible to get them into the yard or do anything with them unless the whip were well used, and they soon learn to dread it, so that it becomes unnecessary to use it often on the same animal. On more than one occasion, when a bull or a bullock was charging, and Ernest was on a bad and terrified horse, which stood stock still with fear, he was only able to avoid being knocked over and possibly killed, by cutting the animal down the face and over

the nose. This used to check even the fiercest animal at once. Quiet cattle, of course, never required any severe use of the whip.

The making of cow-hide ropes was a very useful occupation of Harold's in the winter. He and Ernest used to race one another in killing and dressing sheep. At first Ernest did the work quickest and best, but after a time Harold, who was very natty in everything, surpassed him, though only by a trifle. They used to shear against one another too: but in this Ernest stood no chance against Harold, who was a far quicker and a far cleaner shearer.

Doctor Häst, the geologist, passed by the station on his way to the West Coast about this time. Harry Talbot, who was now on the Longslip run just above Omarama, liked him very much. Both Harry and Ernest would have joined his expedition, or rather would have asked permission to do so, had they not been tied to their employments.

Shortly after, sad tidings came from the next station. MacMurdo had been breaking-in a colt for one of his men, and while he was driving it round the yard, it suddenly kicked him full in the chest. He fell back into his man's arms saying, "All right, Tom;" but he never spoke another word, and must have died almost immediately. There was no medical man nearer than Oamaru, ninety miles from MacMurdo's station. Dr. Hector, the Otago geologist, happened to be at Dansey's station. He rode up, and after examination pronounced life to be extinct. Every one regretted MacMurdo's death, he was so much liked by all who knew him. His partner Hodgkinson sold the run, as he did not care to continue unaided the management of so large a place: but he kept the land above the Ohau Lake for grazing cattle. A very young purchaser soon appeared in the person of Robert Campbell, a man of about three-and-twenty, a son of

Mr. Campbell, of Buscot Park, Berkshire, England. He made great changes; built a comfortable stone house, put up new wool-shed, sheep-yards, &c., hired for the most part Scotch shepherds, discharged all the old hands, brought over from Saxony seventy rams of a very fine breed, and imported a lot of merinos of a good class from Australia.

After Dr. Hector had examined poor MacMurdo's body, he returned by Walker's invitation to Omarama, and stayed there till his men and baggage came up. He asked Ernest a good many questions about the nature and run of the country in the neighbourhood, and he told him in reference to MacMurdo's accident that when he was travelling at the Cape with some Hottentots his horse kicked him in the same way, but of course, not so badly. As he was recovering his senses he heard his Hottentots talking of leaving him and returning home, and they were extremely astonished when he got up. He had a beautiful little Arab horse, which would come to him whenever he whistled or called to it. He said he had accomplished the distance from Dansey's to Omarama in less than three hours, and his horse did not seem the least fagged. It was over thirty miles, and he trotted most of the way.

Campbell did not care to keep the white bull-stag of which MacMurdo had been so fond. In fact he was glad to get rid of him, and made an arrangement for Walker to purchase him and the rest of the wild herd at sixpence per lb.

Accordingly Campbell, Walker, Harold, Whitfeld, Harry, Ernest, and one stockman, seven in all, rode off to the river-bed armed with guns, rifles, and one revolver, which Harry carried. The dray with the team of bullocks was kept in readiness by the crossing-place of Ahuriri opposite the station. Walker knew it would be useless to attempt to yard the brute, so he



determined to shoot it down wherever he might come across it, cut it up, and carry it home on the dray. The riders separated, each anxious to drop on the bull-stag first, and to have the honour of knocking it over. After beating the scrub for about half-an-hour, Campbell and Walker started the herd, the white bull-stag, as usual, dashing away in the lead. Campbell, all eagerness to have the first shot, galloped after it and fired, striking it in the shoulder. This made it savage. It turned and trotted slowly back towards Campbell and Walker. As it came on, Walker, cool on all occasions, dismounted, and at great risk (since, if he had missed, he would most likely have been killed, for the bull-stag would have been on him before he could have remounted) took deliberate aim, striking the bull-stag clean in the centre of the forehead just above the curl: down the huge animal dropped on its knees; as it struggled to get up, Harry, attracted by the report of the guns, came crashing at a hand-gallop through the scrub, rode rapidly alongside and fired his revolver. His horse was fidgety, and reared and kicked so much, however, that though he fired off the six chambers he never hit the bull once, and Walker afterwards jokingly declared that he was far nearer shooting himself and his horse than the bull. Walker came to his aid on foot and finally settled the animal by another bullet in the head. Just then Ernest and the others rode up and joined at once in preparing the carcase for conveyance home. It weighed one thousand and one pounds exactly. It was a very large and heavy animal compared with the generality of grass-fed cattle there: the average being seven or eight hundred pounds, but many weighing not more than from four hundred and fifty to six hundred.

Walker was certainly a most excellent shot with the gun. At full gallop he has with a double-barrelled gun knocked over one after the other, one calf gallop-

ing to his left, and another to his right. He never missed his shot entirely, and generally dropped the animal dead the first time. There was only one unlucky exception. One of the wild steers, which he had bought and which he wanted to kill, would not on any consideration enter the yards: after being driven and pursued for a time by Walker, Whitfeld, and Ernest, it became furious, and began to charge right and left, and made off for the rocky hills at the back of the men's new hut, by "Old Man's Gully." Walker, seeing that further pursuit would be useless, especially as he did not wish to bruise the meat, got his gun, headed the animal and fired. The bullet knocked part of one horn away. Again he fired, and again he struck it, but in the lower part of the face, and it was not till nine bullets had entered different parts of its body that the steer dropped. It seemed like butchery, but it could not be helped, for the animal would not allow Walker to go near it, and it kept tossing its head, so that it was impossible to get a fair shot; and further, Walker was riding a young, newly imported horse "Dandy," which was unaccustomed to the sound of the gun, and would not stand quiet, but kept kicking and jumping. Harold Walker also was an excellent shot. The first season he was on the station he used to go out shooting quails, and one morning he returned with thirty-eight brace. Somehow, after that year there were hardly any to be seen, though before that they were very numerous. The chief reason was supposed to be because Campbell had put on so many extra sheep and these birds were either disturbed or could get no food. Ernest was told that at one time they used to be plentiful much lower down the country, but that they had gradually retired as the runs became stocked. When Harold got accustomed to the work of the station, Walker used often to remain in town for a long time together. Harold had then to shoot the cattle when required.

He generally had no trouble, dropping them at the first shot, till one time, firing at a very wild cow, (though having taken the precaution of firing from the outside of the yard, and of resting his gun on the rail, instead of as usual, from the inside, without rest) he merely wounded the animal, which charged so furiously that she smashed down the post against which she came. It was a very rotten post certainly, but the concussion rather stupefied her, for she did not take advantage of her position, either to get away into the open, or to charge Harold or Ernest. Harold had time to recover from his astonishment and to shoot again, this time successfully. After this affair Harold constantly missed his aim, and he used to take an axe to knock down the animal in case it should only be wounded. He made a mess of this once or twice, mauling one or two of them about frightfully without killing them. After this Ernest determined that the next bullock, if only wounded, should meet with a quicker and more merciful despatch; and for that purpose, without saying a word to any one, he armed himself with an axe and stood on the yard rails. Harold again missed. Ernest dropped lightly down into the yard, and axe in hand, advanced to knock down the bullock by a blow over the head. Just as he was bringing down the axe, the bullock made a poke at him with its horns, and the blade striking the horn in a slanting direction, instead of the head fair, the handle was turned completely round in his hand, and the back of the axe came violently against his leg. Ernest hopped all round the yard in agony: but though in great pain, so ludicrous did the whole matter appear to him, that he joined in with Harold's shouts of laughter, mingling his own laughter, however, with wry grimaces, and with exclamations of pain. He never again tried to knock down a bullock with an axe. A bullet from Harold prevented the steer from an intended charge, and in a

few minutes Ernest was able to hobble out of the yard. The "Old Man's Gully," mentioned just now, was a very deep gully to the left of the house and men's hut, as you face the Omarama. It had steep, precipitous, and rocky sides, and from its gloomy appearance was supposed by the superstitious to be haunted by the ghost of an old man. In mustering times Ernest used to set some of the huge boulders on the sides of its cliffs rolling, and they made quite a roaring noise that echoed for a long distance as they descended crashing through bushes and loose shingle to the bottom. This noise startled the sheep, which always made upwards, so that thus Ernest was more easily able to get them together. On the mountain to the right of "Old Man's Gully," and just at the back of the house, there was in wet weather a splendid waterfall, with a fall of thirty feet or more. Seen from the dray-track on the plain it looked quite beautiful, but in dry weather no water ran there at all, at least there was never anything more than a slight trickling. In heavy wet it regularly foamed down and made a great noise.

About this time or a little before, Ernest's younger brother Arthur arrived from England. It had been at first arranged that he should stay at the Boundary Creek, where Ernest, Harry, and Warrington had some fifty odd acres and a two-roomed hut, and where Harry and Warrington were keeping a dairy farm, in which, at the close of his engagement with Walker, Ernest intended to help them. But they did not get on. Arthur being quite new to the work, and Warrington being very lazy, all the work fell to Harry, who soon got disgusted and left for the Lindis Goldfields, and finally settled with Miller at Longslip.

The temporary arrangement made for the management of the dairy-farm till Ernest's arrival was that Arthur should cook, while Harry and Warrington milked and attended to the cattle, and sold the milk,

etc. A description of one day at their hut will explain the cause of the break-down of the plan.

Harry awakes, jumps out of bed, and dresses at five a.m. Then he takes his buckets to the yard, saddles his horse, and rides in the cows. He milks three or four of them and carries the milk to the hut. He finds Arthur just lighting the fire, but Warrington snoring. He exclaims angrily,—

“Hulloa, Warrington! you don’t call this getting the milk-pails scalded in readiness for me, do you?”

“Oh, bother the milk-pails! let me sleep: don’t wake a fellow in the middle of the night.”

“That’s all very fine,” replies Harry, “but somebody must get up to do the work, and if you don’t work you can’t expect to get your share of the profits.”

“Ah well! I suppose I must get up,” says Warrington, lazily rising from his bed; “but I begin to hate the very word cow.”

Harry scalds out a couple of tins while Warrington dresses, and after pouring the milk into them, leaves the hut saying,—

“Have the other tins ready, and all yesterday’s milk skimmed by the time I come in, there’s a good fellow.”

“All right,” says Warrington in a grumpy tone.

An hour after, Harry returns with two more buckets full. He comes on Warrington skimming the milk certainly, but eating the cream instead of putting it into the proper dish ready for making butter.

“Well,” he cries, “this beats everything I ever heard of: here have I been working all the morning, and, till this moment, you have been sleeping, and now you only awake to eat the cream.”

“It’s very jolly,” said Warrington.

“Jolly, no doubt,” rejoined Harry; “but if you go on at that rate I shall not even get a taste of it, much less see any money for it.

“Hulloa, Arthur, how’s the breakfast getting on?”

"Oh, pretty well; the tea is ready, only unfortunately the frying-pan is so awkward, it upset, and I am afraid that the chops are rather burnt."

"Burnt!" said Harry, "I should think so! they must have gone out of the frying-pan into the fire with a vengeance, for they are nothing but charcoal. Never mind! we might as well finish the cream now, since Warrington has made such a hole in it already. It is hardly worth while to put it aside for making butter this time."

Such a mode of dairy-farming as this was not likely to prove a success; so long before Ernest was expected to join this trio, they broke up the establishment and decamped.

Ernest obtained for Arthur a six months' engagement with Walker to tail rams for payment at the rate of fifty pounds a year. He afterwards went to Campbell at the same rate, and then returned to Walker, living at Miller's station, the Longslip, and keeping Walker's boundary there for sixty pounds a year.

The Lindis goldfields being more and more frequented daily, and the traffic through the run becoming greater, Walker thought it necessary to keep Ernest constantly riding over the different parts of the run to see that the sheep were not stolen and the shepherds' huts not molested. It was known that there were several bad characters about,—in particular, one party, led by a notorious lag, "Bully Jack," alias "Long Jack," &c., as he was called. They had been very troublesome, demanding, and in some cases taking by force, bread, meat, and milk from the shepherds' wives.

Ernest rather liked this work, for he was very fond of riding. He met "Bully Jack's" party once, at the "Saddle." They were on their way down towards Parson Andrews' run. He rode with them to the boundary between the two runs. They were all very civil, and passed through without attempting

to do any harm, though on the very next station they stole food from the shepherd's wife and killed a sheep. Ernest did not at all like the look of their ill-favoured and numerous dogs, and whenever they came near any sheep he requested them to keep those animals close to their heels. They did so without demur.

The sheep had to be mustered about three or four times in the year. In the latter part of the spring for cutting and tailing. In the summer for washing and shearing. In autumn to catch any stragglers that might want shearing, branding, or tailing; (tailing here meaning, cutting off the tails). This mustering was rather a difficult, but to Ernest a delightful task. Walker always gave him the entire management of it. In this mountainous country the sheep only encountering the shepherd on the boundaries, and then only seeing him to be frightened by him, were exceedingly wild. For the shepherd's duty was to prevent the sheep from approaching too near their boundaries. The mode in which he fulfilled that duty was this: viz. by making the most unearthly noise possible by blending the sounds of his own voice (generally by no means musical) with the barking of his dogs. Some sheep, which never left the high grounds except in the depth of winter, were like deer for wildness. Some few had never been in a yard and had very long fleeces; the fleeces, except in a case of milk-fever, not dropping off yearly, though each year's growth could be seen distinctly by the break in the wool. The mode of mustering adopted by Ernest was this. He divided the whole run of about one hundred and fifty thousand acres into three parts, and made a separate muster of each part. He generally began at Parson Andrews' boundary, that is at Skelton's side. Taking his pack-horse, men, and provisions, he went down in the afternoon to the hut. There he and the men slept on the floor. The next morning they got up very early,

and all together walked about a mile-and-a-half up the creek. Then one man who on reaching the hut on his backward journey was to take the pack-horse, was left on the flat, the others mounting the hills: another was left on the first ridge, and so on, till Ernest went on alone to the very top. In this way they swept the hills from one end to the other, and this part of the run (except when the lambs were young, when it took longer) was usually finished in the one day. The lambs, though, gave great trouble. They would all collect together and run round and round outside the flock for a time, and then suddenly they would break off and make in all directions for the hills. It was almost impossible, even with the best of dogs, to stop them unless a few sheep were first put among them. Often when the hard work of the mustering was thought to be all over, and the shepherds were driving the sheep leisurely onwards, the lambs would break away, and it would take hours of running both of dogs and men to bring them back. Even with the most careful and skilful driving, the outbreak of lambs could not always be prevented.

The centre run was the most difficult. Here the men had to be divided from the first into two parties, one starting a night before the actual mustering was to commence, and going to Dalgleish's hut to help Dalgleish to muster down from the Manukerikia "Saddle." The length of Walker's run, from the Ahuriri to Mount Ida, used to be reckoned about five and twenty or thirty miles; but Walker's men never mustered beyond the "Saddle," because beyond that his run proper consisted only of barren mountains with little vegetation.

The morning after the men had gone to help Dalgleish, Ernest and the others would start up the spur from the house, Ernest going to the top as usual, the others stopping at their usual heights. There was



always a long delay at "Old Man's Gully:" it was so very rocky and the sheep were very loth to move from it. The first night, after mustering all day, they encamped in the first "cattle gully," about three miles from the station. Owing to the number of gullies to be crossed, and the time occupied in collecting the sheep, it generally took them till night to reach this point. At the head of this gully was a "Saddle" leading on to Skelton's run, and if great care were not taken lots of sheep would slip over this and get clean away. Early next day the musterers would start again and drive all the sheep on to a long ridge just at the back of and above Dalglish's hut. This ridge ran down into a small flat on the station side of Dalglish's hut, in three spurs: the longest spur ending just at the mouth of the second cattle gully. It was generally dark before this second day's work was done. Before day-break on the third day they had to be on the top of the hills. On the longest spur which lay next to the hills at the back, three or four men had to be placed, because the sheep generally made a determined dash over, and if one got across it, it was almost impossible to stop the others, and then all the three days' labour would have been lost, or at all events a great number of sheep would have been missing. The other two or three men, who had mounted to the top before daybreak also, as soon as it began to grow light, came straight down the spurs shouting and driving the sheep before them. The sheep used generally to race down the spurs as hard as they could gallop, and it was a very pretty sight to see ten or twelve thousand of them with their lambs running from all directions, skipping, jumping and bleating, from the sides and the tops of the spurs right on down to the plain. When daylight first broke, one might well believe that there was not a sign of a sheep or of life of any kind to be found on those three dull, bare, rocky-looking ridges: and it seemed quite

wonderful, when the shouting of the shepherds and the barking of the dogs began, to find how quickly every spot of ground seemed to teem with life. Then the looker on (*mutatis mutandis*) could thoroughly realize those stirring words of Sir Walter Scott:—

“Instant, through copse and heath, arose  
Bonnets and spears, and bended bows ;  
On right, on left, above, below,  
At once sprung up the lurking foe ;  
From shingles gray their lances start,  
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,  
The rushes and the willow wand  
Are bristling into axe and brand,  
And every tuft of broom gives life  
To plaided warrior armed for strife.”

Only here, instead of fierce warriors, peaceful sheep and lambs rise up. From the top of the highest hill on this run, and also from the top of Mount St. Bathans, which was on the third run, and which is nearly seven thousand feet high, could be seen three lakes and Mount Cook. This mountain is over thirteen thousand feet high, and its top is covered with perpetual snow. Mount Aspiring, too, which is about nine thousand feet, and is also always topped with snow, besides the greater part of the chain of the Southern Alps, can be seen from this hill. The third run was on the upper side of the Omarama, which formed one of its boundaries. At the back Mount St. Bathans formed another boundary. For about two miles along the upper side, the gully dividing Miller's run from it, and in which Miller's home-station was built, formed the boundary (together with Ahuriri into which Miller's creek ran). Thus Mount St. Bathans, Miller's gully, and the Ahuriri enclosed it on three sides, while on the fourth the Omarama formed the boundary along the whole line and then discharged into the Ahuriri. This run consisted only of a few spurs from Mount St.

Bathans, the rest all plain. The plain was sandy and shingly; and in summer clouds of dust used to rise from it. These clouds used to look like huge pillars. Sometimes there would be only one at a time, sometimes thirty or forty. They went whirling in spiral columns, sometimes fifty or even a hundred feet high, in all directions over the plain. Mount Cook was a splendid specimen of an Alpine mountain. It was a glorious sight to see it on a bright evening when the sun was setting. The snow seemed then to assume a beautiful blue colour tinged with gold. It had immense glaciers, which supplied the chief rivers of Canterbury and Otago. The Tasman river comes from these glaciers, and flowing through Lake Pukaki is a little lower down joined by the Tekapo from the lake of the same name: further down again it is joined by the Ohau and Ahuriri, both fed by the glaciers of the Southern Alps. From the junction of these three last-named rivers the remaining course is called the Waitaki.

Hodgkinson's run extended right to the glaciers which form the source of the Ohau, as Miller's did to the glaciers which form the source of the Ahuriri. Harry, who was managing for Miller, determined one day to penetrate to the West Coast. He took two men with him, with axes, knives, and necessary provisions. About three days brought him to the sea, although a good half of one day was occupied in cutting through a couple of miles of bush. The undergrowth was so thick that the axes and knives were in constant requisition, and almost every step of the way had to be hewed. The country between Longship and the sea was wholly mountainous, with deep gullies, many of them wooded, precipitous cliffs, waterfalls, and almost every variety of wild scenery. On one side of the range were the great Lakes Wanaki and Hawea, and on the other valleys and fiords, tremendously deep, the hill-sides going down almost sheer. The lakes are as deep as their

surface is high above the level of the sea. The rocks are of granite, gneiss, and porphyry, and the highest mountains are about seven thousand feet. This part is considered by Doctors Haäst and Hector to be about the oldest part of New Zealand, and it had evidently been, at some remote period, thrown up from the very bowels of the earth.

To return to Ernest. When the sheep were mustered for shearing this year, E. Hassall, the sub-inspector, came up to examine them, as it had been maliciously reported that there was scab among them. One flock had been a little scabby when Ernest first came, but a few dippings in tobacco water had cured them, and they had all been right for a very long time. After inspection, Hassall was fully satisfied that all the flocks were not only clean, but in the most healthy condition possible. While looking through them he noticed a sheep of a different brand among them.

"That is one of Saxby's sheep," he cried, "and there is another."

Walker and Ernest would hardly believe him, till he caught the sheep and showed the brand to them. Hassall then said, that as there were two, there would very likely be more. Sure enough, as they ran the sheep through the swing gate, they picked out altogether nearly a hundred. They were all fine big wethers, and well-woolled. Finding that the sheep really belonged to Saxby, Walker, when in town, made an arrangement with Saxby to shear them and to keep the fleeces. Afterwards he bought them, and made a further agreement to purchase any others he could find at a similar low price.

Accordingly Ernest was told to cross the range which divides the Omarama from the Manuherikia. No one even knew whether it was possible to get over to Saxby's that way, as no one had previously crossed the range. The only thing clear was that the

sheep had come over, and therefore there was a likelihood that some way could be found. Ernest, therefore, enjoyed the idea of going very much, for he was very fond of exploring and seeing new places, and the fact that no one had preceded him over the ground that he was to traverse, gave him additional pleasure. Directly after breakfast he made a start, riding straight up the Omarama to its source. The "Saddle" looked low, but he found it a pretty steep and high climb. There was a great deal of spear-grass, and this made the horse very slow in following him; for, of course, he walked up, leading the horse. He too suffered a good deal from the spears, but his trousers protected him in a great measure. Spear-grass grows in tufts. The blades are from six inches to a foot long, and from an eighth to a quarter of an inch wide, ending in a sharp point. The blades are quite stiff, so that they enter a horse's legs with some force, and the point then generally breaks off and remains sticking in the leg. This kind of grass generally grows in bleak, exposed places, and on high grounds. When Ernest reached the top of the Manuherikia Saddle he expected to get a good view, but was sadly disappointed. Nothing was to be seen but bare rocky mountains, and here and there a patch of snow. Knowing that there was no time to waste, he quickly descended the Manuherikia side of the "Saddle," and followed that creek down. He made but slow progress, for, to avoid going on the rocky sides of the mountain, he had to constantly cross the creek as it wound from one side of its tiny valley to the other. When he had gone down the Manuherikia, as he reckoned, about ten miles, and was fully expecting that the next turn in the creek would reveal to him the plains and low hills, he having been all this time riding with high and steep mountains on each side of him, bristling with rocks, and dark by the shadows they cast, he was suddenly surprised to see a

great mountain in front of him. For a moment he thought that possibly the creek ran, as he remembered one river in Greece was said to run, under the mountain, and he felt inclined to turn back, for he knew that he could not climb and descend again such a height before night-fall. However, a few moments' reflection convinced him that the next bend of the creek might wind in a totally different direction, and so, as it were, place the mountain in a different position. He was right, for hardly had he gone a couple of hundred yards further, when the valley suddenly widened, the creek became broader, the hills seemed to open, and the mountain to be on his left. The mountain he afterwards learned was Mount Ida. It was the boundary line of Walker's run at the back, though the slopes on the Manuherikia side belonged to Saxby. The grass on the Manuherikia side of the range (Mount St. Bathans) which Ernest had just crossed was not nearly so good as on the Omarama side; partly, perhaps, because it had not been pastured, and partly because the sun did not reach it so much. Having cleared the gorge along which he had travelled for a good ten miles, he now jumped off his horse, took the saddle and bridle off, and tethered the animal, so that it might get a roll on the grass and a little food. He then sat down on a bank by the side of the river and began to take his bread and meat. He was looking about him, when on a landslip close by he noticed a dark-looking substance jutting out from the clay. On examining it he found it to be brown coal, very similar to that obtained at Geddes' on the Waitaki. He afterwards learned that there was abundance of it in many parts of Otago. This brown coal is very light, and is not fit, therefore, for blacksmithing, since it will not stand the bellows. It gives forth a smell like sulphur when burning, and it burns to a white or grayish ash, leaving no cinders. When once lighted (and it lights very easily) it burns

away without trouble to the very last ; and if a large fire has been kindled on the ground so as to make a big heap of ashes, it often keeps alight for three days and more. The best coal, though, in New Zealand is to be found along the coast of the Karamea Bight in Nelson, but at the time Ernest was in New Zealand it was not worked much.

Many of the terraces along the river-beds and the coast of New Zealand are of gravel and sand, and they cover ancient forests, which are now beneath the sea level. In this kind of gravel and sand are found the bones of the Moa, a bird, some specimens of which grow to ten and even twelve feet. These bones are also found on the mountain ridges, for both on the Manuherikia Saddle spur and on the slopes of Mount Ida Ernest found some very good specimens. Other huge New Zealand birds' bones of species long extinct are also found in this gravel, and in the more recent beds they are mixed with things evidently manufactured by men.

Having finished his frugal fare, Ernest went on his way down the Manuherikia over flats and low downs, till the river, taking a sudden bend to the right, and passing between low though steep hills, compelled him to mount what he judged, and judged correctly, to be the leading spur. This began with a gentle slope, unlike the hills close on the river, but it was for the first hundred yards literally covered with spear-grass. The poor horse danced about in it in pain, and Ernest was very thankful to get clear of it. He then followed along the spur for some distance till he came to another spur leading gently down to the river. On the spur were several large boulders of quartz, which quite glittered in the evening's sun. This spur he resolved to descend, but before descending he took a good view of the country round. Presently he caught sight of a hut right opposite him. This undoubtedly was Saxby's hut. Farther down the river, towards the right, he

noticed several houses, and still to the right, but at his back as he faced the hut, he observed on turning round that one of the low ridges about a mile-and-a-half away had a great number of heaps of clay on its top. Though he could see no tents, he guessed that there were "diggings" there. These were the Dunstan diggings. Crossing the river he cantered over to the hut, and jumping off his horse knocked for admission. He received no answer. Lifting the latch, he entered, and found that the hut was clearly uninhabited, except by fleas, which swarmed on the dirty floor. Darkness was now fast coming on, as there is very little twilight in New Zealand. Ernest therefore pushed rapidly on down the river, and in about half-an-hour reached the first house, which proved to be a home-station. He asked, as usual, for a night's lodging. The overseer, Gardiner (for the owners, two young men named Roland, were not at home), to Ernest's surprise refused him a bed. He excused his refusal by saying that there were so many diggers and others about that he could not tell who was who, and, moreover, he, not being the owner, could not give a night's lodging. Ernest had heard before that he was a very close man. However, he was in a strait, not having sixpence in his pocket, so he was compelled to ask Gardiner to lend him money to pay for his night's lodging at the inn, which was about a mile off. After some hesitation Gardiner did lend him ten shillings. Ernest rode off and obtained fairly comfortable quarters for the night for himself, but he was obliged to tether out his horse, as there was no stable, and even if there had been he could not have paid for it, as the usual charge for man and horse was fifteen shillings per night. He returned to Omarama next day, and by the very next mail, for the posts were only fortnightly then, he despatched the ten shillings to Gardiner.

A few months later, Harold and Ernest were sent



together into the Manuherikia district to try to muster Saxby's stray sheep off the slopes of Mount Ida. Thinking that by sharp travelling they could leave after dinner, get over the other side in time to pitch their tent, and muster the range and bring the sheep down to the tent for the night, so that they would be able to drive them back the next day, they only took a shoulder of mutton (cooked), a loaf of bread, and some tea and sugar, forgetting matches entirely. They did not discover that they had forgotten the matches till they had pitched their tent. There was no help for it, so they contented themselves with bread, cold mutton, and water. At daybreak, having breakfasted, they started up the nearest ridge of the Mount Ida range, leaving their horses tethered in the flat, and their blankets, &c., in the tent. After a long, and to Harold, who was unused to such work, a tedious climb, they reached the top. It was all bare and shingly, and apparently by no means a likely place for sheep. Harold laughed at the idea of there being any there. However, after a time they came on some very old camping-grounds where numbers had clearly at one time encamped, but there were no recent traces. They went about a mile further on, here and there lighting on camping-grounds but all old. At last Harold said that it would be a waste of time and trouble to go on, and finally Ernest consented to descend the hill again. Harold found the going down even a more unpleasant task than climbing up, and before long was glad to sit on a rock and rest, he and Ernest munching a crust of bread each, and drinking from the rill that ran at their feet. Presently Ernest, whose eyes were accustomed to scanning hills and plains in search of sheep and cattle, exclaimed,—

“There they are, Harold.”

“Where?” said Harold.

“Don't you see? right above us, a little to the

right of the very place we have left ; there are close on two hundred."

"Nonsense !" replied Harold, after looking for a minute or two in vain. "I can see nothing but rocks ; you must be mistaken."

"Well, they do look not unlike rocks, but you'll soon see that I am right : just keep 'Glen' (Harold's dog) in, while I send 'Maidie' (Ernest's dog) to head them."

In a few minutes (the sheep meanwhile, with their heads towards Ernest and Harold, wholly taken up with them) Maidie had crept round well above them. Then Ernest called to her to bring them on. She at once barked, and the sheep made a terrified start down the hill.

"Now I see them," said Harold, as some small boulders came rolling down towards him, started by the sheep moving. "Ain't they going at a pace, though ? 'Maidie' can never come down the hill like that. I'll send 'Glen' to head them up again. Here, 'Glen !' forward, boy !"

"Glen," a wild harum-scarum dog, very ill-trained and only fit for driving quiet sheep, made a dash at them and managed to cut them into two mobs, much to Ernest's disgust, and then quietly returned, wagging his tail and looking well satisfied with himself. Harold was furious with him and gave him a thrashing. The two mobs now took opposite directions, and it was a long time before Ernest and "Maidie" by careful working could bring them together, and they did not do this (so furiously did the sheep run) until the two leading sheep dropped dead. Then, with their tongues hanging out of their mouths, the others consented to walk quietly. Ernest and Harold took them straight down to the plain, and were driving them slowly towards the tent, when they caught sight of two men (apparently on their horses, a grey and a bay) looking

into the tent. At first they thought of pushing on together to reach the tent, and try to prevent the men from taking the horses; but they soon found that the sheep could not travel quickly, and they dare not leave them. It was resolved that Ernest should run on to the tent, Harold being as fagged as the sheep. Ernest ran as quickly as he could, and reached the tent all breathless, for the distance was a good mile, and he had had eight hours' walking before, on only a crust of bread and a draught of water. On rounding the last point he saw that the horses were all right up the gully, and that the men had their own horses. This relieved him of his fears at once. The men were only diggers who had caught sight of the tent, and thought that Ernest and Harold had a good "diggings" there in a quiet way. For some time they would not believe Ernest, but when at last he thought of pointing to the sheep they were convinced. Ernest then asked them for some matches. They said they had none. He did not believe them, for they were smoking, and their pipes were fresh filled, so that they must have lighted them recently, and they could not have done that except with matches or a flint, for they were some miles away from the Dunstan diggings where they were living. The fact was they were annoyed at being disappointed, and at having had their ride for nothing. There was nothing now in the tent for Harold and Ernest to eat but dry bread, and very little of that. They, therefore, packed up their tent at once and started homewards. When they got to the foot of the "Saddle" the sheep positively refused to go any further. It was almost dark. Ernest and Harold did not care to pitch the tent, as they might have to start again at any moment if the sheep became restless; so they unrolled it on the ground, and lying on it, wrapped themselves in their blankets, having first tethered their horses. They had placed the sheep in a bend of the Manuherikia creek, so

that on three sides they were surrounded by water, while on the fourth side were Harold and Ernest, and the dogs and horses. Both Harold and Ernest were very tired, and though they had resolved to start on again as soon as the moon rose, and not actually to go to sleep, they were soon in a sound slumber, from which Ernest was awakened by the moon shining full in his face. Lucky was it that he did awake then, for the sheep were quietly stealing off; some of them had got beyond the horses and were making away fast. Ernest hastily sent "Maidie" after them, and then joined Harold in rolling up the tent and blankets, and strapping them on their saddles. They then drove the sheep up the leading spur to the "Saddle." Harold rode; Ernest led his horse. When they had got about a quarter of a mile up the spur, two of the sheep suddenly broke off from the rest and ran down into the gully. By the moonlight it was not easy to follow them readily, and no efforts of Harold, who went after them with "Glen," could bring them back. Harold and Ernest were both much vexed. Harold then rode a little ahead of Ernest driving the sheep on faster. This Ernest rather deprecated, as he knew that the two sheep had broken off from the rest and run down the hill because they had felt too worn out and winded to climb higher, and he was therefore anxious to give the others as much time as possible. Presently he heard an exclamation from Harold, and the next minute he found him rolling at his feet. At first Ernest thought that Harold must be very much injured, falling backwards, as he must have done, from the horse; but it turned out that he was not at all hurt. It appeared the girth had broken, and hence he fell off, saddle and all. A few minutes set things to rights. A little flax, an article almost always at hand, provided by nature, in New Zealand (though, by the bye, it was very scarce in that neighbourhood), soon mended the girth. Harold walked with Ernest all the

rest of the way to the top, which they reached about two in the morning. By four o'clock they had got to the stone hut, where they roused up the shepherd and had some breakfast. Harold then, after helping Ernest to cross the sheep over the Omarama, went on, while Ernest drove them leisurely the same way. He had not got quite opposite the "cattle" gullies, when the sheep came to a dead stop and would not budge a step. They had been lagging for some time. It was now nine o'clock, and the sun was getting pretty strong. He was near the middle of the plain, and there was no shelter of any kind near. However, there was no alternative; so he thought he would sit down for a few minutes, and after the sheep were rested go on again. The sand-flies soon began to annoy him, and he was glad to unstrap the tent from his horse and roll himself up in it to get rid of them. In a few minutes he had forgotten sheep, horse, and sand-flies, and was sound asleep. He must have slept about three hours or more, for when he got to the station, which was only about five miles off, it was between two and three in the afternoon. The sheep were as tired as he was, for during his sleep they had not moved a step.

About six weeks later on, Augustus Campbell, or the "Emperor," as he was nicknamed, rode over to ask Walker if he might use his yards for branding a lot of rather wild cattle, which he and a Frenchman named Mallet had bought. MacMurdo's old yards had been levelled to the ground by these animals, the posts having got very rotten. Walker was away, but Harold said that he would write to him, and if he had no objection, he for his part would raise none. Walker agreed, and said that Harold might as well take his mare "Lily," and help Campbell to muster and bring over the cattle. Ernest, Whitfeld, and the men were at the time engaged in reaping. About three in the afternoon next day, the reapers saw the cattle streaming

over the little ridge above the house, and in a few minutes the horsemen appeared. To Ernest's surprise there were only three, namely, Campbell, Mallet, and Harold. Ernest noticed at once that Harold's mare was lame. He afterwards learned that Harold had been disgusted to find on his arrival at Campbell's, that Augustus Campbell did not intend to take any man to assist: consequently, as neither Campbell nor Mallet, though reputed good riders in their own countries, dared ride fast over New Zealand ground, Harry had to do most of the galloping, and "Lily" had lost her shoe and become lame. By the time they reached the yard, Harold did not like to push her any more, she was so lame. Campbell and Mallet were very little good, the cattle were wild, and it was quickly seen that they would never yard them. Harold then asked Ernest to get a horse. He did so, and in a few minutes joined them. Still the cattle refused to enter the yard.

"Well," said Ernest, after a consultation with Harold, "it is useless for us to attempt to yard the lot at once: the only way will be to let Mallet keep the main mob together out in the plain, while you and I, Campbell, cut off small lots and run them into the yard. Harold says he will keep the gate."

"Oh! but we shall have to gallop to do that," said Augustus Campbell.

"Of course," replied Ernest.

"I will not risk my horse and my own neck to do that over this ground," sharply rejoined 'the Emperor.'

"How on earth then do you expect to get your cattle yarded? surely you do not expect other people to do all your work for you, and to risk their necks over your cattle? Come on, there is no other way; or else we must let the whole lot go at once, for Walker will not care to have his horses and men worn out, and his time wasted for no purpose."

Campbell at length gave a hesitating assent. He

was evidently alarmed at having to gallop over such ground. It was rather rough, but not half so bad as the Ahuriri river-bed. Campbell did not, however, screw up his courage for a gallop, he never once got out of a trot or a slow canter. Ernest had all the galloping to do, and it was some time before the yard was full. The rest of the cattle had to be taken to the inn yard, which belonged, of course, to Jackson. Ernest had several times asked Harold to get a fresh horse, for Harold was a first-rate hand with cattle, and with his aid they would soon have been yarded. Harold now consented to let Whitfeld join. Whitfeld was also a good hand, but unfortunately was provided with a poor horse.

After another hour's hard riding on the part of Whitfeld and Ernest, they succeeded in yarding half the remaining lot of cattle. The ground at Jackson's yard was far better for riding than the ground at Walker's yard, but of course, both Ernest and Whitfeld were now getting tired of it, and moreover they were frequently prevented from doing anything, they were so convulsed with laughter at Augustus Campbell and Mallet, who kept catching their whips under their horses' tails, and were on each occasion a long time freeing them. Had they not had miserable screws of horses, they would have been thrown off a hundred times, for no spirited horse could have stood their awkward management of their whips. Campbell was furious with Ernest for laughing, and never even thanked Harold or any one for the assistance rendered. In the end they had to let about thirty head of cattle go; the young bulls began charging so vigorously. The rails being carefully fastened up by Harold, Whitfeld, and Ernest; Campbell and Mallet took their departure without uttering a word as to their plans for the next day. Next day, soon after breakfast, Mallet rode over by himself.

"Where are your men?" said Harold; "are you not going to brand the cattle after all?"

"Oh yes!" said Mallet, "Campbell said he thought you would help to do that."

"Well," said Harold, "I should be very pleased to help, but if you are single-handed, it appears to me that I and my men will have to do all the work."

"Oh!" said Mallet, "I never thought of that. What am I to do?"

"Well," replied Harold, "I do not like to leave you in a fix, though I think you richly deserve to be so left. I will help you; yet I must say that Mr. Augustus Campbell is a precious cool hand."

Harold, Whitfeld, Ernest, Mallet, and a couple of Walker's men repaired to the large stockyard first. Harold and Ernest got into the yard, and Mallet followed them, but he was quickly desired to remain outside, as he was only in the way, and rendered the work of the others more dangerous. The cattle were wild, but as they were pretty closely packed, they could not do much by charging, and it was easy to avoid them and to cow them. By dinner time, the work of branding, &c., in this yard was finished. After dinner they all went to Jackson's yard. In this there were only about thirty head of cattle, very wild, and with plenty of room to rush about. Three or four of the first were branded without any great difficulty, but the mother of the next, a calf of about nine months old, was furious at her calf being dragged about, and charged vigorously at Harry and Ernest. Ernest had been holding the coil of rope, while Harold with a long pole had been roping,—that is, throwing the slip-knot over the heads of the cattle that required to be branded. Ernest's duty, as soon as Harold had successfully roped an animal, was to run to the corner post and hand the end of the rope through to the men outside, who taking a turn of it round the post rapidly drew in the slack.



Ernest then with Harold had to get behind the animal, and by dint of prodding with the roping stick which Harold held, and by twisting the animal's tail, to force it to run up towards the corner: each time it advanced a step and slackened the rope, the slack was immediately drawn in, and in this way the animal was at length brought with its head close up to the corner post: the end of a small rope fastened to one of the rails was now passed by Ernest rapidly round its body, and handed to the men outside to put round another rail and hold. This was sometimes awkward work, for some animals were determined kickers, and unless a man was used to the work he was most likely to be injured. Sometimes the cattle would try to twist round and jam the man against the fence. Almost at the same time that this "belly-rope," as it was called, was being fastened to keep the body of the animal upright, Harold would be putting a rope round one of the hind legs. This rope was fastened back to a post behind. This was easily done by putting a large slip-knot on the ground near the animal's hind leg, and as soon as the foot required went into the loop it was drawn tight. The animal, thus firmly fixed against the rails and posts, was then branded or otherwise handled. Well, Harold Walker, of course, was armed with a roping stick. Ernest had no stick. Luckily, Harold stood out furthest in the yard and encountered the cow first. By a well directed blow he knocked her left horn right off; the poor creature reeled round in agony, and never attempted to charge again. One or two more were then quickly branded, till it came to the turn of a savage bull about two-and-a-half years old. There was one other besides to brand, but the bull was getting troublesome, and Harold thought that branding might frighten and quiet him. He was safely roped, branded, &c., but just as the men outside were placing the iron hook in the eye of the rope to slacken it from the bull's head,

the animal by a tremendous effort snapped the rope short off and made off across the yard. As soon as he caught sight of Harold and Ernest he charged. Being prepared, they were in an instant safely seated on the top rail. In a minute or two, after a good deal of merriment among the men, they jumped down again to go on with their work. No sooner were they in the yard, than the bull, which had got behind the other cattle, forced its way through and charged them fiercely. They saw that it would be no use while he was in the yard to attempt further work. Ernest declared, and Harold agreed with him, that he was not going in again to risk his life in work with which he had really nothing to do.

Poor Mallet was in great distress. He wanted the cattle finished. He urged Harold and Ernest again and again, but they steadily refused. At last Ernest said,—

“Well, Mallet, Jackson is a good hand with cattle, and an old stockman and bullock-driver: perhaps he will not mind finishing the work for you. I’ll go and see; and I’ll borrow a fresh rope from him.”

Ernest found Jackson talking to a very big, powerful man, in the sitting room of the accommodation house. When Ernest mentioned the difficulty, Jackson hesitated about going, but the big fellow laughed and said,—

“Give me a rope and a pole, I’ll soon settle them; the only thing I bargain for is that you treat us all round.”

“I shall have nothing to do with treating,” replied Ernest, “but I’ve no doubt Mr. Mallet will be glad to treat you.”

The matter of “treating” being arranged, the big fellow strode up to the yard, and with a new rope and a heavy roping pole in his hand climbed over the fence and dropped down inside. He fixed his rope carefully on to his pole and advanced towards the cattle; the bull, which had retreated to its old place at the back,

by this time had got clear of the other cattle, and was advancing at a steady trot towards the man. The fellow stood still at once; gradually as the bull got nearer he drew back evidently terror-stricken. Harold, Ernest, and the men, who till this moment had been expecting to see some wonderful manœuvring on the part of this boastful, big, Australian bullock-driver, now became greatly alarmed for his life. There was no gun nearer than the accommodation house, and no one even thought of a gun till all was over. The bull still steadily advanced, its eyes fixed on the man, and glaring fiercely; the man meanwhile retreating step by step, till at length he threw away the pole and rope, and uttering a loud and frightened scream, or rather roar, dropped to the ground; the bull, with a snort and a whisk of its head, jumped over him without harming him, and trotted back to the others, evidently not at all able to make out the meaning of a man lying on the ground. Ernest often noticed, both before and after this occurrence, that the safest plan to try in cases of great peril with cattle, when there was no chance of assistance, was to throw one's self to the ground. The poor fellow picked himself up as soon as he was assured that the bull had gone. Slowly, and in a crest-fallen way, he climbed the fence. He was still very much frightened, and though not at all hurt, all his boastfulness was gone. Mallet was again in the greatest perplexity, till Jackson proposed trying to rope the remaining bull from the fence. This was very troublesome work, and it was half-an-hour before they had done the one animal. Harold and Ernest then unpegged the rails and let the lot run out.

When Walker returned from town, he said that sheep had gone up so high in price that he thought he would like to try and send a hundred or so for sale. Together with Ernest he picked out a hundred of the fattest wethers. These, Ernest and a shepherd named

Robertson had to drive to the Dunstan diggings, crossing the Manuherikia range. It was now towards the end of May. The first day they had fine weather and got on very fast, having been able to get to the Saddle. The next day they were equally fortunate, crossing the Saddle and getting clear of the Manuherikia gorge: but on the third day they were greatly delayed by having to cross the Manuherikia which had risen in the night. They had hardly crossed it when it began to snow hard, and they were very thankful to get a sheltered gully in which to pitch their tent, and to find in it plenty of small scrub. They soon made a big fire. Robertson, a tall wiry Scotchman, and an excellent shepherd, took the first watch. Ernest took the morning, that is from one o'clock. He found it bitterly cold turning out of the warm blankets to walk about in the dark and snow. He made a roaring fire, which enabled him to see clearly the position of the sheep. They gave no trouble, and the time soon passed, for the scrub burnt away so quickly that it took him all his time to gather fuel for the fire. On the fourth day they reached the "diggings" at nightfall, and pitching their tent rather outside the little township of tents and wooden houses, Robertson looked after the sheep, while Ernest proceeded to see and to bargain with the butcher. He found that the butcher and the landlord of the principal inn (if the rough wooden building might be dignified with such a name) were one and the same person. He soon made arrangements with him to come and see the sheep on the morrow. They were to obtain the average weight of the lot by the butcher and Ernest choosing one each, and then striking the average from the average weight of the two. The price secured was forty-five shillings each, and Walker thought himself very fortunate, for sheep never rose above that, and, after he had sold those, the prices fell rapidly. They had to watch the sheep all night, though they put them into

the butcher's yard, because some of the hangers-on of the diggings,—the thieves, the good-for-nothing portion of the community—were not at all unlikely to make a raid on them. However, they did not, and though Ernest took sheep over several times, on no occasion had he any trouble on that score.

Towards the end of June,—the snow lying thick on the Saddle then,—Paterson, Julius's cousin, crossed over with a lot of sheep from the Manuherikia into Walker's run without giving notice. Walker was very angry, and sent Ernest to hurry him through the run as hard as he could drive the sheep; for at that time there was a lot of scab about, and he had no wish to have scabby sheep stopped and quartered on his run by the inspector for several months together. The day before the twenty-fifth of June, which they intended to keep as Christmas Day, Ernest, by Walker's directions, had killed a fine turkey, and they intended to keep up Christmas for the first time. While Ernest was working in the paddock opposite the house, Dalgleish came from the stone hut on the Omarama and began talking to Walker. Presently Walker called Ernest, and when he came up, said,—

“Just see what Dalgleish has to say: I cannot exactly make out.”

Ernest was puzzled for a few moments by the Scotch lingo; but having heard a good deal of it at different times before, he made out that Dalgleish had heard a dog barking in a swamp. Now there were two swamps, a small one near the cattle gullies, only three miles off, and a large one at the foot of the spurs running down from an off-shoot of Mount St. Bathans, and twelve miles distant. At the time it never struck Ernest that the small one might be meant, and when Walker asked him if he would like to take a gun, he said that he would not, because it would be dark in any case before he could get up there. He rode off at once,

but could find no traces and could hear no sound of a dog. On his way back in the starlight he met Dalglish, who pointed to the place where he had heard the dog, and Ernest, to his mortification and annoyance, found that it was the small swamp near the cattle gullies. Next morning, Ernest, revolver in hand, was despatched to Skelton's to warn him to look out for the dog, and to scour the ranges on that side with him. At dark he returned, having seen nothing. Walker meanwhile had ridden to the small swamp and examined the whole ground in that direction carefully to no purpose, when just at sunset, as he was giving up all hope of coming across the dog, he found a sheep lying on the ground in the second cattle gully. It was quite warm. In its throat were the teeth-marks of a dog. The brute had evidently fastened on to its throat and drained the blood. Not twenty yards further on he found another in the same state, only cold. It was too late to do anything that night, so he rode hastily on to Dalglish's hut, told him to be on the look-out in the morning, and then rode home.

At daybreak next morning, Ernest, Harold, Whitfeld, and Robertson started, guns and revolvers in their hands,—all except Robertson, who only had a stick, as there were not weapons sufficient. A pack-horse was to be sent to the cattle gully with tent, provisions, &c., for they were to encamp there the night. They searched the whole of the centre run. About two in the afternoon Robertson heard what he called a "girning" noise in the first cattle gully. He made his way quickly towards it, and turning a point up a little side gully he saw a large dog, half bull-dog, half mastiff, hanging on to a sheep's throat. Keeping his own little dog in as well as he could, he advanced swiftly and quietly towards it, but just as he was raising his stick, and another step would have brought him within striking distance, his little dog sprang forward and

barked. The bull-dog at once made off, but only went about twenty yards, when he stopped, coolly turned round and looked at Robertson, who at once threw his stick at him, but with erring aim. Robertson gave chase, occasionally throwing his stick at him, down the first cattle gully and up part of the second. Before the dog had got far up the second cattle gully, Robertson noticed Whitfeld riding slowly down towards him, his hands in his pockets, and his gun slung over his shoulder. The dog, of course, was between the two hunters. Robertson shouted to Whitfeld, but it was some minutes before he could make him understand; and by the time he did understand, the dog had caught sight of him and was making off up the hill towards the Manuherikia range. Whitfeld jumped off his horse and ran after him, as the ground was too rocky and steep for the horse to follow. Ernest cantered down the gully just in time to see Whitfeld disappear over the top of the ridge. Whitfeld met with no success, though he went on till dark. The next morning the pursuit was taken up again, the night having been spent in the first cattle gully. Pieces of meat impregnated with strychnine were placed in different parts of the run. Harry Talbot and an Irish gentleman, a friend of Walker's, joined in the pursuit. Another day passed and nothing was seen. The following night, however, as Ernest and his men were just rolling themselves in their blankets to go to sleep, the snow lying on the ground, Walker rode up to the tent, and related what he had seen during the day. His story ran as follows:—

“I took Glen (hoping that he might get on the scent of the bull-dog, and that as he was himself a powerful dog, he might, with me to back him, be induced to tackle the brute), and I rode up towards the Saddle. Until I got within half-a-mile of the entrance of the small gorge there, I saw nothing. The sheep were feeding quietly, and everything seemed to be as it

should be. However, I soon stumbled over a dead sheep with the usual terrible teeth-marks in its throat. Shortly after, Glen's growling warned me that the game was up. I caught sight of the dog issuing from a lot of thick fern and making off at a slow shambling trot. Unfortunately I had taken 'Dandy' (a newly imported horse) instead of 'Old Thunder.' The horse was not used to the rough ground, and stumbled fearfully: however, I was determined to catch the dog, and holding 'Dandy' well up, I pressed him to his utmost speed. Just as I was heading the dog, over I went, horse and all. Picking myself up and catching 'Dandy,' who did not at once recover from his astonishment, I clapped spurs to him and galloped on again. I was nearly heading the brute again when he calmly stopped to drink. To make sure of my aim I dismounted; but when I felt for my revolver it was gone: it must have been shaken from my belt when I fell. The brute then tried to mount the ridge and make away over the Saddle. Leaving 'Dandy' tied to a bush, I ran after the dog, knowing that it must be pretty well tired out, and being determined either to kill it or drive it over the Saddle. In a few minutes I was plunging to my waist in snow, but still I was gaining on the dog, when suddenly he gave up the attempt of climbing the ridge, and made away back along the sidling to my own run again. In this way my purpose of either catching or driving him back to where he came from was defeated; and now the wretch is still at large on the run. Returning to where I first fell, after a time I found the revolver, and, mounting 'Dandy,' tried to overtake the dog by riding along the flat; but I lost sight of him in the darkness. To-morrow we must make a fresh effort."

Again at daybreak they all sallied forth from the tent, Ernest taking the highest ground as usual, and making away towards the Saddle. Half-way they



met Dalgleish, who said that he had tracked the brute from the Saddle so far by the blood-marks on the snow. The wretch's feet were evidently sore and wounded with his long runs over the stony ground. Again the searchers had no success. For three weeks they kept up this constant chevy and watchfulness, camping out nightly, in spite of the snow which at times fell. At last they were giving it up as a bad job. Walker rode up to the tent one morning, and after receiving the usual reply on enquiring whether the dog had been seen, said,—

“I am afraid there is not much hope now of catching the wretch. In any case I want you, Ernest, to come into the station. We are going to kill some wild cattle to-morrow, and you know best where to find them.”

“All right,” replied Ernest, “I shall not be sorry for a change of work. Yet it will not do to lose any chance of securing the dog. He has already been missed once or twice through some carelessness, and I prefer staying here on the watch till dark and then walking home.”

“Well,” said Harry Talbot, “you are on foot, and we are on horseback, so perhaps you had better start on, and we will come afterwards.”

“All right,” said Ernest.

“Stop,” said Harry, “I’ll carry your gun.”

“Oh no!” broke in Walker, “Ernest may want it.”

“Rubbish!” retorted Harry. “He’ll be across the flat in ten minutes, and home within half-an-hour; besides, I might want the gun.”

“Yes,” said Ernest, “it is much more likely that you will want it, than that I shall.”

“Oh! very well,” said Walker; “only remember, if anything goes amiss I shall blame you two.”

Before parting, Ernest said,—

“Mind that you stop till it is quite dark. If I see or hear anything I will ‘cooey,’ and you will be sure to hear me, if you keep your posts.”

"Never fear," replied Harry.

They were then at the far end of the flat, opposite the opening of the second cattle gully. Ernest walked homewards thinking over the best plan of securing the cattle on the morrow, when just as he was coming to the end of the little plain, his dog "Sharp," a very swift animal, went off at a gallop, and, with a yelp, ran straight up the hill. There, not seventy yards from Ernest, sat the long-looked-for bull-dog, presenting a splendid mark for a gun. How Ernest regretted not having kept his gun, and blamed his folly! for, setting aside other considerations, of course he would have liked to have had the honour of killing so troublesome a brute. Up he went, cheering on "Sharp," "cooeying," and lighting tussocks to warn Walker and Harry that he had seen the dog. When he got to the spot where the dog had been sitting, he found a dead sheep.

"Sharp" disappeared over the ridge, and did not return for more than half-an-hour. As soon as he did come back Ernest made off home. Long before he got there it was dark, and they had almost finished tea.

"Well, Ernest, where have you been?" said Walker. "We thought you would have reached home before us." Ernest at once recounted his adventure, and it was resolved to put off the cattle-hunting in order to endeavour once more to run down the dog.

Hodgkinson was staying the night, and he at once entered into a history of an adventure he had with a wild dog many years before, when he first discovered and settled on Ben More run.

"We had been very much troubled by several dogs from the first day of our arrival; but while MacMurdo was with me, we managed to keep them off pretty well, though we could not catch them, they were so very swift and powerful. MacMurdo was bound to go both to the Canterbury and Otago government to secure our run, as it formed a piece of disputed territory. One

day I was working away hard to get our hut finished, for we only had a tent; my horse was tethered close by, the sheep were feeding in sight, and my kangaroo dog was chained in his hut, when I observed a dog trotting over the ridge about half-a-mile off, making away across towards the plain, and seemingly intending to creep round to the sheep. I knew the gentleman at once, a very troublesome customer, rather more powerful than my dog. It evidently had not noticed me, so quietly saddling my horse, and loosening my dog, I cantered briskly after it. It was not long before it heard the sound of horse's hoofs, and then it quickened its pace, and made right down the flat towards the big swamp by the Ahuriri. Seeing that the brute intended to baffle me by getting into the swamp, I made my horse put his best foot foremost, and after about half-an-hour's hard riding, pretty well at full speed, I just managed to get between it and the swamp. It was 'touch and go,' though, for it was not three hundred yards from the swamp, and if it had got into it, all my hopes of catching the brute would have been gone. Just at this critical moment my horse stumbled, and I was flung violently from the saddle. I remember nothing more, until awaking with a kind of dazed feeling, I was surprised to find myself lying close by the swamp, my horse feeding a short distance off, and about fifty yards from me was my kangaroo dog, his tongue lolling out of his mouth and his flanks heaving. My poor animal had clearly had a long fight and had got rather the worst of it, but was still determined to keep between me and the wild dog, and to prevent its getting to the swamp. I jumped up and staggered along to help my dog with a bludgeon. When I was within a few yards the wild dog sprang at my throat, and would most certainly have settled me, for I was still sick and giddy, had not my kangaroo dog caught him by the haunches as he sprang, and flung him to the ground. I rushed in, and

dealt him one or two heavy blows over the head which stunned him, and then he was easily despatched. It did not strike me till after all was over, but I had really been in a most forlorn condition. There was no station in those days within fifty miles of me, and I might have lain on that plain for weeks without being found or even sought for."

Hodgkinson's tale finished, there was a little more chat about their plans for the morrow, and then all turned in for the night. Ernest took his usual bed. He felt it very cold in the night, but could not make out the reason of it. In the morning, he discovered that it had been snowing, and a lot of the snow had drifted through between the wall and the roof. There was a long line of it on the floor beside his bed.

They again hunted after the dog, but to no purpose, and it was never again seen. It was thought that he had either taken some of the poisoned meat, or else had gone back over the Saddle, as it was supposed that he had come that way on the track of Paterson's sheep. In a few days Whitfeld and Ernest were sent after the cattle. Whitfeld rode fiery old Peter, and Ernest rode Harold's mare, Lily. The cattle were running in the Ahuriri river-bed, and were soon found. They went off at a gallop through the scrub. Whitfeld went tearing after them, and Ernest followed close at his heels. The river bed is all ups and downs, with here and there deep ruts that must be jumped; sometimes the banks of these ruts are level with one another, sometimes one bank is higher than another: and the ruts are some six to ten feet wide. The riders come suddenly on them through the long grass and scrub, and never know from one moment to another when they will have to jump, or when they will have fairly good ground to gallop on. Suddenly our friends came on one of these ruts. Old Peter went at it in his harum-scarum careless way, just struck the top of the

opposite bank with his forefeet and went spinning over, flinging Whitfeld into a hole beyond. Ernest had only just time to draw up, to prevent Lily from crashing on to the top of Peter. He thought Whitfeld was killed, but he was only a little shaken, and soon remounted. Ernest then galloped on, headed the cattle, and the two drove them into the yards.

When Walker left again for town, he told Harold that he wished both sides of Mount St. Bathans to be thoroughly scoured to see if several hundred missing sheep could be found. At the earliest opportunity, therefore, Harold, Ernest, and Whitfeld started. The first day they went to Longslip, and spent the night with Harry Talbot. The next day they took Arthur with them, and Harry's cook, old Doctor. Passing up the Longslip to the end of the boundary, they then crossed right over Mount St. Bathans to the gullies and narrow flats below. There was a little snow on the top, but nothing to speak of, for it was only the beginning of May, in the year after the dog hunt. The next day they spent in examining the hills all round, but found nothing. They were intending to spend another day there, but they noticed after breakfast that heavy clouds were gathering and the air was becoming sensibly colder. They therefore made up their minds to pack up their tents, blankets, &c., and get over the mountain as quickly as possible, for they knew how soon the snow got several feet deep on the tops. They were hardly up the first gentle rise before the rain came down in torrents; presently, as they ascended the rain became sleet and the sleet snow. It took them nearly three hours to get to the top. The snow then was about six inches deep. It was difficult to know which way they ought to take, the snow almost blinding them, as, besides coming down very fast, the gusts of wind whirled the fallen snow in their faces. The pack-horse was obliged to be absolutely forced on. Arthur thought

one direction ought to be taken, but Ernest thought another was the right. The rest of the party did not pretend to have an opinion. At last Ernest decided the matter by saying that he intended to go the way he considered to be right, whether the others went or not. All then followed him on what turned out to be the right ridge. They had been descending for about twenty minutes or more when Ernest caught sight of about eighty wild sheep; most of them appeared not to have been shorn for two years at least. He shouted to the others to go on home, and that he would follow as soon as possible with the sheep. "Sharp" had unluckily been poisoned by taking a piece of the poisoned meat left in different parts of the run, and "Maidie" was not in good trim for running. However, she went after them and headed them nicely, keeping very wide. In spite of her good working she was not quick enough, and they split and got away from her. Ernest made her turn them so that both lots would run the same way, and then he followed after them. He was wet through and very cold, having no feeling whatever in his legs up to his knees. Still he did not like to let the sheep go. He followed on after them till it was growing dusk, and then beginning to feel faint, as he had had nothing to eat since breakfast, he thought he had better get to the bottom of the mountain as quickly as possible. The place he had to descend was very steep and rocky, and in parts there was a great quantity of loose shingle, down which he slid many feet at each step. When the shingle first began to give way with him, the hill was so steep that he thought he should go right to the bottom of it; but luckily the shingle beds were narrow, and by making a dash he soon got across them. After partly scrambling, partly rolling down the mountain for some time, at length he got on to more decent ground, and in a little while after he was on the dray-track, and then his work was easy. On

his arriving at the Longslip some time after dark, the others were all sitting round a blazing fire, having had tea. They prepared to make room for him, but he said he must get into bed at once. Harry had made him up a bed in the sitting-room, as there was no room anywhere else. He cut off his boots and stockings, for he could not pull them off, rubbed his feet and legs thoroughly dry, and rolled himself up in the blankets. The next day his toe-nails and the tips of his toes were all black, and he could not walk at all. He had never had sore feet in his life before, and was greatly put out. After resting a couple of days at Longslip, he went on again to Omarama. The only loss he sustained was that of his toe-nails, which all peeled right off. About the time of this sheep expedition, Walker while in town felt very ill, and being rather low spirited, wrote home to his partner, Sir Henry Young, offering to sell him his share of the run. To his surprise, and rather to his dismay (for by that time he had changed his mind), Sir Henry Young, instead of answering his letter, came out in person to conclude the purchase. While matters were being arranged in town, Sir H. Young sent a friend, Michel, a youth of eighteen, up to the station before him. This boy seemed much surprised at the ways and doings on the station. He was a spirited youth, but very lazy by disposition, and too fond of smoking cigars, of which he had brought a large quantity out from England.

Preliminary arrangements were in a few days made in town, and Whitfeld and Ernest got word from Walker to make as clean a muster of the sheep as possible, as they would all have to be counted and handed over to Sir H. Young, he not being at all inclined to take Walker's general statement as to the number. This proved to be a fortunate thing for Walker, as there were several hundred sheep brought into the yards above the number he had named, and

many of these had two or three years' fleeces. It took a good month to muster and tar-brand all the sheep. There were over twenty-seven thousand in all. When one flock of eighteen thousand was being driven over the hill towards the yards, Sir Henry expressed his admiration, saying that he had never seen a finer sight. Ernest became thoroughly knocked up, and the last few days he was unable to assist in the work. The men were greatly dissatisfied with Sir Henry, because he would not give them any brandy or rum. They asked him a great many times. At last, on the last morning they made an effigy of him, holding his umbrella in his usual manner in one hand, while the other hand grasped a brandy-bottle. A tin of gunpowder was put inside the figure, which was to be fired by a train laid from a tobacco pipe in the mouth. This figure was placed not ten paces from the yards. On Sir Henry's appearing, the men again importuned him; again he refused, this time angrily, for he had noticed the figure, as he could not help seeing and knowing for whom it was intended, it was such an exact representation as to height (or rather shortness), figure, &c., &c. When the men knocked off for dinner, and before Sir Henry left the yards, one man lighted the pipe, and in a few minutes the effigy flew in fragments into the air, the umbrella dropping at Sir Henry's feet. He was terribly annoyed. The men roared with laughter. They thoroughly disliked him, for it was usual out there in those days, as it may be now, for the labourers on a station to think a man mean who is not ready, on extra occasions like this delivery was, to treat them to grog.

The sheep, cattle, &c., being duly delivered up to Sir Henry Young, Walker took his departure, first settling up with all his hands. He gave Ernest, in addition to his regular pay, a present of an old black horse, named "Nelson," a very useful pack-horse. He thus saved Ernest the expense of buying another horse, for though



at times he had had as many as three of his own, he had lately sold them all, not at all expecting that he would be moving. The morning before he left the station, not knowing exactly where he was to go (for he was resolved not to stay on the station after Walker had left, and he had not quite made up his mind whether to settle on his own little farm at the Boundary Creek, or to try to get work on another station), he received a note from Harry, saying that Miller had sold his sheep, and they were to be mustered and driven down to Palmerston, and consequently Harry could offer him three months' work and excellent pay. Ernest willingly accepted Harry's offer. This was on the 9th of April, 1865, and on that very night he rode up to the Longslip. "Old Nelson" carried him up well, it was only twelve miles. "Old Nelson" was a strange-looking animal, big, bony, and strong, extraordinarily high in the withers, with a head like a fiddle-case, long enough for two horses, and enormous ears. His high withers made him very serviceable for descending steep places with a load, for the pack-saddle never slipped over on to his neck, as it frequently did with other horses. Harry had driven down to meet Ernest, to convey his boxes, and to drive up from Jackson's accommodation house, a married man, Langie, and his wife.

Deighton, the new manager at Sir Henry Young's, caused great amusement to Walker, Ernest, and the shepherds; for he could hardly tell the difference between a coarse and a fine-woolled sheep, and indeed sometimes seemed to have a difficulty in distinguishing the sexes. A good deal of his seeming want of knowledge may have arisen from nervousness, for he was very young. As to counting he was completely in the dark. That is a work which requires plenty of practice and a cool head to do well and quickly. To see a lot of sheep streaming by at a hand-gallop, by ones, by twos, or by threes, some running straight, some jumping to

one side, some leaping into the air, and this stream to continue perhaps for twenty minutes or half-an-hour, is very dazzling to the eye, and is calculated to make most people giddy for the first time, if they attempt to count them.

Harry talked over his plans for mustering with Ernest that night, and as he found that he had no tent, it was arranged that Ernest should take "Mad-cap," a peppery little horse, and ride down to borrow one from Deighton. "Mad-cap" was a dark bay horse, or rather pony, with one very bad habit, that of jibbing and then trying to jam his rider's legs against the nearest object; whether that might be a passing dray-wheel, a wall of a house, a tree or a rock, it made little difference to him, or to the rider either for that matter, for in any case his shins would be well damaged. However, he used to go wonderfully well at times; the only thing to be avoided was the hitting him with a whip to make him go faster. The least touch of a whip made him jib at once, and if there was not any possible means of injuring his rider's legs by rubbing them against something, he varied this performance by rearing, and if the rider did not dismount, "Mad-cap" would sometimes fling himself down. Harry warned Ernest about him just before he mounted this cheerful animal. "Mad-cap," however, that day behaved himself well, probably having put on his company manners, as this was his first acquaintance with Ernest. Deighton at once consented to lend the tent, and told Ernest that he had made arrangements for building immediately a stone hut for Arthur two miles above Longslip station, and that he had hired Arthur to keep that boundary for seventy pounds a year. Ernest was very glad to hear this good news. By eleven o'clock he was back again at the Longslip with the tent. Packing it, and their blankets, food, &c., into a cart, Harry and Ernest drove up the Ahuriri

gorge till they got to a wooden hut in a gully several miles up the gorge. This hut Miller had had built for his men to use when they went to cut firewood, or to muster sheep. It was formed of rough slabs plastered with clay. When Harry and Ernest arrived there they found the "Doctor" (as Harry's cook was called) had a smoking hot cup of tea and some mutton chops and potatoes ready for them. To these welcome refreshments they did ample justice, and after examining for about an hour the ground at the back of the hut to see if they could find any traces of sheep ever having been there, they turned in for the night. Arthur at this time was still with Deighton, of course; but till his hut was built, he had to live with Harry at Longslip home-station. This was very pleasant for all three, and they spent many jolly evenings together.

The next day they all started from the hut to muster off "Nob" mountain. This mountain was very difficult indeed to muster off, so they did not make much progress that day, but had to return to the wharré or hut to sleep. The morning after, about day-break it began snowing, but later on it rained. At twelve it cleared up, and they secured about two hundred and fifty sheep that night, and sent them by the shepherd to the home-station. After the sheep were gone, Harry and Ernest recollected that they had no meat, so Ernest had to go out foraging in the hills. After about an hour's search he fell in with a solitary big long-tailed lamb, and, hunger compelling him, at the risk of injury to his dog for regular work, he made her run the lamb down. He then caught it, carried it to the hut on his shoulders, killed and dressed it. The following day they mustered to the "Forks." It had snowed hard all the night, so that for about the first three miles the snow was half-way up to their knees. The lamb was demolished before night, and as, owing to the snow, they had not been able to get any sheep,—or rather any

wethers, for they had found some ewes,—they had to go without anything. They were all used to that sort of thing happening occasionally, so they did not think much of it. In mustering the Omarama runs, for instance, the start was always made at day-break, and it was generally night before each day's walking was finished, and they more frequently had not, than they had, dinner or lunch. However, this time they did not quite starve, for the "Doctor" arrived at the tent about ten o'clock at night with a loaf of bread. In the morning they mustered on to the station, and by the appearance of the sheep Harry thought that they had made a fairly clean muster of that side of the run.

They then drafted out the woolly sheep and unbranded lambs, and, late in the year as it was, they sheared them, because they were to be driven so far, and they could never have done the journey with so much wool on their backs.

Rodgers, a married man on Walker's station, now with Deighton, came to help and so did Whitfeld. The next few days were spent by the different hands taking turns alternately shearing, tailing, packing, and branding, as was most convenient. Clayton, a sub-inspector, came to examine the sheep, and gave Harry a certificate enabling him to travel with them. On this day two hundred and seventeen sheep were shorn altogether. Some government surveyors also came and stopped the night. They were on their way to the diggings.

April 19th. Whitfeld went to the "Bush" on "Mad-cap." Ernest repaired sheep-yards, and assisted Harry in blistering a horse, "Rodney." The surveyors left and went on to the diggings.

19th. Ernest went up to the bush with Harry, and brought back bullock dray with hurdles to the stockyard.

20th. Ernest, Whitfeld, and others started mustering, but Ernest afterwards went to MacNaughton's, MacLeane's shepherd, with cart.

21st. All hands mustering Lindis: got six sheep. Campbell's sheep passed through the run.

22nd. All hands mustering Lindis: saw a hundred sheep as the men were thinking of camping. The sheep were near the top of an almost isolated hill with a rounded summit. Ernest, Harry, and the others were at the foot of the hill, as they had all come together with the intention of pitching the tent and getting tea. None of the others seemed to think it possible to get the sheep that night, but Ernest thought he could trust "Maidie" to fetch them. Accordingly he sent her after them, and began climbing the hill himself. When he got to the top he could see nothing of either sheep or dog. He called for "Maidie" several times at the top of his voice, and presently heard her barking, apparently about a mile away in the mountain gorges. He did not much care to go on, as it was getting dark, and he had never been over that country before; still he did not like to leave the dog alone with the sheep: so he went on, crossing gully after gully and climbing ridge after ridge, and every now and then shouting to "Maidie," who seemed to be getting further and further away. After about an hour of this kind of work, he found his shouts answered from the opposite side of the creek, and at the same time he saw the grass lighted here and there, evidently by some one making signals to him. It turned out to be Harry, who had followed on by an easier road, as he knew the run well. The two together now went on in the dark in the direction of the dog's bark, and shortly came on both sheep and dog. She had cunningly got them in a bend of the creek and was quietly watching them, giving an occasional bark to show her whereabouts. Ernest was very much pleased, both on account of getting the sheep and because his dog had shown such sagacity before Harry. The next few days were occupied in making as clean a muster as possible of the rest of the run, in shearing any sheep

that required it, and in making preparations for starting. On the 2nd of May all was ready, and they started off with the sheep, reaching Omarama that night. They crossed the stream, and Doighton kindly allowed the sheep to be put into his yards. On the 4th (losing a lamb daily through the wet and cold) they reached the Otamatakau, the stream which divides Parson Andrews' old run from the Juliuses'. They encamped in the fork, just at its junction with the Waitaki. When they were crossing this the next morning, Hodgkinson rode up on his way home to the Ohau. He was much surprised to see Ernest, and rather disappointed, for he said that he had heard he was doing nothing, and as he himself was going to drive a lot of fat cattle to Christchurch, he had hoped for Ernest's assistance. Ernest was rather sorry too when he heard it, for, though he liked being with Harry very much, yet he naturally desired to travel over new country if possible. The next day they got to the extreme end of the "Barren Flats," a short distance from Geddes' accommodation house and coal mine. They encamped on the flat at the edge of the creek which runs at the foot of the terrace on which Geddes' house was situated. It began to rain hard as soon as they had pitched their tent, and when Ernest was awakened to take his turn to watch, he found he had been sleeping in a pool of water. The night was very dark, and the two hours of his watch seemed very dreary. The rain was coming down in torrents, and his overcoat was soon soaking. Every step he took he seemed to be splashing in a pool of water, and his boots made that peculiarly unpleasant, well-known, "squish-ing" noise, which boots do make when saturated and filled with water. When the next man's turn came to take watch, Ernest, not caring to lie in his watery couch again, remained watching till daybreak without calling him, and amused himself by ineffectual endeavours to

keep the fire in; the fire, however, would not be kept in, but finally, just before daybreak, succumbed to the rain. Ernest thought he had done well to keep it in so long. The creek was rising rapidly; so as soon as it was daylight, they hurried the sheep across for fear they should not be able to get over without loss, some of the sheep being old and weak. They lost three rams which died from the wet and cold of the night: several of the lambs, too, did not live through the day.

At Kurow station they yarded the sheep at night, slept in the woolshed, and tried to get their clothes and blankets dried. After crossing the Otakeike and encamping at a swampy raupo creek, they moved on to the Awamako, and from thence to Atkinson's, having now left the main road, and made a cut across towards the Kakanui. Atkinson, Ernest's old friend the runholder, who had been so generous with his butter and milk, allowed them to put the sheep in his paddock. The being able to yard or paddock the sheep at night was, of course, always a great boon, as it relieved them from night watching. Here for the first time two sheep were "tutu'd." Till this they had avoided all parts containing "tutu," but now for the rest of the way, it was impossible to do so. However, by bleeding them at once, Harry got them both round again. The night after they crossed the Kauran it rained throughout. The country there was beautifully grassed, and the soil was splendid, but there was not an atom of wood of any kind growing. The ground was wet and spongy, and after Ernest had lain down about two hours, he got up and watched with one of the shepherds through the whole night. They searched about, and after a time they got a lot of chips from a fence that had been lately put up, and with these and a log of "goai" they picked up, all being soaking wet, they managed after an hour's hard work to get a fire. They could not have done it had not the shepherd been provided with a tinder-box

and some old dry rags. With these they started the fire; then they got some chips off the heart of the "goai" to which the rain had not penetrated. But for some time they had to keep it going by drying and burning tussocks of grass, so as to dry the chips a little and help the main fire. It was fortunate that they had set to work as they did, or the whole company would have had to go without breakfast, or at all events have been obliged to wait a very long time. Next day they made Clayton and Mason's, but were distressed to find that Fugh, the man charged with loading the pack-horse, "Old Camel," had, through carelessness, allowed that old steed to run away, and in the race after him the pannikins were all lost.

Harry, however, soon rode on to the Otepopo store and got some fresh pannikins, the men meanwhile joking poor Fugh unmercifully. Harry did not always spend the night in the tent, for at each station twenty-four hours' notice had to be given before the sheep entered on the run. This work, of course, he took on himself, so that most of his nights were spent at the home stations. Some of the stations were a good twenty miles off the day's camp, so that he was almost obliged to stay the night, as it was not worth while to weary his horse by riding back. Owing to the rain the Otepopo was rather high, and it took the whole day to swim the sheep over it. The sheep could not be induced to enter it at all, till Harry, Ernest, and a shepherd, taking a sheep each, dragged them into the river as far across as they could ford, the men meantime driving the others up from behind. This plan they had to repeat several times before they succeeded in getting all over. Then, wet through, according to custom, and tired out, they had to pitch their tent on the soaking ground. Not having any meat, and not feeling inclined to kill a sheep, they made fritters in the style already described. The roads were in a



dreadfully bad state, knee-deep in mud. The next day was fine, so they rested on the bank of the river and spent the day in drying their blankets and clothes. In the next few days they passed through Hampden, Trotter's Flat, and over the Shag river, where Miller and Orbell met them and joined in crossing the sheep over. At Palmerston they put the sheep into the yards, and for the next few days were employed in drafting out and sending away the lots to their several purchasers. All this time it was miserable weather, and they had to camp out by the side of a swampy creek, because there was always one flock of sheep which required to be watched at night.

By the 24th they had finished, and all the sheep had been sent away to their purchasers. Harry and Ernest started for Longlip, got to Otepopo, and stayed the night at Reynolds' Inn.

On the 27th they reached Longlip again, and on the 28th they rode over to Campbell's at Ben More, and stopped the night. On the next day they cut out of Campbell's mob several of Miller's cattle, and found a cow and calf of Walker's that had got astray. In the evening they returned to Longlip. The next few days were employed in getting in cattle to kill, making sugar and tea bags, cutting chaff, and chopping firewood, &c.

On the 3rd of June they made a "lead" in the stock-yard for branding the cattle. This was something like a "race" for drafting sheep, with a swing gate, only the fences were much higher and stronger. It had a wide entrance gradually getting narrower till it became a lane only just wide enough for one beast at a time to squeeze through. In this lane the cattle were branded, and thus all trouble of roping was saved. Five or six would be jammed in at one time. They could not possibly move, the gate at each end being closed and tightly fastened up, and in a few minutes each lot could be branded.

On the 5th, Harry, Ernest, Dawson, Michel, the "Doctor," and Campbell's stockman, cut out cattle from the Ahuriri mob; they only succeeded in getting two cows and a calf belonging to Sir Henry Young, at whose house they took tea, and returned to Longslip by eleven p.m., having had a very hard day's riding.

On the 7th, the "Doctor" and Ernest started for the bush, with Ernest's pack-horse "Nelson." The next day they rode up the Ahuriri gorge to muster the cattle, while Harry and Langie, by previous arrangement, mustered the lower part. They got in one hundred and thirty-one head of large cattle and forty-four calves. These they branded, etc., etc., and the day after got in forty-nine large head and twelve calves. Then the "Doctor" and Ernest went up Ahuriri gorge again in search of the "Kickery-goo" mob, a very troublesome lot of cattle, and difficult to yard. They did not find them, but found and brought in two unbranded calves. These they branded, and then rolling up their blankets returned to Longslip. There the usual work went on amid occasional wet and snowy days. This work was chiefly the pulling up of the old sheep yards, making saddle stands, grinding axes, and making trips to the bush for firewood. This was varied by getting in, as they dropped in with them, any stray cattle or sheep which they had not yet succeeded in yarding. Sawing and chopping firewood, cutting chaff, and hide-rope making filled up any spare moments.

On the 18th, Ernest was riding down the gorge on his way to bring in the horses, as he and Harry intended to spend a few days with Edmund Hodgkinson at the Ohau Lake, when he met Michel, who, with a face full of importance, said he had some news to communicate, but Ernest must return to hear it. Ernest did not feel curious enough to return, so he went on to fetch the horses, while Michel, evidently disappointed, rode to the station. On Ernest's return with the horses

he found Harry, Arthur, and the men on the station crowding round Michel and listening to his news. The gist of it all was as follows:—

Two men, one a cashiered officer, had just finished a course of two years' penal servitude, and, immediately on getting free, had made off for Moeraki. At the inn there they ordered their supper, and put up for the night. At four in the morning they rose quietly, stole a revolver and ammunition from the landlord's room, and two horses from the stables, and then made off, riding rapidly to and through Oamaru, past Papakaio and on to the boundary of that run, where Mrs. Fricker, one of Mr. P.'s old servants, kept an inn. There they ordered breakfast. When they had taken their fill, instead of paying for the meal, they ordered Mrs. Fricker to show them where she kept her money. Then they took from her thirty pounds, together with her late husband's rifle, and a fresh horse. Pursuing their way they came to the next inn, which was just on the west bank of the Maerawhenua, and was kept by an old Tasmanian, named Little. It was the best house on the road, being built of a kind of whitish limestone, which looks in the distance like freestone. Little, a big, powerful man, was working with his men in the garden. They ordered him to give them a glass of brandy and to open the stable door. When the man to whom Little threw the key showed himself rather deliberate in his movements, they fired at, but did not wound him. In the stable was a racer belonging to the Juliuses,—three brothers, tall, powerful Irishmen, who owned a run between Little's and the Omarama. The "Barren Flats," over which the main track passes, formed a part of it. We have before mentioned the Juliuses as cousins of Paterson's. Well, this racer was being kept and exercised at Little's. Without hesitation they ordered Little to remove the saddle from the most tired of their horses to the racer. He was bound

to obey or they would have shot him. They then rode off, and, leaving Little in great alarm and annoyance at his loss, they hurried on past an accommodation house kept by Christian, a German. They did not venture in there, because there were so many people in and about the inn. They had not gone a couple of miles beyond it, when they met one of Julius's shepherds, driving fat sheep to market. He was rather a bumptious fellow, and, for a shepherd, very dressy, trying to ape and be mistaken for a run-holder. When they saw him they rode up and asked him the distance to Campbell's run. He at once recognised his master's horse, and claimed it.

"That's Julius's horse; what business have you with it? hand it over to me," was his abrupt reply to their question.

"And who on earth are you, you dressed-up monkey? I'll put a bullet through your head, if you do not hold your tongue about other matters, and tell me at once the best way and the distance to Campbell's."

"I am only a shepherd," was the humble reply, in a very different tone from his previous answer.

"Then why on earth don't you dress and speak like a shepherd?" rudely cried the bush-rangers.

When he had answered their question, they rode off, and he asserted that when they had got to a little distance they fired, and the ball struck the heel of his boot. But the shepherd, who was on foot assisting him with the sheep, did not seem to think that he was hit at all, and said that the bush-rangers only fired to frighten him. The next place they reached was Geddes' inn and coal mine. Here they found fourteen men and Mrs. Geddes just finishing dinner. The men they ordered into the stockyard, and the bush-ranger (one was a tall and the other, the officer, was a short man) with a rifle, mounted guard over them. The short man, the cashiered officer, went into the house

with Mrs. Geddes and ransacked her drawers and cupboards, taking from them about seven and twenty pounds.

Unfortunately for them, one man, Jack, had been left in the coal-pit; and at last, thinking that the others were a very long time at dinner, he came up. Seeing how matters stood, when he observed all his companions in the stockyard, and the bush-ranger, rifle in hand, standing outside, he stole quietly off to where he knew Geddes' old horse, our old friend the fence-breaker, was feeding. Jumping on to its back, merely putting a halter on its head, he made off for Julius's, a distance of eight miles. The bush-ranger on sentry, hearing the sound of horses' feet as he galloped off, caught sight of Jack on his saddleless and bridleless steed, going along at a heavy canter, rather than at a gallop. He instantly gave the alarm, but Jack had got down on to the "Barren Flats," and was some way across them, before they could start. A tremendous race ensued. When Jack saw the bush-rangers coming he knew that unless he got to Julius's in time he would be shot. For dear life then he urged on the old fence-breaker; and the good old animal, troubled with ringbone though he was, seemed to feel that some special effort was required of him, and put forth all his strength and speed. Notwithstanding every effort Jack could make, when once the bush-rangers had crossed the first creek at the foot of the terrace leading into the flat, they rapidly gained on him, and before he turned up towards the station they were within half-a-mile. With redoubled vigour he began plying the whip again over this last piece of ground; but the bush-rangers, seeing that they had little chance of catching him, drew rein and advanced more slowly. The two elder Juliuses happened to be at home, but the younger, who was married and had a house about a mile higher up the Waitaki, was away, though his wife was at home.

At his house there was a lot of plate besides other valuables. There was no time to deliberate about what was to be done, and the hasty decision the elder Juliuses came to was that the bush-rangers would never venture to attack the station, but would undoubtedly make for the undefended house. At once the Juliuses, Jack, and the only man on the station at the time, the cook, ran down gun in hand, to R. Julius's house, leaving the station perfectly defenceless. What was their dismay and annoyance when they got down, to see the bush-rangers quietly canter up to the home-station stables and take out two horses, leaving their tired steeds instead. The Juliuses were infuriated. They swore that the men should not pass their station. The hills there ran down close to the river, and there was only a narrow flat, along which the dray-track passed, by which it was possible to go up country. The hills were rough and rugged, and not at all fit for speedy travelling on horseback. Moreover, if the narrow plain were well guarded, as it might be at this point by two or three men, there would be no possible way for horsemen to get on up the country. The bush-rangers knew that they must get on up the country, for by this time the mounted troopers would be after them from Oamaru. They had, therefore, to face either the troopers or the Juliuses, or else take their chance on the hills,—a very bleak prospect. The shorter man, the cashiered officer, as he was supposed to be by common report, wished to tackle the Juliuses, who with their two assistants formed a complete line across the narrow plain; but the tall man did not feel equal to the encounter. Consequently both made up for the hills, pursued by the Juliuses and their men, who gradually closed round them from the plain and drove them on towards the mountains at the back till night came on. Herbert Julius then rode on to Parson Andrews' old run, then managed by Gardiner, gave notice there, and from thence rode on to Omarama,

where he arrived about twelve at night. Deighton was greatly alarmed. Rather before day-break, Herbert Julius persuaded Deighton and Jackson to accompany him towards the "Saddle" on his way homewards again. Within half-an-hour they started. Jackson had no gun; Deighton took a double-barrelled. They were nearly reaching the Saddle, riding very slowly, when suddenly they caught sight of two riders coming over a low dip to the left,—a most unusual sight. Julius at once observed that the horses were the same colour (a bay and a grey) as those which the bush-rangers had stolen from his stables. It was not yet quite light enough for him to be able to distinguish the riders or the exact appearance of the horses at that distance. Directly Deighton heard that the riders were probably the bush-rangers, he turned tail and galloped back. Jackson, having no weapons, naturally followed his example; and Julius, though very reluctant, felt bound to follow, as he did not think it was worth while to expose his life by opposing the bush-rangers single-handed in the open ground, when he knew that, once at the station, he could get good support from Michel, and would be able to secure them without much danger or trouble. The two riders, seeing all three galloping off, shouted and galloped after them. This redoubled poor Deighton's fear. He struck spurs again and again to his horse and galloped along home at top speed. Jackson and Julius, now also both a little alarmed, pushed on after him. Deighton hurriedly left his horse in the stable, rushed down to the house, and begged Michel to go over the hill to the men's hut and bring the men over. Michel took his gun and went at once. He found the men at breakfast. Not one of them would stir. Curious to say, there is always a strong fellow-feeling with the labouring men in the colonies for the bush-rangers; the cause being, that there is a large sprinkling of men from Australia and

Tasmania, who themselves, or whose parents, had become colonists at the expense of the English government, as a punishment for crime. Consequently they are often more inclined to help bush-rangers than to catch them. However this may be, none of Deighton's men would stir a peg, and Michel was compelled to return to the house single-handed. When he got near the top of the hill, he looked carefully over, and saw that two horses, a bay and a grey, were fastened to the fence. He could not see anything of the riders. Very cautiously, but quickly, he went down past the stable to the back of the house. The back door stood wide open, and from the sitting-room he heard sounds of uproarious laughter. Recognising Julius's laugh and bark above the rest, and concluding all was right, he entered. In the front room were two troopers and Julius looking at a double-barrelled gun and laughing; and poor Deighton standing by the fireplace, looking very sheepish.

"Look, Michel," shouted Julius, "Deighton here actually took this gun out, when we went this morning half-expecting to meet the bush-rangers, and after riding home waited at the window to fire at them, and all the time it never struck him that percussion caps were necessary. Just fancy, too, he went up stairs and hid his money under the blankets. When we saw the troopers coming and we thought they were the rangers, he turned tail and galloped for bare life. The troopers were shouting to us all to stop, but we galloped off all the harder; and here they are splitting their sides laughing at us, and we shall be a joke the whole country round for ever."

When Julius got so far, he again burst into another roar of laughter. The troopers had been searching about in all directions, but unsuccessfully. They told Michel to go on to Longlip and warn Harry and Ernest, and request them to send on to MacLeane's, and desire him again to communicate at once with the police on the goldfields.



After a brief discussion as to who should go on to MacLeane's, it was decided that Ernest should be the messenger. He was delighted. The distance was about eighteen miles, and the road lay through mountain gorges. After a few miles, keeping his eyes well about him the whole time, he reached MacNaughton's hut. MacNaughton was out, so Ernest was obliged to leave word with his wife, who was greatly alarmed. By this time Ernest had ridden to MacLeane's and back, thirty-six miles, the sun had set more than two hours, and it was quite dark. Taking his saddle and bridle off his horse, and letting him go in the usual way (Longslip did not boast a stable) to find his own food, he entered the house. He found Harry and Arthur chattering over the fire. They had been practising with three instruments of death,—a revolver, a double-barrelled gun, and a needle rifle. Ernest used to sleep in the outer or sitting room, for Longslip consisted of only two rooms. Harry and Arthur shared the bedroom. At bedtime, Harry remarked,—

"I say, Ernest, would you not like to move your bed into our room for a time, instead of being as you are now next to the door?"

"Well, I should not object," said Ernest, "that is, if we can by any possible means screw a third bedstead into your room!"

"Don't you think also," Arthur chimed in, "that it would be advisable to fasten and barricade the outer door?"

"Well, if we do fasten it," said Harry, "it will be fastened for the first time in the memory of man."

When Ernest had turned into bed, before he blew out the candle, he glanced round the room and noticed Harry's needle-rifle at the head of his bedstead, and Arthur's double-barrelled gun at the head of his, both, of course, directly facing him.

"I say, Harry, this is a blue look out for me, if the bush-rangers do come. Directly they open the door they will pop at me, since I am within arm's length, and in addition to that I shall be exposed to a cross fire from you and Arthur. I do not know that I should not prefer facing the bush-rangers alone in the outer room. I think I shall clear out of this." With that Ernest jumped out of bed and prepared to shift into the outer room. Harry and Arthur laughed heartily at Ernest's little speech, and assured him that they would be most careful. After some persuasion and arrangement Ernest agreed to stop, but said,—

"Well, I'll make sure of being safe. If I hear the least row I shall jump out of bed, clutch my revolver, run to the head of your bedsteads, turn round to face the enemy with you, and cry with James Fitzjames in the *Lady of the Lake*, 'Come one, come all! this rock (wall) shall fly, From its firm base as soon as I.' In fact I shall look quite tragic in my nightshirt."

Chatting and laughing in this way, they did not fall asleep till nearly twelve o'clock. The next day all practised at different distances at a target (made of an old tea-chest) at from one to three hundred yards off. Harry proved the best shot. On the day following, nothing more being heard of the bush-rangers, Harry and Ernest determined to carry out their original intention of riding over to Lake Ohau to spend a few days with Edmund Hodgkinson. Jim, one of the hands, and the "Doctor" left the station for good, there being now no further work for them. After a very pleasant ride, Harry and Ernest reached Hodgkinson's and found him in. He said they had just come in time, as he wanted to row down to Fraser's to take him an ox, just killed, and bring back some potatoes in exchange. He proposed going out on the lake for a row as practice, as soon as they had appeased their hunger. By that time, however, it came on to rain.

The next morning the weather was beautiful, and a gentle breeze was blowing the right way down the Lake. In about two hours they got to Fraser's landing. Here James Fraser met them with a cart, and brought three bags of potatoes, a doer, and a lot of other things for Macdonald's hut. They then crossed a man named Little over the Lake, and heard that the bush-rangers had both been captured by the troopers. They had not got a mile on their way home before the wind rose rapidly, and the lake was soon a sheet of foam. Ernest was appointed to steer, and Harry, Whitfeld, Hodgkinson, and his man rowed. Harry soon found it too much for him. Every one was wet through, as the waves kept washing over the boat, and Ernest had to bale and steer at the same time. Harry complained several times of Ernest's steering. Ernest certainly was no great hand at such work, and the amusement Harry's wry faces caused him, whenever a wave caught the boat broadside and swept over him, occasionally forcing a mouthful down his throat, did not tend to improve the steadiness of his steering. At last Harry said he could go on no longer. Ernest tried to take his place. The boat was tossing very violently now, and they were making but little headway, and moreover, some were getting alarmed. It was soon evident that Ernest was useless as an oarsman. He caught a crab at once, nearly upset the boat, already quarter-full of water, and was thrown flat on his back in the bottom. Harry would have laughed at him, but he was too ill, for he became quite sea-sick, or rather lake-sick. Again Ernest made a vain attempt, as Harry's illness prevented him from being equal to anything but steering. At first he could not touch the water at all with his oar, the boat kept bobbing up and down so; when he did catch it, he went in so deep that the oar was torn out of his hands and went floating away in the Lake, while he was flung a second time

prostrate. At last Hodgkinson gave up all hope of reaching home that night, and proposed that they should pull the boat in to the shore on the north side, unload and beach it. This they did at Macdonald's gully, and walked on up to Cameron's hut, a distance of about three miles. It was dark before they reached it. After demolishing all Mrs. Cameron's cooked provisions, while she was cooking more scones and mutton ready for the next morning, those who could played cards, while Ernest chatted with the old shepherd, Cameron. About ten o'clock all five turned into one bed formed of planks laid on boxes, and on them a large grass mattress covered with two sheets, a counterpane and two thin blankets. After wriggling about in bed (they all kept their clothes on) for about an hour, one pulling the bed-clothes one way and one another, they at length had a desperate struggle, half in fun, half in earnest, for the clothes. They were all in fits of laughter the whole time: the struggle ended in the coverings being equally divided as to number; Harry and Ernest securing a blanket each, Whitfeld a counterpane, and Hodgkinson and his man a sheet each. Each wrapped himself in his own covering, and, after a good deal more laughing and joking, about one in the morning all dropped off to sleep. After breakfast they rowed across the Lake to the home-station, where Harry and Ernest stopped because it was raining and blowing hard. In the evening it cleared up and became quite fine.

Hodgkinson kept about twelve hundred head of cattle, and it was a very pretty sight in the evening to see many of them come down to the lake, walk in some distance to drink, and feed on a weed that grows near the edge, and of which they appeared to be very fond.

The Ohau is fed by two rivers, the Hopkins and Dobson, separated by the Naumann range. The rivers are supplied by the glaciers of the Southern Alps, and

issue out of two steep densely wooded gullies on either side of the Naumann range. Both the two rivers and the lake are enclosed by high and precipitous mountains, by the Ohau range on one side, on the other by the range which runs on down to the Ahuriri, and from one gully of which the Quail-burn flows. When Ernest visited the Lake, about half-way up the sides of these mountains were immense ridges of snow which seemed to have slid from the top and to be just ready to slide on down to the bottom. These mountains seemed all bare and shingly, but, of course, there was a little grass. The following day Harry and Ernest rode to Campbell's, dined, and got "Romeo," Miller's horse, shod. Michel was there, and Michel, Dawson, Harry, and Ernest amused themselves for an hour or two practising at a sheet of paper with a tiny breech-loading revolver. On this occasion Ernest was very successful, hitting the bull's-eye twice following, and never striking far from it. In the evening they rode on to Deighton's and stopped the night. Harry made the most of his time by praising up the excellent points of "Romeo," and inducing Deighton to purchase him for a good round sum.

A few days later on Ernest received a letter from Robison, who had bought a run in the Pomahaka, the Waipahi Station. Robison wanted Ernest to go and live with him, and to look after the station in his absence. There being nothing more to do on Miller's station, Ernest made up his mind to start next morning, and at once began to pack his boxes. The day after he started for Waipahi, and about dusk got as far as Christian's, that is to say about half the distance to Oamaru, forty-five miles, the whole distance being rather more than ninety miles. He put "Old Nelson" up, saw him well attended to, and then walked into the house. The inn consisted of three rooms on the ground floor,—a kitchen and bar, a general sitting-room, and a small

side room. The storey above these three consisted of two bedrooms, one for Christian and his wife, the other for all travellers. The house was built of weather-boards. On entering the general room Ernest saw that it was full of tipsy men. One man, exceedingly tipsy, at once recognised him, and insisted on being very familiar, wanting Ernest to drink, and assuring him that he was a "jolly fellow." Ernest by no means admired all this, but not knowing of the little side room, thought it must all be endured, and so thoroughly made up his mind to spend seven or eight wretched hours. He cheered himself, however, with the reflection that at daylight he could take to the road again. The man, an old bullock-driver, whom Ernest had employed at Walker's, would not take Ernest's firm refusal of drink, and began to grow rather troublesome and offensive. Christian fortunately came in at this moment, and, seeing how matters stood, invited Ernest into the little side room, where he was soon joined by the blacksmith, who took tea with him. The blacksmith was a very sober, hard working man, and disliked the drinking and vile language fully as much as Ernest did. About nine o'clock the blacksmith retired. Christian then came in and asked Ernest whether he would like to sleep in the little room instead of in the general bedroom. Ernest promptly and gratefully replied, "In this little sitting-room, please." Accordingly Christian made him up a bed on the floor at once, recommended him to turn the key in the door, and left him. Ernest, therefore, after all, passed a good night, and was able to enjoy a quiet breakfast before starting. The next day he reached Oamaru and saw George Sumpter, the land agent. He arranged with him about the letting of a small farm of fifty acres, which Harry and he held on the Boundary Creek. The next day he reached Palmerston, and the day after Dunedin, calling in at the "Half-way bush" to leave a

horse named "Campbell" or "Camel" (it certainly looked like one) for Miller. On the fifth of July he reached Waipahi, and set to work at once mending up the sheep-yards, which were sadly out of repair. The next few days were occupied in Robison's receiving delivery of the run, sheep, cattle, &c., from Mr. Laing: and in paring and dressing the feet of many of the sheep which had foot-rot,—a most unpleasant task. Ernest had never seen anything of the kind on the stony hills and dry country from which he had come. The hills about Waipahi, however, were low, and intersected by numerous swampy creeks and marshy flats. It was a very cold, bleak country, abounding in rain. The "tutu" on it was very plentiful, and of a deadly kind. Ernest was for some time employed in such work as looking after and almost "tailing" sheep, and in mending sheep-yards, unpacking wine, taking old shoes off horses, which were to have a "spell," that is, a short freedom from work, and liberty to roam during that time anywhere on their owner's property, picking out the best pastures.

Robison engaged a man named Galloway,—a bullet-headed, powerful, but short Scotchman,—to look after the horses, and his wife to cook for the house. They had three children. The wife was an excellent work-woman, and the husband also was a good worker, when well managed, but a terribly troublesome, boastful man among his fellows, and if not watched and checked, brutal to the animals under his charge. His temper was very quick, and he was one of those hopelessly ignorant men, who imagine that they know everything. He would say that he could manage bullocks and horses, could plough, reap, mow, shear, ditch, with any one; but when put to any but heavy and straightforward work of the simplest kind he was always found wanting.

Heavy working, such as lifting or carrying great

weights, he was very useful for, because he was so strong. To Ernest he was often a great annoyance, and it often taxed his powers very severely to keep the man respectful and in his place. One of his pet notions was that he was an admirable hand at killing pigs, and salting beef. Ernest let him try his hand on the first of four pigs to be killed one day, but found that he made so desperate a hash of it, that he had to kill the rest himself, and to desire Galloway to leave such work alone for the future. The same was the case with salting beef. His salted meat generally either turned off or was uneatably salt. Ernest found that whether he wanted pigs killed or meat salted he must do it himself. One thing, however, Galloway did do uncommonly well;—that was the cutting and thinning of hair. Ernest always got him to cut his hair. Whenever Ernest was occupied in doing anything in which Galloway had failed, Galloway would look on at him in scorn, for he could never be convinced that he did a thing badly himself.

The building of bridges over creeks, of which there were about twenty between the station and the bush, all very boggy, was another work which had to be done, and at which Ernest found Galloway very useful. Robison himself was the best director of, and for a few hours at a time, the best worker at this labour.

The bridges were built of large piles sunk into the ground at each side of the creek. On these were laid lengthwise, and then across, large logs as sleepers, and these again were covered first with light poles or planks, and then with brushwood, mud, and small stones. Other creeks had a deep trench dug in the centre of the bed, and this trench was then filled with large boulders, so that they formed a solid bottom over which the drays could pass, and through which the water could percolate.

It was some weeks, or rather months, before all these



bridges were fully completed. Even then, in heavy weather, when a lot of dray work had to be done, the wooden bridges frequently required some little repairs.

It was not till the 8th of September, two months after Ernest left Miller's, that his boxes arrived at Waipahi. They could not have come so early as that even, had not Robison's drays had to go to the Molyneux to fetch some corrugated iron for a new wool-shed. Time rapidly passed with Ernest, who was fully employed always, either fencing, or oat or barley sowing, potato-planting, digging and sorting, reaping, shearing, ditching, and bullock-driving. The only kind of work Ernest never took kindly to was the digging, planting, picking, and sorting of potatoes. Indeed he liked no kind of gardening work, chiefly because then he was dreadfully teased by the sand-flies, a great pest. At these times they swarmed into his eyes, ears, mouth, and hair. Curiously enough, when he used at Omarama to be working with Harold Walker, who was fair and thin-skinned, he was never troubled at all, the whole swarm seeming to fix on poor Harold. But when he worked with Whitfeld, he always got a good share of them. They will attack a non-smoker much more than they will a smoker, and while smoking is going on they keep away. The least breeze disperses them entirely, but on still days they are almost unbearable.

On the 15th of October, Ernest received a letter from Harry saying that Deighton had resigned his post as manager for Sir Henry Young, having held the appointment only about six months. Very shortly afterwards he heard that Deighton and a clerical friend had just passed by the Waipahi, having had a strange adventure at the first inn on the road from the Waipahi to the Molyneux or Clutha.

When Deighton and his friend the clergyman rode up to the inn, the Doctor was engaged with Power, the

landlord, performing an operation on his eye. There being neither too much room nor too many rooms in the inn, the Doctor had been obliged to leave his instruments on the table, in the only sitting-room. They were all scattered about on the table, but according to the Doctor they were in a certain definite order. The Doctor was, as usual, rather the worse for liquor. Well, Deighton and his friend, of course, ordered their dinner. The servant removed the instruments carefully, laid the cloth with all necessaries, and left the room to fetch the chops and vegetables. While she was away, the doctor staggered in to fetch one of his instruments. Deighton and his friend were seated opposite one another by the fireplace; there was no fire, as towards the end of October or beginning of November the weather is rather hot in New Zealand. The Doctor stared vaguely round the room for a minute or two, and then said, in a very drunken tone, his head falling from side to side,—

“Who has dared to remove my instruments?”

The two travellers maintained a profound silence. Taking a step or two forward the doctor again said,—

“Who has dared, I say dared, to remove my instruments, my instruments?” He staggered up to the table, caught hold of one end of the cloth, and sent it and its belongings flying over the room. Then turning to Deighton,—

“Who on earth are you? some flashy runholder, I suppose; and as for you,” (wheeling sharp round on his heel and facing the parson) “if you don’t clear out of that at once, I’ll put you up the chimney.”

Not wishing to have any altercation with a man in such a state, they both left the house. Their dinner the doctor snatched from the bewildered maid’s hands, and hurled after them.

During the past winter, owing to the bridges not having been perfectly finished, and to the bullock team

not being in good order, there had been great difficulty in getting firewood. There was a large peat bog out in front of the station about a mile-and-a-half distant. To avoid further difficulty about a winter supply of firing, Ernest and two men set to work to cut a lot of peat, and to stack it and dry it in the summer, ready for carting home for the winter's use. This employed them for some weeks off and on. Then the timber for a new woolshed, men's hut, and house, had to be all stacked as the drays fetched it, and the shed had to be built. This occupied them till December.

On the 6th of December, and for several days after, Ernest planted many hundred blue gum trees, as Robison wanted to get some timber to grow near his own house, partly for the sake of protection against the cold bleak winds. Ernest had already at Papakaio assisted Mr. P. in planting a great number, which succeeded very well, and which in three or four years' time stood ten or twelve feet high. These at Robison's sprung up very well the first year, but many of them were withered by the frost, and many more were trodden down and rooted up by the bullocks, as Robison had neglected to previously fence in the piece of land. When Ernest left, however, there were still a few remaining, and these were doing well, being about two or three feet high.

Bullock drivers seemed to be very scarce about Waipahi. Robison had the greatest difficulty in getting them. One day he engaged a man who professed to be a good driver, and he and Ernest went to Popotuna bush for some fencing posts. This bush had not been much cut into. The roads therefore were very muddy and very narrow, tangled wood and scrub intersected the trees on each side of them, so that it was not easy for a man, except in parts, to walk beside his bullocks.

Robison's bullocks were young, half-broken things,

and not at all easy to drive. Ernest was surprised to see the driver draw back as they entered the bush, and get behind the sledge, because he knew that the bullocks would never go the right way themselves. They soon turned off into a bye-path and upset the sledge. Ernest and the man easily righted that again, but it was more difficult to get the bullocks into the right path. The man could make nothing of them, because he was afraid to go alongside of them, the near-side leader being a tremendous kicker. At length Ernest snatched the whip out of his hand and drove the bullocks himself. In a few minutes he had them in the right path again, but it became narrower and narrower just before a small open glade where a good clearing had been made, and where the posts lay. Ernest found at length that unless he wished to be jammed against the bullocks or caught by the sledge, he must try to get behind at once. He forced himself back against the underwood as hard as he could, so as to get well clear of the sledge, but as the leading bullock, at whose head he had been walking, passed him, it kicked him right in the stomach and sent him flying through the underwood. For some minutes he lay on his back unable to speak, but after a time he recovered and did not find that he had been really injured much. The driver was greatly frightened, and thought at first that Ernest was killed. The bullocks had made off, and the driver would not go after them till Ernest was able to take the whip again. They loaded the sledge, but in going back Ernest took good care to keep behind. The return journey was easier, for the bullocks were glad to get back the quickest way. After they had made one or two journeys in with the sledge, the animals worked away very steadily, and a dray load was got before evening, notwithstanding the great delays caused by the sledge catching constantly on stumps of trees and having to be levered off. The

roads were one mass of slush before they had finished, and from the amount of mud the workers accumulated on their clothes one might have imagined they were wishing to take a cast of their bodies.

Robison bought a lot of about eighty head of cattle, intending simply to let them breed, and to choose out a few of the best steers to break in to make up a good team. Like many other run-holders in those days, he would have been content to let these cattle continue on his run without getting a drop of milk or an ounce of cream or butter from them. Ernest at once offered to break in the cows and milk them without trenching on the usual work hours, provided that Robison would furnish him with a horse and allow Bobby, the half-caste boy, to help him. To this Robison agreed. That evening Ernest got in three cows with young calves and penned up the calves. In the morning he drove the cows and bullocks into the stock-yard together. He put the bullocks in too, so as to keep the cows from charging, for cattle are never so bad when there are a number together, and a few quiet ones have a great influence in keeping the others quiet. Moreover, it is easy to protect oneself by dodging behind an old bullock. The polers, that is, the bullocks attached to the pole of the dray, and accustomed to bear the weight of the dray-load on their necks, are always the quietest, quite as tame in fact as most English cattle. Notwithstanding this precaution, one cow did charge very badly, and had not Ernest succeeded in jumping to one side as she charged, and in rapping her sharply over the head as she passed once or twice, he would have had cause deeply to regret his love of dairy-farming. The first cow was run into the bail in a few minutes. The usual ropes used in branding were then fastened round her body to prevent her from falling, and one hind leg was fastened back almost to its full stretch to prevent her kicking. Then Ernest, full of

eagerness to make his first essay at milking, took the bucket, and at that moment for the first time recollected that he had no stool. Bobby soon ran and fetched a wooden chair from the house. Down Ernest sat on it. He then took hold of the two nearest teats and began squeezing and pulling. The cow's udder was distended with milk, but not a drop came out. The result of Ernest's efforts was not milk, but a series of desperate kicks and struggles on the cow's part.

"This is a rum go, Bobby! what's up?"

"I expect," said Bobby, "you do not know how to manage: knock the udder, like the calves do with their heads, and see if that will do any good."

Ernest, with little faith in that plan, tried it as a forlorn hope, but it was no good. After a minute or two more squeezing he was surprised by receiving a sudden shower of milk in his face.

"I've hit it now, Bobby," he exclaimed, "the only thing is to keep the teats the right way. Now, see."

Again he tried, and got a second edition of milk over his trousers. In this way he went on for about half-an-hour. By that time he had about a quart of dirty-looking milk at the bottom of the bucket, for the cow struggled and kicked tremendously, and sent the dirt flying in all directions.

Looking on No. 1 as milked, he let her go, and roped up the second. Bobby tried his hand on this one and was rather more successful, being probably a little nattier with his fingers. They then set down the bucket just outside the yard and tackled the charging cow. She gave them some trouble before they could draw her into the bail. When nearly in, she kicked out at Ernest, who was trying to get the leg-rope on. Her foot went sideways over and outside of the second rail and, just tipping the top of the bucket, sent it and its hard-won contents right over. Ernest could not help laughing, and Bobby perfectly screamed with

delight at the accident. Rather more than two hours' work,—from half-past five to half-past seven or a quarter to eight, on empty stomachs, was rewarded that day by about three pints of milk obtained from the charging cow. Bill Galloway for weeks after made a standing joke of those three pints as the morning produce of three cows.

However, in a few days the cows got much quieter, and Ernest and Bobby could manage to milk fairly, and before the first month was over they had plenty of milk, cream, and butter, though in summer sometimes, owing to the hot weather, or what was just as probable, to their not thoroughly understanding how to work it, the butter would not come. The milk was a great boon to the whole station.

On the 29th of December, 1865, Ernest received a letter from Arthur saying that he could no longer stand the lonely life in the hut above Longslip, and that therefore, in spite of the good pay and the certainty of a long engagement, he had resolved to give it up. Since then he had travelled five hundred miles asking for work at all the stations, without being able to obtain any to suit him. The result was that he had worn out himself, his horse, and his dogs. He had been ill for two or three weeks, and was now lying at Oamaru still under the doctor's hands, having a tumour on his thigh. Before leaving Sir Henry Young's, and after Ernest had been at Waipahi some time, he had frequently urged Arthur to wait, endeavouring to point out that in a few years they could club their money together and get a small farm, but Arthur found the lonesomeness too oppressive, and was wishing to start by the first vessel for Valparaiso.

On the 11th of February, 1866, Arthur came to Waipahi at lunch-time and stopped the night. He then made up his mind to start for England per "Star of Tasmania," but on the 1st of March Ernest received a

letter from him saying that he had been robbed of all his money. It appears that he had scraped an acquaintance with three respectable-looking men before he had been in town many hours, and they, while pretending to give him every information about the "Star of Tasmania," must have picked his pockets. At any rate he never saw his money again.

All March Ernest was employed building a hut about three miles from the station on the edge of the hills towards Popotuna. The hut was made of slabs brought from the Wairuna bush. The interstices were well clayed. The roof was of iron, and the floor of solid clay. This Ernest was very particular to lay down carefully. First he removed the sods and all the top soil from the ground, and then filled up the space with dry clay, which he rammed well all over till it became one solid floor with not a crack to be seen. Of course this took some time, and had to be done with a large and heavy rammer.

On the 5th of April, the furniture, such as it was, was moved by Ernest to the hut, and the shepherd, Andrew Murray, duly installed. No sooner was this done than Robison's own house had to be pulled down and rebuilt a few hundred yards further out from the hills, where the original mud house of the home-station used to stand, and where there was a garden of about an acre and a half surrounded by a good gorse and broom hedge and divided into two parts. The hedge was from ten to twelve feet high and eight or ten feet in thickness, forming an excellent protection against all winds. A greater part of this splendid shelter from the wind Robison, through some fancy, had cut down, but it was springing up well again before Ernest left the station.

On the 27th of April, Robison and Ernest went to Murray's hut to put in the door and windows, since the autumn was advancing and it was getting rather cold for Murray without them.



March and April had been in a great measure passed in mowing and in getting in hay and oats. Ernest mowed for two days and, though so used to other work, he yet felt for nearly a week after as if he had been beaten black and blue all over. Mowing requires the employment of so many muscles that rarely come into play, or at any rate a greater strain is put on those usually worked. However this may be, though he really enjoyed the work, and never felt weary at the time, the after effects were always the same. A couple of new sledges had to be made, and when Robison and Ernest had put them together Ernest rode over to Scott's (the post office, inn, and blacksmith's shop combined) and got a couple of pairs of iron shoes for the bottoms. These sledges were necessary in bush work, for the bush roads were too narrow and too full of stumps for a dray to be worked in them.

On May the 4th, Mrs. Galloway, the married woman, Robison's cook and general house servant, was delivered of a daughter. As soon as she began to grow ill, Ernest started for Popotuna, a distance of about ten miles, to get a midwife. The country was flooded. In many parts of the road there were pools and shallow streams more than a hundred yards wide. The whole country seemed like a great sponge. Ernest was not long in getting to Mrs. Gardiner's, the midwife. For her use he took an extra horse with a man's saddle, as he had no side-saddle.

Mrs. Gardiner, a stout woman of about fifty, looked with great dismay at the "conveyance" provided for her, and steadily declined to use the horse. Still she did not refuse to come, but arraying herself in a many-coloured and voluminous shawl, and putting on a pair of clogs and a huge coal-scuttle bonnet, she boldly braved the weather and the distance. Ten miles along a road in such a state, in the face of a bitter cold wind and occasional heavy showers of rain and sleet, was no

joke for her. Ernest several times tried to persuade her to mount, though he felt certain misgivings as to the possibility of ever getting her on the horse should she consent to try. She was determined, however, to trudge the whole way, having great faith in being on terra firma. Ernest, of course, walked the horses slowly beside her, and he absolutely roared with laughter whenever they had to cross an extra broad pool or creek. Mrs. Gardiner, firmly grasping a huge and rusty-looking umbrella, which she held high over her head in one hand, while with the other she gathered up her dress and petticoats to her knees, picked her way slowly through the water, muttering all the time, and grumbling about the badness of the roads, and wondering how it was that people would always persist in having babies at the most awkward times. She took Ernest's laughing very good-humouredly, but did not stop her grumbling. She certainly must have been a most excellent hearted woman, or she would never have gone through all that wet and cold walk so cheerfully as she did. Cheerfully, for her grumbling was only surface wrath and dissatisfaction, for between it all she would ask kindly after Mrs. Galloway, and every now and then she would make some little joke about her own plight. The instant she got into the house she changed everything, and put on dry clothes so as not to injure Mrs. Galloway, by going near her while she was so wet; but she never asked for anything to eat or drink till she had fully attended to both Mrs. Galloway and the baby. She must have needed something very badly, and meat was prepared for her, so that there was no hindrance to her partaking, save her own will.

On the twelfth Ernest received a letter from Robison, enclosing twenty pounds in bank notes, and desiring him to take a couple of men with him and ride to Blackstone Hill station, the very station where a year or two before he had been refused a night's lodging.

He had now to take delivery of and drive to Waipahi seven hundred old ewes. It was a four days' ordinary ride. Taking their tents and blankets, pannikins and provisions with them, they camped out every night near some creek or river. This time he found the owners at home. They were two very young men, about three-and-five-and-twenty respectively. They had a very comfortable house, quite an English home, and a good housekeeper. They were both musical, and delighted Ernest by playing and singing to him. This was quite a change for him. He had not seen or heard a piano for some years. The bed and bedroom prepared for him appeared quite luxurious. The return journey with the sheep took much longer, but was safely accomplished without much loss. Ernest was very much astonished to observe the vast difference of climate between the Waipahi and the Manuherikia country. The Waipahi was all wet and flooded, and had been so for weeks; the Manuherikia was dry, dusty, and parched, and appeared as if no rain had fallen on it for months. After his return, Ernest had to pick out of Robison's flocks and deliver over to a Mr. Hill four hundred and eighty-five wethers, which Robison had sold. Then he joined in making the bricks for the new house. About forty-five thousand were made altogether. These were mostly sun-dried, only about ten or twelve thousand were burnt. Sometimes he worked at the mixing of the clay, sometimes at the moulding of the bricks, sometimes at carrying them to the drying-place when moulded; the men generally taking it in turn about.

The framework of the house was speedily run up and weather-boarded, for six or eight men were working at it altogether; two of them regular carpenters. The next business was to build up the bricks as a lining inside, and to build the brick chimneys. Ernest did a good deal of the plain brick-building, but Robison and

an Irishman, whom he had engaged on purpose, built the two chimneys. There was a kind of rivalry between these two chimney builders, as to which should build his chimney best and quickest. Both, however, had often to stop to do other work. The whole time this building of the house was going on, it was miserably wet, showery weather, and the men were daily soaked. Ernest got a severe pain in the side, which stuck to him for several months. He thought at the time that it had something to do with his lungs, as at times he could hardly breathe, and to laugh was agony. Years afterwards he felt sure that it must have been rheumatism. One man, a carpenter Archie employed on the building, had to leave after the work had been going on for about three months. He told Ernest before he left that he fancied he had stuck too long at the work in the wet, and that he did not expect to recover. He went to the Dunedin hospital, but he was too far gone. He died within a week. Certainly, splashing daily through, and working in, the rain, the mud, and the slush, was enough to undermine the strongest constitution. The way in which they had to take their meals and sleep did not improve matters. The men were living in the new buildings erected as future stables, but which, of course, had never yet been used as stables, being put up first as a convenient place to hold the men till their hut should be ready for their use.

Robison, Ernest, Galloway and his wife, occupied what was intended to be the new men's hut, Galloway and his wife taking the bedroom intended for the woman who was to cook for the men, and her husband; the room leading from it, the kitchen and men's dining-room, being used as their dining-room and general kitchen. Robison and Ernest dined and sat in the men's bedroom, Robison sleeping there as well when he was on the station, but he was very often away. Ernest had a small sentry-box to sleep in, which had

been built for a moveable hut, but was now too rickety, and was afterwards converted into a hens'-house. Every night the rain used to come through on the lower part of his bed; and some nights, when the rain and wind were very violent, the whole of the inside was wet, bed and all.

Many long winter evenings, before retiring to this luxurious resting-place, Ernest used to lie for hours on the hard horsehair sofa in Robison's sitting-room with his great-coat and a blanket wrapped round him to keep him warm, for there was no fire-place, and no proper candles to read by; in fact it was too miserable for any one to think of reading. Ernest, therefore, was very thankful when the new house was quite finished. In it he obtained very comfortable quarters.

In the intervals of brick-building and looking after cattle, Ernest and a man named Jim and his brother had to dig a well for the house. Finding after a day or two that they would have to go to a considerable depth, they constructed, with the aid of an old iron coffee-mill handle wedged firmly into a roughly rounded log, resting on a pair of trestles, a rude windlass. With this each man was lowered in turn down the well, and the buckets full of earth were drawn up and the empty buckets let down. By occasional tightening of the handle they found their windlass answer well enough, till one morning, when the well was between thirty and forty feet deep, Ernest was letting Jim down, suddenly the handle came off, and Jim was precipitated to the bottom. Ernest and Jim's brother thought the poor fellow must be seriously hurt; but when they got him out again, which they did by letting down a rope fastened at one end to a stout post firmly fixed in the ground, they found, as he had before assured them, that beyond a few bruises he was perfectly uninjured. He was an old digger, and this was not his first fall. Directly he felt that he was falling, he stretched out

his legs and arms, and so saved himself by making the sides of the well act as a drag on the speed of his descent.

On the 26th of June the first chimney was finished, and Robison, according to promise, gave the Irishman, "Bricky," as he was called, a bottle of rum, to commemorate the event. Unfortunately, on the same day, little Tom and big Tom, both Irishmen and bullock-drivers, returned from the Wairuna bush with loads of timber. On the way they also had purchased rum. The consequence was the men began drinking. About ten at night, Ernest's usual time for turning in, as he stepped out of the house (after wishing Robison good-night) to go to his sentry-box, he heard loud cries of "Murder!" "Help!" "Fair play!" evidently coming from the hut. He told Robison at once, and they both ran over. It was moonlight. At the door of the hut was a dreadful sight,—five or six men tumbling over one another, some with coats on, some without, covered from head to foot with blood and mud mixed. Poor "Bricky" was at the bottom of them. One man had his knee on his stomach and was punching his head, while another, little Tom the Irishman, was deliberately kicking at it. Jim, the well-digger, and his brother, two sober steady men, were struggling with them to separate them. Robison and Ernest had to use all their bodily strength and personal influence to separate the combatants. They could not have done it had not Jim and his brother aided them. By sheer force they at length lifted poor "Bricky" off the ground and carried him bodily into his bed, keeping off his assailants meanwhile. His bed was in the centre of the men's sleeping-room. Between it and another, Ernest noticed an Englishman, George, dressing. "Bricky," half wild with drink as he was, also noticed him, and lifting his foot kicked George full in the stomach, covering his clean shirt with mud and filth. George

flew at "Bricky" and gave him a tremendous blow on the head. At the same time little Tom the Irishman darted into the room on the other side of the bed and began kicking poor "Bricky" in the head. Again Robison and Ernest had to use their utmost endeavours to hustle the men out of the room, and at last they succeeded in doing so. Then Ernest kept the doorway (there was no door) while Robison harangued and disputed with the men. The pouring forth of a long vocabulary of vengeance and coarse epithets seemed to give relief to and to soothe their excited spirits, for in about half-an-hour they were induced to go and sleep in the wool-shed, Ernest handing them their blankets from the room. Robison and Ernest then went to bed, but in the morning they heard that little Tom had returned within an hour and renewed his attack on "Bricky." Had not Jim and his brother promptly interfered, he would have killed him. As it was, it was a full week before it was at all certain that poor "Bricky" would live.

The fight, it appears, had begun in this way. The men had been playing cards and drinking, when suddenly little Tom, without any rhyme or reason, said,—

"There is a little Irishman here who will fight any one. Come, 'Bricky,' I'll take you."

"As for that," replied Bricky, "I could hustle two such dumps as you any day, but I am not in the humour for fighting now."

"Rubbish, Bricky!" chimed in George, "go at him like a man."

"What have you to do with the matter?" said little Tom; "if you're that way inclined, I'll take you instead."

"All right!" said George, "you want to be made quiet, I can see," and he ran up and hit little Tom full in the face.

Tom turned round and sat quietly down, but his whole face was working with passion.

"Come out with me, then, you English scamp; I'll take it out of you," said big Tom, who, though no friend to little Tom, did not like to see his countryman beaten.

"All right!" replied George.

The two went outside, followed by all but little Tom. The first three or four rounds George got knocked down each time, for he was no match in size, or strength, or length of arm, for the Irishman, though he was a sturdy fellow too. He was just squaring up for a fifth round, when little Tom (who had already tried to run at him with a spade and knock him down from behind, but had been stopped by Jim (also an Irishman by the bye) jumped upon him from behind, threw him to the ground, and began pommelling and kicking him. Then there was a general scrimmage. This ended, George, naturally a very quiet fellow, went in to change. While he was washing and changing, the row began again, and Robison and Ernest came out.

The next morning Robison promptly paid and dismissed little Tom, though very sorry to do so, because he was an excellent worker, and always exceedingly willing to do anything to oblige at any moment; but drink is the bane of many men in the colonies, even in a worse degree than it is in the home-country.

On the 31st of July all the brickwork of the house was finished, and on the 20th of August, Jim and Ernest began the plastering, and after that the painting and papering of the rooms.

On the 8th of September they moved into the house, much to Ernest's joy and comfort.

On the 6th of October, all being pretty square in the house, and the sheep having been mustered and their feet attended to, Ernest drove the bullock team with a load of firewood to Turner's, a shepherd, who was at an



out-station about three or four miles from the house, right opposite to it. Old Turner was a capital old shepherd, very vigilant and attentive. A few days after Ernest drove the team to Watty's hut to fetch a load of sand. There he stopped the night, as there was not time to go there, load up, and return the same day. On his return he found a letter from Arthur, from Callao. About this time Robison lost several of his best bullocks, which were killed by "tutu." One of Scott's the inn-keeper's bullocks also got "tutu'd" and bogged, and Ernest had to ride over to Scott's to get a team of bullocks to pull it out. The next six weeks were occupied in such odd work as painting the house, roof and all, outside, bringing in fresh cows for milking, looking for stray sheep, branding calves, salting down a bullock, giving Police-sergeant Bullen all necessary information as to brands, ear-marks, &c., of lost sheep, fixing tanks for dipping, painting windows, draying firewood to home and out-stations, picking oakum for caulking dip, stacking peat, killing and salting pigs, &c.

On the 30th of January, 1867, Ernest rode to the Molyneux (or Clutha) to take the coach for Dunedin. This river is the largest in New Zealand. Owing to the swiftness with which it flows, it discharges more water per minute into the ocean than the Nile does. It is navigable for the first fifty or sixty miles from its mouth, and might without very great difficulty be made navigable to its source. On its right bank it receives the Kawarou, which is fed by the Wakatipu Lake, On this Lake Queenstown and Kingston are situated. in which towns Ernest owns still some sections of land. The Molyneux is also supplied by Lakes Hawea and Wanaka, and so drains a vast amount of country. Its principal sources rise near Mount Cook. About a mile from its mouth there is now a town called Molyneux town, and about ten or twelve miles higher up is

Balclutha, hard by which is Puerua, where Arthur, who afterwards returned to New Zealand, is now living.

When Ernest rode to the ferry, Bobby, the half-caste boy, went with him to bring back his horse. It poured with rain the whole day, and they were both dripping wet when they reached the inn on the river's bank, a little after nightfall. The next day Ernest went on by one of Cobb's coaches to Dunedin, where he met Willmott by arrangement at Wayne's hotel.

Just before Ernest was thinking of leaving for England, Robison had said that he thought of going to the North Island to purchase a lot of land, and after stocking it with sheep and cattle, he intended to leave Ernest to manage it, while he lived in England. Ernest had liked the proposal very much, and even felt a little disappointed that circumstances almost compelled him to go to England, though of course he was intensely delighted at the idea of seeing his relations and friends again. Still he had heard so much of the beauties of the North Island and was very anxious to visit it. Friends who had been there, had pictured to him in such glowing colours the wonders of the narrow strip of country about five-and-twenty miles broad between the Ruahine and the Kai Manawha ranges, abounding in hot lakes, mud volcanoes, and springs of boiling water, at which cooking was said to be often done without the aid of fire. Some of these waters too were said to recall to the mind the healing power of the pool of Bethesda, by their wonderful curative properties. He was anxious also to see the forests of Kauri pine. Some Kauri pine trees he had heard of being one hundred and thirty or forty feet high and from ten to sixteen feet in diameter. However, he was destined never to see any of these much wished-for sights; and moreover, his hopes of seeing Melbourne and Sydney in Australia, and the different towns of Tasmania about which he had heard such grand accounts from Walker, were also cut off.

On February the 1st, Harry and Ernest rowed out in Port Chalmers Bay for a couple of hours. The wind was rather fresh, and when they tried to put the sail up the boat nearly capsized. As it was, they did ship a lot of water, and had to bale away for a good time, till at last they were forced to take the sail down, since the water seemed to be coming in rather too freely.

On the 4th Ernest got on board the coasting steamer "Tararua," employed for carrying the mails. Passing Oamaru and Timaru at 8 a.m. on the 5th, they reached Port Lyttleton, leaving again at 3 p.m. Here, while Ernest was watching the passengers going and coming from the land to the ship, he suddenly found that a new great coat which he had purchased for the voyage had disappeared. He never saw another trace of it. Leaving Lyttleton they passed Kaiapoi, a town and port about three miles from the mouth of the Waimakarira, and near about the centre of the forty-mile beach used for storing and export of wool and the import of other produce. They next passed Table Island and the limestone ranges near the mouth of the Hurunui, and reached Wellington at 8 p.m. on the 6th. Here Ernest went ashore, but while he was waiting on the "Tararua" to see his luggage brought up from the hold, a gentleman stepped up to him and asked him if he were going to England. Ernest replied in the affirmative.

"Would you mind sharing a cabin with me?" said the stranger, a Mr. Walcroft.

"I shall be very pleased," said Ernest. "I have a boat alongside into which I have already thrown my carpet-bag, opossum rug, and one or two light things, and, if you like, I'll row you over, as soon as my luggage is safely out. Hulloo, though! there's the fellow making off. Hie there! wait for me: you have my luggage."

The boatman to whom Ernest addressed these last

words took no notice whatever, but rowed away and was soon lost to sight among the other boats and vessels. Ernest was rather put out, but thought it would most likely be all right. Presently the captain of the "Tararua" came up to them.

"What are you waiting for, gentlemen?"

"Our boxes."

"Oh, they'll be all right. The Company is bound to see them safely put on board the "Kaikoura" without extra charge to you. I will see that they are all right. They will all be put on the lighter which you see alongside, and you can go with them free of charge if you like."

"Well, Mr. Walcroft," said Ernest, "I do not know what you are going to do, but I don't like the look of the 'lighter,' and I intend to take a boat. If you come with me we can look at our cabin and make a few preliminary arrangements."

"Very well," said Walcroft; "I do not think that would be a bad plan."

Ernest immediately hailed a boat, and they were both quickly rowed to the Kaikoura's side. She lay well out in the bay, and men were still busily employed in getting in her store of coal for the voyage. She was a very fine vessel, but, at the time that Ernest boarded her, in a very dirty state, necessarily, owing to the coaling. He found his carpet-bag and rug, &c., safely deposited in his cabin, and after he had been on board about two hours and was beginning to feel impatient about his other luggage and hungry for his dinner, he was just thinking of calling another boat to take him and Mr. Walcroft ashore, when the very man who had run off with his carpet-bag and rug stepped up to him and said,—

"Are you Mr. Ernest —?"

"Yes," replied Ernest. "Then the purser desires his compliments to you, and says that your box has

gone to the bottom. If you want to hear of it again you must come to the pier."

Ernest was perfectly dumbfounded and did not know what to say. He had all his ready cash, over a hundred pounds in gold, packed in the box, and he did not know how he should pay any extra demands that might be made on him during the voyage, for he only had about five pounds in his purse, though he had paid his passage through to England. Mr. Walcroft, however, was quite equal to making up for Ernest's loss of speech. He poured forth a regular torrent of questions at the poor waterman, whom he quite bewildered, for he never waited for an answer. The waterman merely replied by saying, when he could edge in a word, after Walcroft had lost breath,—

"The lighter is sunk: you can see the top of her mast just sticking out of the water. If you want to know any more you must go to the pier. My boat is at your service."

On landing at the pier Ernest was delighted to find his box there, apparently dripping wet. It was the first box recovered. In a few minutes Mr. Walcroft's two portmanteaux were fished up, sopping wet. He too was pleased to see them, for he had even more gold in them than Ernest had in his box. Still he was perfectly furious at the accident, and declared that he would make the company pay full damages. He told Ernest that he had made the voyage from New Zealand to England five or six times, and now this was his last trip, and he was taking home to his wife a splendid shawl which he had bought in Australia, a great bargain, and the sea-water would have spoilt it entirely. They went to the office together, but the agent could only refer them to the captain. There was not much time to waste or to examine the town, and Ernest had to be content with having time enough to purchase a

new cloak and to get his dinner. He then repaired to the "Kaikoura" again, which was advertised to start at three p.m. In consequence of the accident, however, and in order to give the ladies time to repair their loss for the present by making a few purchases of necessary clothing, the steamer did not start till 6 p.m. There was quite an unpleasant disturbance on board for the first week or ten days. Many of the passengers were very angry because the captain would not at once consent to indemnify them, and because he hesitated about the justice of their claims. At last it was agreed to settle the matter by arbitration after landing in England. Ernest had luckily packed his box all round with Turkish towels, and only these and a few photographs got at all wet. He, therefore, much to Walcroft's disgust, did not think it worth while to join in with the complainants. Many of the ladies were in an awkward plight, especially those who had children, for their heavy boxes could not be recovered in time, and the steamer, since it carried the mails, could not wait. Those who had recovered their things hung them out all over the deck during the first few days, much to the captain's annoyance, in a vain attempt to dry them. The drying in fact was not perfected until the things were thoroughly well washed out in fresh water.

On Thursday the 7th, the gain of a whole day on English time was completed, so that they had to reckon two Thursdays in that week to bring them right with Greenwich time.

On the 22nd, at one p.m. they sighted Easter Island, about fifty-nine miles off. They wanted to get as near as possible to it to take soundings, as the Company wished, if possible, to establish a coaling-station there, the distance being too great for steamers to go from New Zealand to Panama without coaling up. They got within about three miles of the island, but even then at a depth of a hundred and ninety fathoms, the

length of their line, no bottom could be found, and the water was as clear and blue as possible. No attempt was made to go round the island, or to search for any inlet or harbour, probably because the time was so limited. While they were sounding, the natives gathered in great numbers on the beach, lighted fires, hoisted flags, and ran to and fro in great excitement. Some of the passengers were anxious to go ashore, but the captain said that he could not stop as he had no spare time, and the chief officer (whose suggestion seemed to be the most effective in satisfying the passengers) hinted that it might not be quite safe to land, as he thought the natives were cannibals. Ernest thought the island would have made a capital sheep run; it seemed so very suitable. There were no high hills, but all low downs, and the island, as far as he could guess, appeared to be about thirty-two miles long and twelve broad. A few days after this one of the passengers died, a woman, who was supposed to be going home to claim some property. The poor thing went out of her mind for a few days before she died. Ernest and Walcroft had the next cabin to hers, and could hear her ravings occasionally, but they were not much disturbed, as she was not very noisy.

On March the 6th, 1867, at noon, they were within sixty miles of Tobago, and reached and anchored off Panama at half-past seven p.m. At three the next morning they were taken off in a little steamer and safely landed before five o'clock. They then strolled up to the hotel and ordered breakfast. This was not ready till eight o'clock. Ernest never enjoyed a breakfast so much in his life before. The bananas and other fruit set on the table were delicious, and the coffee was excellent. All the houses there seemed to have verandahs, and cocks chained by one leg to the verandah railings. When Ernest asked the meaning of this, he was told that cock-fighting was a regular

practice there, and that even the little shoe-blacks spent the money they earned by day in cock-fighting and betting by night. The hotels seemed most curiously built. The lower part was entirely open to the air. The bedrooms rested on pillars, and were built in a quadrangular shape with a balcony all round the inside square, looking on a garden below. From this balcony the several bedrooms were entered, and it being uncovered you stepped from your bedroom, as it were, into the open air, though still within the building.

By nine o'clock the sun became scorching, and there was nothing to do but to wander under the porticoes on the shady side of the dirty streets. Ernest was much struck with the handsome faces and bright eyes of some of the black men working about the pier, but the appearance of the women rather disgusted him. At twelve o'clock the train was ready to take them over the isthmus, a distance of about forty-seven miles. This was accomplished in rather over three hours. The train went very slowly and stopped frequently to take in firewood, for the boiler of the engine seemed to be heated by small sticks varying from the size of the finger to the size of a man's wrist. None was bigger, and it was all cut into short lengths and stacked by the side of the line. Several times when the train stopped the passengers jumped out and walked about, and once the darkies brought sugar-canes down and sold them. They also brought fans, and of these Ernest purchased one and found it very useful for the rest of the journey.

It seemed very strange to Ernest to see the orange and cocoa-nut trees growing by the side of the railway. He dined at Colon, and got on board the "Eider" which steamed off at half-past seven p.m. Before landing at Panama, Mr. Walcroft, a highly nervous man, was in great trouble about his money. He was afraid he would be robbed, and he thought it too great a weight to carry about with him. Without thinking,



Ernest volunteered to carry it, seeing his distress. He never counted it: so when the thought struck him after the first hour that he ought to have done so, he became rather troubled, because of course, if Mr. Walcroft chose to be disagreeable, he might make out that there was ever so much more than there really was. This thought, however, did not trouble Ernest so much (because he could not believe that Mr. Walcroft could be so dishonest), as the idea that Mr. Walcroft being a fidgety, fussy man, constantly making mistakes, might fancy that a larger sum was in the bag than there really was. The only consolation Ernest had, if it were a consolation, was that what was done could not be undone, and that hitherto Mr. Walcroft had always shown himself a gentleman. He was not disappointed. Poor Walcroft was in a great state of excitement pacing the deck of the "Eider" looking out for Ernest, who did not return till just about half-an-hour before the vessel was due to start. The money was at once handed over, counted, and found to be all right, to the great relief both of Ernest and Walcroft.

On March the 10th, they arrived at Port Royal.

On the 11th, before breakfast, they steamed up to Kingston. The vessel that was to take them to Southampton was there coaling up, but they had to remain on board the "Eider" till the day of starting. They wandered about Kingston for that day. The whole town wore a most deserted and dreary aspect, so many of the stores and shops were closed and deserted, and so many windows were broken. The pavements too seemed very dilapidated, and Ernest thought it an intolerable nuisance to have to be constantly ascending and descending steps as he walked along or crossed from one pavement to another.

On the 12th, he and Mr. Walcroft went by rail to Spanish Town, bathed, visited the church, and returned.

He was much amused by the black boys in the river. They seemed quite as much at home in the water as tadpoles, and looked very like gigantic specimens. They would dive for money from the ship's side, and chevy ducks in the water most dexterously.

On the 13th, the Royal Mail Company's Steamer left Kingston with Ernest on board at 4 p.m. The interval since his arrival there had been occupied in coaling the vessel. He was astonished to see what an immense amount of coal such a vessel could hold, and what an amount its engine fires could consume daily. The manner of taking in coal at Kingston was very different from the way adopted in New Zealand. There, only a few men worked with the aid of machinery, but at Kingston there were hundreds of black women day and night in two almost unbroken lines of comers and goers, carrying little baskets and singing a mournful monotonous song all the time, one long line going to the vessel with loaded baskets, the other returning from it to the coal-heap with empty baskets.

Arriving at St. Peter's on the 17th, at 6 a.m. (they had a strong head wind against them all the way), they had to wait there to take in more coal and to receive mails from different quarters. St. Thomas's was the usual stopping place, but yellow fever was there. Ernest went ashore and got some shells and a little of the cotton plant. While they were waiting the "Atrata" came in from Southampton with the mail, and through some carelessness, her bowsprit entered into the railing round the stern of the vessel on which Ernest was, and made a considerable gap. They left St. Peter's at half-past ten a.m. on the 18th. Soon after they cleared the harbour, Ernest, who had not felt well since he left Kingston, became very ill with dysentery and a fierce burning sensation in the head, far worse than any headache he had ever had. Fire seemed literally to be coursing through his temples.

Walcroft was very kind, though very timid. He thought Ernest had the yellow fever, and he was the more inclined to believe this because he had got hold of a tale that the last time the ship made the voyage several passengers had died on board of yellow fever. Whether there was any foundation for this tale is uncertain. The dysentery pulled Ernest down very much, and in three days he could hardly walk, but then a storm came on and immediately he felt better, and in a few hours crawled on to the deck. From that day, the stormy weather continuing, he grew rapidly strong again.

On the 1st of April, they were distant from the Lizard one hundred and sixty-six miles, when a thick fog came on. Captain Woolly was continually at his post now, day and night. He did not seem to like to trust even to the chief officer. Extra lookers-out were put on and the steamer went at half-speed, and as they neared land, at a quarter-speed.

On the morning of the 2nd, nothing was to be seen but fog, when presently a pilot boat sailed up alongside. Captain Woolly on hailing the pilot found that they were about thirteen miles off Lizard Point. He had not been able to take sights for nearly two days, so that he was glad of such exact information. At eleven p.m. they anchored off Southampton.

On the 3rd all the passengers landed, and Ernest, Walcroft, and another friend went to the principal hotel to order breakfast. They got there by eight o'clock: after waiting an hour, and finding that owing to the great numbers who had got there before them they were not likely to get breakfast for some time yet, they went off to a smaller hotel. The first question Walcroft asked the waiter was,—

“How long will it be before you can let us have breakfast?”

“About half-an-hour, Sir.”

"I want no 'abouts;' just say, will you engage to let us have it up in less than twenty minutes? otherwise we must go elsewhere."

"Oh yes, sir, certainly; we can let you have it in twenty minutes. What will you please to want?"

"Fish, eggs, steaks, and coffee for three very hungry men."

The waiter showed them into a room and disappeared. They sat down and amused themselves chiefly with abusing the large hotel, lamenting that they had not lighted on this smaller one sooner. They were too hasty, however, in comforting themselves with the hope of a speedy breakfast. Five and twenty minutes passed and no sign or sound of the waiter. Walcroft got up and rung the bell. No answer. Again he rung it. Still no answer. Then after ringing violently and continually, as it seemed to Ernest, for about two minutes, he dashed on his hat and rushed out of the house in a fearful passion. A minute after the waiter appeared with the fish. Ernest and Simson immediately set to work, first urging the waiter to be sharp with the eggs and steaks.

"Please, sir, there are no eggs now to be had."

"Well, Ernest," said Simson, a jolly, dapper little man, "it is really quite fortunate that Walcroft ran off, for if he had stayed we should not have got enough to eat for three here, considering what a mighty small morsel of fish they have brought us, and then, there are no eggs."

"Yes," said Ernest, "if we are to take these hotels as a sample, Southampton does not appear to be provisioned for a siege."

By the time the fish were demolished, the waiter brought them up a very small, skinny, and tough burnt steak. This they quickly despatched, and then rang the bell for the account, as they were anxious to get their luggage from the custom-house and clear out of

Southampton, Ernest especially wanting to get home in good time. No notice was taken, though they rang several times very violently. At last Simson said,—

“Well, if they don’t want their money for their wretched breakfast, I am sure I don’t think that they deserve to have it, and what’s more, I’m not anxious to pay it. Come along Ernest,” and away he strode out of the room. Ernest followed laughing heartily, but not for a moment believing that they would not both be stopped before long. Sure enough, before they reached the outside door, the waiter appeared, breathless.

“We rang so often for the bill without effect, that we naturally concluded that you intended to treat us to the breakfast, and that you required no payment. Now that you have shown up I’ll give you a minute to prepare the bill, but if it is not ready then, take notice, you will have to whistle for your money.”

In less than a minute they were presented with a bill for fifteen shillings, and each paid down seven-and-sixpence.

“A frightful swindle,” growled Simson; “but anything is better than staying here. Just receipt it, waiter.”

This done, they made off to the custom-house, and without trouble secured their boxes and went off by train, Ernest safely reaching home by about four in the afternoon, and so ending his travels.

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