ZEALANDIA'S GUERDON

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JOHN LONG, Publisher, London
Zealandia's Guerdon

By
William Sylvester Walker
(‘Coo-ce’)

Author of ‘When the Mopoke Calls,’ ‘From the Land of the Wombat,’
‘Native Born,’ ‘Virgin Gold,’ ‘In the Blood,’ Etc

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Dedication

To Zealandia
That land of
Marvellous Beauty
Noble races
And
Kindly sympathy
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Prologue, or Proem

The wind swirled down the gorge, dismally, and bleakly. I had entered it between the twin hills which always seemed to beckon me on over the great plain, and they, the twin hills, now were distant four miles behind me. They always seemed to me to be the portals which shut me out from the rest of the world, and now I was well within them, and up to the base of the great range. Communion with my fellow-mortals was now impossible.

I was environed in a rocky prison. Crags rose all around me, but I must climb higher, and yet higher, if I wished to get to my “whare” over the range.

Rabbits fled on all sides at my approach. Pigs grunted, and “wekas” screamed. One vast dome rose overhead, and where that slight deflection in its crown, stood out against the azure sky, I knew I must pass.

Toiling on, scrambling over stones, boulders, rocks, and rises, stopping for breath, anon wearily facing the steeps; at length I stood upon that majestic summit.

What a view! The sea, far away, and far below; shone like a brilliant silver shield. The distant blue ranges were faint, and sleeping in a mystic haze, and all was light and peace around me.

From my vantage-point, which was white with snow, I could see the hundred mountain “spurs” golden with “tussock” grass, as they dipped lower; swept by the
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wanton wind—as with an ethereal lyre—for you could hear the humming of them. Finally these golden spurs ran out on to the plain in every direction, and even into the sea, some taking the forms of huge saurians, as if in the act of crawling into the deep itself; whilst directly in front of me, and on the road I must take, lay the beetling shadows of a vast and sombre valley, with—far away—over, far over everything, peak towering over peak, quiescent, stern, white and cold, the Southern Alps. There close by at the commencement of this, my future path, a shattered crag shot precipitously downward, with darkling silhouette, into a screened and leafy gully, the bottom almost black with falling shadows.

I could not help the thought, that behind me lay the past, with all its light and shade, variety, and pathos; while in front was the future, indistinct and gloomy.

After struggling by devious paths to the bottom, where my track began to wind along the base of the range I had crossed, I paused to rest by two large flat rocks—placed there as if for passers by, by the mighty hand of some friendly giant—just where a beautiful "Konini" grove, with its pink, smooth, stems, and blue and scarlet flowers, was vocal, with its flashing, warbling honey-eaters, and gently trickling rills. The shade after my strenuous exertions, was cool and pleasant. Nature's music filled my soul, so taking a seat on one of the rocks—where a Maori sacrifice may have been held in the ancient days, for ought I knew—I pondered.

Sad was my heart, and grieved. There seemed no outlet for my fettered spirit. That "whitened wall and sable sky" of misdirected opportunity, lay ahead just the same as it had done for years.

"Take courage," whispered a voice which I recognised as that of my ever constant Hope.

"Here, at your side is one of my companions!"

"Take freely of her counsel."

As I looked up, a figure clad in a dark robe reaching to the ground confronted me. One rose bloomed in her bosom.

"'Tis Patience," whispered Hope, "Await her teaching."
Prologue, or Proem

Trembling, I complied, for her figure was so dark and inscrutable that I dreaded her.

Judge of my surprise and wonder, when she spoke these words—low, swift, clear as a silver bell:—

"Of me you may gather flowers. See here," pointing to the landscape, "Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter.

"They follow in my train.

"In this present vernal bloom, this light and shade of present circumstances, be comforted. You but prepare for Summer. Ah, wed the Hours. With Summer they will need fruition. Be thrifty of your chances. Lo, Autumn comes. From Winter, glance back at the receding three; you will have left some footprint in a pleasant spot, have taken heed of some bright guidance, and Winter but prepares the way for further effort. Ah, the Hours! There they are, each fraught with something on your path to progress.

"Progression once attained, lo, victory is your guide.

"Hope, give your friend the talisman.

"I looked into the crystal. The pageant passed.

"Care, with her darkening mantle, first.

"Labour, with friendship close at hand.

"The first hour marked Achievement's dial. Subtly, in felon's guise, stole Ease.

"'Not yet, not yet,'" swift Action cried, and smote him.

"Thought passed in grave attire.

"Impatience mocked him.

"Fled Impotence and Chance; yet one keen look, the latter gave me, with pitying kindly eyes.

"Came Opportunity, then Certainty, and on Achievement's care-worn brow Fame fixed the star, Success.

"A faltering year or two then Death.

"'Twas over.

"From all these Spirits, choose but one," said Patience kindly.

"I placed the talisman in Hope's fair hand, and our hearts were as one.

"Sweet Hope, my guardian through Adversity. To you alone I cleave, Hope who outlasts all. Hope, who folds her silver wings, when woes are past, tired with her never-
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ending friendship. O my Spirit! my best beloved, my unfailing, unaltering, yet timid trembling guide, give me of thy fullest, for I loved thee in the past. I love thee now, and thou art with me for evermore."
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CHAPTER I

A BAND OF PILGRIMS

The morning-star, in bright effulgence waning,
Dying with flickering ray,
As eastern clouds, a roseate hue attaining,
Herald the coming day.

It is eight o'clock on a morning at the end of November 18—. A large passenger ship is off Lyttelton Heads, Canterbury, New Zealand, almost becalmed. She is inward bound, and her people have been feasting their eyes on the rich and radiant pink glories of the Southern Alps, away on the right hand, incarnadined by the rosy aurora—their first wonderful sight in a new and wonderful country.

Their actions and gestures bespeak impatience, and as a matter of fact they are, as might well be expected, after a long voyage, considerably excited.

The men of the party have been up all night helping the chief officer to fire off the ship’s carronade, and as this, to them, is a novelty, a good many discharges have been made for the pilot, and a vast number of used-up paper collars, which have done duty for the voyage, having been utilized as wadding, have experienced a fleeting, and sudden termination to their hitherto useful and ornamental
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career. The ladies and girls on board have spent the night in curl-papers and general deshabille, popping from various odd corners, and from behind cabin doors, occasionally, or peeping out of portholes, to watch the flashes of the cannon. As a rule, however, any fair head thrust out of a porthole disappeared with the flash or before it, and did not wait for the report. Much champagne has been drunk, even at this early hour, to the future success of our band of pilgrims in their adopted country.

At length, however, as Messrs. Shaw, Savill and Co.'s good ship "Northampton," dips up and down on the long ground swell, a joyful cry arises, as men are seen manning a boat below Godley Heads, at the pilot station. "Here he comes," and a clean run whale boat painted white from strake to keel, is observed by expectant eyes shooting over the water towards them.

The wet, gleaming oar-blades, flash their dripping "feather" against the sun, with quick, strong strokes, and very soon the pilot has hold of the gangway ropes, and is standing on the poop. As he, a powerful, good-looking, bearded man, with the unmistakable stamp of a born sailor upon his every feature, gains the deck, he gives a few quick orders to the first officer, concluding with the words, "Let her surge in," an allusion to the ground swell, which is sending motor power from many rolling surges, straight down the opening for Port Lyttelton although there is little wind. She, the Northampton, literally does "surge in," all the way from Godley Heads to the breakwater at the port, which makes the harbour.

The pilot after giving his orders to the acting officer, turns to the captain, and is soon engaged in an interesting conversation, which monopolizes him from many an anxious claimant for land news, for a considerable time.

An elderly lady, at this juncture rather timidly approaches a group of fellow lady-passengers congregated on the poop, to be instantly greeted with derisive speeches, and good-natured badinage.

"Why, bless me, Miss Featherston, only just up! Jane and Carrie have been up all night. So have I. Didn't you hear the cannon—our cannon? It shook the ship,
A Band of Pilgrims

and the first time it went off I thought I should have died with fright, it made such a fearful noise. I had my head out of the port too, and was looking at the land, never dreaming about the horrid old cannon. Oh! dear, how it frightened me. Did you really sleep, though, through all the banging, and the tramping, and the songs? You know, the gentlemen had a regular night of it. And don't some of them look frights this morning in consequence!” And the speaker, a pretty girl of nineteen years, laughed merrily.

“Well, to speak plainly, Lucy,” retorted the lady addressed, “I was rather terrified, and lay awake all the time. It is to my mind such an utter bouleversement of the old order. So strange and sudden is this realizing of the fact that we shall have to tear ourselves away from our happy surroundings, to part from our dear old ship where we have had so many pleasant days. Oh, dear me, the dragging about again of one’s belongings from ship to railway, from railway to cab and waggon, from cab and waggon to goodness knows where. The idea of it all completely prostrates me!” And Miss Featherston sat suddenly down upon her chair, in italics, emphasizing and pointing her just uttered remarks, by the remarkable vitality and precision with which she did it.

She is, apparently, a well preserved little woman of about forty years of age, though it would have been a matter of impossibility to gauge that statement within five years, backwards or forwards. Miss Featherston’s age seemed to have come to a sudden stop, with a jerk, so to speak, and she was a person who was not likely to age much for several coming seasons. She would probably develop in time into one of those most charming of mortals, an innocent, quiet old maid, with a vitality of real moment to others, useful, helping, and at their disposal, to the utter exclusion of self.

We have little to do with the ship or her passengers, with the exception of the ladies mentioned, and a certain tall young man, who now approached them, and whose powers of conversation seemed to be almost inexhaustible. He happened to be a native-born Australian, who had
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made the world’s tour, named Arthur Somerset. He had a little money of his own, but intended to supplement it, and he was of business habits, having been well trained.

The landing at Lyttelton over, the last farewells, and “Mind you come to see us,” to the kindly captain and his officers over, our ship-load of new-comers disperse in every direction.

A month afterwards our two lady acquaintances were seated in the shady verandah of a pretty cottage in the North Belt of Christchurch, the Cathedral City of New Zealand.

What a site for a city, with the River Avon flowing through it. Crowned with willows, full of trout, and refreshing to the eye, with every house supplied with underground, clear, cool, sparkling water from the artesian flow, where your walking stick, as the saying runs, will grow if planted in your garden, where the blue-gums, imported Australians, attain a height in a few years almost equal in size to their old country on the Bogan and Macquarie.

Lucy Falconer was an orphan. Miss Featherston was her mother’s sister, and consequently her aunt, who had accompanied her to New Zealand, feeling convinced that the girl could not do without her.

“What will you do, dear, when I am married?” the latter asked once or twice.

“Why, my dear,” the elder lady had replied, “I shall live with you. It is quite simple, and I may add—necessary—your husband will never say me nay, and I shall be no trouble to either him or you.”

“Oh of course you won’t, you dear old thing,” said the young lady impulsively, rising from her chair and kissing her effusively under the creepers of the verandah; “I don’t believe Frank will be able to do without you, you are such a wonderful universal genius, you know. Oh, do you not remember that cabinet pudding you made at the cookery lectures on board the Northampton, and its subsequent fate?” And Lucy Falconer went into fits of merry, ringing laughter at the recollection, until tears stood in her beautiful eyes.

“You mean when that unfortunate man—one of the
under stewards, I think, had an accident with it on deck. He sat on it, I think, whilst it was hot. Didn't he, my dear? Poor man!” added Miss Featherston mildly, in a tone of the greatest commiseration, and with a deep, heartfelt sigh. “Yes,” said Lucy laughing heartily. “Oh, and the martyred agony of his face, as they both rolled into the lee scuppers. Oh, dear me, when shall I ever forget it. How he fought to get away from it. It adhered very plainly to a portion of his person. Oh, auntie, you have much to answer for. Did you ever think your innocent old pudding would cause such suffering?”

“Of course not, my dear girl,” replied Miss Featherston aghast at the idea. “I did think of offering the poor man a sum of money which might have purchased him a new pair of ----” But here Lucy was convulsed again, and did not recover fully for some minutes, whilst Miss Featherston looked at her in a surprised and rather injured fashion, so she calmly adjusted her spectacles to get a better view of her peccant niece, which proceeding only set Lucy off into a worse state of convulsions, and crimsoned her face.

Lucy was a cheery, jolly girl, with just sufficient naivete to make one yearn to win her good wishes. She possessed a remarkable fund of merriment—who can stand a laughing girl?—with an irresistible and charming sense of humor, which made her an excellent companion to any one who was fortunate enough to get his name inscribed on her good books, and it was perfectly impossible for the dullest bore to feel hipped or dull in her presence. She had been a general favourite on board the Northampton, and soon became much sought after by Christchurch society.

The life of the two ladies was, therefore, much diversified in the present summer season, by lawn tennis parties, picnics, excursions to cricket matches at Hagley Park, an occasional visit to Port Lyttleton or Sumner, or a fern foray to Governor’s Bay.

Miss Featherston possessed ample means of her own, and Lucy was in receipt of a substantial annuity under her father’s will, to be supplemented on her coming of age, by her mother’s jointure, and her own dowry, as stated thereby, “on marriage valid.”
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She had become acquainted in England with a young New Zealander who was at that time “doing the world,” and the two became engaged; Lucy’s father stipulating that the marriage should not take place until she was twenty-one. But his death had precipitated matters somewhat, causing Lucy and her aunt to emigrate to New Zealand, where Osbern, her intended, possessed a fine farm, almost a station, and where he made plenty of money by careful and shrewd management of crops and stock; the latter a herd of pure-bred cattle.

He had been one of the first New Zealanders on board the ship in eager expectation of seeing and welcoming his betrothed, and was himself a fine hearty young fellow of twenty-five, but rather ignorant and egotistical, and believing, like some colonials, that there was no place in the world like New Zealand, no stock like his stock, and no person like himself.

But in the latter opinion, I am glad to say, that he was not like the generality of New Zealanders, who are shrewd, and know the world.

His mother was alive, and resided with his only sister at Wairuru, as the home farm was called, and which was bounded to the eastward by a large sandy beach and the rollers of the South Pacific Ocean. The large plains of the vicinity were famous for cattle raising, and wherever the plough and harrow went, the fields became fertile with grain and root. Christmas festivities were over, and Miss Featherston and Lucy were back in Christchurch after a week’s sojourn at Wairuru, where they had been cordially welcomed, and secretly criticized by Osbern’s mother and sister.

Lucy, of her own free will wished to carry out her father’s desire, and wait until the stipulated time elapsed before she surrendered her maiden freedom. And though Osbern pressed her to relent, she stood firmly to her guns, and would not hear of it, until he—perforce—acquiesced. Knowing well—like a sensible girl—that the calls of matrimony would be exigent, she determined to make the most of her time of maiden freedom before the details and worry of housekeeping set in.
A Band of Pilgrims

"It is so pleasant, this dear old North Belt, with its narrow strip of park and trees before your very eyes," says Lucy, as the two sit in the verandah, and her mirth chastened down to sober wisdom.

"How the blackbird's note among the trees reminds one of England. And our cottage is so near to big Hagley Park, over the other side of the Avon just, and the gardens, and all that. So pleasant for a nice summer walk, under all the English and American trees, and to hear those darling Californian quail, with their pretty plaintive call. Such dear little things. They run about all over the garden, though if you come upon them too suddenly, flap, whirr, they are off, and you won't see them again. I saw such a lot of trout from the bridge over the Avon this morning, no less than three hares in the park, and—Oh auntie, listen! There's a man calling "white bait," we must positively have some. I'll call him. And it will be so nice to fry them one's self. I shall depose Mary on this particular and important occasion, for you have not surely forgotten the fact, that Mr. Arthur Somerset is to meet Frank to-night, in a less formal way than usual, namely, at 'high tea.' Auntie, Mr. Somerset positively glares at poor Frank. What has he done, I wonder?"

"Well, my dear," Miss Featherston replied mildly but firmly. "Mr. Somerset paid you, an engaged young lady, a remarkable amount of attention during our voyage out here, and you perhaps encouraged him."

"Perhaps it is your own doing, and you now are reaping the after effects of your own sowing. Perhaps Mr. Somerset remembers all these things, and if there was no Frank at all, he might be better pleased," replied Miss Featherston, smiling; "though I will say that if the young gentleman had paid me the same attention, and was so jealous of my well being, I must have reciprocated, at least, a little."

"Nonsense, auntie! Anyhow, I must have them good friends to-night, and perhaps a knowledge of my engagement may sever the enchantment. If I get a chance, I will break the news as tenderly as possible—but perhaps, auntie—you will do so, save the position—and—my feelings."
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"Yes, my dear, I will. Mr. Somerset is such a nice man, and such a good-natured creature, that I feel I must be cruel to be kind."

The guests arrived in due course. The two men were introduced, and the existing circumstances explained. Two more young ladies—friends of the voyage—made their appearance, and a very merry party—to all appearance—sat down in the bright little dining room to a neat and well ordered repast.
CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENTS

And mellowed day comes o'er the place
And softens rugged edges.
The rising moon's great placid face,
Looks gravely o'er the ledges.

—Henry Lawson.

It seemed as if Lucy's wish was to be realised.
The two young men were soon chatting amicably, just
as if they had known each other through a life of friendship, and as if they were not—as they really were, or would
have been in pagan days—rivals.

Frank was asking Somerset to come to Wairuru at a
certain date for the sake of the riding, the shooting, and
the trout fishing.

Both were athletes, and both were of the style of most
young men of the day—neither "muffs" nor "spoonies"
—as our slang vernacular dictated, and well expressed.
The young ladies,—Jane and Carrie Verner,—proved quite
an acquisition after the high tea, and many a pretty piece
of song and music eventuated.

Somerset at length, in reply to a request from his
hostess, who alluded to their amateur Northampton con-
certs, sat down to the piano, and after a rippling fantasia,
played a new waltz in a most effective manner. Then
pausing for a few moments, he broke into a pretty rondeau,
which was heartily applauded, as indeed were all his other
achievements, for Arthur was no mean performer, and
wooed music as an adorer. With a few glee and quartettes,
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time slipped rapidly away, till suddenly glancing at his watch Osbern exclaimed, "It's ten o'clock, Lucy. I've got a beastly long ride to Wairuru to-night, you know. I rather wish you were coming, but I don't know. Two horses are the devil." Whereupon the party broke up, and after seeing the two young lady guests home, the young men went down the main thoroughfare to the stables where Frank Osbern had his horse.

"Good-night, Somerset," said Osbern, as he mounted. "Remember your trip to Wairuru on Tuesday, this day week. Ten o'clock sharp at the station here. I'll meet you with a trap at our end. Don't you miss the train, as I don't want my trouble for nothing."

"All right, I'll not fail," rejoined Somerset, not liking the tone of the advice, and they parted, Osbern's horse clanking out of the yard, and Somerset going to his rooms in Hereford Street, which he reached in a meditative mood.

He is a good-looking young fellow, this Arthur Somerset, with his clear-cut features, auburn hair, and distinguished 
toute ensemble as he sits smoking a cigar in his comfortable bachelor quarters, and perusing the evening paper.

It is not strange surely that he is still thinking of the winning gladsome girl he had left not long before, and that he sees no words of print in the newspaper.

Not strange indeed, considering that the fact of the matter is, he has been told of her engagement. Not strange, because he is head-over-heels in love with her. "Confound that fellow Osbern," says he inwardly. "What business has he with a girl like that? I wish I had his luck, that's all. Hallo! here's the Senor. I wonder what he's been up to now. Most probably dissecting some mongrel puppy, or presiding at a meeting for the glorification of rogues and vagabonds."

The gentleman in question entered by the verandah window, which was wide open, a thick-set powerful looking dark man, with a pair of eyes which seemed to snap sparks, so full of fire were they.

"Good ev—en—ing, Som—er—set. What think you of that?" quoth this personage, placing a box containing a wax model on the table.
Developments

"Pouf, horrible!" exclaimed Arthur. "What is it, in the name of the fiend?"

"The diaphragm, with the nerves and the tissues exposed. It has taken me some time to elaborate," replied the Senor, gravely.

"But what have you been doing, eh?" At a tea-fight with three young ladies, and a middle-aged one! Very good. Quite right! The presence of the adorable sex, my dear Arthur, is conducive to a highly moral and intellectual development. Now my diaphragm, if exposed to these sentiments—— But I hope you sang."

"I did," said Arthur, "and played too."

"Bravo, my friend. Nothing captivates the fair sex like music. You shall sooner lay siege to a woman's heart with its aid, than with warlike deeds. Did not Mary cherish Rizzió? Even the ancients serenaded their mistresses, and in my country we always do so. The castanet and the guitar can carry sentiment, my friend."

"But you look bored—worried. Has not the little tea-fight agreed with you?"

"Bother the tea-fight," snapped Arthur angrily. "It's the weather; it's warm and depressing."

"Ah, yes," sparkled the Senor in a bantering tone. "So it is an affair of the heart, my unfortunate friend. To one of the young ladies of the tea-fight, perhaps, you owe your malady. You should take your tea lukewarm."

"Humbug," replied Arthur smiling. "You tell me now what you have been doing."

"Well, amigo mio," replied the Senor, or to give him his full name, Don Vasquez Ibanes.

"I was presiding at the Cure and Save All Society, and we debated upon the possibility of crushing the latent and hidden crop of hereditary criminalism so prevalent in our large cities, and which only comes to light at all in the out-of-doors' behaviour of certain people."

"The grown germ of this plant, so prolific and so dangerous (I allude to the sprouting, after the rooting), I think you term 'larrikinism' in your funny language. I should call it brigandage."

"First, therefore, as to the sprouting germ, we propose
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to try the effect of judicious kindness. Much of the evil is due to influence and surroundings, if not all of it.

"As the parents are so will the children be. If a man does not scruple to use bad language before his children, he may be well sure that his children will not scruple to imitate him. Well, our method is kindness and employment. El Demonio, whom you term Satan, has a potent evil factor to goad benighted beings to crime, which spirit is known to us all by the name of idleness. Therefore we should have work for our young misdemeanants, work for our old and hardened malefactors. I grant you that your laws furnish that, but they also throw the recipients of their charity into prison. Now we argue that the law of love shall so prevail upon these people, these outcasts and depraved persons, that it shall compel them to work together for a good purpose, if we employ and give work to them."

"Ah," replied Arthur scornfully, "a mighty fine theory, and one that looks well upon paper, nowhere else. The Salvationists do something in that way, excepting the pay, I fancy. I suppose your Society would pay wages. But there now, Senor, I have a mind to fling something at your head."

"You are chaffing me. You were at a Salvation Army meeting, after all, with your Cure and Save All. Are you a 'Captain' that you presided? Out with it."

"Ah, there is a certain history connected with that little episode," gravely replied Ibanes. "Their chief, a sort of flag lieutenant, I believe, was a young woman, and she fainted. I had to support her. Consequently I was rather superior, at that particular moment. Was I not?"

"And what did the rest of the 'Army' say to you as Father Confessor," asked Arthur, thoroughly amused with the pompous gravity of the Spaniard. "Did they like you in that role, and approve of your action?"

"Well, not exactly, amigo mio." There was a young fellow—a very fiery fellow—red as to his uniform shirt, and red as to his general composition, who resented it very strongly, but I found means to pacify him, and resigned my deputyship, or general deputyship, whichever you please."

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Developments

"Well, Senor," rejoined his friend, "you certainly go into all sorts of extraordinary places. I have known you to visit gaols constantly."

"I like to study human nature, amigo, especially criminal human nature," quietly responded Ibanes. "Sometimes I mistake a saint for a sinner, but not often. Many a sinner is a saint outwardly."

"As in the last quoted case, eh? I did not think it of you, old man. I suppose the girl possessed more than an ordinarily pretty face," asked Arthur.

"Few faces have power to move me," retorted the Spaniard. "Perhaps I possess an occult power to move them, my friend. What say you to mesmerism?"

"Well," replied Arthur, "say it was then, or hypnotism if you prefer that term. Who are you? What are you? I'll be hanged if I can make you out at all sometimes."

"Shall I say farceur?" returned the Don, equably. "It is a French term as expansive as you could well wish. It is true, moreover, my friend. But to return to our argument about criminals," added he snorting, as if he were getting tired of Arthur's incredulity. "If I can't convince you on the one head perhaps I may be able to do so on the other."

"I'm bothered if I can see your drift either way," exclaimed Arthur almost irritably. "What are you driving at. I have no sympathy with criminals. I do not associate with criminals, and I care less than nothing for criminals or their ways. Look at a thief. Why, even if he ever attained a position in society after his release from gaol—which Heaven forbid—I should say the old habit would come upon him, with stronger temptation than ever, under many circumstances. Suppose he were asked out to a dinner party? Wouldn't he wish at once to annex all the silver forks and spoons?"

"Probably, amigo, if they appeared to him to be valuable enough to suit his needs. Filthy lucre, as you term it, is indispensable to some natures. I would do much for gold or silver myself. Yet a thief might be a kind-hearted man. It is his perverted nature, hereditary criminalism that makes him what he is. It is not him. It is his nature.
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All criminals are not thieves. I pity a thief myself. Let us take the savage side of human nature, a murderer's heart, for instance, and pry into it. What do we see? Mere lust for blood, a savage instinct driving him to self destruction. And yet, in certain cases, a murderer might hesitate to steal."

"I should have thought a murderer would stick at nothing," said Arthur hotly, repenting his rashness, however, when the Senor returned at once to the charge, pinning him with:

"A criminal murderer with base born instincts will, I grant you, stick at nothing, especially if driven by drink, the fuel of combustion to his depraved intellect, but a man may be a murderer without thought, legally a murderer, aye just as surely and inevitably a murderer as the greatest criminal unhung. And a murderer convicted by the law gets short shrift. In a moment of passion, let us say, a whirlwind of fury, blots out one's calmer identity, and the deed is done, to be repented of no doubt in sackcloth and ashes. I might kill a man if suddenly and grievously provoked. In my nation the blood is fire. This fire of blood penetrates my system. I cannot control it. If it is given free rein I am a madman for the time being. Nevertheless if I have allowed it to carry me away, and I have removed the cause of it, have killed a fellow-creature, perhaps unnecessarily. And if I cannot prove to the full, before a judge and jury that I have been attacked to the peril of my own life, I am found guilty of murder, anyhow of manslaughter. But I don't want to keep you up all night. We have drifted into argument without beginning or without end apparently. It is long past bed time, my friend, our problem is no longer interesting, and I am sleepy. Let us give it up. We bore each other—Buena noche." And the Senor departed musingly to his bedroom.
CHAPTER III

"WAIRURU"

I have forded all the rivers, swum them when I knew I must
After many wet encounters I regard them with distrust.
I have mustered all the country, driven stock on every track,
Watched the dogs in every gully hold them fast, or head them back.
I know all the lowest saddles, ev'ry terrace, ev'ry pass,
And the carrying capacity, of all the native grass,
I am just a simple squatter, to the manner born, I own,
And I boast an honest title, to the squatters name alone.

Unknown—slightly altered.

Lucy's marriage is not to come off for two full years yet
and a bit over. Additional time has been asked for and
obtained.

Frank Osbern is a good-looking young fellow as far as
mere looks go, but Lucy Falconer, after a long and serious
conversation with her aunt, feels that she wishes to know
more of him, as she fancies she sees some ideal change,
and desires to know more of her future husband's inner
character before she finally commits herself. Another
thing too, her heart has changed in a great degree, perhaps
more than she will acknowledge. A year's separation, a
new existence, the society of others, greater ideas of the
world's knowledge gained by travel, have all combined to
change her first impressions. And Lucy did not, after
considering all things carefully, during a sleepless night or
two, know quite exactly whether Frank Osbern was now
the only man in the world for her.

Arthur Somerset, at 26, had some knowledge of the
world. He was a steady fellow, a fine athlete, a sensible
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man, and he knew now that he fairly worshipped the very
ground that Lucy’s light but firm and substantial foot
has pressed.

Fortunately for Lucy’s peace of mind Osbern was a
man who showed little emotion. He could not get greatly
in love with anybody. It wasn’t in his nature. He was
stolid, took life exactly as it came, making little fuss about
anything. Lucy would have liked him to have been a little
more demonstrative. Certainly he enjoyed his life in a
quiet way, his chief pleasures being either riding, shooting
or fishing, but that wasn’t all. His very stolidity was
Lucy’s chief bar to matrimony. She liked marked love,
she did not object to adoration one bit, but the man must
be a man, and a clever loveable man.

She had noticed that Arthur Somerset was a very manly
fellow, also that he was clever, amusing, and witty. Also
very good-looking. He was well set up, and very active,
like most Australians, and she had noticed with pleasure
his winning nearly every athletic event on board the
Northampton, from high-jumping to boxing.

There had been a very growing friendship between these
two, highly dangerous to their peace of mind, and the girl
knew, though Somerset didn’t, that her heart was changed.
Then she reasoned. If it had not been for Frank Osbern,
she would never have come to New Zealand at all. It
would have been quite unnecessary to uproot her aunt
and home ties. But—she would never have seen Arthur
Somerset—who in spite of the engagement, in spite of
everything, was getting to be more to her daily than he
ought to be. At times she thought of frankly telling her
fiancé all about it. It was not a matter of money. Lucy
had money of her own. It was a mistake. She had run
across Osbern at St. Leonard’s in Sussex, rather over a
year ago at a lawn tennis party. And a match with a rich
young New Zealand farmer or squatter was considered a
good thing for any girl. But she had not considered her
own mind much about it.

And boisterous merry Lucy Falconer, never calculated
that any one would step in that she would like better
during the interim of absence. She felt rather saddened
as she pieced out bit by bit her duty and her inclination. Osbern has already invited Somerset to come to Wairuru, and she knows she will be there at the same time. She doesn’t know whether to go or not.

Wairuru is fifty or sixty miles from Christchurch, and lies near some mountain ranges with a river, the Wairuru flowing past it, through the plains which stretch away from the mountain bases. “Wai,” is the Maori term for water. They all meet there eventually, Lucy and all. And now to describe Wairuru, Frank Osbern’s home, where he lives at present with his mother and his sister.

The house at Wairuru, the principal house, where the family dwell, is rather Australian in appearance. Despite the somewhat changeable climate in New Zealand there is a long lease of sun during the year, and New Zealanders well know the pleasure and comfort that a large broad substantial verandah gives to a well-built and well-ordered house. The house itself is on a rise, near the foothills. It is a well-timbered, well-grassed rise. The ranges top up in the back-ground, and the lower hills beyond the foothill ridges are dark green with their clothing of pine and “matai,” black birch, and “manuka,” the latter being covered with snowy flowers about Christmas and New Year time, thus giving the lower hills the appearance as if a fall of snow had taken place on them. Around the house is a beautiful, fenced in garden. The kitchen is some thirty yards from the dwelling-house, but is connected with it by a covered way. There are vines and passion-fruit creepers trailing about the verandah of the dwelling-house, and several other white, wooden, shingled buildings are to be seen near by. The plains stretching away from the base of the foothills, and bisected by the river are yellow-gold with tussock grass. The river runs over boulder and pebble bottom, not far from the house, and like most New Zealand rivers forks into double or treble broad shallow channels here and there. When up, and strong-streamed, the whole river rushing over the boulders of the then one channel; can be heard as a continuous roar for miles. Osbern’s father has had an eye to the future, for he has planted English trees everywhere about the houses,
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and these are large, properly enclosed, hedge and ditch, woods of English oak, silver birch, ashes, elms, hazel, beech; dotted about, with various picturesque peeps through and around them. The growth of these trees have been so marvellous, that it is easy to understand, why, here at Wairuru, it is possible to look through a perfectly authenticated British tree-scape at a perfect New Zealand landscape, emphasized by many a spike pointed cabbage palm on the plains along the river-course, and ranges of snow-mountains in the distance.

To the front of the house, all is open country stretching away towards the ninety-mile beach, with a view of the Kaikouras to the extreme left. The sea, however, is a good bit away. But even with the English trees in such wealthy profusion, the spike pointed palms, and the curious metallic call of the Paradise ducks on the plains plainly tell a tale of New Zealand, which lingers in the memory always of those who have visited her plain and river country.

Arthur Somerset is sitting on the back-verandah at Wairuru talking to Osbern.

Somerset's position is this. He possesses £100 per annum of his own. He is an orphan, and has applied—being brought up to business, for a head clerk's position in a certain large mercantile house in Christchurch. He is a hard worker. Still, before he permanently enters upon his business duties, he has obtained a week's leave, and as a result, has come to Wairuru.

"Do you see those wooded mountains yonder, Somerset?" asked Osbern, pointing with his riding whip to the spur of a ridge before their eyes from their position.

"Yes," replied Arthur.

"Well, that's where we are going pig-hunting tomorrow. We'll ride to the end of that spur, 'tussock-tether,' our horses on the plain and walk up until we get to the good pig gullies. There are still a number of pigs thereabouts, though they are not nearly so numerous as they used to be. We've thinned them out a good deal. Amongst the heavy range base timber on the flats and in some of the wooded tops, we can get pigeons and 'kakas'
—large parrots—so we will take our guns, of course you brought yours. Oh yes, I remember, you brought it with you when I met you at the station. Glad you did, I don’t lend mine.”

“How far are those hills?” asked Arthur. “They look near enough.”

“About three miles. And now, let us join my mother at her four-o’clock-tea. It’ll be cold if we stand botherin’ out here.”

So the young men rose, went through the hall, along the front verandah, and into a drawing-room, fairly well furnished, but boasting a fine grand piano. In this room they found the ladies assembled. Mrs. Osbern, Frank’s mother, was tall, wiry, and ascetic. Miss Osbern was rather like her mother, whilst Miss Featherston and Lucy Falconer, are previous acquaintances.

“What have you two young men been talking about?” asked Mrs. Osbern.

“Pig hunting,” responded her son. “We’re going to the Aietemona Valley and hills to-morrow. Won’t you come, Lucy? You’ll be all right. I’ll drive you and Miss Featherston there, and Somerset can ride. We had talked about riding just our two selves. If you come, I’ll drive, and you can camp by the Aietemona and get flowers. There are some kidney ferns, acres of them, if you care to climb. Do come, there’s a good girl, and we’ll make a sort of picnic of it.”

“I should like to come, by all means,” said Lucy brightly, with one of her winning smiles. “Wouldn’t you, Auntie?”

“Yes, my dear,” said Miss Featherston, “I want to get a little experience of New Zealand. I shall put on my thickest boots.”

“Quite right, Miss Featherston,” observed Osbern. “It’s rather bouldery about the ridges, and you’ll want thick soles if you don’t want to hurt yourself.”

“What do you think of New Zealand, Mr. Somerset?” asked Mrs. Osbern, as he rose to take his cup of tea from her. “Do you like it?”

“Very much indeed, Mrs. Osbern; but I already notice
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a slight shade of difference in manner between New Zealanders and Australians, exactly to be expected under the circumstances. New Zealanders are a trifle slower, more like the English in talk and expression. Not quite so impulsive as the Australians. Climate perhaps affects them. But then look at the grand, deep, strong feeling which pervades their being of New Zealand. What did they say about that last contingent sent to the front. Why, that every man Jack of them able to carry arms—the whole male population—would go, if the Old Land needed them. That's something like loyalty isn't it? They're a smaller land, just a chip off Australia, so to speak, but they have the real old dogged British blood in them. And New Zealand is like a glorified Great Britain, with bits of Switzerland and Scotland and Norway thrown into it, with your mountains, and lakes, and rivers, and fiords—or sounds. The "Great Britain of the South" it truly is. Again, Madam, New Zealand is a young nation which has had her own battles to fight. Until now, we Australians had developed under a bloodless flag. But I do not know that I can give you any better idea of what all our Australasian colonies are like, than by singing to you if you will permit me, a remarkable prophecy by one of our own gifted Australians, a man who has lived and fought the battle of life, with other strenuous hard working brother Australians, a man who saw the poverty, the misery, the wickedness accruing in the great cities from this endless peace. We are like ants. We get too full fed, and too idle, and too luxurious, by continual peace, until the law of Nature swings back again and compels us to fight for our position to weed out the crawlers, and give us vigor again. After such fat full fed peace, our hypocrites pretend to be horrified at the very thought of war, the dispensation of a higher power, but brought on more or less by our hypocrites. There are times when we must fight, and a war shows us our weak points, our follies, our demerits, more than anything else could do. What says Lawson in his inspired, impassioned, thrilling words, words which the heart of every Australasian beats in time to, and endorses, until the day comes when they will all be

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"Wairuru"

Australasian federates joined to the Old Land by a link, which plotting aliens in heart and person can never break. And Arthur Somerset who got quite excited when fairly launched upon his favourite hobby walked over to the piano, opened it, and sat down. After a pretty bar or two, he sang thus in a full, rich baritone:

THE STAR OF AUSTRALASIA.

We boast no more of our bloodless flag, that rose from a nation's slime, Better a shred of a deep-dyed rag, from the storms of the olden time. From grander clouds in our "peaceful skies" than ever were there before, I tell you the star of the south shall rise—in the lurid clouds of War; It ever must be, while blood is warm, and the sons of men increase For ever the nations rose in storm, to rot in a deadly peace. There comes a point that we will not yield no matter if right or wrong, And men will fight on the battle-field, when passion and pride are strong, So long as he will not kiss the rod, and his stubborn spirit sours. And the scorn of Nature, and curse of God, are heavy on peace like ours.

There are boys out there by the western creeks, who hurry away from school. To climb the sides of the breezy peaks, or dine by the shaded pool. Who'll stick to their guns when the mountains quake, to the tread of a mighty war, And fight for a Right, or a Grand Mistake, as men never fought before. When the peaks are scarred, and the sea-walls crack till the farthest hills vibrate, And the world for a while, goes rolling back, in a storm of love, and hate.

There are boys to-day in the city slum, and the home of wealth and pride, Who'll have one home when the storm is come, and fight for it; side by side: They'll fight for honour, and fight for love, and a few will fight for gold. For the devil below, and for God above, as our fathers fought of old, And some half-blind with exultant tears, and some stiff-lipped, stern-eyed, For the pride of a thousand after-years, and the old, eternal pride.
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The soul of the world they will feel and see, in the chase and the grim retreat,
They'll know the glory of victory, and the grandeur of retreat.
The South will wake to a mighty change ere a hundred years are done
With arsenals west of the mountain range, and every spur its gun,
And many a rickety son of a gun, on the tides of the future tossed,
Will tell how battles were really won, that history says were lost.
Will trace the field with his pipe and shirk the facts that are hard to explain;
As grey old mates of the diggings work, the old ground over again,
Now this was our centre, and this a redoubt, and that was a scrub in the rear.
And this was the point where the Guards held out, and the enemies lines were here.

They'll tell the tales of the night's before, and the tales of the ship and fort,
Till the sons of Australia take to war, as their fathers took to sport
Their breath comes deep, and their eyes grow bright, at the tales of our chivalry,
And every boy will want to fight, no matter what cause it be—
When the children run to the doors and cry:—"Oh, mother, the troops are come!"
And every heart in the town leaps high at the first loud thud of the drum
They'll know, apart from its mystic charm, what music is at last,
When proud as a boy with a broken arm, the regiment marches past;
And the veriest wretch in the drink-fiend's clutch, no matter how low or mean,
Will feel when he hears the march, a touch, of the man he might have been.

And fools, when the fiends of war are out, and the city skies aflare,
Will have something better to talk about, than an absent woman's shame;
Will have something nobler to do by far, than jest at a friend's expense,
Or blacken his name in a public bar, or over a back-yard fence.
And this you learn from the libelled past though its methods were somewhat rude;
A nation's born where the shells fall fast, or its lease of life renewed.
We in part atone for the ghoulish strife, and the crimes of the peace, we boast,
And the better half of a people's life in the storm comes uppermost.

The self-same spirit that drives the man to the depths of drink and crime
Will do the deeds in the heroes' van, that live till the end of time;
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The living death in the lonely bush, the greed of the selfish town,
And, even the creed of the outlawed "push" is—Chivalry upside down!
'Twill be while ever our blood is hot, while ever the world goes wrong,
That nations rise in a war, to rot, in a peace that lasts too long;
The Southern nation and Southern state aroused from their dream of ease,
Must sign in the book of Eternal Fate, their stormy histories.

And Arthur left the piano, and sat down on his former seat again.
"Oh, Mr. Somerset, what beautiful manly words, Wherever did you get that song? It's quite new to me," exclaimed Lucy Falconer, with great animation, her pretty face flushed with excitement, her eyes sparkling with spirit and splendour.
"Well," said Arthur Somerset, "the words struck me also as wonderful and inspired. It was a prophecy literally made by one who knew his subject, and had the power given him to clothe his grand ideas in beautiful words. He is quite Kiplingesque in his ideas is he not, Miss Falconer. So spirited, terse, and strong."
"Yes, indeed," replied Lucy. "Words like those are what we girls like, what the Colonies like—in fact—" then she added: "But the music, Mr. Somerset? Who set it to music?"
I did, Miss Falconer. Such words should have the accompaniment of a military band. But," he continued, flushing slightly. "I am afraid I have not half done justice to it."
"Oh yes, Mr. Somerset. I could hear the roll of the drums, the steady march of federated Australasia, the enrolment of our coloured races all over the world in a steady, loyal friendship and soldiership under the dear old Union Jack, a world-wide regalia, Queen and sceptre, crown and empire beneath that flag."
"For my part," interpolated Osbern slowly, "I don't see much to make a fuss about. Why not let the Boers have the country if they want it. Let 'em do just whatever they like. We've got lots of other colonies."
"And let despotic anarchy and tyranny triumph, let the Britisher be scouted and insulted by alien races everywhere,
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lose our hold on half our possessions and all our colonies. Give the rest of the world the justification of their sneers, about the British nation being 'played out'! I don't agree with you," said Arthur, hotly. "If I'd had any training for soldiering I should be off myself at once. Indeed I think of doing so yet."

"Oh, Frank is quite pro-Boer in sentiment," broke in Mrs. Osbern. "We are all great admirers of Gladstone, and magnanimity."

"I believe in a man livin' on his own farm in peace and quiet," said Osbern. "I don't see what all this fuss is about, and I believe in 'im makin' as much money as he can get hold of and stickin' to it."

Here Lucy came to the rescue, and played a spirited march, whilst Arthur turned the leaves for her, and presently the pair broke into a duet.

"Well, I'm goin' out to see what horses I'll take tomorrow," said Osbern to his mother, surlily, and sauntered off.

"I wonder if he calls his horses 'Anti-reform' and 'No-Progress,' or 'Morley' and 'Harcourt,'" thought Arthur indignantly. "And that treasure of a girl will be married to a clod who thinks only of himself and his money; thank goodness, there's not many New Zealanders like him."
CHAPTER IV

PIG HUNTING

Just where bright Nature's ample skirts
Trail on the hillside, mild and vernal,
Bedizened with her browns and vertes,
And winding round the rocks eternal.
By thy Druidic groves asleep
Morn's dial marks a shadow vaulting,
Sped from high crag, on rugged steep
And by thy crypts, harmonious, halting,
Time's index finger on the hour
When, in red-pillared shades rejoicing,
Their wants supplied by Plenty's shower,
Thy feathered tribes their hymnals voicing
With subtle canticles of praise;
Melodious range thy boles at leisure,
And from thy utmost limits raise
A loud, exultant trill of pleasure.

The next day they started, the two ladies and the two young men, for the Aietemona valley, pulling up at a certain point there under some trees, and taking the horses out of the buggy, previous to their unharnessing and tethering.

Osbern initiated Somerset into the mysteries of "tussock-tethering" the horses, which like many other things, was simplicity itself when once you know how to do it, and yet many people might wander for months over the New Zealand plains in the vicinity of the big rivers, and not imagine any way to tether their horses at a pinch.

First select a good patch of feeding ground on the plain, and a good strong tussock from one of the many tens of thousands growing about, your horse is, or ought to be,
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provided with a head-stall, and sufficient length of rope attached to it for tethering purposes.

The tussock is long, bunchy, strong in fibre and deep-rooted. Get hold of it, and twist it upward from the root into a rope or hayband. Then make the end of the twisted tussock into a loop and pass your headstall rope through this, bringing it back with a clove hitch, and there you are. The more you pull the stronger your knot will be, and the horse won't pull the tussock out of the ground, unless he gets really desperate; but will be content to feed about anywhere for the length of his tether, and wait until you come back. Or make a common reef knot, practically a double loop, with tussock and rope, and your horse is securely moored to Mother Earth, with plenty of grass around him. Take his saddle and bridle off, and if you have to leave him for a long time, tether him near water. Arthur and Frank, after thus attending to the horses, proceeded to get all the things, including a luncheon basket, out of the buggy, and then lit a fire for the ladies, and having escorted them to the base of the ridge where it was, took their guns, and followed by Frank's large pig-dog "Lion," climbed higher up the spur until they came to the first trees, beyond the "manuka" belt.

Numberless razor-backed mountain saddles were to be seen still above them diverging in all directions, and they climbed and climbed until they attained the first of them. They were a good height up, and here the trees on part of the saddles, were "bearded with moss" up and down the great trunks from the mountain mists and along the lower branches. But the day was hot and sunny, and the climbing had made it work warm work for the pig-hunters. Osborn here cautioned Somerset against going down any of the spurs, unless he knew it to be the right one, simply because going down the wrong one, would have the effect of landing him, when his journey was accomplished, some miles from the camp he wanted, which in this instance, would be where he had left the ladies. However, for the present, being together, with Osborn thoroughly conversant with the locality, whether hill, or scrub, or plain, there was no danger of getting lost. So they loaded their guns, putting

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a bullet cartridge in one barrel, and struck downwards again into a deep leafy gully, where the dog "Lion" got some scent of a drove of pigs, and went off at score, though running the trail quite mute, after the manner of a perfectly trained pig-dog.

Down at the bottom, and when almost wedged in a most awful tangle of "supple-jacks"—which "bend but will not break"—they heard the dog baying.

"Come on Somerset," shouted Osbern, "he's got a pig, and when we come up, will collar him by the ear." So after frantic struggles they forced a way through the forest of "supple-jacks," and managed to scramble up the gorge, towards where they heard the full mouthed savage bay of the dog. When the dog heard them coming, he seized the pig by the ear, swinging himself back alongside him and holding on all he knew. "You can stand guard with your gun, Somerset, but there's no fear of 'Lion' letting go if he once gets hold. It's a 'barrow' I expect, and a big one by the noise. All the better for us." They hurried onwards, and when near, Osbern laid his gun carefully on the ground, and drawing a sharp knife dashed in. His pig was soon killed by stabbing scientifically in the throat, a matter rendered quite easy by the trained instinct of the dog which had a tenacious hold on the root and entire ear of the pig, and lay right alongside of him, body to body, out of danger from any rip. Osbern approached on the other side and in a few minutes the "barrow" ceased to exist. "Lion" never let go his grip until the quarry was dead.

"Good-dog, Lion" said Osbern, as he passed him, and then remarked that "barrows" were sometimes more dangerous for a dog than boar-pigs, as they were wonderfully quick, active fighters, with sharper, straighter tusks, and many a good fighting dog has experienced a sudden termination to his career, by a "barrow's" swift and dangerous attack. When Somerset examined "Lion" more closely, he found him to be a large powerful dog, of great strength and hardness, with a good deal of the bull-mastiff breed in him. But he was grievously scarred all over the throat and head and shoulders, with old wounds

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received in battle and these wounds were all tusk-marks. They then “gralloched” the pig, and filled it up with dried fern, covering the body with some more, until their return. Then they climbed to the top of the gully on the side where they had killed the pig. Arrived at the top they proceeded along the ridge, and a mile or so farther on “Lion” started some more pigs and scattered them all over the place. Out of this drove Somerset managed to secure a fat, three-parts-grown one which crossed near him in some heavy fern, using his shot barrel, and firing just behind the shoulder in the brief glimpse he got of it. This rolled it over stone-dead. The body was instantly bled, and “gralloched.” When all was ready Osbern hoisted the pig on his shoulders, and Somerset carrying both guns followed him closely as they retraced their steps, keeping to a connecting saddle this time, on their way back to the spur they had first climbed. Arthur was much struck at the ease and confidence with which Osbern negotiated this difficult country, for be it remembered that they were surrounded by great forest trees, and thick almost impassable undergrowth, where at times nothing could be seen but the tiniest glimpse of the sky. But Osbern had a intimate knowledge of the gullies, and knew the spurs, ridges, and saddles, as well as his A.B.C. from constant mustering and hunting in the vicinity. Nevertheless the New Zealand ranges are terrible places for those who do not know the country, and many a man has been lost in them, sometimes only the skeleton being found, whilst horses and cattle have become entangled in “Supplejack” ropes, to be finally devoured by wild pigs; the inevitable end also of the human body. At length the two young men found their first big barrow pig, and sat down to have a rest, and a smoke, for going best pace, with or without loads, is desperately fatiguing in this hilly country. As they sat there, Somerset noticing that a pigeon or two whirled into the branches of a great beautiful, drooping “Matai” tree which shot high above his head, reached softly for his gun, and shortly afterwards was successful in getting one of them, a very large bird something like the Wonga Wonga pigeon of Australia, but larger, and black
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spotted about the white breast. As they went downwards afterwards they put their burdens down on hearing the harsh cry of the “Kaka” parrot, and secured four of these, returning to camp where they had left the ladies.

There they found a most appetizing lunch ready for them, and they were hungry enough. There were three or four bottles of Bass placed in a pool under a delightful cool fall of water, with moss above sparkling with beryl drops, and black, wet rocks, shaded by dense manuka, all in bloom, and breathing “aromatic fragrance.” “All these mountain streams hold trout,” said Osbern. This little one, is a tributary of the bigger Aietemona. I placed some imported trout fry in the lakes some three or four years ago, and in the big pools you get them from 3lbs. to 7lbs. in weight. The ladies had found plenty of fresh watercress, and the luncheon was most enjoyable. Chickens and ham, salad, bread, butter and cheese, cold tongue and boiled beef, with pears in syrup, and all sorts of good things formed the repast. The table cloth had been spread on a flat green sward under a grove of “Konini” trees—native fuchsias—and their pink-scarlet smooth stems formed a pleasing and marked contrast to the blue of the skies above, and the vivid green of the grass under their feet. Impromptu seats were devised, and all was merry and jovial. The branches of the “Koninis,” the great fuchsia trees, with trunks two feet in diameter were alive and vocal, with green and black, and blue and black honey-eaters, and the purple berries, green leaves, and general bright aspect of the trees assimilated with the birds whilst the murmur of the mountain stream near by, added a charm of its own. The ladies had been to vast trouble in the absence of their male companions, for they had removed everything and re-arranged everything a hundred yards away from the spot chosen by Osbern on their first arrival, and certainly their choice was much the best. And they had made a scientific fire of their own, where tea or coffee could be made at short notice. And they had also a plentiful supply of milk and cream from Osbern’s dairy.

After lunch they wandered about exploring many beautiful spots where the ladies obtained ferns for pot
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plants, and clematis with its starlike flowers, also scarlet rata. By and bye Somerset remembered that he had seen some kidney ferns, which only grow in the ranges at certain altitudes, these had been pointed out to him by Osbern on their way up, after the pigs.

So he volunteered to climb back and get some, and ascended the range again with his gun, "Lion" following, as soon as he saw the gun shouldered, despite his hard work of the morning. Arrived at the spot where the "barrow" pig had been killed, and where he got his first pigeon, Arthur found about an acre of fresh green kidney ferns, growing amid moss and lichens, and green mountain grass. So he at once began gathering his specimens. As he was doing so, he missed the dog, and presently heard him bark half a mile away. Hastily loading one of his barrels with a bullet he pocketed his kidney ferns, and made off as hard as ever he could in the direction he had last heard the dog bark. As he got up to the scene of the encounter, the dog never stopping barking all the time, he saw that this time "Lion" had got a fierce looking black yellow spotted boar "bailed up" a regular "Captain Cooker," long, lean, but very muscular, and possessing an eye that fairly glowed with the baleful fire, of determination, and savagery. The boar had backed in between two high and deep buttresses of a huge "Kahikitea" tree, and with his face to the foe, seemed determined not to budge.

He was in such a strong position that "Lion" would not directly face him, but kept on barking savagely. Arthur having no knife, and not at all expecting pigs at this juncture fired straight at the boar's head, but somehow the bullet grazed and glanced off the skull, and it was only by a desperate leap in the air that the young man avoided the instant straight forward savage charge which took place, the boar making an upward wrench at him as he passed underneath, with that lightning quickness with which the wild pig uses his tusks. Well for Arthur that he was an athlete, and accustomed to make his eye guard his body, or that moment would probably have been his last! To be ripped by a wild boar, and left to bleed to death on a mountain side is not a pleasant ending for anyone. But
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he just escaped by the nimbleness of his spring, and the boar tore down the ravine with the dog after him, and vanished in the distance.

Being bailed up again by "Lion" the pig adopted the same tactics, this time against a red pine, but when Arthur again came up, the first shot placed in the body between the brisket and point of the shoulder settled him, and as the pig in this instance had run down hill towards the picnic party, Arthur was much relieved to hear a "coo-cee" from Osbern, which shewed that he had not much further to go, and that his successful shot had been heard.

Osbern was surprised at the success of one he considered a "new chum," and declared that he knew this particular boar well, and that he always got into some corner where his attackers would have to stand the chance of a charge, and a rip.

Arthur had a wish for the tusks, so Osbern went off to get them. And as Somerset gave Lucy her kidney ferns, he felt worse than ever, as he looked her in the face, and thought what a prize she would be to any man. The week at Wairuru, and the pleasure he felt in her society, passed all to quickly. Trout fishing during the afternoon, or in the gloaming. Driving, riding, one impromptu dance, at which two other young ladies from an adjoining station assisted, and singing and playing in the evenings brought it to a close, but to Arthur Somerset ever afterwards, the passing of that week was a memory, combined with heartache. He went back to Christchurch so deeply and fatally in love with Lucy Falconer, that he determined to give up his idea about going into business in the Cathedral city altogether and to seek elsewhere some solace for his troubled mind, some place where he would be quite apart from the syren presence, where he could work to better effect.

So he threw up his appointment and wrote a letter to Miss Featherston saying good-bye, and giving her an address to write to, in the hope that thereby, some day, he might glean some news of his lost love.

In spite of his humming the poetical adage of "If she be not fair for me. What care I how fair she be" over and over
again, the cheerful, agreeable, laughing girl was with him in his thoughts, no matter how he tried to stifle them. Next he consulted his friend and fellow-lodger, Don Vasquez Ibanes, concerning the best part of New Zealand for him to go and under the present circumstances. The Senor knew all about New Zealand. So he said, anyway. And Arthur proved the truth of his saying, having had many indications of it during their companionship, although he never could quite make out who and what his fellow lodger was.

"And so, my poor friend, you are going to leave us?"

"Well, I daresay you are quite right. And the cause is, of course, Miss Falconer. There you are quite wrong. Why not carry off the fair one, amigo? In my country it is remarkably easy to get rid of the troublesome male adorer."

But Arthur had been much struck with Osbern's capacity, bushmanship, and capability for manly sports, and although much disgusted with his disloyal opinions, which he put down simply to pig-headed ignorance, thought him personally about the luckiest man in the world.

So he told the Senor to mind his own business, which he proceeded to do at once with corresponding gravity. He, however, recommended a place situated in the County of Sounds to the North of the Middle Island, to which if he wanted a short all-round trip, he might reach by going first to Wellington from Port Lyttelton, and then across Cook's Strait. This place recommended by the Senor was called "Waitahi," and according to his account was full of charming young girls, amongst whom he hoped that Arthur would find a successor to Lucy. And also come across some employment to distract his mind. "But," my poor friend, remarked the Senor in conclusion, fixing Arthur with his glittering eyes. "This fair Señorita is imprinted in your mind ir-re-voc-ab-ly. I should recommend that you should see the fair young ladies of Waitahi, as an antidote, even if I cannot rec-comm-end them as a permanent cure for your mal-a-dy."

Waitahi to be reached, was, as aforesaid, a steamer journey, so Arthur packed up and started for Lyttelton going to the North Island to Wellington, where he
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transhipped and recrossed the sea again to the Middle Island, more for the trip than for anything else. The Señor promised to write regularly to him, and the two parted with real regret, for they had got to understand each other. Arthur’s steamer left Port Lyttelton at about two. As he was a good sailor he prepared himself to thoroughly enjoy his trip. He was more heart weary than weary in body. The Union Co.’s “Arawata” forged out rapidly through Godley Heads, opening the Bay of Sumner, the sea-side resort, and a most pleasant one, of the Christchurch people, and our hero was much interested in watching the coast line densely wooded in some parts, and the sand hummocks and long low coast and beach, between New Brighton and Kaiapoi—the latter a manufacturing town, chiefly of flannel goods. Had Arthur known then, what he knew in after years, that, on that beach near New Brighton, as he saw it from the steamer there amongst the sandhills, was doomed by destiny, to be a turning point in his life, he would have wondered greatly.
CHAPTER V

MOUNT TAPANUKA

All hail to thee giant, in solitude soaring,
Snow-clad to the zenith, so fearless and free,
The hoarse rocky streams from thy gorges out-pouring,
Glad peans of triumph in tribute to thee,
How paint thee? or how, in thy mood so enthralling,
Catch thy meed of bright splendor, or change, day by day?
When in grandeur majestic the cloud-rack is falling,
The gloom of thy glory in haste so portray,
Or when the sun flashes, in brilliancy vying,
With thy summit, uprearing, so vivid to view,
Our vision entranced with thy far-depth descrying,
Is lost in thy setting of limitless blue.
Then again by wan moonlight in bivouac steady,
The vigil e’er keeping, far-seeing, serene,
The ice blink the gleam, of thy broadsword so ready,
To guard the plain sleeping—Thou sentinel keen.
But thy lone mountain-peak when the rare Alpin glory,
Floods thy sides and thy crest with the hue of the rose,
Like a demigod scorning, an old age so hoary,
Flushed with strength, lives immortal, eternal with snows.

ARTHUR reached Wellington, the big city at the south end of the North Island quite safely. The change from his immediate surroundings did him a lot of good, and on the morning after his embarkation on board the steamer he rose just before sunrise and watched the dawn, gradually creeping over the sea, as he thought over the past connected from his departure from England until the last day or so, when he had said good-bye to Lucy Falconer. He had slept soundly despite the rather lively pitching and tossing of the steamer during the night, as the wind had freshened
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into a gale, but at three o'clock as if “native and to the manner born,” he had risen to watch the vessel’s progress, before the scrubbing of the decks, by sandstone, “squeegees” and seamen.

He noticed great flocks of whalebirds quietly winging their way to the northward in one continuous unbroken line. As the morning breeze—for the gale had died out after two hours’ hard blow—began to ruffle the tumbling billows again, the forms of cloudland, especially on the eastern horizon, were very grotesque and fantastic, but at length after growing lighter and lighter, with the “tumbling water-rows” lightening from dark purple to gleaming scarlet, the ruddy rising sun burst forth through lattice work of truly royal splendor, whilst silver and gold and crimson were scattered everywhere lavishly from the sun itself to every reflecting point including all freshly cleaned brasswork on the vessel’s deck. A large school of porpoises were racing the steamer, and every disturbed spray and wave and splash caught all the reflected lights like a kaleidoscope. “Kawai”—a species of bonita—were leaping clean out of the water and racing in schools everywhere within his range of vision. Then he began to feel hungry, went below, bathed, dressed, and enjoyed a hearty breakfast. Wellington was reached at about eleven o’clock.

On deck again and about, he found the entrance to this fine sheet of land-locked water very picturesque. A long stretch of wave-washed jagged rocks on the port side. On the land beyond that again still on the port side the lighthouse and signal station on which their number was already up, long before they were abreast of it, as a notice to the shipping circles of the city, not yet in sight. The hills on the starboard quarter were in places wooded to the water’s edge, and he observed many pleasant little bays and sandy beaches, and the shade under some umbrella-shaped trees looked cool and refreshing even at this early hour, for the sun can be extremely bright and hot in New Zealand.

Rocky points jutting out into the sea make navigation a matter of care, and there were two channels, one for small, and the other for large vessels.
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Wellington was a fine looking town, and the anchorage off it, as well as wharf accommodation, superb. Arthur went ashore, and was lucky enough to catch the steamer that was to take him—practically back again to but further north on the Middle Island—and at the entrance to the harbour once more, he found the sea shining like brightly burnished silver, and a large barque bearing up added to the beauty of the scene.

On the starboard side at this point in the journey was a large, yellow, sand-hill embedded amongst dark green trees, and below all that again waterwards was a lovely bay, with golden sandy beach.

But again over the harbour entrance, over the wooded hills and terraces which confined them, rose a ragged escarpment of a higher range altogether, far in the background, and red purple against the blue sky, which reminded the watcher strongly—for he had travelled—of the Esterel Mountains in the sunny Mediterranean and despite the Southern latitude he realized that it was quite as warm as the Riviera in the season.

Nearing the sea-entrance again, the land on the port side yellow clad with tussock, variegated by rolling rounded clumps of trees, and sloping gradually downwards with a pronounced trend from the summit, looked to be a place where many a beautiful villa could be built in the future, many a stately garden enclosed, many a changing view of sea and landscape entertained by fortunate onlookers. It may be that it is even so now, or will be so at no distant date. Arthur then diversified his outlook by going forward to the forecastle and watching the vessel’s progress from thence. Peering over the steamer’s bow he was well rewarded by the sight which there met his wondering gaze. The steamer’s cutwater flying through the waves, threw the spray off in an arch, and this speed of motion aided by the wind which dispersed and threw the spray higher and farther, caught by the strong rays of the sun, formed the exact shape of a reaping sickle, rainbow hued and gloriously transparent; with the handle placed close to the ship’s side, and the curved blade stretching ahead. It was a fit emblem of the silent watcher’s after life. It
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was most exquisite in form and colour, and though the weapon boded ill as a destroying angel, the sun seemed to shine through it with better augury. Strange to say, these ideas passed through the young man's mind as he looked and admired the beauty of this presentment.

As the vessel rose and fell on the open sea, before she took a different course to starboard, some distance up the coast appeared Cape Palliser, shaped like a "mooruk's" head, a long reef stretching out below it, and a landslip near by looked like a puff of grey blue smoke amidst the haze of the far headlands (pumice stone of this locality) furnishing the deception. After an hour's steaming the view past Cape Terawhiti shewed sandy beaches with a rolling surf on them and the Middle Island began to be plainly discernible. Later on the steamer was in Tory Channel, one of the entrances to the Great Sound, finally reaching Waitahi at dark.

At Waitahi Arthur made a few friends during his brief stay at a big boarding house in that town, finding out that a life of adventure was to be obtained inland, gold digging, or rabbiting. Consequently he left Waitahi and set his course on horseback out through valley country into the Marlborough district crossing eventually the range which divided this district from the Awatere River. His horse was a good one, and as he was travelling light with only a valise strapped in front of him he had ample opportunity to inspect the country. One of the young fellows he had met at Waitahi had recommended him to go right on to the Awatere district to a certain station and ask the manager if he would pass him on, rabbiting, as he was employing nearly all the men he could get. "Oh bother being a 'new chum' at the work" said the young fellow, "you'll soon learn how to skin a rabbit, and dress the skin, aye, and eat the rabbit too. They're good 'tucker' and put good muscle on you, 'pecially if you've got much hill climbing and carrying to do. I'll give you a letter to Mr. Grace. He knows my people, and I've worked for him before."

Acting on this recommendation, and determining to learn, and to do anything that might be required of him.
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Arthur was fortunate enough on passing through the bright little city of the plains, twenty miles from Waitahi to leave it again with the mailman, a cheery, plucky, light weight, riding alternately two fine horses.

The mailman, after the manner of his sort, was not at all communicative, but allowed himself to be gradually drawn out when he found his companion was a “decent sort of chap,” as he expressed it afterwards to a crony.

But when he got to know Arthur a little as they jogged onwards he gave plenty of local information, and good advice to travellers on horseback, generally suitable for the part of the country they were in. The mailman informed Arthur that the Awatere River was eighteen miles away and at the other side of the rugged ranges which confronted them after clearing the town.

The road they followed after crossing a ford on a bright pebble stranded river brought them to Taylor’s Pass, and the route forward from the end of that was safe and easy, the gradients slight and the scenery beautiful. After drawing the mailman out of his shell of reserve, Somerset found him a cheery companion, a plucky little chap with a great reserve of confidence, a quality which he needed, under Providence, in crossing such dangerous rivers as the Awatere and Clarence during his long journeys.

Arthur—as yet unexperienced in New Zealand rivers anyway—rode gaily on with his new companion, as they crossed creek after creek, and at last, after many changes of road, first up and then down, ascended to the extreme summit of the range from whence they could see a good part of the road they were still to traverse, and from this vantage ground they obtained such a “bird’s-eye” panorama of the country, that Arthur, spellbound, pulled up to gaze at it. To their right at the farthest end of that magnificent plain, far behind the tussock ridges and foothills, rose snowy Tapanuka, for all the world like a giant white sentinel, glinting supreme and sunny beyond—far beyond anything in the neighbourhood. Alone it stood, but riveted the eye at once with its solitary and dominating grandeur. How blue the sky was about its vast snowy peak and sides. One of many other colours could be thrown by nature
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there: peach colour, peach blossom colour, either in early morning in the radiant sunrise, or in the evening afterglow. Then there would be the contrast afforded by a peach tree in full bloom, against a perfectly blue sky, always a startling yet very pleasing contrast of colour. And the shadow on the snow, in crevasse or gully is always a very delicate bright blue, against the intense white, a softened emblem of the national flag. The tussocked range our two travellers were on, in colour golden yellow, where their horse’s feet were planted, stretched right and left to the utmost limits of their vision. Far away on the other side of the gleaming Awatere now visible amid its great banks on the great stretching plains below, rose other huge snow mountains joined together in a mighty range—The Southern Alps—and Harboro, the station they are making for, is about six miles off, the white glancing houses embedded in beautiful dark green forests of pines, gums, and oaks—English oaks, which grow far better in New Zealand—that Britain of the South—than they do in Australia. Descending the range they were on, they found themselves at the bottom of it, in the commencement of the real rabbit country.

They had seen occasional rabbits and myriads of holes on coming through Taylor’s Pass, shortly before this, and had also stumbled upon innumerable vagrant encampments of rabbiters, but here, where they were now, “bunny” was all at home. They scuttled off in all directions dashing into the creek bottom the horsemen were following, or into the numerous flax beds (phormium tenax) or merely sat up on their headquarters to judge for themselves what manner of men the travellers were. Their white bobbing tails were seen in hundreds everywhere. But it was over the other side of the big river Arthur and the mailman were now making for that the rabbits had so enormously increased—so the latter stated—as to necessitate an Act of Parliament compelling all the settlers there to carry on a war of extermination against their almost invincible hosts.

Arthur had his attention drawn to several wild pigs on the hillsides to his left, as they went down the gorge of the creek which sloped pretty rapidly to the big river, and noticed himself also that the flax swamps which were all
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about their course, and held considerable bodies of water, were alive with "pukakas," or large water-hens. These birds possessed an intensely bluish black plumage, with white wing feathers, set off by scarlet beak and legs.

"You bet your boots they're good eating," exclaimed the mailman, as they flapped up in sixes and sevens. "They're awful easy to shoot—easiest bird in the world—make first rate curries and stews, and there's plenty of meat on one bird for a good feed. My old woman can cook 'em proper, Ai. It's fine sport shootin' 'em," added he, "if so as you don't mind a bit of wadin'. They'll rise round you in hundreds if you've got a good splashy, barky sort of dog, and you've only got to hold your firestick straight, cos they go slow, and don't dodge any."

Then the unearthly weird cry of the Paradise ducks shrilled in the horsemen's ears, as they debouched from the ravine on to the plain, and Arthur, knowing what they were from his Wairuru experience, watches them wheeling about in the air in pairs, or feeding similarly all over the plains. After a ride of about three miles, they suddenly descended a steep bank, and the flashing, dashing, hurrying waters of the Awatere appeared before them. They reached the accommodation house at the ford, which was situated on the higher terrace of the river, and proceeded to call for refreshment for man and beast, which was duly provided.

The Awatere ran through an enormous rift in the plain, which here follows its entire course to the sea.

Beautiful sandy beaches, with picturesque and tropical looking belts of manuka and palms lie all along this river course on both sides of it, clothing both banks with verdure. The stream itself rushes over huge water-worn boulders, and the roar of its sparkling, rattling rapids, can be heard for miles, even if the river is low, as it happened to be in this first time of Arthur's crossing. When flooded, it was said to be a wide, wild, yellow turmoil of eddy, current, and danger. Woe be to any unlucky creature that managed to get drawn into its fatal embraces. Hundreds of trunks of great forest trees, borne from higher up, and rubbed round, smooth and branchless by contact with the
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river's iron bed, lie around piled in masses, and in battalions on the beaches, thus furnishing abundance of firewood for all the settlers along its banks.

Having refreshed the inner man, the travellers descended two or three river terraces to the ford, and proceeded to cross, finding the stream very swift, but low. On the other side, along the high river banks, Somerset was amazed to see rabbits in tens of thousands. They lurked in every tussock. They jumped over each other's backs in scores for mere play.

Close by Arthur is a perpendicular red sand cliff, part of the water-shed, as high as the first terrace. Up it they go, black and gray, in scores and hundreds. Arthur saw rabbit holes half way down, on inaccessible precipices, only get-at-able by a rope or a balloon, but the bunnies got to the holes all right, and disappeared into them with cheerful alacrity by little zig-zag, upward and downward paths, engineered by themselves. This they did over and over again with the greatest assurance, to his great wonder. They reached Harboro before sundown, and the mailman, placing his mail for the station at the pillar box by the road, said good-bye to Arthur and pursued his journey. Arthur had a quarter of a mile to ride, and saw much that made him wonder, even during this short distance before he reached the manager's house, introduced himself by means of his letter of introduction, was accepted as a worker, and sent down to the men's hut.

He found that Harboro was a beautifully situated station, with a background of low tussocked hills, and watered by a creek. He found as he went along that trees had been planted in every direction. They consisted of oaks, Scotch firs, pines of many sorts, blue-gums, scrub-gums, silver-beech, mountain ash, etc., to say nothing of New Zealand trees, which are very beautiful. To his great astonishment, he met a bona fide gamekeeper, in brown velveteens, accompanied by a fast-looking greyhound. He was afterwards informed that this man had made £2000 already in a three years' contract for killing rabbits on this station, and the scheme was one of great proportions. Ferrets were kept in numbers in hutches throughout the
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woods around him, solely for breeding purposes. Their increase was turned out all over the run, to assist in the work of rabbit destruction, and although many of them died of cold and wet in the winter, there was little doubt that hundreds and thousands of rabbits must have been destroyed by them. Cats were also turned out in great numbers, becoming sleek and fat with digested rabbit. Wild pigs were not allowed to be killed on certain parts of the run, because they dug up and devoured very young rabbits. Hawks appeared in myriads from parts unknown, and caught and coursed the rabbits. Yet with all these potent courses of destruction, Arthur had seen more rabbits that day—far more—than he had ever seen during the whole course of his existence.

He finds the headquarters where the manager lives with his wife and family to be a handsome villa, encircled with trim, well-kept lawns, and pretty flower beds. At the house he was informed that he would get employment as long as he chose to keep it, and for a week would be employed about the station, the manager informing him that he would be eventually put on a boundary to keep back infected sheep, and that he might shoot all the rabbits he could get, both for his own use, and to help in the war of extermination. But in addition to his wages, according to this permission, he would get the station price per dozen for rabbit skins. As he led his horse away he passed through a big swing gate, and went down to the men's quarters, a large whitewashed "raupo" thatched cottage, some four hundred yards away in a huge, fenced-in paddock. "Native and to the manner born," Arthur takes his saddle off at the men's quarters, and puts the hobbles on him, then removes the bridle, as a young man, a cheery, good-looking fellow comes out, and says, "My name's Stanford. I'll put you 'up to the ropes' here as much as I can," and then shews him where to put his saddle, and the bunk he is to occupy this night. "To-morrow, I'll shew you where to put your horse with the others," added Stanford, "mine's there, and I daresay they'll chum up. I only came to-day, but I know the place. Worked here a long time off and on. Been away spending part of my
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cheque. You’re Australian, you say. All the better, you’ll soon get used to the work, if you don’t know it altogether.”

Where the two young men are now, is the sitting-room of the men’s quarters, but there is more sleeping accommodation in another big house, and Arthur’s new friend points to it. It is a fine large, high, roomy compartment. The only furniture consists of two long forms, two small tables and some common, strong china, but those big forms will be handy in the winter nights for the men to congregate about the huge fire of river driftwood that will then be blazing in that enormous fireplace just over there.

The other part of the “whare”—house—is divided into two sections, one of which is a long dormitory, with tiers of bunks on both sides of it, and the other which is the same size undivided, is partitioned off into three sleeping rooms, with a couple of berths in each. The men located in these are chums, work in three parties, and are the permanent station rabbit destroyers. They shoot the rabbits as well as poison them, and these men are continuously filling cartridges at night, ready for next day. I believe the best rabbit shots in the world come from New Zealand. Practice makes perfect, and these men do nothing else.

They are also equipped with Greener’s very best guns, for which they have paid a great price, as well as a heavy duty, but they make their pound a day, like the others, so Arthur finds.

At the other end of the paddock, is another large house. This is the kitchen and dining-hall—“Cook-shop for all hands”—as Arthur’s new mate explains. Close by this building is the “doctor’s”—cook’s—residence, a little wooden cottage. The cook, by the way, is an old man with a family and wife in the city of the plains, but he is an undoubted master of his art, and makes rattling good wages. Arthur finds out later that he has a great knowledge of pansies. Then again, near by are the bakehouses, and a large sleeping house for the men, before mentioned. “What do you think they press in the woolpress in that big woolshed over there?” asked Stanford, cynically. “Not wool at all, but rabbit skins properly dressed, cleaned, and
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dumped in bundles of two dozen. Pressed into wool bales. We're not sheep breeders now. It's a rabbit station. Of course you're no new-chum, and the first "runts" you see of what should be prime wethers, will tell you what damage these blessed rabbits have done: So, instead of wool, we export rabbit-skins. How is it you are not off to the war? I shall go if there's another contingent or two. If old Kruger doesn't look out he'll get half the Colonial boys wandering about Ons land, as they call it. Haven't our boys done well? Hear the new plan of the New Zealanders for drawing fire. Pretend to suddenly see the Boers in a kopje ahead, and gallop off. The Boers are there, but invisible. They blaze away, and discover themselves. Our chaps either report knowledge of position, or rout 'em out. And they say the British cavalry have also taken to doing so. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and the Tommies like our fellows well. Some day all of us young fellows will be soldiers. And, my word, we'll fight for the Old Country. She's been a good old mother to us. I'm going to join the first mounted infantry I get a chance at, when this season is over. I've got two horses that would make clipping chargers.

"I'd go to-morrow," said Somerset.

"That's it," replied Stanford. "We'd be pals."

Then he informs Somerset that to-day the main body of rabbiteres are in at the station but only to leave on the morrow again, and form a large camp by the sea, and do their best to turn out the rabbits there, a part of the run famous for its former fattening qualities for sheep.

"But bless you," said Stanford seriously, "the brutes have pulled up every tussock."

Just then there was a stentorian bellow from the kitchen.

"My word, that's the 'Doctor!' Come along Somerset, I'm awfully sharp-set."

And Stanford races top-speed for the kitchen, followed by Arthur also at best pace. Simultaneous headlong rushes are taking place by men from all parts of the big enclosure, and a row of dogs, retrievers and spaniels by their kennels.
Mount Tapanuka

bark madly. The tea-table inside that long low building
is a sight for the gods. What a splendid, healthy, hearty,
happy set of youths, young men in the early prime of life.
And what a hearty sumptuous, hunger-inspiring tea.
There are no short commons in this land of plenty. This
is a real nabbiting tea, in all its abundance and profusion.
A couple of stray “swagmen”—men travelling, seeking
employment—have just dropped in “promiscuous like,”
but there is “full and plenty” for them, had there been a
dozen of them. They will have a good bunk to-night, and
breakfast next morning all free of charge.

Many a friendly pound of butter is thrust forward over
the table towards these wayfarers. Butter at that tea-
table is private property, and has to be bought from the
farmer who visits the station daily with vegetables, poultry,
eggs and milk. One of the swagmen is a man with white
hair, younger than he looks, a gentleman by manner. He
looks like an old army officer. What is his story? Ah
me, there are many very strange ones amongst such
wanderers. There is an enormous tea-canteen tank fitted
with a tap near the entrance of this banqueting room from
which each man fills his large mug before he sits down.
The pièce de résistance on the groaning table is perhaps a
huge well flavoured stew of wild duck and teal. There
are several other different sorts of duck in it, comprising
grey-duck, blue mountain duck, and Paradise duck. It is
very palatable, and no wonder, for it is all game. There
are chops, pork and mutton, fried and stewed, moist and
“dry” hashes, potatoes roasted and boiled, bacon, cold
meats, eggs, “manuka,” and eucalyptus honey—private—a
Brobdignagian sea-pie, and continents of bread upon the
white sea of the table-cloth.

Indeed there is more than enough provender of all sorts
for the thirty-two hungry souls who sit down together for
the meal, with an all powerful hunger, which can only be
obtained by constant hard work and exercise in the open
air.

During the meal, Stanford, who was the son of a
gentleman of independent means, as indeed half the
company were, informed Arthur that it was most likely
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the "governor"—manager—intended to put him on a certain boundary, he (Stanford) knew well, having been out there rabbiting. Somerset would have to keep back the Harboro sheep, and scare the others on the other side of the fence. The next run was infected, scab having appeared among the sheep. But he would be allowed to shoot rabbits and would get money for his skins. The district was very hilly, and there were plenty of goats, Paradise ducks, an occasional "sucker," "pukakas," and blue mountain ducks. He added, "It's an awfully lonely place. If I was put out there for more than a week, I should be inclined to go out and howl at the trees! But you'll see Mount Tapanuka in all its glory, for it dominates your valley. And may be you don't mind solitude. But I'd apply to the governor to be allowed to come into the station once a week if I were you. That will be somewhat of a break, and you can take out fresh loaves and one of the "Doctor's" cakes, and get some books when you come in. Mind you shoot in. Leave half your skins on the way. Pick up again as you go back, and from half way bring in others, and I will clean and wire them for you here, and keep your 'tally.'"
CHAPTER VI

STATION LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

We’ve drunk to the Queen—God bless her.
We’ve drunk to our Mother’s land.
We’ve drunk to our English brother.
(But he doesn’t understand)
We’ve drunk to the wide Creation.
And the Cross swings low for the morn.
Last toast and a foot on the table.
A health to the Native-Born.

—Rudyard Kipling.

AFTER this ample meal had been done full justice to, most of the assembled party make an adjournment to the large sitting-room, first entered by Arthur on his arrival, in one of the adjoining dormitories whereof he is to sleep. Arrived there, pipes are lighted, games of “nap” and draughts got under way, and several bouts with the gloves indulged in. Arthur being a new-comer was—according to time-honored custom—at this station expected to box, and got “all over” his first opponent (a bigger man than himself) from the start. Then he had to “tackle” the champion, a handsome, well-set young Irishman, with considerable science, and plenty of strength to use his hands. This ended in a rally, and both combatants succeeded in getting about equal exchanges, parting with a certain amount of mutual respect for each other.

There is some little gambling at “nap,” as the men are in funds, earning, each one of them, about six pounds sterling per week. To-day happens to be a bye day, or there would be more work after dinner, according to daily
Zealandia's Guerdon

routine. During the flush of the season, the men are bringing in over three thousand skins daily. They start early in the morning and do not finish until eleven o'clock at night, with the cleaning, tying, and wiring of all these skins. To a rabbiter the skinning of a defunct rabbit is easy enough—and rapid—also. They are wonderfully expeditious, the whole affair being a few quick cuts and a pull. So, the skin is then ready for the rabbiter's belt!

By these same cuts on the forelegs and behind the ears, with two on the hind legs, they get enough purchase for the pull, and by placing the dead rabbit in a certain position under his feet, the rabbiter accomplishes this part of the work in hand in a few brief seconds!

A quick steady pull takes the skin clean off, leaving the pelt only on the head, ears, and feet. The carcass is then thrown aside, and the next picked up and skinned. All this work takes place out on the run in the open air. Once the phosphorus by which these rabbits are poisoned has acted it consumes itself and dogs can eat the dead bodies with perfect impunity, and in fact seem to prefer them to anything else, so much so that Arthur in his after-experience often saw them carrying dried skinned rabbits for miles preparatory to a meal. The fur is turned outside by the rabbiters with another quick movement, for carrying, and the pelt then goes on to the rabbiters' belt to join company with many more.

When the rabbiter gets more skins than he can carry he throws them down in the line that the picking up pack horsemen or cart drivers will be taking, and skins away again at fresh corpses poisoned over night by the poison gang, who are working at a different place to-day putting down their spoonfuls of phosphorised grain, at every likely place especially near large warrens. But Arthur soon got to know how the men prepared their nightly skins for export. The skins are all taken to the woolshed by the pickers up and rabbiting gang.

After tea the rabbiters repair there, and each of them prepares a pile of thin pieces of flax a little over a foot long. The *phormium tenax*, New Zealand native flax, can easily be torn into strips of any width. It supplies a want to
all New Zealanders, obtained in Australia by means of bullock hide. The flax is one of the most useful native products. The Maories tie all their fences with it. To them it supplies the place of nails.

The strips of flax prepared by the rabbters are just strips to tie the extremities of the rabbit skins firmly to the wires.

Great numbers of prepared wires are assets of a rabbit station. There are thousands of strong wires, bent half circle-wise at the top, with two legs, the shape of the letter U, but with sharpened points and longer legs than that capital letter possesses. They lie ready to hand, as the rabbters sit down on the floor, each by his pile of flax strings and wires. The rabbiter takes one of the fresh skins, passes one hand inside, and turns it out like a stocking. The wet skin is now outside. He stretches it at the same time upon his long legged wire letter U, and ties the lower ends to each leg of the wire. The rabbit is so skinned that the smaller end of the rabbit skins is confined at the half circle of the U, at the bottom of it. A few rapid turns of the knife and that skin is ready, the fat and gristle is taken off and the surface will now dry. He places it on its wire beside him. It is now stretched to fullest extent and ready for drying. If a wet day that wire is hung with thousands of others on nails inside the walls of the woolshed. If dry, the sharpened ends of the wire U, are stuck firmly in the earth in the open air, and the sun soon finishes them for market. Arthur saw battalions of these sub-verted Ω’s with rabbit skins drying on them all over the ground, and wondered what they were for, for as yet the knowledge of preparing skins of rabbits had not entered into his experience to this extent. He knew them well enough later on. The dexterity of a three season rabbiter at wiring, tying, and stretching, seemed to him to be perfectly marvellous the first time he saw the operation. When thoroughly dry these skins are taken off the wires and are put together in bundles of from two to four dozens, tied as parcels and pressed in ordinary wool bales. Then they are sent to town to be forwarded for export. That evening Arthur “turned in” early. Pipes
were re-lit, books and newspapers were produced and a running fire of "chaff" kept up until Nature asserted itself, and the merry company were asleep. No wonder that this open-air life makes natural soldiers of the colonials, the same as it has done for the Boers. Arthur was suddenly roused into wakefulness, as well as all the others by frantic cries of "Julia," "Julia" from a young fellow in the bunk above. A shower of bed clothes, trousers, socks and shirts descended to the floor and after a hearty roar of laughter from "all hands" at this episode—which was explained by the young fellow, that he had been under the delusion that his fair friend Julia had been "sitting upon him"—silence again reigned supreme, broken only by the heavy breathing of some of the sleepers. Somerset seemed to have slept for about five minutes when a bellow from the kitchen announced breakfast, and though it was hardly light, towels and soap were in instant requisition, everyone scurrying to the creek for a wash. The gold finches in the willows by the water were beginning to twitter and by the time they all sat down to breakfast it was daylight, but the sun was not yet above the horizon. The meal was of the same ample proportions as the tea of the previous evening, and was discussed quite as vigorously. Directly afterwards the rabbiter and poisoners disappeared with packhorses, dogs, guns, and phosphorised oats. Not having had any place as yet assigned to him, Somerset paid a visit to the woolshed. Thousands of wired skins were hung up in treble and quadruple rows on the sides of the walls of this large building. The woolpress was hard at work. Dozens of tightly compressed bales all full of rabbit skins lay about ready for market, keeping two large station waggons with their teams of splendid draught horses constantly on the road to the town. Many thousands of parcels of dried skins of some dozens tied together lay about on the floor, or packed in heaps on the old tables and wool sorting appliances. Others were piled in heaps in corners, they were everywhere. Arthur Somerset remembered that on two other occasions when he had been asked to shoot
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in the old country, he had heard it remarked that if two black rabbits are seen amongst the corpses of the others at the cover-side the rabbits would average about one thousand, that is—of the common greys. But here he never saw so many skins together. And the "blacks" though in proportion only lying about, numbered thousands. He took a walk down the River afterwards to see for himself. Rabbits sprang from under his feet. Droves of them retreated in armies a hundred yards off. The banks and terraces of the watershed were alive with countless myriads and in places the whole surface of the earth seemed to be moving. A seeming infinity of white "scuts" popped into their burrows. There were cities upon cities of rabbit warrens everywhere, in all the banks, and in many dry flat places even on the sides of cliffs. The ground waved with them and yet the poison and rabbit gangs had devastated this part repeatedly. It had been netted and shot over and over again netted, with enormous nets that bagged thousands at a time, and still there the cheerful bunnies rioted in hundreds of thousands.

"Seeing is believing," muttered Arthur. "I should never have believed it, unless I had seen it for myself."

The bunnies were apparently, as exhaustless, and in as high spirits as ever. Wherever Arthur turned, a black rabbit was to be seen, sitting still and watching him, from distances computed at 20 to 50 yards! He didn't count any "greys," which were two-thirds more numerous. He then tried all the points of the compass with the same result! Then he minutely divided them, and faced bit by bit round the entire circle. That didn't alter matters, except that at certain points he was sometimes confronted by half-a-dozen black rabbits at a time! At one part of the Blind River—so called because you cannot see it until right at the top of its precipitous banks, the stream far below running in this abrupt chasm of the plain—a splendid cascade fell with a sheer leap of thirty feet, rearing and foaming. Above it, on the opposite bank, on a rocky projection of a cliff just facing him sat a rabbit—a black one of course—with its head between its paws, in rapt contemplation of the noisy rushing torrent below!
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Somerset could not help musing on the extraordinary fecundity of the species as he walked back to the station. In after times his friend the fencer—who will be mentioned by-and-bye—told Arthur, that he could remember a period when there were exactly twenty-seven rabbits—all told—on Harboro run!

The fencer—a very expert man at this particular trade as all New Zealand fencers are—narrated how he and his family had supplemented the wages made, and in addition earned a very large sum of money by rabbit slaughter. With the money so made, he had purchased a farm with houses on it, a large farm, and was set up for life. And he still went on with his fencing. His family of girls, the eldest about seventeen, were adepts in the chase, tramping, snaring, ferreting, or shooting, and every dog of lurcher breed, bred by himself, and trained by the children who were out every day when their father was out on his line of fences, would catch and bring the rabbit to hand, quite uninjured. What mothers of colonial soldiers these girls will make. No tight-lacing indolence about them!

Arthur Somerset found, on second application at headquarters, instigated thereto by young Stanford, that it would be impossible for him at present to get a berth with the rabbiters, and they were—all of them—earning a pound a day. Therefore he felt considerably chagrined. However he was offered a billet at boundary keeping at twenty-seven shillings a week, all found, and understood that he could obtain the regular price per dozen for rabbit skins. So he accepted it at once. He had seen a good deal of station life in Australia, albeit brought up to business in cities, after he was seventeen, going always to the stations in his holidays, and like many other Australians, even if town bred, he had an aptitude for bush life, which would have made a first class jockey or of him, if he had been apprenticed to bush life for good. It was the opening he had been offered in New Zealand, that had eventually brought him there after his visit to England, but the chance contact with Lucy Falconer, had driven him away, as he considered his suit hopeless.

Strive as he might he could not drive the girl's fair image
Station Life in New Zealand

from his thoughts. She was the one mate for him, and there she remained, but in this new chance, hundreds of miles away from his enslaver, the opportunity of combining sport with duty seemed the solution for forgetfulness.

As the manager cannot get away for a week, he went boldly up again to the station and asked for work, point blank. This won the manager's heart. He was a hard worker himself. So he gave Somerset his first job immediately—skinning dead sheep.

Owing to some carelessness of the poisoners, phosphorised oats had been spread in thick patches in the stud-flock paddock, with the untoward result of poisoning several. It is a nasty job skinning these dead sheep as some of the bodies are swelled up and gaseous, but he persevered and could count twenty skins hung up on the fence as he retraced his steps homeward that evening. And after a good bathe and a change of apparel, he felt all the better for his work. Whilst every one of the assembled company—much diminished however from the previous night—thought the better of him.

He stuck at this work for about a week, gaining in health and appetite in spite of the gruesomeness of his task.

At last the auspicious day arrived, and immediately after breakfast he began to put up his traps, and proceeded when finished to the manager's house, leading his horse packed with blankets, ammunition, etc. He purchased more necessary ammunition at the store. He had his work cut out on this journey, as he had not only to lead his horse, but carry his gun and tow a footsore old dog, borrowed for the occasion—as he was told he "must have a dog"—from one of the men at the station. Therefore their progress was necessarily slow. They crossed over the low lying hills at the back of Harboro and on the other side at the bottom found a pretty winding stream flowing, with dense clusters of flax growing on both sides of it. Here were a large number of pukakas, and if they had had the time to spare, they might have knocked over many a brace, but stern duty, and a long wearisome road were before them, and they let them be.
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Before them now stretched a vast plain, with towering hills at the far extremity of it. The manager pointed out two sister-peaks, with a gorge between them, towards which they steered.

About half way to this range he kindly allowed Arthur to ride his own horse, and undertook himself the duties of leading Arthur's animals. Arrived at the mouth of the gorge, they picketed the riding horse, removing his saddle and bridle, tussock-tethering him, and with Arthur's pack-horse took their road up a foaming mountain torrent. Up and up they went, stepping from boulder to boulder in a tortuous and crab-like fashion. And after crossing the creek over and over again hit a well defined mountain track. At one spot a tree had fallen into the stream right across their path, and so they had to get the tomahawk out of Arthur's swag, and lop the boughs to obtain a passage for the pack-horse. How the rabbits swarmed. There were hundreds upon hundreds dodging in the tussocks. There were thousands on the rocks above them, and tens of thousands upon tens of thousands on the vast hill sides.

In fact, the latter seemed just moving masses of rabbits from base to summit! It was quite easy to knock them over with stones they were so fearless, and crowded together so closely.

After much trouble and climbing Arthur and the manager got to the end of the gorge, and a huge mountain lay before them, up which the path went zig-zag. How well Arthur remembered that climb in after years, the wild beauty of it. At the top they halted a bit, and the manager pointed out several objects of surrounding interest. There was Flaxbourne, the adjoining station, then a large lake far down in the valley below them. Their path went downwards now, and after a brief rest they started on again. They now skirted the steep mountain side obliquely but always downwards, downwards, treading into a deep valley, a dark deep valley, with the dense shadows of the fantastically peaked and rocky hill, hanging like a pall over the abysses about them. More mountains rose to the south, grand solemn, rugged, and majestic. At the bottom they
skirted to the right hand of the range they had crossed, through lovely groves of “konini”—native fuchsia trees—with their smooth, pink, purple stems, and here and there they cross tinkling water-courses. Numbers of wild pigs and goats were visible on the hillsides, as well as the ubiquitous rabbits. Pigs and hawks—of which latter there were hundreds circling overhead—are waging a war of depletion upon bunny. The keen nose of the pig soon smells out a nest of young rabbits, which they root up and feast upon, whilst the hawks course them falcon-wise. Cats and ferrets, had been turned out in large numbers to assist these island bred destroyers, but still the rabbits swarmed as elsewhere, apparently more numerous than ever. At last, after many devious twists and turns through bosky gullies, and acres of flax beds and tui grass, with its tall waving plumes, Arthur sees the shining zinc roof of his wharé or future residence embowered amid many trees; where halting, they made shift to get some hastily concocted tea, and the manager after ascending a small hill near by with Arthur, and showing him from there, a considerable part of fence boundary line, shakes hands and departs back again with the now unladen pack horse. He will have his work cut out to get home before dark.

Somerset was now alone—a solitary being—in a vast valley, which slopes gradually away, over tussock clad boulders, for a mile until the deep cliffs of the Flaxbourne river terminates it, and where the fence divides one station from the other. Tier on tier, black-purple against the limitless æther, tower the ranges above him. Craggy mountains environ him on every side. He is, however, vastly delighted with his camp. It is situated at the base of some great hills, the fantastic peaks of which seemed to terminate in the sky. And on the other side of the rushing bubbling stream, thickly tussocked land, under “koninis,” “ broad leaf,” “ manuka,” “tutu,” the land slopes upwards with the same unvarying slant, as it does on his side downwards towards the river. The rushing mountain stream is close to the door of Arthur’s wharé. It is a firm substantial building, with accommodation for two men. One bunk is provided with red blankets, and Arthur takes the vacant
Zealandia’s Guerdon

one, wondering much who stops here. There is no one now, at any rate. On due exploration roundabout outside the wharé, he finds that he has a water-tight underground cooking place for wet weather, also, a large fine-weather one above ground. The two of them are close by his wharé. The underground one is so small that he can sit on the block which does duty as a seat, in front of the fire therein, and reach for his plate, knife, fork, etcetera, neatly disposed near by, without moving off it. All these implements together with the frying pan, kettle, pannikin and various spoons, are neatly arranged on shelves or hung on nails on the walls of the underground kitchen. The man who made it must have been an ingenious fellow. In after times Arthur, with the aid of an improvised lamp, a warm fire, a copy of an old “Australasian,” and a pipe of tobacco, had many a comfortable smoke and read, in wild, wet, cold weather, with a hot pannikin of tea to refresh and comfort him also. The fine-weather kitchen has no roof, and he forms instant plans to remedy this defect, and provide himself with at least a rain proof dwelling for cooking his daily meal and wherein to skin and place together in neat bundles whatsoever rabbit skins he may acquire. He can soon remedy this—his third building,—by thatching it with rushes, flax, or manuka,—goat skins would be an improvement. He must have some. He would cure hams, goats’, and pigs’ in that chimney. Why, it would be a capital place. There was a good slab chimney, with iron bars across, and wire attachment and hooks for billies and kettles. He would live in style in this wild mountain fastness. On that point he was determined. He then proceeded to untie his lent dog, which did not seem at all frolicsome, and lay down again. Next, Arthur explored a little up the creek. It was now half-an-hour to sundown.

“Konini” trees grew all along the creeks in groves on each side of it, and he finds also that some pretty imported pines have been planted. They are now large trees, and one or two of a rare species he found to be extremely aromatic and sweet smelling. Melodious songsters are babbling from all trees near the creek. He leaves it and ascends to the summit of a small hill near by. From this,
on account of the height any hills at the base of this high range occupy he can see the fence, and the limit of his daily sixteen miles’ tramp along that fence eight out and eight back, and right away to the end of the long and—from here—apparently flat valley he will have to traverse, and there rises Mount Tapanuka in all its snowy grandeur far beyond the end of it, with wood opal-coloured hills—the foothills in its foreground. Yellow gold colored tussocked plains, blue-black higher hills, a glimpse of a cataract in the bed of the river, a gleam of the water, a call from a pair of paradise ducks, and the approaching night signal from the marauding “weka’s”—Maori hens. These with an occasional goat-bleat from the crags, form his surroundings. It is weird, wild, lonely, and there in the midst of the yellow tussocked valley plain is a hill exactly similar to a golden crouching lion, with purple red mane—rocks about the head—and his tail curved and rounded lying behind him on the plain with a tuft at the end and all. “Lion Hill” Arthur names it on the spot. And the air of this mountain region is wonderfully invigorating.

On returning to camp he found the cooked leg of mutton, he had carefully brought out with him for present supplies, gnawed to the bone, and his brute of a dog gone! He had to eat dry bread and cake that night, as he had not thought of shooting a rabbit. He sat up over a pipe or two afterwards listening to the forest and mountain voices in that grand hill solitude, the grunting of the wild pigs, the cries of the “wekas,” the more porks, a harsh occasional cry from a “kaka” disturbed from its rest, the weird flute-like melody of the night wind amongst the “organ-hills,” that aerial music of the spurs: and finally went to bed and fell asleep, lulled by the close never-ceasing cadence of the rushing stream close by his door. How that torrent used to roar during the wild storms of hail, rain, and snow, and how the thunder used to echo from the hills afterwards, on some occasions which happened, about the vicinity of that lonely cabin!
CHAPTER VII

SOLITUDE

Theme of the poet, lay of bird and tree,
Harp of the minstrel, Nature’s verity,
Where are thy voices? Surely, all around.
From murmuring brook, from hillside, they resound.

There are the sweet blue hills, the silvered range
Snow-capped and ice-bound. Ah, ’tis passing strange
That mortal men can find the truest trace
Of nature’s God in solitary place.

THE next morning Arthur was up at sunrise, bathed in the creek, dressed, made some tea and ate some cake and bread, determined to forage for future provisions during the day. It was very lonely. Even the company of the traitorous canine would have been welcome. No one—save those who have experienced it—can tell what a companion a dog is in these mountainous solitudes. With a dog you have a trusty guard, that is if he belongs to you and likes you. You have more eyes to see with, and an unerring nose to smell with in addition to your own powers. Also a sagacity and instinct which you do not possess, except in the person of your dog. A warning scout, a faithful friend. And he will find game for you when, by yourself, you would over-look it entirely.

Arthur finds, however, as he sets off with his gun—but dogless—that though the plains along the precipitous river banks look level from the heights adjoining the camp, there is many a water course and creek, and much rough ground and ravines, that must be traversed before he even reaches “Lion Hill,” and the descent to, the descent into, the river
Solitude

and climb on the opposite side must also be reckoned in the intervening spaces. He has to wade the river up to his knees, but is very proud of himself—when halfway over—as he knocks over a splendid Paradise duck which came “keening” over his head. After this, he had a sharp ten minutes with rabbits and “pukaka,” getting a couple of brace of each. As his game bag is now filled, he proceeds more leisurely, crossing the river again in a mile or two. The other bank reached, and having his Australian proclivities aroused by the sight of various coloured pebbles, including quartz, in the bed of the river, he deliberately sits down, grallochs his rabbits and birds, and examines all the birds’ crops, and gizzards, hunting for stray grains of gold in the digesting grit. He is unsuccessful, and replaced them in his game-bag, having made his load considerable lighter by the process. He then finds that he has an awfully steep bank to climb, which he proceeded to do, holding on by the wire fence which happily runs up it. He finds in the river bed on the line of the fence, most ingeniously constructed water-gates, to prevent the passage of stock. They are swing gates but the swing is down-stream, so that they lift when the stream is high, and allow the passage of logs and debris.

They are made of tough manuka saplings, bound by wire all over, and shewing the skill of the New Zealand fencer. On the top of the last mentioned cliff, the country is a straight level plain of tussock with boulders. On arriving at the Lion Hill, Arthur found a brace of Paradise ducks perched about the crags which formed the Lion’s head. Judging that they intended to breed there he left them alone, and proceeded along the fence, their keening alarm cry at his previous approach changing into a softer note of satisfaction as he did so. But they did not fly away. Probably this was a favourite spot for this particular pair. Then he knocked over eight or ten more rabbits and denuded these of their skins. The Richmond Brook run which he is now opposite to is infected with “scab.” He drove back all the sheep near the boundary a hard job enough without a dog, as they promptly got into all sorts of inac-
cessible gullies and ledges and strongholds in the bed of the river, and refused to budge until the unexpected report of both barrels of his gun, and the unaccustomed echo and reverberation sent them scampering off to the hills. Somerset found some dead sheep along the fence line. He burnt all these, heaping "tussock" and "tutu" over them, and setting fire to it, but taking particular care that there should be a clear space around each fire, for a tussock fire is awfully destructive, and would burn miles of pasture, should it get a hold, beside miles of fencing and perchance some huts as well. However to burn sheep is a good plan to prevent contagion from spreading. But if any of the Harboro sheep were to rub noses in a friendly way with any infected ones on the other side of the fence, the contagion would soon spread, and the run, as yet clean would be declared infected. So he had to exercise all the vigilance and care possible. From the top of the high river-cliffs he could see pigs and goats in droves. Truly there is no lack of game. At mid-day he halted and consumed the bread he had with him, took a draught of clear water from the nearest stream, enjoyed a quiet pipe, and the beautiful mountain scenery, and then prepared for his homeward journey, plus four rabbits—in carcass—four pukakas and eighteen skins, not so bad for a first day. And as he slowly wended his way back, across plains strewn with boulders, down precipitous banks, across rushing streams, up other hills, across ravines, his mind was constantly running on the delicious stew he was going to have for supper, for Arthur Somerset was very hungry. When he reached camp at about four o'clock, the birds, "tuis," and honey eaters are singing most melodiously. His mountain stream was bubbling on its rapid course. Throwing down his burdens and placing his gun ready loaded but carefully at half-cock, in a strap sling inside his whare, he went up the stream to collect fire-wood. He brought several loads of "tutu" from thence on his strong shoulders and proceeded to skin his four gralloched rabbits. Two of these he hung up in the smoke of the fire. He plucked the duck, a couple of pukakas, and two rabbits cut very thin into sections, and put the whole five into a new Zea-
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land cooking pot, a large utensil, with just enough water to cover them. Then he shredded an onion into it, and added pepper and salt. It smelt good as soon as it warmed. What would it be when steadily cooked for an hour? As he was engaged skinning the rabbit, etc., by the stream, his eye was attracted by something galloping along the banks, among the boulders. Lo and behold it was a ferret eager for blood! It purloined all the legs, heads, and entrails, making several journeys backwards and forwards to its lair somewhere near by amongst the rocks, along the bank of the stream. This little animal was Somerset’s only companion for a week, and it always turned up at skinning and cleaning times. At the end of the week it was very fat and important. Day succeeded day much in the same manner for Arthur, only varied by the number of skins obtained, which increased considerably. On the eighth day he went into the station for bread, and what with shooting and skinning rabbits en roule, it was after sundown when he got in, tired and hungry. After an interview with the manager, he got leave to come in regularly, once a week for bread, which varied the monotony of his solitary life considerably, so that with the advent of two or three square meals—cooked for him—and the society of the “rabbiters” he did not feel his enforced seclusion half as much as he otherwise would have. This sixteen miles a day, got him into harder condition than ever, so much so that he could run up hill with ease. He also carried at times heavy loads to considerable distances. After a visit to the station he would carry back a large sack full of things, a two foot long loaf, and cake of the “Doctor’s,” to match, newspaper, books, powder and shot for cartridges, besides his gun.

He got cuttings of willows, gooseberries and currants, which he planted along his creek, with stone walls round them to keep the rabbits out. He was not entirely alone, for the fencer, a real good all-round man used to stay a night in his “wharé” every fortnight, and they used to sit up half the time discussing theology, or anything else that turned up. Franks, which was the fencer’s name was a wonderful shot with a pea-rifle and Somerset often put up
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a powder tin fifty yards off with a tuft of white rabbit hair stuck on the middle of it, and Franks would plug the centre of that rabbit fluff every time. Franks carried this small muzzle loading pea-rifle to defend himself from pigs, which were savage. Somerset himself had often seen them charge down from the Lion Hill, when on his rounds, and after the first time always carried a bullet or two for his smooth bore in his pocket. Franks never missed a rabbit, shooting them in the head, and could place a bullet in any part of a wild pig's body he chose to. From the fencer, Somerset got a present in after time of a young lurcher dog which he christened "Bondi" in memory of a certain sea-beach and sandhills near Sydney. And about that time too he got the use of an old pig, cattle, or sheep dog called "Tory," who was faithful and not a thief. But he had no teeth worth speaking of though he could "speak up" and scare the sheep when wanted to. So that after Franks' later visits Somerset fared better. And sometimes the interval would be filled up by an eccentric shepherd with a wonderful bitch that could catch goats, chase them down within shot, and generally provide her master with "tucker." The eccentric shepherd lived over the range somewhere on the Richmond Brook run, and was a great politician and a devouring reader. So Somerset swapped books and papers with him, and found him, an acquisition. One day he arrived in his gala dress en route for the little city on the plains that Somerset and the mailman had left on their way to the Awatere district. "Sez they to me sez they," said the eccentric shepherd, arranging his buttonhole of his best "Sunday-go-to meeting." "Sez they to me sez they. Who are you for? But I'm not such a bally fool. I never lets on, just signs my ballot ticket, and no one but myself knows who I vote for. And I never tells no one. Them's my politicks!" "Bondi" was the best dog for rabbits that Somerset ever saw. He would catch more than twenty rabbits a day single handed, all hard runs, for the mountain and plain rabbits can go like smoke. When caught he would bring them a mile or more to his master's hands, alive! He would only kill a rabbit if he thought it would beat him down a hole. And Arthur has seen him
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stand on his head in a rabbit hole trying to catch one that had just dropped in. Through "Bondi," assisted by his own shooting, Arthur's pile of rabbit skins increased daily. He could average from four to five dozen pretty easily. He also had some capital goat and kid shooting, the latter being very palatable. He pegged out several skins of these, and what with an occasional porker, lots of rabbits, ducks, and pukakas" lived like a prince from May onward for some months. Each day's work became to him a joyous task, and the wild freedom of his life benefitted him greatly both in health of mind and body. The mountain air gave him a zest for life such as he had never felt in cities. It increased the play of the lungs, and bestowed such unison of mind and being with the grandeur and beauty of Nature, that he worked as he had never worked before, slept like a top, and awoke fresh as a daisy the next morning, most anxiously willing and able for his day's work, fit and fore, as a man could be.

Then the cleaning, wiring, skinning of four or more dozen skins had to be done by lamp or fire-light. An hour's repose or reading followed, and at the end of each recurring day, to bed again to sleep as only a tired mortal could. The vastness and beauty of the wild mountain ravines, the marvellous change of color on the summits and sides similar to wood-opal, the ceaseless roar of torrents, the bright blue sunny skies, the marvellous air and the snow-blink from Tapanuka insensibly drew Arthur's mind away from all care. At times he forgot even Lucy—and the life converted him into a natural healthy man—an Adamite—with a vast dominion to rove in, and inspired a sublime feeling that he was not alone, but under the eye and presence of the Creator. From the top of the big range he had always to cross, on his way into the station—and which was often snow-clad—the view was extended all over the country. Far to the northward to the east and to the south, his range of vision from the topmost gorge, embraced the mighty ocean, to the south where he could see coasters sheltering sometimes—looking like toy boats—in mighty bays under great wooded headlands. To the eastward where the North Island reared its jagged and lofty silhouette in the blue distance, over the flashing mirrored tide of
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Cook's Strait, and a silver shimmer of ocean stretch again far down towards the Kaikouras, in which direction lay Osbern's station, Wairuru, but far distant. Here, of course, came a thought of the girl he had left behind him, but he stifled it. To the north and west from where he stood, the distant coast line and the ranges towards Nelson were visible. Inland yawned a deep valley—his valley—and a little to the right lay Flaxbourne station, near its lake or lagoon. Beyond that, range on range tower the intermediate and lofty mountains backed up by the mighty snow covered Southern Alps. Imagine the immediate contrast between the blue of the infinite distance, and their dazzling white purity, with the shadows in some of their great crevasses, shadows of palest blue. Such a view, with the snow of his vantage point shining like white metal in the sun, the tussocks waving on the great plains below and very distinctly on the near hillsides, that golden rippling flow so peculiar to the "tussock," seemed like a yellow sea, as the wind passed over it. All this, charmingly varied by the warm russets, golden russets, and purple russets, of the scarps and gullies, with the dark and deep greens scattered through the forests, all medallioned with the exquisite faint blue of the sky, and far distance, glorious with the silver dazzling shimmer of the great stretches of sea, made up the great panorama of what Arthur saw every time he crossed the giant range. Of course all this was varied in shape and colour by the weather, but it always was startlingly vast and wonderful. A single glimpse of such an earthly Paradise was worth ages of toiling and moiling at books and figures, and it was from this infinite standpoint on the range that Arthur began to think that a free open air life was the one best suited for him, and every time he passed the summit to or from the station, he bade good-bye to it with sorrow—for to be there, was to feel like a king—as if he was bidding good-bye to a part of his existence, the subtle charm of which lingered in his memory like a breeze from the ocean, healthful and fresh, until the strong, wild, free life took entire control of him, and often and often when away from it he stood once more, in imagination, on the summit of the range.
CHAPTER VIII

INCIDENTS

List' to the foaming torrents after rain
Clad with a bridal wreath, and silver train,
Raiielouds and mist, dark shadow, glowing sun
As down the mountain-sides the waters run.

The eighth day on which Arthur Somerset had gone into the station had been marked by a rather curious sensation of utter loneliness, the fact arising from the consciousness of having done his duty to the utmost of his capacity during the seven previous ones, and the fact that he could take a days' rest if he liked. The sudden cessation of his daily work, work in one direction that had to be faithfully carried out, had, no doubt intensified this feeling which wore off when he got into the station. On the day before this exodus, he had gone as usual, immediately after breakfast, from his camp, proceeding over the little mountain creek-flat to his left hand. The gun that he had with him was a borrowed muzzle-loader, but a good piece. His own had been left behind, as it had been injured by a fall at Wairuru, and had not yet been returned from the gunmakers owing to his sudden departure from Christchurch. Stanford had lent him his, stating that it had belonged to his father before him. And Arthur had no reason to be in the least dissatisfied with it, save one, that he could not load it fast enough to please him. Sometimes he used paper when wads cut from various sources ran out, and that nearly brought on a catastrophe for him on another occasion. On
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this particular day now being described, namely the seventh of his practical exile from the rest of the inhabitants of the station, he set off as described, starting the usual number of rabbits in the first hundred yards or so. He had no particularly lonely feeling to-day, simply because he had something very particular to do, and which would take him from then until four or five o'clock in the afternoon. His boundary line had to be walked, and scrambled, to the very end of it, before he turned back homewards. As many rabbits as possible had to be shot and skinned. The sheep all along that boundary had to be looked to. The boars at "Lion Hill" and other parts had to be carefully watched, and a possible charge prepared for. But the "blessed sheep," as Arthur had now termed them after many a weary experience, had lately grown too cunning to be sent flying back, by the report—or a dozen reports—of his gun. They found out that a bang, accompanied by no matter how many echoes or reverberations hurt them not a whit. They had got used to it. So they collected in impossible spots when they saw him coming, and "poked borak" at him which in Colonial slang was equivalent to "taking a rise out of him." And they took many "rises" out of him, if attempts to scale inaccessible places were reckoned. Arthur "poked mullock" or rocks or stones, anything to dislodge them from the fastnesses, but in many cases the "jumbucks" were persistent, also secure. The brain of the sheep is callous—if it works otherwise than defiantly—and nothing would dislodge the brutes, but the bark, or sight of a dog! Preferably a dog keen of sight, keen of nose, keen, even hard on sheep. A dog that would always go "forrard" as hard as ever it could lay legs to the ground, all day, and all night too, as keen dogs always do. At least as they do, or appear to do, even if asleep. They are after sheep in their dreams. No doubt with an approving master directing, shouting, and swearing at them. A chivying dog was what Arthur now yearned for in his most inmost soul. Any dog—such were Arthur's thoughts after several valiant attacks with stones on out of reach ledges. All he got from the sheep was one indignant baa or two. But they budged not unless the mullock or stones actually hit them. All this made
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Arthur wish fervently for a sheep dog, the more especially as he had an adventure with a wild boar soon afterwards, which would not have happened if he had possessed a dog. But the sheep nearly drove him mad.

It was to the north-west of “Lion Hill,” where a deep, dry waterless bed of a creek shewed an outlet for flood water during special seasons of the year, such as heavy continued thunderstorms during the summer, or during the violent mountain downpours in the winter. It was a big, broad deep water-course with sloping banks. Grass grew thickly along both sides and at the bottom. Patches of flax also were to be seen in great profusion along the bed of it. Somerset had just dropped a fine “pukaka” with his left barrel, a long quick shot that gave him no end of quiet inward satisfaction. He had discharged his right hand barrel just previously and secured a rabbit, and the report had scared the “pukaka.” But both barrels had also routed something else out, a rather dangerous and uncompromising customer. Forth from a cluster of flax plants at the bottom of the watercourse dashed an angry stubborn wild boar, with a rush and a snort. Glaring around, he instantly observed Arthur standing on the bank above him, and came slowly up the bank straight for him! Had Arthur had a pig-dog, he would have been all right. As it was, he was then dogless, and therefore considerably all wrong. He dropped a charge of powder into both barrels, and fumbled in his pockets for the bullets he always carried. Still the pig came onwards, not in a hurried manner but with that utterly fearless deameanor and wicked eye wild boars always have before they make their sudden fatal rush. There wasn’t time to reload, so Arthur clubbed his gun, whistled loudly, and then shouted and beckoned for an army of imaginary dogs. The ruse succeeded. The boar came to a sudden stop, wheeled and trotted slowly off, with that wicked eye and head of his, glancing back all the time. He trotted up the opposite bank of the ravine, and disappeared amongst the fern. Arthur as soon as possible, let fly a bullet in his direction, spoke to several dogs as if they had just come up, and wended his way for the remainder of that day with a bullet in one barrel of his
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smoothbore. Next day being the momentous eighth referred to at the beginning of this chapter, he had about half completed the thatching and general doing up of his open-air cooking-house, and had some previously collected loads of thatch lying ready down the creek for immediate transport. But as he crossed the creek after breakfast, and left the timber fringe behind him, opening out on to a beautiful wide hillslope of pasture with silver plumes of “tui” grass waving in the air all over it like Prince of Wales’s feathers, then he felt that lonesome feeling that comes to a man but once in his life, and instead of going for his loads of flax and reeds, he shouldered his gun firmly, and kept on by the hill-base track which led towards the station. He shot all the way in, his gun quite hot. He put two dozen skins in a flax bush on the station side of the big range, ready for his return, pursued the usual zig-zag fashion of travel down the rocky creek, until he came to the place where the manager had “tussock-tethered” his horse after their arrival there on his first journey. He knew the tussock. There were the plenteous hoof-marks too, all about it, and the trail of the rope. He passed between the twin peaks with the grass-covered slopes, and it seemed to him that he was going back to the world again. Now he would meet men, and speak to them, and the feeling of despairing loneliness left him. The ferret had been his only companion for seven long days. Away over the great plains now by the horse-track, until he arrived at the stream of many “pukakas” in the flax-beds. Through it, and over it, and away up the rolling grassy tussock-covered hills, until from the top he could see Harboro below him quite near. About nine miles he computed the distance. to be from his camp on the other side of the far range. He represented his case to the manager who sympathized and seemed pleased, when he described what work he had done, advised him to get a dog as soon as possible, and sent him off down to the “doctor,” who at once supplied him with an excellent meal spread out on a clean table-cloth in the big kitchen, and sat opposite and talked to him while he enjoyed it, and related some of his adventures.
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Then Arthur discovered that the old, hale, hearty man had a family of his own, grown up married daughters with their families, and that he was a pansy fancier in his leisure time when he could not get such wages as accrued to a cook for rabbiters. So Somerset, getting the “doctor’s” address, promised to send him some varieties of this beautiful gem among flowers, when the rabbiting season was over, and kept his promise, much to the old man’s delight. In the afternoon, Arthur, who had read the very little readable matter he had at his camp, fairly gloated over some papers the “doctor” had given him, and through the columns of the “Australasian,” which is widely read in New Zealand, got a budget of world news which interested him vastly. He also found a letter from the Señor waiting him, of which following is a transcript:—

Christchurch,
Canterbury, N. Z.

My poor, dear Arthur,

You are gone, and I am quite desolate. No one now fires up at my arguments. No one does me the honour to admire my wax models of the human frame. I have news. The Señorita is much with her intended, always however accompanied by her dueña. It is thus. The mother-in-law that is to be, the sister-in-law that is to be, accompany the intended, and come down to stay at the cottage in the North Belt. I meet them about the town. I meet them in the main streets. I meet them in the parks, along the river, everywhere. They sally out in force, to balls, to parties, to picnics. In three weeks or so they all depart to Wairuru, the whole lot of them, including the Señorita, and her very charming dueña. I shall make bold some day to introduce myself to the dueña. Be not jealous, my Arthur. But your chances are nowhere. Go quicksticks, and make love to another señorita. There are several here I could recommend. Does the heart feel sore yet? Are the wounds so deep and painful, now healed? I pity you, my poor Arthur, but say to yourself, there are good fishes in the sea, better than any that yet came out of it, and fish, fish, fish for yourself. For bait use yourself,
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your looks, your manners. The eye, my Arthur, is a favourite bait. Use your eye, first one, then the other. Leer with it. Wink with it. Implore with it. Try to hook one of these new larger, ever so much finer fishes. Dangle yourself about, my Arthur. You are good fresh bait. Dangle, dangle, dangle, and presently one of these amiable fish-señoritas will jump and hook herself on to you. But what are you going to do? Are you tired of the pen, the ink, the foolscap, the ledger, the daybook, the ruler, the blotting-pad? Do you abhor the desk, and the long-legged stool? Write, my Arthur, and tell me all about yourself. I miss you and our arguments. From what I can see, I think the wedding will take place sooner than some people think.—Yours truly,

VASQUEZ IBAÑES.

A. Somerset, Esq.

"Poor old Señor," muttered Arthur, looking much perturbed, and with a deep, painful sigh, "he is quite right, and a good fellow, in spite of his aggravating ways and suspicions. I'll write him a reply."

Which, after a reflective pipe, he did, for all hands were away. A few would be back at sundown. Until then, therefore, Arthur had the big room all to himself. His letter ran as follows:—

HARBORO STATION,
AWATERE RIVER.

MY DEAR SEÑOR,

Thanks for your letter, and the news. Of course the old love is hard to cure. But I am undergoing a course of physical training, so that if we ever meet again, it will make me a better antagonist to you with the foils, that is to say if I could cope with brute force against your wonderful skill. I expect to be here for some time yet, and I do wish I had you sometimes to chat to, for I can tell you, a week is quite long enough to be entirely alone. However, I have made a radical change now. I make, or will make, my four to five pounds a week, and I am my own master, as long as I carry out my work conscientiously and spare

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no trouble over it. Try and get an introduction by all means to Miss Featherston, and remember me most kindly to her. As an old friend she might write. I shall endeavour to follow out your advice, but the only señoritas I have about me at present are the manager's servants, and I might get into a row if he caught me speaking to them. No houri pays me any visit out in my mountain fastness. Keep me posted in any details you may get hold of.—

Yours ever,

ARTHUR SOMERSET.

Don Vasquez Ibanes.

Arthur met Stanford that night. The latter was delighted at his coming in, and asked him seriously if he felt inclined to go out and "howl at the trees," declaring that one night would finish him utterly. "Be a loony in the morning," said Stanford. He supplemented this warm feeling by two yellow-backed novels of the Gerstaecker type, and two old "Australasians," which became brain-food for Arthur for a week. "But it's real jolly your coming out once a week. I shall always be here at sundown, if I don't get the 'sack.' Where did you put your skins?" asked Stanford, all in a breath. "In the shed? All right. How many? Three dozen from the twin hills. Two dozen to the foot of the range. First rate. My word, you're doing well. I'll wire them for you, myself to-night."

But to this Arthur demurred, and after tea sat down with Stanford, with his own skins beside him on the woolshed floor, and by the time he had done, he had learnt many wrinkles from the art of his friend.

And so the next morning he went back to his whare, and his work over the range, shooting more rabbits as he went, and picking up the rabbit-pelts of the day before. But he brought old "Tory" out with him this time, a dog which had been given him by Stanford, to keep as long as he remained on the valley boundary. It was five o'clock in the afternoon when he reached his camp, as he had a heavy load, including a long loaf, and a long cake of the "doctor's" baking. And all the lonely feeling had gone. He wouldn't be bothered with it again, the more especially
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that he now knew he could break the monotony or solitariness of his present life once a week. And he worked all the harder for that comforting thought. When he got to his wharé he instantly started tidying up generally, and preparing supper. He also placed some shirts ready for washing on the morrow when he returned from his boundary survey, after giving the sheep fits, with old "Tory." He had found before this, close by, down the creek, a large copper boiler, with a fire-place under it. He put a little water in it and made a fire, but the explosion of phosphorus above the water-line when heated had shown him that it was a poison tank, so he heated it without water with a slight fire and thoroughly cleansed it. To-morrow, after hours, he would have "boiled shirts," ad libitum, also trousers of the moleskin variety. "Tory" took to him wonderfully, and followed him about everywhere. So towards sunset, Arthur strolled up the creek to get a couple of rabbits for him as he had only brought skins back. He got one almost directly and heard a loud bla-at from a goat immediately after he fired. When he got the second rabbit he was further up the creek, and the bang of his gun was, as before, followed by a bla-at of even deeper vigor or despair. On a hill-slope above him following the sound he saw lying at the foot of a broad-leaf tree, an enormous dark coloured billy-goat, which recalled at once to him the one discovered by Robinson Crusoe in the cave. Thinking it most extraordinary that the animal which should be by rights as wild as a goat, did not move or jump up or do something he scrambled up to it, and found out that the unfortunate animal was firmly trapped above the hoof, by the big joint of the foot. It was wedged in to a forked stem of the broad-leaf. The animal had evidently reared up, in the first instance placed its hoofs upon the stems which were close together, to get at the leaves, and then it must have slipped with the result now to be seen.

So he released it after some trouble, and the goat bla-ated again joyously. But, as the poor brute had evidently been there for days, it was too weak to get up by itself, and too weak to do anything but stagger when it
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was up. So that when Arthur, after a good deal of difficulty and hauling—for it was an enormous shaggy monster, which would have promptly butted him into the middle of next week with its huge curly horns if it had been fit—got it eventually upon its four legs—it saw the dog. Then it made a frantic, erratic, head over heels dash down the slope towards the creek, into which it fell with a crash and a despairing blaa-aat, with its head jammed under the opposite bank. Here it would have been drowned and smothered if Arthur had not come to the rescue again, and hauled it out by main force. After great difficulty he got it on his legs again on a little patch of grass just clear of the creek bank, but just as he turned to go away it staggered into a thicket of supple-jacks, and got its great horns and body hopelessly entangled. So Arthur spent a quarter of an hour with it until he finally got it out, and away from all entanglements, timber, and watercourses, leaving it at last on its native hillside. It got away by degrees, giving blatt after blatt, but whether in thankfulness or to summon its seraglio, Arthur never knew, for it never came back to thank him. No doubt the poor brute bleated at first, on the mere chance of man, being humane, and able to release it from a living death, but the first man Arthur told about it on a subsequent occasion was surprised that he hadn’t cut its throat. So the chances were against the goat. But humanity happened to be in the way for the goat on this particular occasion and gained the day.

One day Arthur had a narrow escape from fire. He always had in mind the manager’s caution against lighting tussock, and though he had burned some patches near the fence to preserve it, in case of a local fire, he always stood ready with a thick bough to beat it out, if it threatened to spread beyond the area he intended that it should occupy. He had had on this occasion some sharp shooting in a gully in the river bed at a place which had been swept out—leaving a high straight up and down sand bank—by some former flood of the river, and this place had short scrub and long thick dry grass about it. Somehow or another he had no regular wads for his last two shots, and had used paper, and this of course smouldered and finally set fire to
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the grass, which Arthur saw blazing, ten minutes afterwards when he was on one of the high hills near his own camp. The fire was in his rear, but there was a high wind that day, and Arthur got some idea of what a fire would do, by seeing some shreds of tussock carried by that wind from where he was standing, to the next hill. That made him think how the fire would leap from ridge to ridge if it once got full swing, and got over the river. So he ran back to make sure. But luckily it only burnt out a bit of ground, where it really did more good than harm, and roasted several unfortunate rabbits into the bargain. But it did not cross the river, and Arthur did not leave the vicinity until all was safe. His own camp had been burnt clean out on one occasion some years ago, the manager had told him, and sundry blackened beams and twisted zinc roofing were to be seen to this day in a gully near his wharf. Next day again Arthur got his first pig, a fat half-grown one. Young New Zealand wild pigs are bristly yellow, with black bristly spots—piebald pigs—and just at the spot near "Lion Hill," in the old watercourse, Arthur saw two of these, and his mouth watered for them, or for one of them. They were off and up the bank into the fern, before "Tory" got near them, but he followed them, and after a long exhausting, and excited run, chased one back towards Arthur who had been running full split all the time. He was just exhausted, and could have hardly run a step farther to save his life, when the pig crossed. He had just enough strength and will to pull the trigger when over fell the pig with the charge in a proper spot behind the shoulder. Arthur collapsed by the pig, but when he recovered his breath he gralloched it and set off homewards, with a kidney and liver prospect for supper. The fore and hind quarters of that fat porker delighted him at meals for some time afterwards, for he cured and smoked the hams, having plenty of salt, and bacon was an item in his fare. And now a new industry came upon him. He made a splendid syrup out of the ripe berries of the sweet briar which ran wild here all over the gullies. When boiled and strained and sweetened with sugar, it had a flavour of its own, just sufficiently acid to make it very palatable, and
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he found it very refreshing when bottled and kept cool. Then he used it, mixed with cold clear water. At this time, too, having some nibs, a penholder, but no ink, he proceeded to make some from very black berries not fit to eat, and wrote letters, and his diary, at a little writing table he made in his spare time. On one occasion he ran out of bread, and coming home very hungry, was contemplating a visit to the station next day, almost in spite of the fact, that the sheep wanted another day’s driving back from the fence with the aid of old “Tory.” Rather disconsolately his eyes rested on a round cylinder in the corner of his wharé, which for some reason he had never looked at. It was covered with a round wooden top, and a heavy stone had been placed on this to keep it in his place. He walked over, took the stone away, and raised the lid. “Corn in Egypt, by jove,” exclaimed he delightedly. It was full of fine white flour. It wasn’t long before he had some clipping Australian Johnny-cakes to eat with his rabbit and pork, and he thought he had never enjoyed a meal so much. He finished the sheep with two days more “rally” after this unexpected piece of luck, and did not go into the station until a day after his time, carrying out more flour to replace what he had taken. It was lucky, because the next night brought Franks, the fencer out, with a splendid lurcher dog for him, which he at once christened “Bondi,” in spite of the fact that he possessed a name. But “Bondi” he remained. A handsome, very handsome dog of the greyhound-lurcher type, with a perfect arrow-shaft in black from just below his eyes, and along his snout nearly to his nose, a black arrow on a white ground. It happened, too, to be typical of his great speed, and was a true birth mark of his inheritance.

“When first I came here” said Franks in retrospection one evening as they were sitting wiring Arthur’s rabbit skins, “there were exactly twenty-seven rabbits on the run. Two pairs had been turned out by somebody, why or wherefore, no one knew. I believe it had been done with a view to sport. It hasn’t been sport for the owners. A few years back the owner of this run was getting such a good return from his sheep and wool, that he took his
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whole family to England, where he lived in tip-top style, keeping his hunters and enjoying himself generally. But he's on his way out again, and will never be the rich man he was. The idea of sport perhaps originated in pheasants having also been turned out. They did well, but the rabbits did better. They increased so much in three or four years that everybody became alarmed, and they destroyed the pheasants. For what poisoned them killed pheasants too, and with all that they increased to such an extent that its now the problem of our lives to best them. I don't believe we ever shall until all these great pastoral plains are built over, house to house; and long before that the rabbits will have spread all over New Zealand. I bred ferrets and dogs—lurchers—and got two of that breed," pointing to "Bondi" who seemed to understand every word—"a dog and a bitch. He's one of their descendants. Be kind to him. He'll bring them to your hand unhurt. He'll hunt them until he gets so tired that he will hang up on a wire fence if he tries to jump it. But he never does that unless I am by to take him off again. The breed of those dogs in addition to poisoning and wiring has made my fortune. I'm a fencer by trade, and I have been employed here in that capacity for years. I've got a house and several acres of my own now on this run, and I made the money to buy it—all out of rabbits!—besides putting something by for the kids. My three girls are out rabbiting every day, and they train the dogs. But my poor wife's gone."

Franks went onward next day, but not before Arthur had tasted some cake made by these same rabbiting young ladies, and jolly good cake it was, too.

He saw two of them afterwards, and nice, strong-looking, pretty girls they were, like all New Zealand girls who use their limbs well in the open air.

New Zealand is especially a country where exercise, and many hills to climb breeds stalwart men and women. The grand physique of the Maori would tell an observer that. And New Zealand had fine athletes and vigorous maidens, with looks to back their physical powers. A grand young nation rising from the sea, a country of enormous possibilities. A land with marvellous deep
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harbors waiting for new cities and descendants of her strong young men and women of the present day.

"The 'land of the waiting Spring-time'
With its 'five-meal meat-fed men,'
The 'tall deep-bosomed women,'
And 'the children nine or ten.'"

Truly our dear "native-born" have shown the old land the hearty deep abiding affection they have for her. 

Will the English ever understand that their loyalty was born with them all, that they have watched at times her doings with pain, but always with sympathy. That sympathy mixed with pain has been extended to

"The island in the sea—
The last least lump of coral—
That none shall stand outside,
And our own good pride shall teach us
To praise our comrade's pride."

The Boer war should make the old land value her loyal, warm-hearted colonies more.

"Bondi" now became a companion and a valuable asset in Somerset's estate. He caught and brought rabbits all day long, and often whilst his master would be walking along thinking over many things, he would be brought out of his reverie suddenly by the feel of a soft living body thrust quickly into his hand from behind. "Bondi" had caught and brought another rabbit. He was always bringing rabbits. It was his creed. Six to ten dozen a day was now about Arthur's "tally," and that meant more than ten shillings per diem, added to his weekly wages of twenty-seven shillings. "One has to be a good clerk to obtain what I am getting," thought he, "and I'd sooner earn money thus than at a desk."

He had just about this time a most troublesome acquaintance with a brood of the most thievish and cunningest animals in the whole world, Maori rats. It was to these animals that he owed the loss of his bread. They would get it unless it was secured in the same way as the flour discovered by him, which he found had been put there by
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Franks, the fencer, for emergencies. Franks was perfectly aware of the propensities of the Maori rat, and had thus taken the proper precaution. There were two of these sly brutes about, with a family, and their hole was at the side of Arthur’s wharé.

But at last he circumvented one with a noose of very thin copper wire, and managed to shoot the other. He then stopped the hole with earth and a large stone, and the thriving family perished. A good job too, for whenever in these out-of-the-way places a building is inhabited by man, these pests come, and in a short time get so numerous that they damage and steal all his belongings. Arthur began to visit the old rabbiter’s camps all over the large stretch of country he had to control, and he found these by water, amongst picturesque “manuka” clumps, on beaches down on the river bed, at a big house with large peach trees near it, and in this last, the teeth, and claws, and other signs of the Maori rat had been only too evident. At this place, too, he found a quarter of a bag of good salt which he carried on his back for three miles, over mountainous country to his own camp. He found halves of “Australasians,” whole “Australasians,” and some scattered book pages, all of which had become valuable to him now, and he carried them all back, and many a bit of valuable information did he get out of those old back-date papers. It is in these far out-of-the-way places where these columns are so carefully read. Reading matter then becomes a treasure. Nothing is lightly skimmed or tossed aside, and politics, both of the old and new countries are well considered. He got another pig. He shot goats and kids, and once saw some blue mountain duck in a hole in a rocky bend of the river, surrounded by enormous rocks—smooth, huge, water-worn rocks. He watched them for a long time from where they could not see him, but he fired no shot at them, as it was too like murder, and also it was very questionable if he could have got to where they were swimming unconsciously about, without imminent risk to himself. So he let them alone and observed their habits with great interest. It was a wonderful deep hole, with calm spots and eddies in it. What a caldron there would be there when
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a mighty flood filled the bed of the river! Anyway, there were five or six of these rare birds swimming, and the great smooth rocks rose sixty feet above them. Through a gap in these, against the glorious blue sky, rose lofty, snow-gleaming Tapanuka. He found out all about the "wekas" or Maori hens, during his sojourn, which lasted three months. He found out the habits of the "kiwi," and at last, when the season was over, with a cheque of goodly proportions in his pocket, he went back to Waitahi, but the subtle charm of the wild life he had led, mid the ranges and foothills, valley and river, still lingered in his memory fresh as an ocean breeze, and often times in after life, he stood once more in imagination on the lofty summit of the big range leading to the station, and from his foothold on the chill, crackling, frozen snow, he breathed once again the fresh, clear, health-giving air, and gazed in thought on the marvellous, almost limitless panorama, around and below him.
CHAPTER IX

WAITAHI

Broom behind thy windy town; pollen o' the pine,
Bell-bird in the leafy deep, where the *ratas* twine,
Fern above the saddle-bow, flax upon the plain,
Take the flower, and turn the hour, and kiss your love again.
—Rudyard Kipling.

**STANFORD** came down with Somerset. They rode down country on their own horses. On crossing the Awatere River again, "Bondi" had to be taken over in one of the Harboro waggons which was going to the little "City of the Plains" with bales of rabbit skins. Arthur had had one curious experience here with "Bondi," and he wouldn't face the water ever afterwards. Once during his four months' knowledge of boundary-keeping, he had obtained a three days' holiday, one of which he had spent at Waitahi. He arrived—on this occasion—at the Harboro Station on foot from his *whare* over the range, and feeling very fit, determined to walk the twenty-five miles to the "little city," going on from there by train afterwards. He was told at the station that the river was high, but that there was a horse kept at the accommodation house at the ford that would take him over all right. This was a horse that had been trained to take passengers over, and an animal that would not attempt to come over for him if the state of the river did not please him. Arthur started off at once after this intelligence, whistling for "Bondi" who was having important communications with the "Doctor." He passed by the beautiful woods, having said good-bye to
all friends, and struck the main road. About three miles further, the man and the dog descended by the road to the bed of the river, crossing three boulder channels of various forks, now running, however, and found the main channel very seriously different to what it was when he and the mailman had crossed it before. Three quarters of a mile down the river there was a great sweep of the whirling, boiling stream against a deep, red cliff, the waters there roaring and churning against resistance, with a noise that could be heard a mile away. Two men were on the opposite bank, a hundred yards off, with the trained "flood-horse." It was a big, leggy draught-horse, black in colour. The men yelled out something that Arthur did not catch against the roar of waters. But he gathered that they meant him to hurry. The horse on the other side was coming across now. He was saddled and bridled, the bridle fastened back to the saddle, but a length of rein was allowed to give the horse a free head and reach. On he came, feeling every step of the way. The current was awfully swift, down he went, slowly, slowly, till the river reached the saddle flaps, then half way up them. There the strong horse felt the full force of the stream and tossed his head angrily. Then with a powerful effort, for the water was foaming against his sides, he swung to it, heading slightly more up stream, and still carefully feeling the boulders at the bottom with his broad, flat feet, he surged forwards, rose gradually, and came right over to Arthur. Arthur lifted "Bondi" to put him in front, but the warning shout came: "Look to yourself. Never mind the dog!" from both men opposite, in a roar. Arthur mounted quickly, thinking the dog would go back to Harboro, and knowing well that he would be carefully looked after by his many friends, felt no further anxiety about him. No dog would face that roaring torrent. The horse entered, walking strongly. Towards the middle he surged low, and Arthur raised his legs from the knees. Deeper, deeper, a tremendous strain now, but the horse swung slightly upwards again, heading the stream more. One glance was enough in that roaring, boiling water. One false step or stumble, and no power on earth could save them. They
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would be whirled over and over, and the horse would be drowned. There was no ford below. And those churning cliffs, belted at the bottom with rolling waves and foam, and depth and death!

The least rise, a strong, forward movement. Arthur felt the great strength of the animal he bestrode. Higher. Splash, splash, splash, out of danger, and out in safety on the other bank! As Arthur jumped off amid the congratulations of the two men, he saw a black and white whirling object close into the bank, a good bit below him. If he hadn't seen it then, he would never have seen it, because it passed behind a bend of the river bank. Without a second's hesitation, Arthur sprinted his best down stream and ran a quarter of a mile harder and faster than he had ever done in his life before. Breathless, he was just in time, in the supremest nick of time to throw himself flat on the top of a straight bank, and seize "Bondi's" fore paws as he reared up in vain attempts to get a foothold, a climable foothold. Another second, and he would have been swept into the whirlpool, and dashed to pieces against the great cliffs lower down! Arthur didn't know the dog when he got him out, which he had to do with a mighty lift. He was full of water and looked like a barrel. It had been a gallant swim, and he had just managed to save him. But "Bondi," albeit with still a lot of Awatere water in his stomach, was still following him after he had had something to eat at the accommodation house. The men said, "You got over just in time. 'Floodwater' wouldn't ha' gone over for the Dook o' Edinboro' ten minutes later. River's risin' fast. My word, that's a good dog of yours. Save a pup for me when he gets any. But you mark my word, he'll never want to swim in the Awatere again." And he never did. Hence his waggon crossing on this occasion. The waggon-men knew him and welcomed him. They all made a halt at the little hotel, ordered lunch, and afterwards, Stanford and Arthur said good-bye all round to this last outpost of hill and plain, and dale men—to each with a qualm—for every man in that district was a friend and a good fellow.

They rode through Taylor's Pass and saw men digging
Waitahi

out rabbits on the hillsides with long, narrow-bladed spades, and stopped after two hours' riding at the outpost hotel of the "little city." There they had something to eat and a feed for their horses, for they had still a long ride to accomplish. They rode through the "city," left it, crossed the Waihi, and on through a fine plateau valley, with "totara," black, white and red pine on the hillsides and flats. At the end of this valley their road trended downwards, and they saw Waitahi and the waters of the Sound below them. Stanford, having two months to spare, also a large cheque to spend, proposed that Arthur and he should bachelorize for a bit, so as to look round. "I can't stop working," said he. "I'll go to the saw-mills or the mines before long, but I'm going to live like a gentleman for a bit. There are numbers of pretty girls here, I notice." After about three days they got a nice cottage at a moderate rent and took possession of it. A wooden cottage with two front rooms and a big kitchen, which they used as a sitting-room. Upstairs were two large rooms. There were two wells, one under the kitchen table—rather a surprise for the new householders—but not to be seen until the flooring trap door was lifted. This well was intensely cold in the hottest weather, and as Stanford remarked, if they "got in plenty of 'tucker,' or 'kai,' they would be able to stand a siege." After a day or so, the two bachelors began to settle down. Arthur was rather fond of writing, had a "turn" for it as the saying is, and the moment he saw the two upstairs rooms, he formed plans. He had a long, smooth-topped deal table made, and put into one of them, and commenced to write descriptive articles of what he had seen, one of which, greatly to his delight, was accepted and printed in the local paper, the Waitahi Gazette. This article brought Somerset in contact with the editor of that journal, who informed him casually that the paper was about to change hands.

"Some of our young blood is now going into it," said the editor. "I daresay the new man will do a lot of good for the place, to the utter extinction of us old fogies. He's a shrewd, keen fellow, this new man, Horncastle Richards, and his father is one of our large landed proprietors in the
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timber line, also a very pushing man. Between you and me, the district wants ‘go.’ Write up another article for us before we give up the reins. What other part of New Zealand have you been in?” Arthur told him. “Oh, you’re an Australian, are you? Well, you’ll take to it naturally. You might get a chance of being editor here, with Richards as proprietor, if he hasn’t already secured his man. I’ll speak to him about you. He’s very close, is young Horncastle Richards. You never know exactly what he is going to do. He is always springing surprises upon you. But I’ll see him. I should say that you would suit him down to the ground. You’re young, you see, and young blood must tell, with him especially. I’m too much of an ‘old fussler’ for him now. Told me so to my face. What do you think of that? Besides, I’m proprietor of this paper, as well as editor, and I’m old enough to retire. But I’ll write articles for the other.”

Three weeks after this interview, both Somerset and Stanford got to know several of the other young men about the place. They joined the cricket club, and proved great acquisitions. So a select coterie of these young men arranged a camping-out expedition, and invited our two friends to join them. They were to go to a certain place up towards the head of the Sound where there were houses to camp in. They were invited there by the resident in the bay they were going to camp at. It was a sporting party, and the inducements held out were Californian quail shooting, pheasants—rabbits had not yet appeared in any great quantity—flounder spearing on the shallows, by torch, moonlight, or lamplight, stingaree spearing, fishing of all sorts, with a hint of turkeys—imported—in a certain gully, wild pigs, etc. There were Maori graves to be seen, and the knowing ones could collect old stone Maori tomahawks on the beaches, and might come across a Maori “tiki,” or a gouge of greenstone perhaps. A “mere” had been found here once by a lucky searcher.

The gentleman who owned the place was an extremely nice fellow—a little eccentric, perhaps—and he owned a fox terrier, a perfect wonder at killing anything, and he acknowledged with a grin when they all arrived, that
"Jock" had killed most of the turkeys they expected to shoot. However there was lots of other sport, the *piece de resistance* being flounder and stingaree spearing. They arrived from the Waitahi in two whaleboats having pulled about eight miles from thence. Horncastle Richards happened to be one of the party. The name of the bay was Ngakuta. They got up before sundown and went up to the house, turning out again after tea and going down to the beach which was sand, with schistose particles in its composition. They got many flounders, and had to tackle a huge stingaree with pitch forks. They also rescued the eccentric man from a huge eel, which had got him by the thumb, while "Jock" tugged valiantly at his tail, thereby increasing his master's agony, and the eel's desperation to hold on.

After this all went to bed, but Horncastle Richards found time to corner Somerset, and thus, suddenly, before he could realise his good fortune, he found himself Editor of the *Waitahi Gazette*, at a good weekly sum, despite his disacknowledgment of his ability to write political leaders. Horncastle Richards brushed this excuse aside at once as superfluous.

"You can write quite well enough for me. Bother politics. Let them slide until I speak. What we want to do is to make this district *budge*. Budge quick! Don't you see? They've been torpid for years, like snails, and they want rousing for their own benefit, and *ours* of course. See! There's coal here. There's gold here. There's antimony here. *We'll* make the place spin.

Affairs went on very well indeed now with Somerset. Stanford went away to other work, and came back only in a stray holiday to stop and live like a gentleman. But Somerset had made many friends, and though living alone, concerts, balls, and garden parties were plentiful. So far all the reforms he and his employer had fought for in the columns of the *Waitahi Gazette* had met with success. Much had been accomplished and more might have been done had not the world been busy with other matters. The subscription was fair. So was the circulation. But the place was dull, partly from want of capital and ener-
getic spirit. Local news was mostly unimpressive, and they both put their heads together and tried hard for a new sensation. If old Roberts went bankrupt, or one of us were to drop a match and set fire to the main street, things might boom a bit. Oh well, something may turn up yet. Your last leader was a clipper, Somerset. You warmed the Borough Council properly. Fancy only having the gas lamps lit on moonlight nights, and not on the nights when the steamers come in. Wait till I get on the Corporation."
CHAPTER X

BOOMING THE "GAZETTE"

The candle burnt low as an Editor sat,
Newspapers were strewn all around;
He took up a *Times* and in glancing at that,
Lost himself in the columns he found.

HORNCastle Richards, the young proprietor, and head-compositor of the *Waitahi Gazette* was in that state of mind which might be aptly termed—speculative—as he stood re-distributing type in front of his case in the printing office of that journal. It was a weekly paper. The time was three o’clock on a Saturday afternoon. The issue had been early that same morning, and by this time the newspaper, with its budget of news and opinions had been distributed all over the County of Sounds by train, post, and mail-boat. The town Waitahi, where Horncastle Richards worked and thought out political and local developments, was a slowly rising one, in spite of a threat once vented by a discontented citizen—much vexed at his own non-election to the post of Mayor—that he would make it a “deserted village” when *he* got into Parliament. But Waitahi did not rise quickly enough for Horncastle Richards. Coal and gold had been found, also antimony. Certain industries, such as fish-curing had been started, and desertion had not been experienced by the inhabitants to the irately prophesied extent predicted by the non-mayor. A certain influx of hard-working men, who benefited the
place by buying goods from the storekeepers and otherwise spending their money in the place, had occurred, but still not enough to please Richards.

The old identities had stuck to the place, and had made their fortunes there. So they were content, fully content with the present aspect of affairs. They had built comfortable houses on all the best spots, and had reared families, what more could they want. But the quiet hand-to-mouth sufficient-unto-the-day-is-the-evil-thereof manners of the "old identities" of town and suburbs and outlying dwellings up and down the great extent of Queen Elizabeth Sound—the vast waters at their feet—irritated Horncastle Richards. He wanted to "boom" the place, to make a thriving city of the "deserted village," forgetting perhaps that in the ordinary course of things up to date, there was no special need for progress. Everyone was contented, and had the best of everything to eat and drink, and all the wherewithal to be clothed. Sleep, the sleep of the just and contented, came to them without the troubling of the waters by huge fleets from far off countries. There had been a fair amount of success with the paper, and Horncastle Richards saw his way to a living with it—if not to a fortune. Anyway he was dying for a boom—and he wanted increased circulation. Horncastle Richards, who now deemed himself to be the guiding spirit of the district at this time, welcomed new things and new rules to the utmost. He was of a go-ahead, determined nature. His father had been one of the most noted men in the district, who had risen vastly above his primary means by the motive power of his own quick brain, and now owned several going concerns, and was one of the rich men. His other fads were building—and—roses. Of the latter he knew enough to make a visit to his pretty garden very pleasant and instructive. The passage of thought through young Horncastle Richards' brain had suggested—in default of anything better—the sending of Somerset out to a certain place where a new coal deposit or vein was said to have been found, to report on it. But this idea was suddenly arrested and turned off in a totally opposite direction by a certain slip of paper just handed in to him
Booming the "Gazette"

by one of the many newsagents who frequented the little printing office of the Waitahi Gazette. This slip, with a few words written on it in pencil, had been handed in by no less a personage than the skipper of the Maori, a small steamer which used to run up and down the Sound from the gold reef at Port Thomas to his father's sawmills at the head of the Sound. It was brief, and there seemed to be nothing startling in it, if one could judge by the words written on it as follows:—

"Three schooners anchored at Karaka Bay."

But it had a great effect upon Richards. Having dismissed the worthy skipper with a curt nod, as if the news he had brought was hardly worth noticing, he however watched him out of sight before he took action. Then he finished re-distributing, having only a few letters left, hastily donned his coat, went out, locked the office, and ran as hard as he could through the "manuka" scented air to Somerset's cottage.

He rapped at the door at the front verandah, and was admitted. Seating himself in the chair which Somerset proffered, seemingly not much surprised at the hurry of his visit—he was getting used to him—Richards, with his brain-pan full of prospective "copy" plunged in medias res, as soon as he could get his breath again.

"Have the Maories broken out?" asked Somerset, "or is there a case of libel on? Have the Boers invaded Waitahi?"

"Look here, old man," exclaimed Horncastle Richards in a gasp. "You hold on till I'm out—or my breath's in—I've got a dashed good—chance to boom—our paper—properly—just—now."

Arthur lit a cigarette and allowed him a little time. Richards jumped up a little later, cornered him, and with his right forefinger upheld in an expressive way, began in a low tone:

"If things pan out all right we ought to sell about five thousand extra copies of "the rag" next week. To say nothing of the kudos we shall get for our smartness." De-
Zealandia’s Guerdon

pend upon it, it will be a real big thing in the end for the *Waitahi Gazette*. Somerset’s eyes twinkled with satisfaction, but he let his “boss” go on.

“Do you know Durock?” queried Richards almost in a whisper.

“Well I can’t say I exactly know him,” replied Somerset tranquilly. “I know of him. He gets the character of being a bit of a sharp, but you can’t trust hearsay—always—you know.”

“I’ll tell you what he is,” said Richards with deep meaning in an “off-with-his-head” sort of manner.

“He’s a pirate, a smuggler, a real devil! I don’t even believe that he would stick at murder! You know of course that he lives at Karaka Bay, on ground reserved by the Government for a pilot-station. Well, I noticed his eyes last night when he was talking to Roberts at the bar at the Barracouta. *There’s a gleam of humor in them too!* He seems fairly to revel in wrong doing. Of that little matter I’m quite certain. Oh, he’s a downy customer. Now I’ve had my suspicions about him for a long time. You know, I suppose that he comes up here, to Waitahi at all times of the day and night, in that fine cutter of his, the *Kawai*. Built her himself they say. My impression is that he and Roberts are in collusion. Arcades ambo—you know—‘blackguards both.’ I believe he sells him no end of stuff. Roberts seems to have prospered very much lately. Illicit grog selling, that’s what it is. *Durock runs a still down at Karaka Bay. Those schooners are there to take the stuff away!* Nothing simpler than for Durock to run a lot of it up here in his cutters. He has another, a bigger one, you know the old *Ballahoo*, and I believe he runs cargoes to Wellington and all round the Sounds to the settlers on his own account, and in his own vessels. Now I think of it, don’t you remember the hospitality of these ‘Sounds’ settlers all of them—backed with first class whiskey. It seemed to me all the same brand, wherever they got it, on that last circulation tour of ours. They all seem to have it anyway. Look at this. That’s why I mentioned the schooners. I want to prove my point.” Herewith Richards handed the slip of paper which had
Booming the "Gazette"

produced all this scathing and ruthless judgment. "You see it plain enough, don't you?"

"Three schooners in Karaka Bay."

"No, they're not windbound. Nonsense," as Somerset attempted some justification for the erring craft. "No doubt they're loading whisky by the barrel. Depend upon it Durock runs a cargo for Roberts thus: Stowed away in the cutter are boxes of salt-cured fish. Karaka Bay teems with 'moki' and blue cod. Dried cod with kegs concealed in the midst of them. The parcels in bags, casks, and big Maori kits. Two bottles could be concealed in a big Maori kit, and kegs easy enough in bags and casks, or boxes. You bet he won't allow outsiders to handle them.

Roberts could run his cart down to the wharf, or to the top of the bay, where a boat could land. He would get to the latter by the bush track through the tea-tree, in the dead of night when there would be no living people about—with a wink—except those alive to the circumstance. The other citizens don't count. I'm told there's always a lot of coasters loafing about in Durock's Bay. They go to Wellington, I'm sure of it, with the whiskey. What a holy old time the cunning beggar must have had. Now do you see how the land lies. I begin to have suspicions. My suspicions begin to shape to certainties. The Waitahi Gazette takes the matter up. Now to business. A selected staff will leave our office, an Expedition will be formed to suppress—large capitals—this smuggling, this piracy. See here," and Richards flourished a pen, and wrote rapidly on a bit of "copy" paper:—

**WAITAHI GAZETTE IS SUSPICIOUS!**

**EXpedition PLANNED.**

**ARREST OF THE PIRATES.**

"By Jove it'll look grand, old man. You let me be," said he, carefully burning the slip and throwing it into the fire-place. "I'll have some new type for the headings,
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We take Durock and his gang red-handed. We confiscate his still, all his illicit apparatus. We take the men engaged upon this diabolical work prisoners! Confiscation of the cutters! Glorious! And make a name, for ourselves!”

“Hasn’t he got a daughter or two?” asked Somerset dubiously. “I have heard that he has no less than three daughters. All remarkably good-looking girls. Regular athletes, and splendid girls in any boat, either sailing or pulling. Nereids, you know.”

“Hum,” muttered Richards. “I wonder which of ’em runs the still?” “Now for my plans,” he added, “I was watching this fellow Durock last night, and could not help thinking that he and Roberts were uncommonly thick, and confidential. I went in there as usual for my evening peg, you know; also to get any current news before wiring-in to the paper all night. I believe the ‘Kawai’ ran up a lot of illicit stuff last night.”

“She’s off now, of course, left this morning at daybreak.”

“See Shipping News” murmured Somerset in an abstracted fashion.

“Roberts keeps good whiskey,” reflectively continued Richards.

“And charges for it,” interpolated his Editor.

“Of course he does,” replied Richards as if he had made a great point. “Rather! That’s where I come in. Nothing simpler than to put Durock’s stuff out of his smuggled kegs into special bottles, labelled ‘Old Scotch,’ ‘Dew of Glenlivet,’ ‘Talisker,’ or ‘Long John.’ Nor is it impossible to make a blend of it with the ends of half emptied bottles, previously pining for consumption in his bar, and call it “Irish.” It’s as plain as the nose on your face. See! I have ascertained—never mind how or where—that Roberts pays a penny a bottle for returns. Says he gets his whiskey by bulk and bottles it himself. All fudge. And looks dashed suspicious. And all the whiskey he sells is County of Sound’s whiskey. Of that I am convinced. I haven’t been taking notes for nothing. And Durock makes it in Karaka Bay.”

“Come along and put our suspicions plainly to old Sergeant O’Flaherty and let us see for ourselves what he will say. Can’t you hear him before we get there.”

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"And now, gentlemin, what'll yez be wantin'. Sure oim the harr-dest wurrked min in the for-rce. I'm niver in moibid, but oim rung up out of it. An arl forr pwhat. Bidivilmint o'sorrs av car-rse."

"Arl for what, indeed? The old villain has the easiest billet in the town and well he knows it. He gets clothes, lodging, light, coal, and the very best of the manuka fire-wood which comes up the Sound. I can never get a decent log after that old beggar has been down to the wharf. And he doesn't cut it up either. He makes O'Reilly do that, because "shure he's a younger min than oi am." Anyhow I can't get decent wood after he's been there.

"No," said Somerset laughing, "nor I. And I find it equally impossible to get my favourite cut of a joint at the butchers when the Sergeant has been there before me. He commandeers it, and if you see a special shoulder or small roast it's put aside with a label, 'Sergeant O'Flaherty.'"

"Well, come along," said Richards. And the two passed out through the garden, and into the street. "Yes, he's a queer old fish" continued Richards, as they walked briskly along, "but he's 'old in the horn,' knows his way about, and his 'parkisits.' But he does shine at a County Court case. And doesn't he sit upon the solitary 'drunk' he catches. And he always makes O'Reilly do his duty, while he swaggers about, and bosses things generally, from the boys 'spotty' catching on the wharf to the last unregistered dog. But he's a good old sort for all his blather and self-trumpeting. We should all be sorry if we lost the old Sergeant. He'll go heart and sowl into this business. Just up to his mark."

The Sergeant looked red and warm, when they got to the Police Station, round which a considerable space was enclosed, including the Sergeant's neat dwelling house and garden. New Zealand is famed for flowers. Nearly every cottage in the suburbs of towns has its bright coloured frontal patch, and all flowers, including the rose, bloom luxuriantly. In fact a saying—a common one—which often strikes a new comer is, in "these beautiful isles of the sea," "Oh yes, anything will grow double here, even your walking stick," which is pretty true, especially if your
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walking stick happens to have been cut whilst out walking. The Sergeant looked warm, for he had been hoeing amongst his cabbages, but on accompanying Richards and Somerset into his office, he became much warmer, especially in diction and gesticulation and when he thoroughly understood the subject put forward by Richards he exclaimed vigorously “I'll woire to hid-quar-rthers immediately, but oive long susthpicted this min. He hasthn't the bist of charachther-rs by repart-rt. Smugglin' his nate whiskey into the town in this way be jabers. Moind yez—save the laste taste—when yez take the divil—for misilf—wid arl his belongins. Ye'll saize the cutther-rs won't yez. But oill give moi instructions to the constable. He'll have his car-roine. An yez'll have yer roifles, ye're in the volunthee-rr for-rce. Ye'll go to-morrow to reconoithre an yezzl go aisly. Don't make an-ny noise to give any suspcion to the swoine. An thin yez'll come back to make report, and starrt for good an arl wid the warrant, accardin' to Law. Its moighty foine whiskey. Its arl through the countrhy soide. An its breakin up the shtill ye'll be? Moind yez if ye come acharcss a kig of it, ye kape it. It'll be moi boundin dhuty to taste it. Oh the divil, a shmugglin, an a merchandoisin, an a masqueradin it arl round the place, wait till oi get him in the clink, oill see he gets fat on wather, oi will.”

Richards and Somerset went back and matured their plans. They would have two young fellows locally known as the best sailor men and boat-men in the district and in the County of Sounds, and that means a great deal, considering the violent gusts of winds prevalent at times on these dangerous waters. One of these men was a half caste known as “Maori Bob,” the other a white man known generally as “George.” These two knew every inch of the Sounds, and the office expedition would hire the use of Maori Bob’s boat, a large fast craft, for either oar or sail. They would take provisions and camp out at some spy-point not very far from the smuggler’s abode at Karaka Bay. From there reconnaissances could be made by night or day. In the daytime they would land and reconnoitre from the hills, and creep as near as possible. At night they would search for
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the still. It was sure to be by the best running water, George and "Maori Bob" were accordingly interviewed at once, let in to the secret, and expressed their extreme willingness to carry out the plan. It being understood, moreover, that this first attempt was a reconnoitring expedition. If the smugglers should be caught flagrante delicto, it was all right. If a still was found it would be watched until the persons belonging to it were captured. Constable O'Reilly was to accompany them and represent the law. Late that evening came a wire from the Empire City in the North Island giving the necessary authority to the Sergeant, and as the next day was Sunday the provisioning of the boat was seen to that night, and everything arranged so as to be ready for an early start. Absolute secrecy was enjoined upon the members of the expedition, Somerset well knowing the local power of gossip, did not commit himself to a friend—of the other sex—more than by an apparently careless remark, that he was going fishing with some others, but even this elicited the caustic remark that he "seemed to think more of fishing than church-going." As they departed soon after cock-crow next morning, only two or three boys fishing for "spotties" off the wharf noticed their departure, and secretly rejoiced that one "bobby" was out of the way anyhow, but a night-capped head surmounted by a rubicund visage, bobbed for a brief moment from an hotel window opposite, which made Richards at once suspicious that old Winks, the proprietor, was "in the swim" also.
CHAPTER XI

IN QUEST OF CONTRABAND.

The wild, weird, sight of the Sea, bedight;
With myriad gleamings of opal light.
With a roseate flush, on the towering brush.
Of the iron-bound sea-capes where waters rush,
Wind and wavelet’s sigh, with the gannet’s cry
Re-echo the tired days lullaby.
Gold, running, gleams, through the opal streams
Such a sight as is seen in faerie dreams.
But the lingering trace, of its passing grace.
Comes back oft again for my heart’s embrace.

As the boat glided past Esmeralda Islet, and round the farthest point of the mainland it opened the whole bright panorama of now sun-kissed Sound right away down to "Willie-wa" reach, and Doldrum Point. The four long oars, dipped regularly, emerged dripping and sparkling as they crossed the great Sound diagonally, making for the opposite side. The whole panorama, flanked by a breadth of it of from four to six miles across, was set in a background on both sides, ahead and astern, of densely wooded hills, lovely vales, with great trees, along the water courses fringing the sweet beaches and growing densely in gullies and up the hillsides. Above all again rose towering blue-red mountain peaks in the rosy morning sunlight. Constable O'Reilly was steering, and like all the other amphibious Sound-dwellers, he possessed the knowledge of boat-handling to an expert degree. It is indeed a necessity for Sound-dwellers to have this knowledge, for the gusts which some-
times sweep down from the big hills are ferocious. And in a bad nor-wester, the “willie-was,” sometimes circular in eddy-gusts scoop the spindrift thirty feet high. Woe be to the man who does not know how to “luff” at the proper moment, or who has his mainsheet fast. Bodies of the drowned are not recovered, save perhaps one out of fifty from those great unsearchable depths; and the swinging currents at the two sea entrances sweep them away far below, out to sea, or into some great chasm at the bottom, where only the starfishes, sharks, octopi, crabs, and lobsters, know all about them. Of course there are accidents, even the most skilled being sometimes overwhelmed entirely, but happily these are rare comparatively, because the boat is the vehicle, the produce-bearer, of the dwellers along the shores of the County of Sounds or great sea-inlets. Somerset and Richards felt, as no doubt did the others that few countries in the world were possessed of that awe-inspiring infinite landscape and harbour sea-scape with which New Zealand, that august Princess of Southern Seas enthralles her subjects. These great harbours will some day, let us hope, be a more crowded rendezvous for the fleets of Great Britain, with as ever, the old Flag over them.

The wind was a nor-wester, but very light at that early hour and George was getting his barracouta-lines ready for a breakfast farther down. They would be wanted shortly when they came to shallower water near the gleaming sand and schistose beaches of the other side, where down in the clear water lurk the silver-blue sea-tigers. They had a long distance yet to pull to their first outlook point which dominated Willie-wa Reach, but when they got barracouta they were going to land and have a Maori breakfast. The boat impelled by four willing oars shot along through the waters of the glittering Sound, now a veritable molten white metal shield of glittering water, embossed like a targe with a sparkling diamond flashing ruffle of ripples and waves, but the warm breath of the wind as the sun rose higher showed well enough to the experienced that by and bye, towards noon, and afternoon, it would rush down in strength like a wild-boar of the hills.

They were to land at one of the many beaches, and
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dthis was now pointed out, but there was a good mile of barracouta water before they got there. Somerset looked—with a keenly appreciative eye and brain for "copy"—at George, noting all details of his fishing gear. A shortish, thickish, six feet of manuka formed the rod. It was strong enough to lift a twenty-pound fish suddenly and wholly out of the water into the boat. A strong short line about four feet in length was attached to one end of it. But the hook and bait attracted Arthur's attention. There was no pretence about it. A round whittled red stick of "Kowai"—native cedar—formed the bait and the "copy-mongerer" found that the hook was just a nail driven right through near the end of the "Kowai" stick, and turned upwards. But the barracouta does not stop to examine the bait and hook minutely. He is attracted by the splashing, sees foam, and eddies, and bubbles in the water near him, and in the midst of this turmoil a round red thing whirling about in circles which to him must seem to be an enlarged specimen of something he likes to feed on—"the whale feed"—a small crustacean. So he "goes" for it and snaps it in his capacious jaws, to be instantly whirled "out of that" into another upper world that he is not accustomed to. Now the boat was in water where the crew could just see bottom. George handed Somerset the rod, instructing him to hold it downwards, the point of the rod eighteen inches under the water, and stir round and round with it as the boat goes on, as if he were stirring porridge in a large bowl. By this vigorous motion the hook and bait follow the point of the rod-stick round in circles. The more circles, the more froth and bubbles the fisherman makes the better for him and the worse for the barracouta.

"There's one!" said George of the quick eye. And a long silver-gleaming fish of five feet long has shot like lightning from below and taken the bait!

"Over your head with him into the boat. Lift, sir!" shouted George. They were all fishing now but two, who were pulling to keep a certain amount of "way" on the boat. And they all splashed and made porridge with such zest that they quickly had ten of these sea-tiger's flapping about the bottom boards. As it would be actual waste to
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catch more, and as it was now about nine o’clock, they shoot into a lovely beach bay, and go ashore.

Bob and George moor the boat off, clear of the strand with a headline and sternline. Then a large drift-wood fire was lit, and billies filled with fresh water from a cool sparkling stream near by, in the bed of which Somerset at once found a Maori stone axe of gray diorite. Then the cold meat and other viands were spread on a clean rough tablecloth. But George and Maori Bob had cleaned and washed in the fresh salt water two fine barracouta weighing about six pounds each, and these were being now prepared by both men for the cooking. Bob cut two saplings of green pliant wood seven or eight feet long and two fingers thick, and sharpened to a point the two thickest ends. These he split down from the thinnest end for over five feet, and a barracouta inserted—his head cut off—lengthways in the split, in which he was securely tied, tail and top and middle with withes of native flax. The fire was raked and strewn about until it shewed a glowing pile of white hot embers. Then the sharpened end of the first stick which had the barracouta properly secured for toasting was stuck deep down in the sand, slanting-wise so as to expose one whole side of the fish to the glow of the fire. And the other fish was similarly treated. After a little a side of each fish was grilling, baking, steaming and roasting all at once, as plainly shewn by the sizzling expressed juices. When the experienced chefs were satisfied with the appearance of their respective fishes’ sides, where a slight browning now existed, and the odorous appetising steam, seemed to say Done! to the palates and digestive juices of the anxious waiters, breakfast-awaiters, the roasting spits were hauled out of the sand, and restuck again, turned so as to expose the other side of the fishes. When these sides had again succumbed to the influence of the fire, for the second time, the spits were withdrawn, carried to a convenient spot, restuck for the third time, but this time in an upright position. There was their breakfast. A little salt, pepper if they were sybarites, a knife and fork and a tin plate were all now that the intensely hungry party wanted. And they had these ready and sat down
on mother earth, or “mother beach” close to the sticks. And there they feasted at a feast fit for the very gods themselves.

For, O Shade of Epicurus, what a truly delicious morsel is a fresh barracouta, cooked in true Maori fashion. Those sons of the sea, forest, stream and plain know how to live, and if one has an appetite, keen whetted by the balmy air, a slice of barracouta a la Maori is ten times more tasty than a studied course of dishes, backed by a menu of alarming and half-understood names, would have for a stomach and palate jaded with the stifling air of cities. And it is not prone to bring on dyspeptic results, but sustains and strengthens, making one fit for prolonged exertion afterwards.

They left this pretty beach some hours later, but not before Somerset got three more stone axe-heads, and they all had another sumptuous feed off their fish. Another fresh pair had been cooked between one and two o’clock. This time they got as far as Willie-wa Reach, out in the open, the sea itself in the distance. To their left lay the entrance to Endeavor Inlet. Further on again a little more to the right they could see the steep hill wooded with black birch, manuka, totara, matai, and other pines to the very water’s edge. Where this point trended down and terminated, but on the other side, and shut out from view, is Karaka Cove and bay. At a deep bay nearer to them than this point, from whence there is access over the hills to the smugglers’ den, they would camp after dark for the night. After a good look to direct all points for the morrow’s advance, they pulled back out of the way again to the inner harbour side of Doldrum Point and re-landing, after beaching their boat, climbed the low land, and lying supine amongst the tussocks on the top, watched.

Nothing could be seen, however, no suspicious smoke any where about, or anything which could be interpreted to the disadvantage of the men they were seeking. When near sunset, being mightily refreshed by their rest, and invigorated by the sulphuretted hydrogen from the fresh washing sea-tang and sea-weed scattered beaches, as well as the ozone in the air in the foaming assault of the
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breakers, setting free on the breeze the myriad salty particles of the ocean; Richards, rising to the occasion, said:

"It's a most extraordinary fact, how hungry one always gets at Doldrum Point!"

"Yes," said his Editor, "I've heard it remarked so—frequently—now I know it: What do you say O'Reilly?"

"Faixs me insoide's, carlin cupboard too, an there's no mistake about ut," replied the constable, a bright looking Hibernian, with an appearance of much latent strength and "go."

"Well," resumed Richards, "let's go and get tea. We've got to explore that bay at the beginning of Resolution Inlet to-night and see if we can find the still. Durock is not likely to have it near his house, and he can reach that bay easily enough in a rowing boat from his place. By Jove they might be at work to-night. Think of that boys!"

Their tea—off two more barracouta—was thoroughly enjoyed, with the addition of scones and hot tea, and the satisfying and ruminatory pipes smoked by the expedition afterwards, I daresay, can yet be remembered by everyone of that party. The evening glory of the New Zealand Sounds at sunset is a scene that once observed, ever lingers in one's memory. The water flushed on its surface near and far glows like a gigantic opal. Warm, ruddy tints dwell on each salient scarp and crag of promontory and mountain. Tender russet lights tinge the pines, and soften and warm into glowing life even the charcoal coloured stems of the black birch. The snow white manuka blossoms take a tender peach colour. The green-blue of the waters where the sheen shoots up through all the dancing colours above, shews its great transparency, and the blue of the sky, where not tinged with scarlet fire-opal gleam, and gold and red purple, forms another huge opal, above. The reflection and transparent reflection of everything in the water on these occasions, especially if it is a dead calm, makes you think if you are in a boat that you are poised between two worlds, an upper and a lower one. You seem to be absolutely poised in mid-air, and the fall \textit{below} is awful
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to contemplate. You have been up in a balloon, and may fall back to the under world. The deception is perfect. You can see the outline below you, of every grass blade, every near fern frond, every trunk of every near tree, the reflection of everything your roundabout gaze takes in, and the same sky is below you, as the one above. And the depth below is awful. One can't fall upwards.

Then, whilst you are wondering where you are, shrills out the wild weird, mocking cry of the "weka"—or Maori hen—a "gallows" rail, an impish rover, a keen-eyed picket, of other marauders, revelling in the coming night, when the opal tints are dead. A dandy of the first water is the "weka," with that bold eye of his, as he steals up silently to your camp, to steal your edibles. The eye seems to say, "Don't use me badly, I'm a tame, confident bird," but all the same he comes to see what manner of men these are who have made a big fire, and trespassed in his—for these are "cock-wekas" although they are all called "hens"—royal sovereignty of dell and bush, headland and stream. And he also means to find out what manner of meat these men eat. The "kaka's" restless note has also a harshness in it which gives an extra eerie feeling in these vast solitudes, but it is not half so eerie as the "weka's" curious cry, which gives one a creepy chilling feeling, and makes one partly shudder at the footsteps of the night. It is a cry, the remembrance of which to this day brings—I doubt not—to any one who has heard it the thought of vast hillsides and of the dying gleams of day, combined with the chill of the approaching night. It brings many a "tang" and shell-strewn beach back to view, vast deep waters, and the trailing robe of night, spangled with stars, crescent adorned, as with a tiara, and an air perfumed with pine and manuka. But the New Zealand night in its solitude and wildness, when the human being in the wilderness of its savage life—far from the dwellings of other men—is grand in its loneliness, its utter loneliness. Then the "weka's" cry shrilling from the side of a great hill slope, or near forest waters, or great inland waters perfects the loneliness of the nocturnal scene. It is loneliness itself, and makes it rather mournful.
CHAPTER XII

THE IDEAS OF THE EDITOR

Old ocean enwraps thee with on-rushing mountains,
A chlamys of white, and of emerald green,
The sun glances bright on thy hill-tops and fountains,
And pours down his glory in glittering sheen.
Peaks tower far around, snow-capped or misty-bound
Girdled by forests in sombre array,
And down the mountain-side, echoes with rushing pride
Many a river source, speeding away.
Land of the fertile plain,
Land of the golden grain,
Land of the laden wain,
Land of the free!

AFTER dark, and after tea, they re-entered their boat, and as it was now dead calm, they propelled her with muffled oars, and kept strict silence—a suggestion of Somerset’s, who made mental notes in plenty, as they glided round Doldrum Point and headed over towards Resolution Bay, one of Captain Cook’s noted anchorages. The “Endeavour” and “Resolution” were his ships when this new land was taken first possession of, and handed down as a valuable asset to British posterity. As they neared Resolution Bay, pulling over the calm waters with as little sound as possible, a sound of rushing water was heard, and they beached the boat, and landed. But after following the course of the stream a good way, and after an hour’s stumbling into pitfalls, and over logs, they found no erection resembling a whiskey still, although Bob the Maori actually discovered part of an apparatus which might have once formed a
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portion of an ancient "worm," used for distilling purposes. But even this slight cue was quite enough for Richards. "Didn't I tell you so," said he, under his breath, "he's been doing it wholesale. Used up one of them, and has now moved the whole caboodle of his nefarious whiskey-brewing apparatus to a more secret and remote place. Depend upon it the real still is in Corvette Cove in Karaka Bay, not far from his house. Oh, the pirate." But this bit of an old "worm" was all they found, and having explored the neighbourhood in a very thorough manner, without any further result than "barked shins" for Richards, who turned a summersault over and into the branches of a dead and fallen tree. As he was speaking, they got into the boat again, and pulled to the furthest corners of the bay, where they again disembarked, and hauled their boat up a little running creek, where they secreted her in dense flax which grew higher over their heads than usual. Then when they had done with her, it was not possible to see her until within a few yards. Then they prepared to camp for the night for they were now at the bottom of a spur of the range, which dominated Durock's bay and residence. Up this spur to the top of the range, and down another selected spur must they go on the morrow, if they wanted to find out a secure and safe position from whence to spy out what Durock and his men were engaged at. After their supper which, here, consisted of cold articles and a little whiskey, because they dared not light a fire to betray their presence, or even to give notice of their whereabouts by smoke-smell, they were much diverted by the roaring of the penguins. A penguin, like a bull-frog, makes a noise out of all proportion to the size of his body, and roars like any lion. Finally they all went to sleep, and when Somerset awoke, he was much touched and gratified to find that Constable O'Reilly with thoughtful kindness had thrown over him his huge military greatcoat, and furthermore that the constable appeared to be quite unaware of it, in any way as an act of kindness—for the early morning was very chilly—and went on helping to prepare the breakfast with the others. At about eight o'clock they set off following up the course of the stream for a hundred yards or so, and
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then striking off it, through a belt of supplejacks fairly terrifying to a timorous bushman, but by cutting here and skirting there, they finally managed to get on to the steep hillside up which they scrambled. Somerset, from some cause or another, probably the sun, had a bad headache, and the climbing made it worse. However he kept on until he had arrived at a point about three parts of the ascent of the main range, and noticing still above him a very stiff climb, he threw himself down under a veteran matai, and refused to proceed another step. He remained deaf to all the remonstrances of Richards who painted the glories of being “in at the death,” the confiscation of the cutters, the discovery of the whiskey still, even throwing in the possible attractions of the three Misses Durock, as a last inducement. But Somerset merely remarked, “Well, fire off your rifles, when you’ve done all this, and I will come on if my head is better.”

“You’ll lose of yourself, sir,” said Maori Bob. “Suppose you not follow right spur, you come down to water, perhaps not to water at all, many bays away. Perhaps lose yourself altogether.”

“Never mind me,” said Somerset, “I’ve had my training in these ranges, and won’t get lost. My head’s too buzzy to go any farther just now. There’s quite enough of you armed as you are to confiscate all the Durocks, house and all.

And resolutely refusing to move, he remained watching the party of four climbing onwards, after they had taken his rifle to further arm themselves. Left to himself, the mountain solitudes soothed him, and he soon got a little easier about his head. A “kaka” here and there called fitfully to their mates, and there was a congregation of them feeding about two hundred yards away, on the berries of a huge red pine. A noble pigeon, black spotted about his white breast, flapped its wings with a sudden clap, as it shot into the topmost branches of the “matai” above him, but its keen vigilant eye would have perceived the resting man if he had moved. But Somerset was screened from its gaze by the interposition of the giant red-brown trunk and many over-head branches. His eye passaged through

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the endless vistas of "totara" trunks and frondage, and forest boles of "matai" with its pretty droop, blackbirch, pine, and manuka, which latter grew as trees, not shrubs, in this locality. He could hear the murmuring of the ocean beaches, and the ripple of the inlet waters far below him, and once he heard the bellow of wild cattle. Then a boar, routed up by the advance party from somewhere or another, rushed down the hillside, grunting alarmed and angry grunts, at no great distance from him. Arthur sat up, lit his pipe and smoked. The crack of the match, caused the pigeon to give a sudden whirl out of his branch, and then a deep-soaring dive down into the depths far beyond the hillside. At length after an hour's meditation, he formed plans for the complete development of such a wonderful country, as the one he was now dwelling in, with its wealth of forest, of mountain, of sea, all yet undeveloped. Perhaps these rugged, timbered mountains would be discovered some day to be teeming with minerals, coal, iron, gold, copper, antimony. Sea, vast stretches of sea, along these coasts, were certainly swarming with all kinds of fish and shellfish. The plains in the interior should be harvested to the richness of their fullest yield, to the contentment and prosperity of large and increasing generations. Huge ice fed rivers would supply the kingly salmon and lordly trout. Villages, towns and cities would up spring in succession in lonely spots. They would overflow with the supply of an agricultural and mining population, exporting also—when the rabbits were exterminated—sheep frozen in bulk for the civic population of the old country. Cattle second to none in the world's market, would go also. Wool, hides, tallow, fruit, eggs, wheat, oats, barley, market produce of every description would swell the total. Butter, cheese, etc., and heaps more things he couldn't call to mind just at present, would keep the exchequer full to overflowing. It was a glorious dream, as he made it out, but hearing nothing more of his friends after another hour of a botanical and geological examination of the neighbourhood, he began to make his way downwards to their camp of the night before. He nevertheless with all his confidence in himself managed to take another spur than the one he had come
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up by, and wandered on framing out his glorified plan for the future, with above all the federation of the Anglo-Celtic races all over the world under the Union Jack, and the certainty of the co-operation and kinship of America. This resulted in his finding himself down at the running water, where they had made sure of finding the whiskey still, the night before. He was only about six bays away from where he meant to go to, and consequently the double of that number of rocky headlands to get round before he got there. However, he knew the direction and skirted the beaches, and clambered over the rocks at the points. He was the more able to do this as it was low tide. At last he hit the corner of the bay where they had camped, and shortly afterwards was joined by George, who scouted the idea of Durock being an illicit distiller of whiskey and a pirate. He added that he had got separated from the others, but had got near enough to see Durock and his man building a boat. George had been scared away from his post of observation by Durock’s dogs, which scented him and rushed after him barking. Durock and his man evidently thought that the dogs were after a pig, and took no notice, never leaving their work, and George stated “that, that did not look as if they were guilty parties.” There were no schooners in the bay, and the girls and the old woman—meaning Mrs. Durock—were gardening, and wore sunbonnets. After a couple of hours the rest of the party returned, much chagrined and humiliated, even Horncastle Richards admitting that they saw nothing suspicious in any direction, thus confirming George’s words, although they had been at considerable trouble to disprove it, having been an hour, all of them, up different trees. So they camped again for the night, and as they had now no sinister intentions or guilty consciences—which admit the same construction—they prepared to enjoy themselves after the manner of people camping out. Before night they unflaxed their boat, launched her and pulled out to a point called the Bottle and Glasses, and there having let go the kellick they secured ten fine “hapuka,” the smallest of which were over 40 lbs. weight, running to 60 lbs. and 80 lbs. One of these large fish had two whole penguins,
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feathers, feet and all, in its interior. Then they suddenly hauled up a small one, not more than two pounds weight, when the others apparently horrified at seeing the baby "hapuka" going into the upper regions, left off biting. Next morning after breakfast they started for home, and as they opened out vista after vista of point and promontory, and reach after reach of bay and inlet, about 25 miles of it in length; Arthur could not help thinking what possibilities might lie behind the providence which provided such a harbor. Those big hills might hold something which would make that harbor useful. Here all the fleets of the world might lie at anchor in perfect security, whilst the many deep bays on each side of him conjured up views of other towns than Waitahi spreading all about, with minerals to support the increasing inhabitants. They halted at a beautiful wooded and watered beach at midday, the two ends of which were of course flanked by rocky points, and after a feed of fried blue cod, Maori Bob afforded them amusement, and not a little wonder by his manner of fishing. He caught at least a dozen large blue cod off the rocks with a tomahawk. Having saved all the entrails of the great blue cod he had caught—the same they had for luncheon—he made a flax line, and attached one lump of them to the end of it. This he threw out from the rocks, let it sink to the bottom, and drew it slowly in. Three great big blue cod followed it until quite close in and immediately underneath him, with only about a foot of water to swim in. A downward stroke of the tomahawk finished the biggest, struck on the head. Then it was hooked out with the tomahawk on to the rocks with a jerk, and the process repeated over and over again.

They arrived at Waitahi in the evening, for they dawdled about this bay for two or three hours, and Somerset found a greenstone "tiki"—Maori neck ornament—on the banks of an old watercourse. It was shaped like a squatted demon or idol, but was immensely valuable to the proud discoverer, who always lamented the dearth—in his literary work—of records, real records of that bygone age, when the Maories made their own utensils, and traversed those glorious sounds in their own home-built canoes, to their
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patches of Kumaras and potatoes, a period when the "pah pole" rose in every Maori pah up and down the waters, and white men were not known before Captain Cook's advent—the period between pristine savagery and the colonization of the Islands by the Brito-Celtic races. The party swore to secrecy, each and all of them with regard to their expedition, and nothing extra exciting to the columns of the "Gazette" appeared save the Editor's ideas evoked by the journey, worked from the crudity of his notes to the finish of "Roundabout Jottings."
CHAPTER XIII

A SON OF THE OCEAN

For the wind has come to say
You must take me while you may,
If you'd go to Mother Carey
Walk her down to Mother Carey.
For we're bound to Mother Carey,
Where she feeds her chicks at sea.

—Rudyard Kipling.

But it so happened that Horncastle Richards, who had beheld the fair-seeming aspect of Karaka Bay, from one of the topmost branches of a wine-berry tree, into which he had climbed on the approach of Durock's dogs, had become possessed of a determination to go down and visit it in his own behalf, inwardly vowing that if he could get asked to stop, for a night, he would search far and near to see if there was really any tangible proof to be afforded to strengthen or prove the truth of the suspicion which even now lurked in his mind. And the old Sergeant himself confirmed this desire to get to Karaka Bay somehow or anyhow, and by himself, to a more fixed determination. He didn't want company. Richards hated to be beaten. He was not going to be beaten if he could help it. The Sergeant had said: "Arrah don't tell me. He's had some wurrud. Or it isn't buildin' boats he'd be, but manufacturin' nate whiskey."

And it came to pass also, that a fortnight after this on a Friday, Durock's biggest cutter, the Balahoo ran into Waitahi Bay, and Durock stayed at the Barracouta for the
night. Next day the "Gazette" came out and was distributed. But there was a hard gale blowing, with promise of worse to come, the Balahoo was still at anchor in the offing, and Richards towards evening came across Durock standing at the pier looking anxiously at his craft straining at her one anchor, evidently thinking of going off to her and giving her the other and more chain to them both. A furious wind was blowing, but a fair one to Karaka Bay: Durock was alone. His man had succumbed to the potentiality of the very whiskey Durock himself was accused of supplying to the district. "It's a bad night, sir," said Durock, who of course knew Richards well enough by sight and hearsay. "It's a bad night, and I'm rather bothered about my cutter. My man's not fit to take down I could sail her down myself, but I've no one to attend to the head-sheets, or let go the anchor, and two "hands" are little enough to work her with this breeze. And it will be a good deal worse before it gets better. It hasn't half blown itself out yet. None of the boatmen would go with me under a couple of pounds and I can't afford that." "H'm," thought Richards, "Doesn't want to let on that he's been coining money in the whiskey trade. Cunning beggar. Probably he has bags of gold at Karaka Bay. Now's my chance, for all his scheming." Durock after one violent squall right down the Waitaha Valley, which nearly swept them both into the water said. "I have to go sir, and chance it; good night, sir. It's not the first time I've done it, nor the second either, only wish I had one of my girls here. I'd be snug at home by the fire in a couple of hours, and the old hooker would be safe at anchor in my bay."

Horncastle Richards offered to go. He had nothing particular to do, and he had heard that Durock was a splendid able seaman. No one had seen him. There was no one in sight. He could get down all right, now, entirely on his own hook. People were used to his sudden disappearances, and he liked turning up suddenly in the office just to see how his staff worked. It was a golden opportunity. "Find the whole blessed thing out himself, and get all the profit of it." "Should I be any good Mr. Durock?" he had said. "I don't mind coming if you
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will have me. I daresay I can get back if I signal my father's steamer next time she passes your place. My head man in the office, and my Editor can get on quite well without me, anyway till Wednesday next. My work's done for this week."

"Why, sir," said Durock jumping at his offer. "You'll be heartily welcome. You've never seen my place and it's worth seeing. Come, sir, and with pleasure. My old woman will make you comfortable. The air in Karaka Bay will set you up in a couple of days, and I'll see you don't miss the Maori. And into Durock's dinghy they both got at once, and over the hissing waters went Horn-castle Richards, quite unaware of the fate that was awaiting him at the hands of the smuggler, pirate, and murderer. They were soon on board the Balahoo a large roomy craft of 30 tons or so. She was beginning to leap at her anchor, as if she wanted to drag the bottom of the bay out. It was now dark, but Durock soon had a light in the cabin and in the binnacle, and also lit the fire in the galley. The anchor was soon up and with only the foresail set, and eased off, the Balahoo flew along through the whitening squalls. Alas for Richards and his opinions that no one saw them go. One small boy had been concealed on the wharf, in the horsebox, and saw everything, remaining until he saw the lamps lit on board. He casually informed every body he met and it was known all over the little town very soon. The holders of the secret, the expedition themselves, could only wonder what the deuce was up. But they volunteered no opinions. And the old Sergeant chuckled slyly to himself, saying, "Faix it was misilf star-rted him. And a good job too."

"This boat will 'stay' with only her foresail set, in moderate weather, Mr. Richards," remarked Durock. "It takes a good boat to do that, and 'go about' with it. But there is no beating here. It's a soldier's wind. Do you take the tiller a bit, sir, while I get tea ready. Keep her just as she is going by the compass. We're well clear of Waitahi Point and it's a straight run to 'Doldrum's. Richards acquiesced whilst Durock bustled about, and in a quarter of an hour he returned and motioned Richards to

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go below into the comfortable cabin, where he found an
exc ellent repast awaiting him. Two freshly cooked salt
blue cod, toast, tea, butter and a couple of eggs to which
he did ample justice, but a sudden roar of wind overhead
made him finish in haste and go on deck. "Willie-was,"
were now coming down with appalling fury. A wide,
straight phosphorescent gleam stretched astern of the
Balahoo, but the misty spume of the squalls, and the
utter darkness was terrifying. "Going to be a bad night,
Mr. Richards," said Durock calmly. "I'll take a hot pannikin
of tea and a bit of bread if you'll be good enough to
get it, sir; but I daren't let go of the tiller now. It'll be
worse before it's better." The wind was well abaft to
beam but not nearly dead astern, and the foresail sheet
was taut as an iron bar. Richards attended to Durock
and when he had finished his 'snack,' took the plate and
pannikin below, returning to stand by him. He had also
taken the precaution to put everything in safety below.
"Don't half like it," said Durock. "Th' wind's increasing
in force, and it'll knock up such a sea down below Dol-
drum Point that you can't expect her to make across to
Kara Bay with all head sail. I'm too short-handed to
put a balance reefed mainsail on her, and I've no storm
trysail—at least aboard her. If I had that I could weathered
across right enough, but with the sea and current that'll
be on now she won't do it with the foresail alone. I'd have
to run for the open sea, if I didn't know a place to get into.
But you'll see Kara Bay to-morrow all right, Mr. Richards!" The roaring of the wind was now tremendous,
and they shot by Harkenside and Radical Channel, past
Doldrum Point and out into the open waters of the North
Channel. They ran past Short Island, and felt the wash
and heave of a rather stormy sea. The squalls here were
terrific, and the waves were increasing rapidly when
suddenly the cutter ran under the lee of something.
Richards saw a wall of black rock close aboard, but the
cutter kept close to it until her way was somewhat
deadened and she was suddenly rounded to, and shot into
an opening in what was apparently a rocky island, so
manoeuvred by Durock, who deadened her way with such
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skilful manipulation of the tiller, aided by current waves and gusts of wind that in one brief moment, to his utter amazement her bowsprit glided up and just touched a wall of opposite rock. But it was quite calm in the curious harbour, and they were quite land locked and even wind-locked. The cutter was in a smooth deep basin surrounded by precipitous rocks and no matter how the gale howled overhead, there was hardly enough wind where they were to blow a match out!

"My best drawing-room in bad weather, Mr. Richards, especially with the wind in this quarter," laughed Durock, "I always say that this place is just like a room with the door shut! We're safe here now from any gale, and have only to look out for the rise and fall of the tide, as far as our moorings go. I'll take the kedge ashore forrad, and then get a stern-line warp on her. No end of fish here for the line, and for the spear.

"'Moki' and the butterfish swarm here, and you'll see them to-morrow in daylight.

"I can give you some rare good sport catching cray fish and 'moki' and spearing butterfish, at Karaka Bay. Perhaps you'd like a day or two pig-hunting. I've got some good dogs. Richards' conscience smote him still. Durock didn't talk as if his dogs were solely needed to guard the illicit still, and as if he distrusted strangers about his place! His host then got into the dinghy and Richards lowered the kedge to him off the bows. Durock then took it ashore with a strong coir rope fastened to it. He then dropped it in a convenient hollow amongst the rocks and returned. Then he came back and made a similar rope fast astern, allowing a little on each rope for the lift and fall of the tide, and the Balahoo was as snug for the remainder of the night as she could possibly be. Then having made everything secure they went below to a more substantial supper than their interrupted tea, especially on Durocks' part, and a glass or two of whiskey afterwards was noted by Richards. to be out of the usual bottle and brand provided at the Barracouta, at Waitahi. Richards experienced some compunction about these refreshers, but his host was so cheery over his hospitality that he didn't know how to back out of
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it. They took another glance on deck before retiring to the cabin finally and Durock saw all secure. Gannet Rock or Island, in the middle of which they lay, was a storm-tossed rocky islet—which came in very handy as a refuge to one or two knowing old shell backs—would not accommodate anything much larger than a fifty ton coaster. However for the cutter there was ample room. When they finally returned, and were discussing a night-cap over a pipe Durock unveiled more of himself and his past life in an utterly un-pirate like fashion. His chief object in this world seemed to be able to leave his wife and girls fairly well off and there was no trace of contraband dealing in his talk. He was to accomplish the object of his life by building boats and yachts with his man, and fishing on the grounds outside, or in the Sounds, to supply the big town over the Straits—Wellington. "I was born in Norway, Mr. Richards," said he "and all my people belong to sea-faring life. I became a sea carpenter, and did many voyages in sailing-ships, going to all parts of the world until I finally found myself out here. This country suited me, and I saw an opening. I have already built two yachts—winners, both of them—but not on this side of the Straits. I am a shipwright—been brought up to the trade. Well, I then got a billet under the New Zealand Government, and that served me for several years. There was a Yankee skipper in one of those Government craft I was in—shipped as ship carpenter, of course—a steamer called the Akaaroa.

My eye he was a Captain. He looked more like a Quaker parson, no quaking about him, though—or a business gentleman—but he was a regular "shell-back" skipper. He was a first-class navigator and a regular "Geordie"—coaster skipper—all knocked into one. And he was most dangerous when he was most polite. I was with him once with a lot of volunteers. He was bringing six hundred of 'em back from Opunake—time of that row with Te Whiti the Maori prophet. They had all been to the front, and were going home. Poor beggars, they were awfully sea-sick. About half of 'em anyway. Sprawled all over the deck they were, and a lot of 'em
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lying clean knocked out, on the top of their rifles. Ha, ha, ha, 'Taipo'—the devil—as the Maories always called him, goes aft, and he finds some of his pet woodwork on top of the hatchways a bit scored and rubbed. The varnish had got it hot from nailed boots. He calls the first mate. I was standing quite close. So he said:

"Mr. So and so, do you see this?"

The mate nodded.

"These gratings, and hatches, and skylights will have to be looked to, Mr. So and so."

"I'm always tellin' 'em to keep their hind-legs off these places."

"Ha, ha, ha. Laugh, Mr. Richards? I nearly fell down with laughing. Don't you see that a good many of the sea-sick ones could only crawl, on four legs, so to speak." And Durock's mirth was so contagious and so hearty that Richards joined in quite as heartily. "He was the cleverest seaman I ever saw, this Yankee captain," resumed Durock when they had recovered, but the laughter was in his eyes yet. "He could take his ship anywhere. There wasn't a hole or corner on the New Zealand coast that he didn't know intimately. He'd have annexed Samoa if they'd let him, he offered to. He could turn and twist that steamer of his in any place, with just a few inches of water under her keel sometimes, or with rocks close aboard. It was all one to him. He knew what to do, and how and when to do it. If I hadn't been with him, I don't believe ever I should have been up to the tricks I am with my craft. Well, 'Old Taipo' did his share of work for New Zealand, and he put me up to many a wrinkle. And a better skipper I never sailed under. He was the active means of settling several Maori troubles, carting the natives about and landing them anywhere. He would turn the cold water hose on them if they gave any trouble, and this was why they called him 'Taipo.' And very many places where he knew all about the anchorage, and capability of export and import was valuable information for any member of Parliament who happened to be on board. For the 'Akaroa' was in reality a sort of Government yacht, and a man-of-war combined. She carried a seven
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pounders Hotchkiss and small arms for the crew besides. As I said before old 'Taipo' would have annexed Samoa if Great Britain had permitted it, but the Old Country always got behind the times, as she has always done, and did nothing for her Colonies, always making concessions, concessions to other Powers, and giving away an island here, half a continent there, and an archipelago somewhere else. As the Duke of Argyll says, 'the Boers bamboozled them enough in the past, and so did other Powers. It wasn't only the Boers. The sooner they get someone at home to understand these little matters with the eye of their colonists, and not Downing Street, the better for both colonials and the British Empire generally. She will feel the beauty of these graceful conditions and concessions some day when she doesn't want to. Cheese paring and want of confidence at home because nothing is ready. Everything put off. I want to know why she isn't ready. She has men, thousands of willing men, thousands upon thousands of willing colonials only too anxious to be allowed to fight for her. Why on earth doesn't she increase her army. 'Tis a volunteer army really. But she asks for fifty men when she might have five thousand. The tail of the Gladstone government lies still over everything, and will be until she repents his reign in sackcloth and ashes.

"But it will be some time before that incubus is removed. Talk, talk, talk, and no 'do.' That was Gladstone's creed. However, the home government are learning some part of their lesson nowadays. About time too. Well, Mr. Richards, having saved some money, I married several years ago, a young woman I was attached to, and kept an hotel over the other side of the Straits. But it didn't bring me any profit. In fact I lost money over it. But I kept up my trade of boat-building with it, and that held me up. After my family grew up a bit, I came over here. I had visited the place I am now at, with 'Taipo' and I settled on that government revenue patch, a famous old Maori place in the days of Captain Cook. I can show you the stone ruins of a place, where a Maori princess was said to live when he was there. I've dug up an old Maori
canoe, when I was reclaiming a swamp for part of my kitchen garden there. And my children have found ‘tiki’s’ and a ‘mere’—greenstone—and heaps of old stone axe-heads. Also I found an old box-compass, with the metal part all right, the wood a bit decayed: Goodness knows how old it is. You know the wood it is made of, elm, lasts a very long time. And in an old burial ground, stuffed into the ‘raupo’ thatch of a ‘whare’ was a Times newspaper, dated 1846, it had one literal error in it too, rather a rare thing to find in the Times. I’ve heard tell that the editor of that paper is fined a sovereign for every ‘literal’ that appears in it. I wonder if he paid for this one. Well, I’ve been at Karaka Bay for three years or more. I like it. It’s like my native country. The Sounds in New Zealand are like Norway and Switzerland combined. The hills, and sea-inlets supply me with the world’s goods. I build my boats out of the timber I find. There are pigs and pigeons in great quantity, so that it only costs me the labour of procuring them. If I cut a tree down, any left part of it supplies me with an edible fungus, which the Chinese are very fond of. Consequently a few bags of this are valuable. I run cargoes of fish to either Nelson or Wellington. The latter is my best market. I cut hop-poles, and run them to Nelson, or elsewhere. But I hope, sir, you can spare a few days with me and I can give you some capital sport.”

Richards assented gladly. He was much impressed with the man’s kindly hospitality, so ungrudgingly offered, and wondered now that he could ever have openly spoken of him as a pirate, a villain, and perhaps a murderer! It gave him a lesson on his own proneness to judge other peoples’ failings at second, or third-rate hearsay without any knowledge of his own. And Horncastle Richards was a man to profit by such a lesson. “Judge not that ye be not judged” were the words that rang in his ears as he climbed into his bunk on board the Balahoo that night. He had found Durock a cheery companion, an able seaman, and a kind-hearted host. Was he therefore justified in branding him as a pirate and a smuggler? Certainly not, unless he found indications during his sojourn with
him, which would indubitably prove the fact. The scales
had been somewhat lifted from his eyes, and after he had
thought considerably over the matter, he went to sleep in
his snug bunk as the Balahoo lay in the curious rock-
surrounded harbour in the middle of Gannet Island.
When he woke next morning, he found his judgment much
clearer in every way. After going on deck, with the
invigorating fresh smell of the washing sea-tang in his
nostrils and lungs, he found Durock very busy attending to
their breakfast. He had speared a couple of fine “butter-
fish” from the dinghy, as they were disporting themselves
amongst this sea-tang, washing at the base of the rock
walls about him. Richards observed that there was thirty
to forty feet of room, each way, as the cutter was moored,
that the rock walls rose sheer fifty feet, and more overhead,
with the mainland of the island behind that, again on
looking down into the water Richards could just make out
the bottom, but Durock said it was sixty feet deep. It
was still blowing hard with occasional wild squalls, but
Durock was going out, as it was daylight, and daylight was
all he wanted. However after breakfast they managed to
hoist the big mainsail and took two reefs in it. Then the
foresail and jib were hoisted, and after getting the kedge
and mooring rope in, Durock got a line from the bow of
the Balahoo into the dinghy, and towed the cutter out
through a narrow but comparatively still opening, so
narrow indeed, that the feat of bringing the cutter in on
the previous night with a gale of wind blowing and nearly
pitch dark, was marvellous in the extreme. But he had
done it. Once outside, and free from the lee of the land
the breeze soon caught them, and with Durock at the
tiller they made a long leg over towards Karaka Bay
despite one fierce “willie-wa” sending spoondrift thirty
feet high like a travelling smoke storm which assailed them
when half way over. But Durock luffed her into it, and
she passed through it without carrying away anything.
They shot across Karaka Bay on the next tack, and let go
their anchor under a rocky headland wooded with enor-
mous trees. Then they made all snug on board and
landed from the dinghy on a beautiful sandy beach, dis-
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closing a double bay, with a stream of rushing clear water right through it. From the outskirts of the dense timber in the flat was to be seen the chimney stacks and white gleam of Durock's house against the background of stems of forest timber in a blue haze. It seemed a large cottage.

"Welcome to Karaka Bay, Mr. Richards!" said Durock.
CHAPTER XIV

UNDER THE WINE-BERRIES AND KARAKAS

By the "Karakas" side by side,
Let us glance back once more to the glittering tide
As we sat there once, 'neath their summer pride.

What quaint old legend shall we place
In the book of our Fancy? Let us trace
But one from the past—in its storied grace.

RICHARDS was introduced to the family as he landed, for they were all there to greet him. Mrs. Durock, two girls—seventeen and sixteen—a couple of small boys, and one other girl about twelve years.

"My old woman and family, at your service, sir," said Durock, laughing.

None of them looked as if they had been brought up to whiskey distilling and drinking, although they wore sunbonnets and flowered print dresses—the girls at least—and the boy's were sturdy, small, sunburnt creatures, each with a broad smile of welcome. Horncastle Richards thought that he had never in all his life seen such an alluring vision, as now beamed upon him from under one of those pokybonnets. Such a laughing face too. Such a beautiful figure. In height neither too short, nor too tall. In person full of grace and beauty, rounded and supple also. Such a ripe, red mouth, such faultless teeth. Such blue, amused eyes. He doffed his hat and shook hands all round, Durock giving him a keen glance as he did so. Though it was not known to his detractors, Durock was well-informed as to the suspicions attaching to him. He knew that Richards had intended to make capital out of it. He
knew of what he was suspected. But he never said anything anywhere. Durock pulled back to the Balahoo again to make everything right for the night. There were several things about the mooring of her that he had to attend to, and Richards was left to the care of his wife and daughters, and somehow or another, he very soon found himself talking volubly and amicably to his fair vision as they strolled along the beach, and up into a large cultivated patch of ground, which was well and carefully enclosed, where raspberries and strawberries grew in profusion, besides pie melons, cabbages, potatoes and all sorts of other vegetables. The Miss Durock, the eldest—Richards had just caught her name—"Pearl," from her sister, as the latter and Mrs. Durock had taken the turn to the house. "Don't be long, Pearl," she had said; was like a ripe peach, or rather a ripening peach. The yellow, red, brown was in her hair, the rich full tints were in her lips, with a paler flush in her cheeks. One flash of her expressive eyes backed by all her charms and beauties, settled Richards for ever, and in his heart he hated himself for previous unjust suspicions, as he had never hated himself before. And with this hate of himself, came the counter thought, that it didn't matter whether Durock had fifty whisky stills, or whether he sold it all over New Zealand. He himself, Horncastle Richards, would help him, aid him and abet him, go into partnership with him, throw all his energy into the work, and all for the sake of this one fair girl. Richards could see no wrong in Durock now, and if he had discovered the whiskey still in his house, it would have made no difference. It is really wonderful how circumstances alter cases, through the self which lurks at the bottom of many of our judgments and actions. If our own self be touched—we don't care a button about the self of others if our own is untouched—our judgment in many cases is instantly reversed, and we become quite as keen in the reverse direction. It is very hard, well-nigh impossible, to get that "ego" out of our "kosmos."

How much harder when there is a pretty girl to satisfy that "ego?" After a stroll round the kitchen garden, the
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pair returned. Durock came back from the cutter, and they all sat down to dinner, with flowers: roses, snapdragons, wallflowers, and carnations tastefully arranged on the festal board. It was a festal day, for it was an epoch and a turning point in the life of young Horncastle Richards, and as such worthy to be commemorated. For the first time in his life, he tasted “hapuka” soup flavoured with parsley, baked “moki” stuffed with sage and onions, baked wild-pig, with “Kumaras.” A cherry tart with rich, yellow, cream. A cheese of Mrs. Durock’s own making, with tea as the universal beverage. But after dinner Durock gave him a good glass of whiskey. And he recognized the bottle as the same brand he generally ordered for himself at the Barracouta.

During the afternoon they all strolled about. He first inspected the shed where Durock was building a large sailing-boat yacht. Then they re-inspected the kitchen garden, and later Richards found himself strolling through the wineberry woods, and under giant totaras, and pinetrees with the girl who had made such an impression upon him. Their walk was very pleasant, as they all explored the labyrinth of stream and dell, noting fine cedar forests, and many a quaint tale was told of hunt and foray thereabout. How to get “huia” feathers, where the “Kiwi” built, when the “saddlebacks” came. If “Karaka” berries or fruit were best eaten plain or preserved. About the wild cattle on the top of the big range, the waterfall, about an old Maori garden. Where the peach-trees were. All about the “mutton-birds.” The cannon shot the Maories over by the sea had. One of Captain Cook’s cannon shot. They were to bring it over some day. Where the Endeavour and Resolution were careened. Where and how they were moored. Where Captain Cook lived. Of the strange fish. The twisting ground shark that cuts the line when he comes to the top. The blind scarlet eel that no one dares to touch, and which ruins all lines. The half-caste girls, or rather quadroons, of Short Island. And all the numberless legends of Karaka Bay and its old pioneer time history, sparkled out in talk under the wineberries, and again under the shiny dark-green Karakas, with their scarlet-yellow fruit, by the rushing water-
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course, and over the shell-sand beach, where the creek made a miniature sand-bar with the waters of the bay, after the manner of many New Zealand rivers of larger size, and wherein the broken waters lurked the great green-blue cod eager for anything edible.

In the evening towards sunset, they went out in boats to spear “butter-fish” in the sea-tang along the rocks, to set the “moki” nets, and to haul up the lobster-pots. Durock and his wife went off in one boat round the point, and Richards and the two girls followed in another. By Pearl Durock’s advice, Richards had a strong towing-line with a long gleaming strip of mackerel flesh and skin on the hook at the end of it, for the pirate-blue cod of which he caught several, one at every point. The rays of the westering sun again gave the colour of fire-opal to waters, rocks, and headlands. The densely-wooded points with their lower belt of rocks were magically reflected in the smooth waters far below them, with absolutely startling fidelity. Each black birch, manuka bush, frond of fern, and blade of grass were reproduced, and that dark intense green so common to New Zealand was everywhere from sea to tree. All this shot through with fire-opal, with the red-brown light in the trees made a panorama which would linger in Richard’s brain for ever, mixed up with the radiant figure of the girl now pulling in the boat, in such delicious proximity. The water was withal so translucent that the great pirate-cod could be plainly seen dashing at the bait, and Pearl Durock said that there was always one or two at every point. If only one, it was sure to be an extra big fish. And she used the term “pirate-cod.” The word somehow brought various emotions to seethe within Horncastle’s repentant bosom. The large coal-black, and smaller and redder butter-fish were to be seen here and there, basking in the sunny water over the endless sweeping tangles of sea-tang, which grew as a fringe all along this part of the coast, where the fresh sea-currents struck it.

The fish were now their special prey, for Durock and his wife would work the lobster-pots and “moki” nets. It was very exciting work this butter-fish spearing, necessitating quiet noiseless movement of sculls or paddles,
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whilst skirting the reefs of sea-tang. Then when a large butter-fish, three or four pounds' weight, was discovered hovering motionless in two feet or less of water, the spear is pushed noiselessly through the water until close to his back, when a steady and final "jab" sends the prongs home. The light wood, long-shafted spear has, as a rule, four straight, sharp-ended prongs of wire bent on to the end. Large straightened fish-hooks are good, for they provide a natural barb on the extremities. And these barbs hold the impaled fish so firmly that it could be lifted on board.

But there is science, even in butter-fish spearing, and Richards couldn't "hold a candle" to either of the girls in this latter art. After much teaching on their part he secured four, and the girls two each, the smallest about two pounds' weight, and the largest over three. Pearl Durock explained that the thick, outside skin, which is a regular coating of leather, must be taken off wholly, first, and the delicate inside flesh fried.

"But," she added, "we will show you how we do it when we get back."

They cruised along, leaving Durock and his wife, busily engaged at the head of a curve of a small inlet. Then they passed some more good ground for feeding—butter-fish feeding—kelp reefs, and secured six more.

The girls did all the work here, and proved themselves most expert, Richards moving the boat gently along by sculling from the stern rullock hole with a paddle. They landed just in the grey gloaming at a beautiful beach where the golden sands would have shone like the ruby a short time before. There they cut some strands of native flax to attach their fish to after they had been cleaned and washed. Then they got into the boat again and pulled leisurely back homewards, the girls singing various snatches of song very melodiously. The whole party landed together at Karaka Bay where Durock triumphantly exhibited fifteen fine "moki" also washed and cleaned, and eight lobsters. Of the fish the least was five pounds in weight, and the largest sixteen. Then all the fish from both parties were taken up to the house to be scientifically treated. Some were to be split,
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salted and smoked, and the others were to be cooked in some of the many forms for which the Durocks were famous. Pearl Durock, with her sleeves rolled up to her pretty elbows, showed Richards how to take the skin off the butter-fish, by means of a strong two-pronged fork which was stuck right through the butter-fish’s head into the table. Then the skin was slit downwards and pulled off as one would skin an eel, leaving the beautiful, delicate, green-tinged flesh ready for the frying-pan, adding butter, pepper, and salt. Several—at least four—were fried for tea. They passed a pleasant evening, playing all sorts of games, in which the younger children joined. Durock sang some plaintive and touching Norwegian sea melodies, and rest to all there that night, was sweet and refreshing. The roar of the waterfall higher up the valley in which the cottage stood was attuned by distance to the exactly proper tone to lull one to rest, and the slight lap and wash of the waves upon the beach had the exact rhythm to harmonise with the first, as sleep stole through a crowd of pleasant, dreamy thoughts and caught her willing victim by surprise.

Therefore it was with a highly pleasurable sensation that Horncastle Richards awoke to the matutinal chorus of the “tuis” and honey-eaters of this emerald gem of a bay in a sea-inlet—Karaka Bay—and starting from his couch he got his towel, and accompanied by Durock’s two boys, and two collie dogs, they made for the glorious sun-kissed beach incarnadined now by the early rosy eastern flush of the rising sun. As they breathed the crisping, revivifying sparklets of air charged to the brim, each of them, with ozone, their eyes rested upon a picture of life far apart from that of an early morning in a city.

What a picture of life in reality, real awakening life. Here inclining a little to their left, looking over their left shoulders in fact, was the glorious living picture of the open sea, so distinctive in its breadth and movement. Out there in the Straits, you can see it moving, as its gigantic forceful billows chase one another. Over the undulating bosom of the deep waters sped great flights of sea-birds passing to their daily feeding haunts from far and near, immense multitudes of them, great black and black and white cormorants, divers
of the lesser sort, black and white and grey. Gannets circled everywhere, their plumage a dazzling snow white as they dropped from aloft like aerolites, after a keen gazing poise. Nearer shore an infinite variety of gulls screamed for breakfast. All was life and movement, whilst far off could be seen the blue distinctly serrated line of the North Island. Nearer over the broad entrance, was Cape Coemarloo with Short Island and Totuara as land marks opposite. Richards divested himself of his hasty half-attire, and sprang forward into the fresh salt water over the shining silver sand. After a real good splash-about and a steady swim he came back refreshed and hearty. Then he had a shave by a rippling brook and repaired to the house meeting the girls on their way to bathe.

A frank good morning, and reminders that to-day was to be a big special pig-hunt, and that he was to accompany them by boat whilst Durock scoured the hills with gun and dogs. Pearl’s sister Maud was a cheery bright girl also very good-looking, and she said something to Pearl on the way when they were quite out of hearing which made that young lady rebuke her, probably because the remark brought a flood of colour into her face. The girls bathed, and came back to help get the breakfast ready. Richards polished off two plates of the delicious fare provided in addition to etceteras and a cup of fragrant coffee, and after a pipe felt ready for anything, especially in such fascinating society. A man from Short Island having come over with a dog and a gun, Durock and he started up the hills nearest to the house, and Richards and the two girls pulled round several points to the bay of the previous night, where they had cut the native flax for fish-withes. Richards took stroke oar, Maud Durock pulled bow, whilst Pearl steered, and in this vis a vis arrangement—whether or not connived at Richards had much ado to prevent himself from open admiration at the beauty of her eyes and expression, the faultless symmetry of her form, the charm of her scarlet lips, and beautiful even white teeth. The ruddy golden gleam of what hair could be seen making up such a mountain of allied charms for his too susceptible frame, that he found it hard to keep his composure at all. So that it was with a
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great effort that he retained sufficient presence of mind to pull his stroke out.

“You own the paper now, Mr Richards, don’t you?” queried his fair tormentor. “How I wish I had the power of a man.”

“Have you not more power, Miss Durock?” said Richards impulsively. And then wished he had bitten his tongue out. For the object of his adoration flushed brightly and affairs looked a bit uncomfortable for a brief space. But she returned to the charge, albeit with a rather satirical glance at him, and said “I daresay it is our style of life that gives me these rather masculine feelings. Don’t you think it would be likely to do so? We do all the work about the place, besides helping to pull and sail the boats and cutters. I should be satisfied, I confess, but I am not—sometimes.”

“But don’t you see, Miss Durock, can’t you understand that these very things which you complain about gives you the splendid vitality you possess, the power of life and frame that makes you so vigorous and healthy. What is it then that makes you yearn for some other ideal? Do you care for cities, balls, parties, dresses, and other things so fascinating to feminine taste?”

“Well, we were only children,” she returned “when father lived in a city. We went to school for years, and I suppose we hadn’t time to think about any change. But I should like to see a little change sometimes. Don’t you think it is natural?”

Richards assented, still however sticking to his point about health and vitality, and certainly both girls showed it plainly enough, when a shot was heard in the distance far up in the hill tops, over and back from the steep cliffs and craggy densely wooded rock-land they were now rowing under.

“That’s Dickson’s gun,” exclaimed Maud, “I know the sound of it. Hark! there’s old ‘Stormy.’ He’s after a pig I expect. Dickson missed it. Most likely in dense scrub—it’s dreadful up there. Listen, ‘Stormy’ is coming nearer!”

Sure enough the occasional deep bay of the dog, a noted pig-fighter, seemed to be approaching down the hill towards them. Richards motioned Maud to back stern on into a small beach, grounded the boat, jumped ashore with a boat-
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hook, and clambered up a cliff about ten feet high, but the next instant an active wiry boar dashed through the manuka, charged him and knocked him clear off the cliff on to the beach beneath, jumping down too and scuttling off over the rocks, but even in that brief moment inflicting a nasty wound on Richard's leg. He was conscious of the girls screaming and then he became unconscious.

When he came to himself he was lying on his bed in Durock's house in Karaka Bay, and Pearl Durock was sitting by him. And from her lips he heard that he had been unconscious for two days, that all the others had just gone down to the corner of the beach to meet the Maori which was just steaming into the bay with a doctor, and that he was not to talk.

Presently the whole of the Durock family came back with the gentleman in question, and as Richard's father happened to be on board there was a double family meeting.

It was decided not to move the patient for some time. "Whoever brought first aid, saved his life," said the doctor to Richard's senior. "He is out of all danger, and is in capable hands. I'll attend to him to-night myself, and go back with you to-morrow." All of which eventuated exactly as the doctor foretold, but Horncastle Richards found that time of his convalescence the sweetest experience he ever went through. And the hours spent in the society and daily need of help from sweet Pearl Durock passed very rapidly.

After the doctor and Richards senior departed Somerset came down by return trip in the steamer, and having satisfied all his chief's anxiety about the "rag," went off after stipulating for a passage with Durock in the new yacht, when he should cross the Straits with her.

And thus it was how Richards went down to bowl out the pirate, and remained helpless and contrite in a snare himself of mutual affection and love in the very place he had so anathematized as a nest of smugglers. And Somerset, when he returned to his duties, whistled dubiously as he thought over their first expedition, and resolved to have a day or two himself at Karaka Bay when his chief was sufficiently recovered in health to ease him from his present double work.
CHAPTER XV

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE

"Again I see the old elm-tree, with its branches bleak and bare,
And the rustic seat where lovers meet—yes—lovers and seat are there
And I fancy I know, there, each bright smile, the turn of a glittering curl
That hangs—like the spray of a fruitful vine—on the neck of a lovely girl.
And the sterner face above her bent, is lit with a softer light
As her voice falls low like a wavelets' song when sunset fades to night,
And they list to the merry Christmas chimes,
And laugh—Ah, well-a-day,
Does she find a trace of a changeless face
Five thousand leagues away?"

—Unknown.

LUCY FALCONER is not at all satisfied. Osbern pays her every attention, but her heart does not reciprocate.

The plain fact is this, that the girl has come to think upon their engagement of the past in England as a great mistake. She has seen more of the world during the voyage, and her subsequent residence in New Zealand, than she has ever seen before in the Old Country. Her own conditions of colonial life have been more free and more untrammeled than at home. She has grown to like some one else. But she considers herself completely bound by her old engagement to Osbern, although the contrast in her own mind between him and that other one, to say the least of it, is not a favourable one. Although she has been constantly in Osbern's society, her mind is far away from him. It is Arthur Somerset of whom she is thinking. She has heard nothing of him since he left. However, just at this moment Miss Featherston came in from shopping brimful of news, and before she had even untied
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her bonnet-strings she burst out with "Oh, Lucy, I met a strange gentleman in the street."

"Dear me, auntie, how very reprehensible. What could you have been thinking of?" chimed in her niece, without the bright smile that formerly characterised all her remarks. Much of her old boisterous happy manner had gone, and a close observer would have judged her aspect as rather worried. Her Aunt had noticed it for some time back, but could get no acknowledgment of any trouble, good, bad, or indifferent, although she had a shrewd suspicion about it all. "And, Lucy," resumed Miss Featherston, with a quick glance at her, "I think that what the strange gentleman told me might interest you a little. It did me, as I am always pleased to hear about old friends, especially about such a friend as Mr. Somerset."

"Oh, Auntie!" exclaimed Lucy coming rapidly forward, as she first flushed crimson and then turned deadly pale. "What is it?" Then by a strong effort she checked herself, and in an altered tone said almost distantly. "Is he well?" But stay a moment whilst I help you off with your bonnet and cloak, you dear old thing. Now—just sit down there—and tell me all about it while you are comfortably seated. Miss Featherston then proceeded to do so, but she kept a very keen observant eye upon her niece as she did so. "Well—I was walking along by the cathedral, when a dark strongly built gentleman, raised his hat, and stopped me by gesture, saying; "Pardon me, Miss Featherston, I am unhappy in not having been introduced to you before. Will you forgive me for introducing myself. I know you quite well by sight and reputation—although it no doubt surprises you—I have often heard about you from a young friend of mine—a dear friend I may call him;—Mr. Arthur Somerset. That raised my curiosity as you may well imagine, Lucy dear. Lucy was looking abstractedly out of the window albeit with a light in her eyes that was not there before—"and of course I told him that I was glad to meet any friend of Mr. Somerset's, that I knew him very well indeed, that I was a fellow passenger of his, and esteemed him greatly. He
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really is a very nice young man, Lucy. Well, this gentleman informed me that his name was Don Vasquez Ibanes. He is Spanish, you see, indeed his accent is to be detected easily enough although he speaks most perfect English. I should say he was a sort of Professor of something by his appearance. And he has such wonderful eyes, my dear. They seemed to go right through poor little me. He was Mr. Somerset's fellow-lodger when he used to reside here. He also told me that Mr. Somerset is still in New Zealand, in this very island where we are now, but much farther north, at a place called Waitahi, which Don Vasquez described as a small town situated on the shores of a beautiful Sound. Mr. Somerset is now Editor of a paper there, and I believe is a good deal thought of by the people of the district. So he has not gone back to Australia, as we thought he had done. It is rumored that he is engaged to be married, my dear—"

"Oh dear me," suddenly exclaimed Miss Featherston breaking off abruptly. "What is the matter my child? as Lucy shivered, turned pale, and finally burst into tears. But she collected herself almost instantly, and said that she had not been well, and now had a violent headache. She would go and lie down.

And Miss Featherston ruminated upon matters in general concerning Lucy, until she ruminated herself into a very perturbed state of mind. Poor child, she thought. Her own marriage is approaching. Surely I have not overlooked the fact that she has been out of sorts for some considerable time. She is certainly thinner and paler than she was. She used to be so robust. What can it be I wonder? I never quite did believe in her engagement with young Osbern. He's not my style, or her style either I know, and the girl certainly could not have known her own mind at the time. "Since I've travelled, said the lady, bridling, I've learned some things that I didn't know before. I believe in travel. It opens one's eyes, and gives one a much more general sort of judgment of things. Now there's that Don Va—I'll write to Mr. Somerset at once. Don Vasquez told me that he would be pleased to hear from me. And I'll read it to Lucy, when she has got rid of
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that nasty headache. And taking pen and paper, Miss Featherston rapidly wrote the following lines.

VERBENA COTTAGE,
NORTH BELT,
CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Dear Mr. Somerset,

How shamefully you deserted us. After all our long companionship too. Why did you not write to us. Your friend, Don Vasquez Ibanes, told me your address. He has also informed me that you are doing well, which I was very glad to hear.

And he also told me that you are engaged to be married! Will you allow me to wish yourself and the young lady every happiness. I am old enough to be your mother, Mr. Somerset, and I always wished you well. You were most attentive and kind to me on board ship, and that is the sort of thing an old woman does not forget. I hope I shall have the pleasure some day of meeting both your wife and yourself. Lucy has not been very bright of late, I wish she was a little brighter. I think I shall have to take her away for a change, perhaps to Wellington. They say it is very bracing there in the winter. Write soon, and tell me all about yourself.

"Sans adieu,
"ADELA FEATHERSTON."

Lucy never saw this letter, as her headache continued, and Miss Featherston finding her not in the least inclined to talk or do anything, went out and posted it.

It reached Arthur three days later, and though he might have had thoughts about a certain young lady resident at Waitahi, of very prepossessing appearance and manner, he had as yet said nothing, or acted in any way beyond the strict rules of society.

But that letter hit him hard, and a suspicion gradually gained strength that he himself might be the direct cause of this loss of brightness, and back surged the old love with ten-fold violence. Should he go down and tell her that he loved her beyond all on earth, and carry her off,
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if her love for him was confessed? Should he speak to Osbern if her decision was favourable? What should he do? He sat late that night thinking, and at length sought Richards—now convalescent—brought him back with him to his cottage, and had a long conversation with him, the upshot of which was that he obtained a fortnights' leave of absence.

The Kawai having come in the next day he sailed in the evening with Durock and his man for Karaka Bay. Durock was beginning to get popular now, and very well he took it, never referring to the time when he was an object of suspicion and—as it proved—slander. But he had many quiet laughs all to himself, and sometimes uproarious ones when alone, after he heard of the expedition to collar his cutters and himself and man, often exploding during intervals of a quiet "trick at the tiller" of the Kawai or Balahoo. And his wife would often find him shaking with laughter when he was supposed to be asleep. But for all that he never opened his lips on the subject. On arrival at Karaka Bay, Durock informed Somerset that the new sailing boat yacht was ballasted, watered, and provisioned ready for a start, in fact, over the Straits to Wellington. But Somerset had ideas of his own, and Durock's plans exactly dove-tailed with his, when the latter mentioned that before they finally started in the Huia, he wished to go for a couple of days to Pelorus Sound to investigate certain timber, which he believed would furnish hop-poles, of which he was going to take a cargo for Nelson on his return. After this visit he would return to Karaka Bay and start with the little yacht through the south entrance of Queen Elizabeth Sound for Wellington, where he expected to sell her.

The journey to Pelorus Sound would be performed in the "Kawai." So next morning off they went, a crew of three for Durock took his man. They ran round Jackson's Head and headed for Port Gore. A stiff S.E. was blowing and Arthur was deep in admiration at the masterly manner in which Durock handled the "Kawai," which was a fast, fine cutter and a wonderful sea-boat. Durock had built her himself. In appearance the cutter was much like an
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English Channel pilot-cutter. She had a nice cabin below, and yet had plenty of room in her hold for cargo, and was of about forty tons burden. On their way they called at the gold reef, where they got close in under the lee of the land, and lowered the dinghy to go ashore and inspect. These mines gave Arthur Somerset something in his head to work out for the benefit of the district. He already had his eye on the minerals of the Sounds, and had sent several specimens of quartz, coal, mica-schist and granite from the neighbourhood of Waitahi and Ngakuta to the Sydney School of Mines for analysis. He thought that when Nature put such vast Sounds, such wonderful inland harbours, ready for a fleet—for hundreds of fleets—she does not work in vain. Something of value will have to be carried from these harbours eventually. But as usual in those far away districts like Queen Elizabeth and Pelorus Sounds the population is scanty compared to the great extent of country, and though the old pioneers there had found coal, gold and antimony, manganese, copper, farther north towards Nelson, all paying minerals, there was not the capital nor appliances enough to work them successfully with. And men must delve deep and powerfully to come upon the riches of these vast hillsides along the great Sounds. There were forests of useful timber there for the old pioneers. There was superabundance of fish. And the amphibious Sound-dwellers, fished, cured, sold and cultivated patches, and obtained grass for their stock by felling the smaller timber and burning out the gullies along the shores of the sleepy Sounds. But some day no doubt there will be an awakening. The more enterprising and wealthier inhabitants erected saw-mills and did well with the timber trade, like Horncastle Richard’s father. But Somerset was of opinion that Nature never lied and there would be found something more valuable than timber and fish to help to populate the Sounds. There would some day be use for these great natural harbours, chiefly for the export of minerals, although even now the great inland plains produced the finest corn in the world. There was Somerset’s chance. He had thrown in his lot with the place, and Horncastle Richards and he were going to make
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it boom. That was their first crude idea, but they were beginning to see further ahead now beyond supposititious whiskey stills. Somerset reflected that if he married, and the place went ahead he would be able to support a wife in comfort at Waitahi. And the idea gave him far more energy and determination for his press work. The paper was already bi-weekly and a daily was projected. By Richards own wishes was he now down at Eaglescliff gold mine to report on it. And his notes were copious that day. Chancing, during this trip on the first night in Pelorus Sound to anchor in a beautiful bay—Wild Bay—Durock called it, a curious spectacle was afforded by the moon rising on one hand, and the sun setting on the other, just as the cutter's anchor was let go, and she was brought up for the night. There were immense quantities of fish rippling all over the water—water-acres of them—Durock said these fish were anchovies—another item for Arthur. So they were. And the mica-schist on the hills reminded him of Cannes in the sunny Mediterranean, where anchovies also are to be found about the neighbouring waters. Herring also abounded in Queen Elizabeth Sound. Pelorus Sound almost touches the former, only a hill to be crossed, from the summit of which both these vast sea-inlets are to be seen. Another curious fact is that in Pelorus you can catch schnapper, plenty of them, but not in Queen Elizabeth Sound, although the actual waters are not more than a mile apart from one position. Durock found a place where he could cut about 2,000 hop-poles and they went back to Karaka Bay, and started in the Huia, exactly with the same crew, but with the addition of Miss Maud Durock, a fair-haired young lady, and a great help to her father in the management of the little Huia of eight tons. Pearl Durock was now engaged to Hornycastle Richards. Somerset had of course seen, and was much impressed with her beauty, and the very fact of her being engaged to marry his friend, seemed to make him think of his own hard fate. Durock was very proud of the Huia. She was about eight tons, and built of "Kowhai" or native cedar. She was beamy, swift and stiff, with some lead on her keel and a considerable amount of good ballast besides. 148
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They had a pleasant run from Karaka Bay to the South entrance, varied now and then—when fairly inside this most remarkable narrow outlet—by "willie-wa's" which drove the yacht ahead with great force. As many of these violent gusts were circular, that is to say one moment dead astern, the next second dead ahead and then from both sides, the greatest vigilance had to be exercised by the helmsman, but Durock was up to the "willie-wa" in all its vagaries. They arrived at sundown at a beautiful little bay with a beautiful sandy beach, just inside the South Head of the South entrance. Above, on the heights was a large cottage with ample verandah, the residence of one of the Sound settlers, a Mr. Sandall, who, seeing the yacht anchor, pulled off in a boat and asked them all up to tea, which invitation they thankfully accepted. After a sumptuous repast they all adjourned to the kitchen, where a blazing log fire seemed to invite a general smoke and conversation, which eventually turned to all sorts of subjects, whaling, fishing, natural history and gold-mining being included. Mr. Sandall mentioned that his beach was one of the rare ones, mostly at the sea-entrances, where the beautiful and fragile nautilus (Argo) is cast up. Durock's beach at Karaka Bay in the northernmost entrance was another of the beaches where it was found. After spending a most delightful evening, the young lady of the party foregathering with Mrs. Sandall and her daughters, the crew of the Huia pulled back in the yacht's dinghy, the Huia lying right in the silver path of the moon, with all her spars and ropes outlined against the light of it. They all slept well until early next morning, and Durock consulted his aneroid. A slight fall! Everyone knew what that meant. A strong Nor-Wester! After breakfast they weighed anchor, got hatches on, and made all secure for a rough trip. Their sails were not much use to them after they rounded the point as the wind failed them, but the strong ebb tide shot them over the kelp reefs, at one time rather near the rocks.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Durock, as a strong N.W. puff rushed down on them. "Don't half like it, beginning so early. Shall we go?" he asked Somerset.
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"Of course," replied Maud Durock, ignoring his reply in her haste, and knowing well that her father's anxiety was only for herself. "Of course we will go daddy, I am all right with you, and you'll want me to-day, now see if you don't."

Miss Maud was in yachting costume, but later she was in a sailor's waterproof with bare feet, when she was needed. Durock muttering something about "catching it from the old woman," nodded assent, and the "Huia" flew by the last kelp reef and then they could see the state of affairs at the Heads. A high heavy roll from the S.E. was smashing at the base of those iron-bound cliffs with a muffled roar. As they passed Tawhite, the Maori whaling station, the open-sea, with a vicious, foaming, tide-rip in the distance on the starboard side is visible, with a background of the distant blue hills of the North Island over the tumbling water. Keeping the two white beacons at Okekuri—another farm settlement, in a line—by which Durock cleared the "Boat Rock," the "Huia" slipped through the wild grey pinnacled entrance, and was out at sea!

And a real old-fashioned high, heavy sea it was. A long S.E. roll into which the little craft sinks every now and then as if loath to come up again. There is a fast freshening north-west wind driving her at speed over those lofty billows. The dinghy, a new one of Durock's was bobbing and plunging astern, and often could be seen high up against the sky, as the "Huia" sank deep in an abyss. Durock prophesied trouble in regard to this boat, as she had been found rather too large to be taken on board, and events proved that he was right.

Running over the Straits at over nine knots an hour, when near Cape Zeralhiti—the abode of the winds—they double reefed the main-sail and took in the jib, also single-reefing the foresail. Then they "caught it." Squall after squall of great violence bore down upon them, and in passing through the tail of the tide race off this gusty cape, it was impossible to do anything but hold on, the motion being so quick and uneasy, but Durock's forethought had provided "life-lines" fore and aft, so that there was some-
thing to catch at, in heavy lurches. The driving spray through the force of the wind, cut like hail, but the Huiia made the most magnificent weather of it, being “as stiff as a house, and as lively as a cork” as Durock expressed it. Miss Maud was worth quite an able-bodied seaman, and was delighted with the experience of the blow, knowing that she would be one of the few ladies who had crossed the Straits in such a small craft, and at her first trial too. She was a buxom, vigorous girl, and possessed many of her sisters attributes, and Somerset admired her pluck, and winning manners immensely. She was smart and quick at reefing down, and knew all about sea-faring life. Somerset had all his work cut out to hold on and wipe Durock’s eyes with a towel, as the squalls off land were terrific, and obscured vision with their pitiless driving stinging spindrift. Durock cast anxious glances, but it was almost impossible to look to windward with the stinging flying water. All along the coast of the North Island which they were now skirting the waves broke with an ominous thundering roar, but their towering crests were cut clean off and shot backwards by the nor-wester, which was off the shores here, giving the extraordinary sight of the huge S.E. “combers” rushing landwards but leaving their spray behind them in smoke-like trails. All the way to Wellington Heads they experienced very heavy squalls. At the entrance to Chaffer’s Passage, the unfortunate dinghy which had gradually been getting water-logged from flying spray, sank level with the water, often taking a dive, and being a great strain on the yacht. Rocks were now on both sides of them and a fearful sea was running. With one impulse the crew of the Huiia tailed on to the “painter,” dragged the dinghy through the water and on board—and a mighty tug it was—upset all the water out of her and tumbled her overboard again. They only had about two minutes’ grace to do it in. “Ready about!” Round she goes, and is off on the other tack. For three boards in this narrow channel they experienced great anxiety, but Durock, the hero of a hundred storms exercised marvellous skill to keep clear of reefs and rocks. Clear at last. They
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hoisted a small second jib and away she dashes like a greyhound from the leash. Furious puffs every moment. Abreast of the pilot-station there are indications of a lull, but in a few moments down it came again fresher than ever. After several boards and passing four steamers they made Soames Island, and bore away again, when with one final drive in a cloud of spray they shot by the shipping, and rounded up to their anchorage at seven p.m. It was worthy of mention that they were accosted on the wharf, and told that a captain of one of the Union Company's steamers had reported a small cutter outside to be in need of assistance, but the crew of the little ship were not of that opinion. They all went to an hotel, leaving the man on board, and Arthur said good-bye to the Durocks next day, as he had to catch his steamer for the South.
CHAPTER XVI

CHRISTCHURCH—AND AFTER

Ah yes, to you I might have been
That happy being, past recall,
The slave, the helpmeet, and the queen.
All those in one, and one in all,
But that which I had dreamed to do,
I learned too late was dreamed in vain,
For what I might have been to you,
I cannot be to other men. —*Atlantic Monthly.*

ARTHUR was back in his old rooms at Christchurch, indulging in a confabulation with the Señor.

"Well, my poor Arthur," said the latter, "you assure me that you have not in any way compromised yourself?"

"Not in the least," exclaimed Somerset, readily. "Whatever my intentions might have come to, it is not for me to say. I danced three or four times with her, but of course not at the same party. We played lawn tennis together, but in no other way, either in word or deed, did I seek to be more than a friend."

"That is all right. Now what will you do? It will bring on a challenge, my Arthur. You will have to get the pistols and coffee for three, presuming that we leave Mr. Osbern in a moribund condition—you, myself and the cabman. If he challenges, I pray you, choose the rapier. It is the better and surer weapon if you know where to place it."

"Nonsense," replied Arthur. "If it does come to fisticuffs, I can take care of myself. Osbern is all right,
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though I dislike him in some things. What should I think of it, I wonder, if I were in his place, and some one was to come down and take my girl's heart away from me? I don't feel as if I have any right to be here.

"Then go back my friend, and end it by marrying the other girl," laughed the Señor, ironically.

"That could never be, Señor, while there is a chance in this direction," said Arthur, sadly.

"These young fellows will half murder one another," thought the Señor. "That was a bold stroke of mine to hint to Miss Featherston about the engagement—all for my young friend's sake, too. I'm glad it's not true, and my friend Arthur will have to fight it out."

Arthur ran right up against Lucy Falconer that very evening. The girl started when he met her in the public park enclosure, right opposite Verbena Cottage. He raised his hat. She flushed and then turned pale, all of which Arthur noticed. In a few moments he had told her all he had come to say in a manly way. But the girl was obdurate, even when he told her that the rumour of his engagement was false. She held to her engagement with Osbern, though she liked Arthur far more now, if that were possible, than before, and they parted, the girl remonstrating with him for coming to see her. Thus they parted, with breaking hearts, not even seeing Miss Featherston, and Arthur passed down the street to intimate the bad news to the Señor, and vowing vengeance against Osbern all the way down Hereford Street in his own mind.

Lucy now surprised every one with her feverish gaiety. She went to balls, parties, picnics, with renewed zest, and was never easy unless shining at some society function. Elderly dowagers shook their heads and pronounced her flighty, and tongues wagged in all directions. Then her manner changed again, and she shunned society, going about with her betrothed's people in a quiet, unemotional style, which caused other pointed remarks in select circles. As for Arthur, he went the very next day back to Wellington and across to Waitahiri, resuming his duties, and being much commiserated by Richards, who got up another expedition to Karaka Bay, and carried Somerset off from
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Saturday evening till the following Tuesday in his father's steamer, the *Maori*. It was rather awkward for Arthur, seeing the complete happiness of his friend Richards—who was now quite recovered from his accident—at the meeting of his sweetheart at Karaka Bay. He was very much inclined to take what fate had given him at Waitahi, in the person of a clever, pleasant girl, who would have made him the best of wives, but with the mingled love he had for Lucy Falconer, that was impossible at present and he could not yet, until after her marriage, give way to chagrin in the manner suggested. The young lady in question who had had no serious thoughts on the matter was no more affected than by a passing idea or two, that "Mr. Somerset had grown quite dull since he went South." The girls down at Karaka Bay, perhaps feeling some innate sympathy for Arthur, arranged a small party in which the girls from Short Island were asked to come over and share in the festivities. Richards happened to have brought down a polyphon, and some choice dance tunes; and they had an impromptu dance on the short green sward near to the sparkling waters.

The three Island girls—sisters—daughters of a white man and a Maori half-caste woman of very high rank, were very handsome, one of them, the eldest, was marvellously beautiful. Her name was Aoitea Saunders. She was about eighteen years of age, a most graceful maiden. During the dancing—a square dance—Somerset noticed her on one occasion, colour most delightfully. Shortly afterwards she beckoned to one of her sisters and then the two disappeared for a few moments into the thickest wineberries, Aoitea emerging a little later, gravely, but with a little sparkle in her eyes. So he conjectured privately that some article of her dress had become unfastened. But he never forgot that charming, self-conscious blush, which flushed her face and neck and even her bosom. However, she resumed her dancing with gravity and composure. The Maories are such a fine race, both physically and intellectually, that any inter-marriage with the whites produces remarkably fine offspring, and these Island girls were quadroons and renowned throughout the district for their great beauty.
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Only the very faintest trace of the Maori dark color lurked in Aioeta. It could not be noticed in her complexion, which was that of a pure white, only incomparably richer in tint. It was principally in her raven hair, and soft dark eyes, so made for love, that these traces were to be noticed. All three of the girls were clothed in white, and Aioeta wore some Kowhai and clematis flowers on her breast and in her hair, and very lovely she looked. She seemed to take to Somerset at once, dancing with him several times. He thought she was the loveliest girl he had ever seen, and her manners were charming, confiding, and affectionate even at this early period of their acquaintance. All three of the sisters—their mother was dead—were capital hands in a boat, either rowing or sailing. They excelled at it, but they had been brought up under European supervision at the native school near Waitahi since their childhood, amongst both British children and pure Maories, and were consequently very well educated. Music, dancing and all home arts had been imparted with perfect success, for even the pure Maori is a most rapid and intelligent learner.

Later on, Somerset and Aioeta found themselves seated on the short green grass under the Karakas, with the air growing refreshingly cool under the westering sun, and the gorgeous fire-opal tints beginning to deepen, whilst Aioeta possessed by an idea of her own that Somerset would be sympathetic and perhaps courting that very sympathy, was saying,

"Don't laugh at me, Mr. Somerset, for what I tell you, but I think my own must be a strange nature. I feel that I am the three-quarters of your race. I feel all that they feel. I have their common thoughts and hopes and aspirations at heart. I know what they know, and do what they do, as far as it is permitted to me, a poor girl, and I worship in the same church that you do—when we are in town that is to say—I learned the knowledge of the white race at school. But there is a love of my own race deep, deep in my heart. My mother knew all their traditions, and posted us in them when we were little children. My mind often wanders back amongst my Maori people, especially amongst my ancestors, and often, when father and ourselves are going to Waitahi in his sailing boat, to make purchases, we
sometimes pull the White Cloud into some bay to rest, or have a meal. I sit on one or other of those numerous lonely beaches, with the 'tuis' calling Maori words to me. 'Tamaiti o tuku ngakau'—'Child of my heart'—with the chime of the woodlands from wind, and stream, and tree in my ears, and my heart is very mournful because of the old days, the days before the white man, the days before your white Captain Cook, when the Maori wandered about these Sounds, wheresoever he listed, when the canoes flitted over the waters from Kumara and taro patch, to Kumara and taro patch, where even now you find, after all these buried years, the Maori trace along the beaches in his stone-axes his little carved greenstone idols, his greenstone tools for making canoes, or perhaps a bit of hard-wood carving from the front of some old deserted whare. Yes, even back to the nearly white Moriori, who inhabited these islands before the Maories came, my thoughts go. With them also my blood must be mingled by descent. I feel then that I am a sort of outcast among you whites, neither one thing or the other. You won't be angry with me, will you, Mr. Somerset for thus expressing my ideas?"

"Angry with you? Miss Saunders," replied Somerset, struck by the poetry in her nature. "Not I indeed. I am only too charmed to hear you talk thus. I too have always been impelled with a strong desire to go back to the past—the Maori past—whenever I am about on these Sounds. But Mr. Richards is going to-morrow to East Bay, which you know is one of their old, old settlements. I believe it was a big strong Pah once, wasn't it? Cannot you and your sisters persuade your father to let you all come. Press the two Miss Durocks to aid you, I myself should be very glad of your company, for we have many things in common to talk about, and I intend to take copious notes for my paper. Your knowledge of the past would be of enormous advantage to me.

"You would like me to come, Mr. Somerset?" she said suddenly looking him full in the face with her wonderful eyes, as if she would read his very soul, and then, perhaps finding an honest, but wavering glance in his, under their power, they softened wonderfully, and changed almost to
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motherliness, such as some protecting angel might assume if it was the guardian spirit of the young man, and then again shifted to a maiden's half-doubting glance as she added. "Yes, I could help you a little, I think. I will come. How pretty that 'Mandolinata' was. I can't get the tune out of my head." And her pretty fingers played the chords with both her pretty hands on the lap of her white dress. "Isn't it a lovely sunset? Now I must go, and make arrangements for to-morrow. I expect that we shall all stay here to-night, so as to be in readiness to go with you." And she rose swiftly to her feet, and ran forward to another group, where her father was expatiating to Durock about two or three old musket-flints he had picked up on the beach. This outcome of three different races left Arthur musing. The extreme beauty of the girl. Her wonderful capabilities. His own independent position. A letter received by the last mail, just before this visit to Karaka Bay, had given him the news that an aunt on his mother's side had left him heir to her property. Her last will and testament had been enclosed to him together with her solicitor's letter. It was worth £1500 a year, and a house in Sydney was included with it. There was a strangely magnetic and sympathetic feeling already established between himself and Aiotea Saunders. A little society enjoyed together might rapidly develop a far firmer feeling. They were both of them hovering on the threshold of love. They had danced together. Arthur had felt within his arms that firm, gracefully rounded form, and but a spark would kindle the flame to attachment. A feeling of close sympathy between young people of opposite sexes soon develops a warmer feeling. And who would dare to say it wasn't there already? Arthur felt a strange feeling at his heart when he looked into the depths of her glorious eyes. And she was much attracted by his handsome face, athletic frame, and honest kindly manner. The night passed away, and the East Bay expedition was ready to start after one of those wonderful fish-breakfasts, so famous at Karaka Bay. The Kawhai had her sails up, where she was lying at anchor, and they all embarked in the White Cloud, Saunders' famous skiff sailing-boat,
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which they towed away to East Bay with them for the purpose of disembarking again. East Bay was a wonderful deep inlet flanking the South Side of the North Entrance, at the widest part of it. On the left hand of this deep inlet, as you first went into it, the sea hills on the coast rose in rugged grandeur, the peaks of the outside hills being visible—blue in the distance—over all the foreground. Nearer came the wooded hills, high indeed, but not so high as the outside sea-hills, which were mountainous. Then from the base of the forest hills, a gradually sloping golden tussock covered descent sloped right down to the rocky cliffs and beaches of East Bay itself. The end of it, six or seven miles up, was much flatter land, with a noble stream through the middle and clumps of timber along its banks. This was where the old Maori Pah was. And on the right were steeper and more rugged mountains, with thickly wooded gullies running up the sides of their spurs. To the old Maori Pah at the head of the bay, they were bound; and just at mid-day the Kawhai dropped her anchor with a splash, and they proceeded to land in the White Cloud, a good sized party. All the Durocks, Saunders and the three Island girls, Somerset, Richards, and Durocks' man. The lovers, Richards and Pearl, paired off and went away to the right to examine the great beach for curiosities and mementoes of the day. This beach stretched right round the bay and was of sand and schistose formation. A quarter of a mile inland, through clumps of “konini,” peach trees, and “manuka,” along the banks of the stream the first “whare’s,” and the fenced in road leading to the Pah, where the poles and side pieces were all kept in their places by withes of the native flax, were visible. Right in the midst of the “raupo” thatched “whare’s” on a green spot where the “marae” or public-meeting place must have stood—a slightly raised platform—in earlier days, and under a grove of pink-stemmed fuchsia-trees, the spot for the luncheon was selected, and all the party, with the exception of the first pair mentioned, began to busy themselves with the arranging and unpacking of the provender baskets. A good wood-fire was set a-blazing, and perfumed smoke of the burning embers was wafted pleasantly far and
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near. Peals of gay laughter rang out from the girls, as they hurried about adjusting the table-cloths, and placing dishes and knives and forks in order, and the males were bustling about also, bringing wood and water, making themselves useful—and—useless.

Aiotea was more than usually bright and happy that day, and more than usually beautiful and attractive, as with a bright flush on her face, she flitted about, here, there, and everywhere. After the lunch they wandered about amongst the dwellings, and along the banks of the stream, and found all sorts of treasures. Aiotea and Somerset at length collected two large "maori kits" full of them, including leaves from the New Testament printed in the Maori language, old fashioned wooden cartouche boxes, with holes drilled into them and old leather straps on them, relics from some of the Maori wars, captured from the soldiers in some fight. And many other things they had gathered; for Arthur was very keen about these sort of curiosities, and had long ago started an old time museum, where he had a fair collection of old stone-axes, "tikis," and green-stone implements, including beautiful spinning baits made from "pawa" shells. They had a long, interesting walk and talk, all to themselves. Their ideas were so congenial that they wandered up the sloping hill at the end of the bay until they found themselves at the top of the sea-cliffs with a vast sheer drop below them, and sat down on the golden tremulous whispering tussocks together, out of sight and ken from anyone but themselves. And in front of them was the grandest panorama of coast and sea. Cook's Strait with its moving, glittering waters and the blue distant North Island. And behind them Queen Elizabeth Sound. The flame had kindled, and Arthur, attracted to this girl more than ever, deeming that his old love was utterly hopeless now, had told Aiotea all his story, and had asked her to be his wife. The girl has accepted him. It has been very sudden, but she is radiantly happy. She whispered. "Arthur dear, my heart was yours, when we first began to talk." My only fear is, that someday, you may have occasion for regret, seeing that I am descended from the Maoris. But I am of good blood. My mother's ancestors were of the best Maori
blood, through a long line of fighting chiefs. My father is a good man, a real man though he is poor. Will you take me, as you find me, Arthur?"

"My darling, I am proud of you, immensely proud of you. Few girls can boast either your beauty or intelligence. I thought I could never love again. But you seem to have been sent to me to show to me how false those ideas were. Let us go back to the others now, dearest. Take my arm, and we'll face the world together. The whole world can have nothing but admiration for you, my pet." A single glance at the noble pair, showed the rest of the picnic party how matters stood. In small communities the least attention of man to maid is taken to have but one result. Durock gave one swift glance, and retired quietly to the beach, sat down, threw sundry pebbles into the water in the direction of the Katohai, and went into fits of quiet shaking laughter. There was another of his would-be slanderers—but not the worst of them—done for, completely done for, asking his best and most tried friend Saunders, for his eldest daughter. And his worst enemy—Richards—already engaged to his eldest daughter. "Oh Lord, Oh Lord. It was too funny!" And he roared—inwardly—with convulsed laughter. Saunders was unaccustomed to go against his daughter's wishes. He had loved their mother dearly. He had always respected her native position and traditions. He knew his girls were good, the best and most virtuous of girls. So he offered no opposition whatever. After a very short interview with him the pair departed again to do a little authorized love making on their own account which was apparently very successful if their happy assured faces were to be taken into consideration when they returned. The two engaged couples were the focus of admiration on the way back. Indeed it was generally believed that the three girls not yet engaged, debated in whispers on the wedding dresses, the style of cakes, and other matters long after the time that they were supposed to be asleep that night. And there was also cause for more excitement among them for Aiothea now wore a diamond Solitaire ring—a real Australian diamond—that which there is no harder, whiter or brighter stone in the world, on her "engaged" finger.
CHAPTER XVII

THE “DAILY GAZETTE”

And the Rose answered, In that evil hour
A voice said “Father, wherefore falls the flower
For lo, the very gossamers are still”
And a voice answered, “Son, by Allah’s will!”
—Rudyard Kipling.

ARTHUR and Horncastle Richards went back to their work well content. Richards was in raptures over the whole affair. He had been backed up and seconded, so to speak, in his matrimonial matters, by his Editor. Now they really had a stake in the place. As he termed it, when the pair of them were married, they would have both anchors down forward, and another out at the stern, his way of expressing a life anchorage. Somerset now made him an offer. He was going to put money into the business, a good round sum. That meant improvements in the printing plant, and increased circulation to Richards, and was warmly welcomed. After the conclusion of these preliminaries they walked over to the “Barracouta” and drank success to the venture. Then they went back to the newspaper office. Richards was going to order a complete new set of type and a faster machine, and was walking through the rooms taking mental notes of what he required, whilst Somerset after a glance through the books, commenced to arrange the front window with various specimens of printing, including menu cards, ball programmes, invitation cards, etcetera, etcetera. Whilst doing so he noticed the editor of the rival paper, “a common weekly” glance in at the window with an ap-
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proving smile. He nodded to Arthur and passed on. Meantime the Saturday issue of the Gazette came out, with a leader calling attention to the change of plans and proprietary, with the additional news of the old bi-weekly being turned into a daily at an early date, a real bona-fide daily, which fact was hinted to be one of the increasing signs of the growing prosperity of the district, and towards the close of the article, attention was drawn—unfortunately as it turned out for the author of it—to the great care to be taken, and the facilities to be offered to the public in the printing of all sorts of fancy articles in improved type, such as the window of the office showed after Arthur’s careful arrangement. Unfortunately for the latter, however, the “Old Fossil” weekly, as he and Richards had irreverently nick-named it, came out on the same day, with their bi-weekly issue. And this “opposition rag” had a “local” in it the reverse of pleasant to Somerset, which read as follows:

O TEMPORA. O MORES.

Pace tua, oh Gazette, it is with regret that we notice our juvenile comtemporary—always in a hurry as usual—has left its former beaten track, where we were quite prepared to compete with it, where its road was secure for a modest competence because made so from the first by older and more experienced hands—“That damned old Editor”—murmured Somerset, as he read onwards—“older and more experienced hands—“I’ll be even with him yet”—and is shooting recklessly off, on a bicycle track of its own. Now a “daily” is, we hear, decided upon. We would ask the proprietary to pause, to beware. Where is the population to warrant this new, absurd, and we may suggest, immodest expenditure. We have no doubt but that the proprietary mean the “daily” to form the motor, or driving wheel of the Gazette bicycle, but where is the need of this new and blind undertaking? “Hit ’em hard” murmured Arthur again. ‘They can’t start a daily, an we’ll run ’em clean off their legs.’ “We’ll make people come from other parts” chimed in Horncastle Richards, who was now looking over his Editor’s shoulder, with a face of incredulity.
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at the paragraph. And let us—"The Fossil"—who happen to have an ancient local standing, advise our young friends—"Me and you, Dickie," said Somerset, looking round—"before they launch into hitherto untrodden parts to beware of trying to mislead the too trusting public, by exhibiting in their flashy but false window."—"Our only window" interpolated Somerset. "We'll have three shot in "Dickie." "I'll pull down the hand-machine room, build a bigger front, and give fifty feet more to the office. There's plenty of room."—"Our very own ball programme card, with our names and address—our imprint, in fact, at the bottom of it. But their design is only too obvious. They cannot produce its equal."

"Oh Lord!" gasped Somerset, "Where is it? Oh the old brute!" And he rushed to the window, and there, in the very midst of the *Gazette's* special bits of show-work, reposed a gaudy flowered programme card belonging to the "Fossil."


The Daily did come out at last, and on that very auspicious morning both Aiotea Saunders and Pearl Durock happened to be in the office and perused Arthur's first daily leader with delight and satisfaction. It must be understood that a month had elapsed from the time of the return of Richards and Somerset from Karaka Bay, and the exposure by the Editor of *The Fossil*, until the present date of the first daily issue, when the two girls were together in the office with their respective promised husbands.

"A really capital leader, Arthur," remarked Aiotea. "But there was another—a sort of introduction to this one—wasn't there, some time back. It appeared in a number of the old weekly, which I read at the Island—before I knew you," she added, in an undertone, "just about the time," raising her voice in gaiety, "that you and Horncastle went down on that wild goose chase of yours."

"Oh, yes," chimed in Pearl Durock, "and branded my poor father as a pirate. Don't you remember, Dickie?" "Dickie" looked anything but pleased. He was distributing type like lightning. "Never mind. I've made you
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pay for it since, haven’t I, Dickie?” “You have,” muttered “Dickie,” in a rage with himself. “Here it is, Aiotea,” said Pearl. “Here is the article you wanted. You read it out, dear, and I’ll criticise.” Which Aiotea did, sitting down in Somerset’s own particular chair with a bright, intelligent smile.

THE SOUNDS.

When Captain Cook first planted the British flag upon Motuara the experienced mariner no doubt expected from future times, prosperity, content, and happiness, arising for the population of such a district as this is. We want that population, we want energy, we want forethought. Our pioneers have done what they could. They have discovered coal, and gold has been worked for some time in the district. The indications of the latter valuable metal are considerable down at the Avenue Farm, from thence through Mahakipawa and probably out through the Kaituna to the Wairau. What the interior hills hold yet we do not know. Captain Cook may have thought of argosies lying at anchor, but in his day, gold was not the factor it is now in making lands and cities. He may have dreamed of many ships passing and re-passing each other on the waters of the Sounds, but he did not think of gold indications on the Pelorus. He may have felt also that his exploration into undiscovered sea-realms in the far South had led to a possession important to the English speaking people. He may have even seen in mental vision, rising towns, increasing population, fertile harvest fields, and may have fancied that the sound of the surf and the cry of the sea-birds would give place in future time to the buzz of a busy, working, manufacturing population. No doubt the harbour, and such a vast one, one of many, was to him of great importance. Here was room, only mention- ing the one Sound at our very doors, for the whole British navy to manoeuvre in, depth enough to float the largest ships, breadth enough even for the old wooden walls of his day to sail in strong column of squadrons. Such may have been his thoughts naturally enough, but since the brave old navigator has “gone aloft” what remains for us
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to do, with our improved knowledge. Simply this—To go to work in earnest, to utilize our natural resources, our great gifts from Nature's liberal hand. Truly they are many. From the earth itself. Timber, grain, wool, coal, gold, antimony, manganese, copper, stone, flax, fruit, etc. From the sea and inland waters, fish and shell-fish in great variety. Again, let us glance at the wonderful facility Nature has given in opening up the great plains of the Wairau in the interior by the easily graded Kaituna and Waitahi Valleys. This fertile agricultural, and well-watered region inland, the great plains stretching away from the base-ridges, and mountainous districts will be of immense value to the country, and the valleys between will enclose smiling homesteads, more numerous than ever, and become wonderful fruit producing places. Nature never gives advantages like these, unreasonably. There is little doubt that the hills and mountains all along the sound, and in the interior, cover wealth, and bring the rain. As to covering the wealth, that seems certain enough, else why is gold found in the lower beds of the Wairau, and at Mahikipawa. Coal measures will be found which will supply the world with coal, and keep our manufactories here going. Why should not Waitahi build the best vessels in New Zealand? Rope making could be carried on in the port, with the vast available swamps of phormium tenax along all river flats. The best Manila rope in the world could be made here with the native flax. Fish curing in all its forms, and many other branches of industry would soon place a city where our town stands now. England is a country of almost unlimited wealth. Would no philanthropist stand forward and prove that these sources of great wealth do exist in New Zealand? English capitalists would benefit by it. These capitalists invest in almost everything on the Stock Exchange, and often know that such and such a company or mine that they hold stock in exists but in name, or is doubtful.

Why not invest in something real; it wants capital, of course, and a considerable amount of science. But we believe great deposits are there in the hills. Now is the time, our time, to make things known and attract people
here. In almost any geography in the world you will read that there are three great harbours in the world. Sydney, Rio Janeiro, and Cork, but you never see Queen Elizabeth Sound or Pelorus mentioned. And these two are bigger than all the rest put together. They want describing. They want their natural advantages given to the world. We shall endeavour to carry this out. We should push for a wider circulation of the United Press, and give better information all round of localities. It will be our endeavour in future to give more minute information concerning the mineral deposits and gold-reefs in the Sounds, and we would invite our subscribers and others to send us in reports and specimens concerning these subjects.

"Excellent, bravo, Mr. Somerset," exclaimed Pearl Durock, delightedly.

"Very good. Science will come to our aid someday," observed Aiotea, with a smile. "I think as you think Arthur, that these great Sounds and hills are not placed here for nothing by the Creator. Under that wretched 'tahine' and 'tutu' scrub some day treasures will be disclosed. All in the course of time, of course. Now for the other, to-days' leader.

OUR MINERALS.

As we had previously arranged we give a resumé of our previous article on mineral deposits in this neighbourhood. At the Point the work is progressing slowly but surely, and the manager expects to find the main-reef shortly. Good gold is said to have been found here before. At the Crow's Hill mine there have been undoubtedly good prospects, some rich gold having been found, but a great deal of the precious metal has been lost, through some flux which carries it away with it into the sea. We understand that an experienced gentleman, a mining expert from Victoria, has been engaged to prevent this, and develop some improved plan for saving it. When this is done, the returns ought to be satisfactory. A report from this mine, from
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the directors to the shareholders, gives the following results:—

No. 1. 150 tons stone yielded 65 ounces of gold.

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No. 2. 165
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2. 165
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3. 208
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4. 205
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5. 203
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6. 125
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An extract from the report will show how this waste of gold alluded to above, through the flux, or "slimes," is proved to be real. The reports say:—

"The gold actually obtained from the first crushing, irrespective of that contained in the 'tailings' and 'slimes' was 65 ounces as above shewn, or say equal to 8 cwts. 16 grs. per ton of stone. The figures of loss were shown by an average taken from the general loss on the whole crushing as a result of the 'slimes.'" The surface indication of the Crow's Hill mine, commence at the sea-level on the Port Blood side, the surface rising abruptly for a distance of 330 feet to the mouth of the Adit tunnel, about 180 feet above the sea, thence with varying slope to the summit of the range at a distance of over 1500 feet, where it attains an elevation of 550 feet from measurements taken by the barometer, which is the highest point of the reef. Near the summit are several outcrops of quartz veins, from one foot to three feet thick bearing west, 20 degrees north, some dipping vertically, others at a high angle to the south. On these one shaft has been sunk to the depth of 85 feet. On the slope of the range, descending towards Port Blood, there are several outcrops of quartz varying from one foot to four feet in thickness in a line with the course of the lode. To the north and east of the Burner Shaft, within 100 feet there are two small quartz veins dipping away from the main lode into the hill.

The quartz forming these outcrops is apparently free from minerals, owing chiefly to its proximity to the surface, yet it is in many cases a likely looking stone for gold. There is also a very rich yield of gold from some pyrites here, which on being assayed yielded nearly 17 ounces per ton. A new mining manager has been engaged, and men
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are going down to work, so that a new era of success will probably come upon the Crow's Hill mine in the near future as they will save gold under the new management. New plant tending to this saving of the gold has, we understand, already been erected.

With regard to the Antimony Reef, near the entrance to the Sound, one of the prospectors is living there yet. There are eleven shareholders in the company, and we have reason to know that they propose to work it in an elaborate fashion, for the indication found by the prospectors is considered sufficient. There is little doubt that the main reef has never yet been found, although there are blocks of antimony scattered all over the country, and lumps are found lying on the hill-sides in some parts covered up with earth, and in others collected in small pockets. Tramways—wooden tramways—were laid down some time ago, but they are now quite rotten, and the bush has grown over them. We understand that the assay gives 50 per cent. of antimony, as it was tried once or twice on a small scale, just to get an idea of the value of it. This reef runs down into Try Again Inlet. From the saddle on the Dividing Range going downwards two miles of country contains this antimony, and for all we know there may be antimony on the other side of the range also. Surely here is another field for enterprise and capital. Antimony is yearly becoming more useful as its properties are being found out, and it is now used in connection with various industries.

The driving for coal about Waitahi is progressing, as the prospectors have followed it in, 200 feet, driving for the main seam. The last coal was very good, and Mr. Tempest of this town, says that it is the best he has ever used. It gives a great heat and causes no "clinker," the iron coming out perfectly clean. Some time ago we sent several district specimens to the Sydney School of Mines for report, and we herewith publish the letter received:

"The specimens of coal from Waitahi appear to be of very good quality being very bituminous. It would be worth while having an analysis made, with a view of determining the quantity of ash in the coal." Coal seams,
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unlike quartz reefs, lie in a more or less horizontal plane, generally dipping slightly. You should be able to observe the direction and angle of the dip, at the outcrop of the seam, and can thus form a very good idea as to where the coal extends to.

“The specimens from Ngakuta, shew no indication of coal, but belong to an older formation, in connection with which gold might be looked for. The marble of clay you sent might either be from the coal formation or from an alluvial clay formed from the schistose formation, but it is impossible to say which, without seeing it in situ.

SPECIMENS RECEIVED

1. Waitahi bituminous coal.
2. Schist.
3. Waitahi fossil gum from coal.
4. Shale.
5. Ferruginous schist with quartz, from the Avenue.
6. Sandy schist from the Avenue.
7. Quartz from the Avenue.
8, 9. Mica schist from Avenue.
10. Quartz from Ngakuta.
11, 12. Mica schist.
14. Mica schist from Avenue Farm.

Such was our letter shewing indications of gold at Ngakuta. We have also received some splendid specimens of manganese from Tawhite Channel, and we are assured that there are thousands of tons there. We also understand that there is good building granite rock about this vicinity and also lithographic stone. In order to give publicity to the stones and minerals of this district, we would as heretofore invite contributors to leave specimens at our office, and we will endeavour to have the exact value of such specimens made known.”

“Dickie” and Pearl had taken themselves off somewhere else, ere Aiotea finished reading, leaving Somerset and herself entirely by themselves.

“Very good indeed, Arthur,” said Aiotea. “And the war news—Repulse of Buller at the Tugela! Arthur, five hundred mounted Maories have volunteered to go! They

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would all go if they were required. I've heard the 'haka.' My mother, you know, was brought up with the tribe. They are one of the finest fighting dark races under the sun." And Aiotea's eyes lighted up with the fighting blood of two noble races.

"At the first word 'Reverse' your country Australia was stirred to its depths, and every able-bodied man wanted to go to the front at once. So it was in New Zealand and every other colony. Now many young men of both countries have gone, and others are yet to go, and"—she turned pale, gasped and pressed both palms against her heart.

"What's the matter, dear," anxiously asked Arthur, as he embraced her. "Do you think I want to go to the war when I have you to guard at home. Not I, indeed, my duty is to you first of all. It's not so urgent as all that. There are plenty of better men there than myself, and plenty more to go."

"Oh it's nothing, dear, it's nothing," she exclaimed, but her face was pale. "Only a girls' foolish fancies. I knew you wouldn't leave, but—Suppose you should be killed? I couldn't, couldn't lose you. But you know our wedding, and Dickie's too, is fixed in three days' time, and we girls are going down in the Maori to-night to Karaka Bay. Then next day I shall probably go over to the Island with father, to take a last look at the old place, and come back here to you. Arthur, kiss me."

And the girl clung convulsively to her lover. An hour afterwards the two girls joyously embarked in the little steamer, and Aiotea's white handkerchief was fluttering until they were out of sight round the point. As Richards and he walked back together Somerset said, "I feel rather miserable to-night, Dickie. I wish I had gone down with Aiotea. But I have my work to do, and must go and do it."
CHAPTER XVIII

FRANK OSBERN

Yet with steady lip, and with fearless eye,
And with cheek like flush of dawn
Unflinchingly she spoke in reply—
Go hence with the break of morn,
I will neither confess nor yet deny
I will return thee scorn for scorn.

—A. L. Gordon.

I am sorry to say it, but there was a spice of the wrong sort of a devil in Frank Osbern, a devil not of elan, but of dogged revenge, and if he was crossed in anyway this bad part of his character came to the surface. Given his own way and let alone he was a pleasant enough young fellow, but dogged, easily roused, and possessing a temper none too happy because of early spoiling by his mother. Disloyal too, was Frank Osbern, as his pro-Boer tenets plainly enough shewed. When any one individual raves against the best government in the world, that person is a pest to society and should be promptly sat upon, and ostracised. New Zealand was far too loyal a country for Frank to dare to hint his sentiments at a less auspicious moment than at a family gathering, where his ideas were supported by the members of his own circle, but those ideas were there in strength and he forgot that he lived in security and peace in a grand country under the very flag he abused. It was sheer ignorance on his part, backed by a stubborn desire to be opposite—dead opposite—to other people. Whenever—as happened once or twice.—Frank sat on a jury, he was sure to be the only dissentient voice. That was his
Frank Osbern

nature. He had obtruded his opinions upon Lucy twice, but had been met with a chilling reserve and a look of disappointment, which really covered disgust, and he did not forget the second and last occasion.

He had remarked, after expressing his ideas upon the subject of the Boers, that a fellow had a right to his own opinions.

"Yes," replied Lucy, "but I had no idea you were so disloyal, Frank."

"Disloyal?" answered Frank. "Yes, I suppose that is your judgment. I don't believe in any government. Every man should do just what he wants to. I suppose you would call your admirer, Somerset, a loyal man?"

"How dare you speak to me in that manner," replied Lucy firing to white-heat. "Yes, he is both loyal and a gentleman."

Frank flushed, "And I am not, I suppose?"

Lucy answered no word, but as they were close to Verbena Cottage, she left him in the street, and going indoors told Miss Featherston of her determination to have nothing more to do with him, writing a note to that effect, and posting it later on herself.

Frank Osbern had left Christchurch in a rage, and his anger was no less when reading this missive two days later at Wairuru. He swore a little oath that he would be even with Somerset some day, but had no clue at present to his whereabouts, and knew nothing of the Senor, who could have informed him if willing to do so. Strange to say Don Vasquez Ibanes had passed the couple at the very instant of the culmination of their quarrel, and heard quite enough—knowing both parties by sight, and being unknown to either of them—to make him think a little over matters.

The Senor, it will be noted, thought a great deal over matters. But he knew that Somerset was now engaged to be married, and kept his counsel to himself, reflecting that anything he might now say would be unavailing. So he never hinted at it in his next letter to his friend. But he thought also, that although Lucy Falconer hinted that Osbern was no gentleman "they will make it up some day.
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They always do. What fools men and women were! But the young man is a cad. Whatever the girl could see in him at any time is more than I can imagine. Face and figure perhaps. Somerset is worth a hundred of him.”

Frank Osbern was more in a dogged wilful rage than anything else. And he was a sort of man who would never say that he was wrong. So he just wrote Lucy a short letter, saying, “that as she made her bed, so she must lie on it. It was no fault of his.” This letter was promptly burnt on receipt and Lucy turned her attention to other matters. She had, before this, heard of Somerset's real engagement through the Senor, who managed to keep Miss Featherston posted up in Arthur Somerset's movements, partly through an idea of policy, to cover his first mis-statement, but in fact Arthur had written to Miss Featherston herself, and Lucy, after her non-recognition of his hopes, when he visited her on his forlorn mission could say nothing. But she—with her woman's curiosity had egged her aunt on to ask for a photograph of the bride that was to be, and within the last week it had been sent, and they were both struck with the great beauty of Aiotea Saunders.

“I hear from Don Vasquez Ibanes, my dear,” said Miss Featherston blandly, “that she is not by any means a pure Maori. Her father, I believe, married a Maori princess, but she was only half Maori. Miss Saunders is therefore a quadroon. She is very intelligent, the Senor tells me.”

“You must introduce me to your friend Don Vasquez, some day, auntie,” replied Lucy rather listlessly, and then she turned the conversation into other channels.

Frank Osbern now altered his tactics. Like most young New Zealand farmers he was a splendid horseman, and owing to the saving habits and perspicacity of his father, who had owned Wairuru before him, he was able to breed his own horses, and was always very well mounted. He used to ride down to Christchurch oftener, stop at one of the hotels and spend money far more freely. He also began to take more liquor than he had been accustomed to.

There was a place, a small farm out on the New Brighton sand hills, he had lately bought just before Lucy Falconer came out from England. There was a cottage
there but a pretty one. There were sand hills all about it, and in his spare time, or when satiated with town life, he used to go out there with a friend, sometimes indeed with his mother and sister. He had some schemes for utilising this land, and turning it into a dairy farm with some of the Wairuru cows. Being so near Christchurch, he was of opinion that it would pay well if he could find grasses suitable for food, which would grow on the sand, and bind it together, thus preventing the dust storms which swept across it during the prevalence of the strong nor-westers, which harried it into desolation except in certain spots.

The chief difficulty was to cover all the sand hills with grass, and he was experimenting with several different kinds. He was now trying Australian “couch,” and American “buffalo” in this endeavour to get lasting pasture. At last he found out that ashes and cinders on top of the sand formed the best bottom for sown or planted grasses, and the ideal seemed to be in sight if only a prosperous season eventuated with plenty of rain. He had ordered many cartloads of ashes from the city, so that there was always a string of carts going or returning. Then he fenced his four or five hundred acres of this seaside farm, and often lived there for a month at a time, developing further improvements. There were a few rabbits scattered about over the many miles of these sand hills, for they backed the ninety-mile beach. He began to fence all his acres of sand, flax, manuka, rush, tui-grass, and swamp, with a sheep proof as well as cattle proof fence, and found enough even within its limits to distract his mind. But if he cared to go farther for sport, and there was no one to say him nay, there was an occasional pheasant, or a stray covey of partridges, besides many sea birds, with a few ducks wherever water had made a small pond amidst the rushes, and so sometimes he would wander far and near with his gun.

At times he was rather morose, and at others he debated upon the propriety of making, or trying to make it up again with Miss Falconer, and ascribing his opinions and rudeness to her as merely the result of jealousy, which was surely pardonable, coming from one who was a great
admirer of her himself. He interviewed Miss Featherston and learned from her of Arthur Somerset’s recent engagement. So that stumbling block was removed. If he played his cards well, he thought, there could be nothing—given a certain amount of regretfulness for his behaviour—to stop him from getting back to his former position with the young lady. By and bye he wrote a letter to Lucy herself, apologizing most humbly for his previous behaviour, urging most strenuously that it was only the love he bore to her, that made him act in such a manner, that he was half mad with jealousy when he did it, and many a special excuse besides. And Lucy, considering it in this light, thought she too, had been a bit too hasty, and matters were resettled. But she insisted that no marriage should take place until the full and stipulated time should have elapsed. The Senor happened to meet this newly-reconciled pair one evening as they were “doing the block” in Hereford Street, and at once prided himself immensely upon his own superior judgment. And Lucy having found apparently a change of views in her lover, as well as kindlier manner regained her good looks and determined to do all she could to reclaim Osbern herself.

But he never really forgave her, and was only playing a part, determining to have his revenge when they were married. Frank’s new farm, which had now become a regular hobby to him, was situated about a mile away from the sea, on a sand hill overlooking a flat marsh. Beyond it, seawards, the land was sand-dune after sand-dune, although before you came to them there were dense patches of flax and forests of tall thick manuka, with gnarled and twisted stems, so thick in places as to shut out any view in a straight line. The natural grass that grew on the sand hills was a long wiry, many rooted, wandering grass, with tints from yellow to orange. It took root after growing above the earth, close to its outcome, went on a bit and rooted again, split into arms and rooted all along them at intervals. But it was no good for stock, and it was so tough and wiry that it required a good strong pull to break it. However, it was from this particular native grass that Frank developed his ideas of “couch” and “buffalo,”
because they were both of the same nature in their many rooting, and sand-binding properties, but vastly superior to the wild grass in stock-grazing richness. He planted some hardy trees about, although the cottage was protected from flying sand in a great measure by a forest of manuka which extended its wings three parts round it. Water could be either stored on the flats or in the hollows, or got by artesian boring. Meantime the Northampton was out again, and Miss Featherston and Lucy were accosted one day in the street by one of the sailors, who said he remembered them on the previous voyage. He was looking for work, he said. Could the ladies give him any? They volunteered to speak to Osbern about him. Neither of them remembered the man, but he gave them some particulars of the voyage out, which were indubitable, and they believed him accordingly. The man's name, as he gave it, was Rawlings.

Contrary to Lucy's expectations Osbern jumped at this chance. He wanted a man he could leave in charge at this sandhill hobby farm of his, and in a very short time he pronounced this sailor to be just the man he wanted. He could cook, fence, garden, and attend to the grass making. By Osbern's own account he was a perfect paragon. He certainly did a lot of hard work, and seemed anxious to get on. But the real fact remained that he had been dismissed from his ship for insubordination. However, that might be, he certainly worked well and was very handy to Osbern. He had one fault, but he took very good care to conceal it from his master. He was too fond of his grog and was a most unbearable brute when it mastered him. But for one reason or another best known to himself, he kept this failing under, and though Osbern even left a bottle or two about on occasions, he never missed any during his absence. The man was working like a steam engine to make money, as he wished to get on to the diggings at some future time. Whether Osbern's unexpected kindness in taking him on, and giving him employment had anything to do with the discharged sailor's resolution or not, it is hard to say, but there he was and there he worked, with nothing at present to his dis-
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credit. For one thing, the place was like a gold-mine to him. His wages were excellent. His lodging and food free. He lived in a small two-roomed house Frank Osbern had built specially for him, at the far boundary near the sea. By getting up very early in the morning before the sea-gulls were astir, he could secure three or four frost-fish on the sea beach, which he could sell in Christchurch at from seven shillings to ten and sixpence each. These fish are great delicacies for the table, and are in much demand at hotels and clubs. He used to send them up to market by a neighbour who used to take up milk, to whom he sometimes gave a fish for his trouble. Sometimes, if he was very lucky, he would get half a dozen, besides a fresh ling or so. But the frost-fish are of such delicate structure, that when they come near shore on a frosty night the cold of the shallow water kills them, and they are washed upon the strand. So Rawlings went on hoarding money obtained from this extra source of income, and strange to say, his character changed. Having made more money lately than he had ever seen at one time before, during his life, he began to be miserly. He thought he had found out the secret of making a fortune, and hoarded every penny. Lucy remained true to her determination, and in thinking of Somerset as an engaged man, did all she could to reclaim Frank apparently to good purpose, but still there lurked that in him which brooked no crossing in his love affairs.

In his own dull, dogged way he cared a good deal for Lucy, and was especially proud of her good looks and accomplishments. And there was little doubt also, about the girl herself making a sacrifice to suit the occasion. Was it worth it? And people talked as people will talk.
CHAPTER XIX

CATASTROPHE AND SEQUEL

Yet may I look with heart unshook
On blow brought home or missed,
Yet may I hear with equal ear
The clarions down the list.
Yet set my lance above mischance
And ride the barrier—
Oh hit or miss, how little 'tis
My lady is not there!

—Rudyard Kipling.

That evening just before dusk, Aiotea, her father and sister left Karaka Bay—after their arrival in the little steamer—in the White Cloud to cross over to the Island. Durock saw them start, but when half-way over—to his horror—he saw the lugsail of the boat balloon in some way, probably through a foul main-sheet, halyard, or tack, and the boat capsized in a heavy squall. The boat's crew had evidently intended let the sail go with a run, but something had occurred which brought death with it, all in a second. Durock managed to recover the boat after a hard pull, with his man, and with Maud steering. But the bodies were never seen again in the flesh—the strong under-currents, and great broken depths had concealed them for ever. Pearl Durock, however, had a letter written by Aiotea before her death, given her the last thing with certain injunctions. Sadly the Durock girls made use of the steamer again, and reached Waitahi in the middle of the night to break the dreadful news as gently as possible. Everybody was prostrated with grief,
and the tidings for Arthur Somerset was almost too awful for him to realize at once. When he did he almost went out of his mind with the suddenness and awful reality of it all. There was no hope of getting the bodies, although he went down with some picked men. Several attempts were made, but the sea held on to its dead. Aiotea had gone to join the race for which she had such kindly feelings, the “great majority” of it, alas!

It nearly broke Arthur down altogether, and of course “Dickie’s” marriage was postponed. When Arthur read the last letter written by Aiotea in pencil under the influence of some strange presentiment, he felt he could have blown his brains out, or flung himself into the Sound to join his beloved girl. The letter was brief and to this effect:—

“Darling Arthur,

If you get this letter given to you by Pearl Durock, I shall have gone beyond recall. Aiotea’s ‘mana’ has fallen. I saw it all in the office that last day I asked you to kiss me. It was not given to us to mate, but oh, Arthur, I loved you. But God knows best. Think sometimes of Aiotea. I shall be near you wherever you go.

AIOTEA SAUNDERS.”

Desperate for two days, was the term to use for Arthur’s case. At the end of that time, he interviewed Horncastle Richards, packed up his belongings, crossed to Sydney, and managed to get enrolled in the New South Wales contingent, the first detachment of them. He was a good rider, had money, and cared for nothing now, but it was his New Zealand volunteering which had brought him up to the mark.

As aforesaid, Arthur was quite desperate. The world was not good enough for him to live in it, unless it should please the Almighty to alleviate in time the sense of the harshness of the crushing blow that had just fallen upon him. He embarked with the New South Wales contingent in the transport steamer, and the very first night he was at sea, dreamed that he was in a most beautiful garden.
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He felt he was a stranger there. All the people were in holiday dress, and all the men wore pretty buttonholes. Not only were there all sorts of exquisite flowers in this garden, but there were numbers of beautiful birds of most beautiful plumage. These birds were all round the garden in large enclosures, each wonderful or rare bird, or pairs of birds, had enclosures to themselves. As he wandered over the green turf amongst the radiant flower-beds, he noticed that here and there were other people walking. Stopping to examine some bright pink flowers in one particular bed, a pretty, well-dressed little girl who was near by walking with a lady, apparently her mother, anticipated him by darting past, stopped just in front of him, and stooping down to examine the pink blossoms more closely, which resembled little pink birds, cried excitedly: "Oh mother, look, the little birds are just going to fly." As she spoke two of the small pink blossoms detached themselves, becoming tiny pink birds, which flew into the aviary of the Argus pheasant close by. And Arthur looked up to see in the little girl's mother Aiotea herself, with great mournful chastened eyes, which nevertheless looked through and through him, as if they could read his very soul, as also did at this self same moment, all the eyes of the male Argus pheasant which was sidling up to his bars close beside them. On awaking after this very vivid dream, Arthur wondered if he had really seen Aiotea's spirit in dreamland, and whether the little child was the one that would have been given to them had her earthly career been fulfilled. If it was not to have been granted to them in this world would it be in the next? But from that day forward he had the conviction that Aiotea was with him and near him in spirit. And the thought comforted him greatly. He could not forget her, nor did he wish to. So by slow degrees day by day his brooding sorrow became blunted, and the stir, and bustle, and fun, and good temper of his contingent on board the transport kept his mind away from retrospection in a great measure. The next time he saw Aiotea in his dreams was the very night before he got to Cape Town. She appeared just as he had seen her on that bright happy day when he had asked her to
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be his wife as they sat on the cliffs overlooking Cook’s Strait from the back of East Bay seawards. She lingered with him long, and he seemed to be telling her his troubles. But at length she pointed ahead and vanished.

All was bustle and stir with the men, as the big steamer glided to her anchorage with Table Mountain overlooking them, and when at length they were on shore and marching from the docks, he found Cape Town in a sullen sort of state. All sorts of bad rumours were flying about heavy British reverses. There were 1200 Boer prisoners on that big transport yonder. No, there weren’t. They were English wounded, with a large proportion of officers amongst them. But Buller had gone to the front, and reinforcements were now pouring in, and the men were packed off at once, no one knew where. Men in khaki were everywhere, he himself, after New Zealand and Australia, where all the people pulled together and were happy, thought Cape Town looked a wretched place, as they marched along in the dust through swarms of Kaffirs, and Cape boys, Malays, scowling Dutchmen, khaki-clad British soldiers, horsemen in khaki, cyclists in khaki, all so similar—those khaki-clad soldiers—that it was impossible to tell what regiment they belonged to. But his sentiments did not refuse to make an allowance for it all. It was war, stern war, and he did Cape Town the justice to think of it as a pleasant place, with a little acclimatisation to its surroundings in a time of peace when all these differences had been adjusted, and there was no divided rule under the English flag, the divided rule of former days which led to the hoisting of the “vierkleur,” and the wish and will to drive the British into the sea. Cape boys, yellow and brown refugees of all nations and all brands from the Rand, big lumbering yellow or yellow-brown hansom-cabs with little ponies in the shafts. A few cheers here and there, white and yellow flat-roofed houses with “stoeps” in front of them. Table Mountain, the glittering waters of Table Bay, all made up a panorama which got into his brain, and stayed there until finally they all got into the railway carriages, and went right away to De Aar. They had

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times of waiting about, guarding lines of communication, and all the steady monotony of camp duty. At last by some one's suggestion, and mounted men being badly needed, it was determined to turn them all into mounted men, mounted infantry, which of course ought to have been done at first, and would have been if Great Britain had spoken from Australia instead of from Downing Street, where the usual confusion and ignorance of outside matters beyond the street prevailed.

After only one mounted drill, they all turned out far better than the General commanding could have anticipated. Their first experience of being under fire was at Kloof camp, *en route* to Belmont after leaving Naauwport. At this place—Kloof camp—they were under fire before entering. Then they undertook out-post duty and were constantly under fire. They had arduous times of it, but buckled to their work like men.

On one occasion, together with the Inniskillings and some infantry, they checked the enemy from one position for two days, but the Boers managed to bring up some artillery, a fifteen pounder, and some pom-poms, with which they commenced a terrific fire. With their usual "verneukery" they turned the fifteen pounder into a howitzer by dropping the after carriage or trail into a hole, thus giving the muzzle and elevation for shell firing. Once going, they concentrated and peppered the British artillery very severely. Word came for their captain, Arthur's captain, to take out twenty men to act as a covering party. This the captain at once did with a simple, "Lads follow me, gallop!" They rode desperately forward for nearly a mile under both shrapnel and pom-pom fire. At the ridge at Hobkirk's farm on the left, the Boers attacked with heavy rifle fire, backed by artillery, and gradually forced the position. Here the Victorians distinguished themselves by saving a company of the Wiltshires, but they had to retire. Then they all held the valley with a line of mounted men, and skirmished until dark, when Kloof camp and Colesberg in their rear was evacuated. After which episode they held the hills from six o'clock in the evening until midnight, whilst the foot-soldiers
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retired, and the Victorians and New South Wales Mounted Infantry formed the rear-guard until they reached Maeder’s farm. The retreat was continued from Maeder’s, but they now had as companions the South Australians. They left at 2 a.m., and reached Rensburg in good order at 6 a.m. on the 13th February, 1900. They had been on this particular occasion of advance and retreat, three days and three nights out without any rest, and their unfortunate horses had no water, and only one half-feed for 38 hours. At Rensburg they fell in with their other half-company which had also been doing good work at Slingersfontein under their lieutenant both on outpost and acting as escort to guns.

Arthur’s company went on from Rensburg to escort an R.E. patrol to Arundel, but they met no enemy on the way.

Rensburg was evacuated on the following night, and the whole force retired to Arundel hotly pursued by the Boers, who were in great force and managed to cut off two companies of the Wiltshires, thus shewing their superior mobility over infantry. And at this time too the Boer artillery was far superior to the British. In fact the British were only beginning to find out that the fossilized military routine and red-tape, as represented by the War Office at home, had seriously hampered the brave men in the field. But the soldier wasn’t going to be beaten in the long-run, only the apathy and ignorance at home was responsible for many a gallant life through the stick-in-the-mud policy of the authorities.

On the 14th February Arthur’s force took part in a reconnaissance to escort guns, and the man riding next to him had his horse killed by shrapnel fire. How the man escaped, neither he nor Arthur knew when they compared notes. But by this time the whole regiment was “blooded to the open and the sky,” and were gaining great credit for themselves. Arthur was promoted to be sergeant for an act of gallantry in rescuing one of his comrades under a heavy fire, and stood a good chance for the V.C. Three days after his promotion he took part in another re-
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connaissance, and they were under a heavy cross-fire of artillery without loss. He was sure now that Aiotea was with him, according to her promise, and he was more certain of this because just the night before his rescue of his wounded comrade she was with him in his dreams, smiling, yet sad. The New South Wales Mounted Infantry all along had strenuously worked at all their duties, both men and horses having been used to the utmost of their force. On February 20th they went out again with a force to repel an attack upon their right rear.

One division, under one of their lieutenants, was escorting some of the guns when, unfortunately, one of the privates was killed by a shell together with his horse, and another private was slightly wounded. Subsequently, with the other three divisions, reinforced by some of the Victorian Mounted Rifles they were sent to occupy some kopjes in front of their position. At dusk, with thirty-five rifles and twenty in reserve, they were opposed to fully 200 Boers, and the small body of fifty-five men came to a dead stop. These Boers were in a farm on the opposite ridge. The rest of the New South Wales men were holding the other part of the ridge, which had already been taken. Arthur, at this juncture, under the heavy sustained fire which came from the farm, heard the bullets whizzing by him quite close enough, but was under good cover with the rest. And now began a furious rifle-duel which the Boers supplemented by firing shrapnel from an invisible gun one thousand yards away. And they also were firing at the Australians with explosive bullets. The whole of the company where Arthur was, even the horses and horseholders on the far side of the ridge were under a dropping fire, yet all escaped.

The Major of the Artillery sent word over to them when they got back to camp again, that they could not have done better, which was high praise indeed, and much appreciated by the regiment.

The last fortnight of the gallant New South Wales Mounted Infantry had been indeed trying. When in camp even, they had to stand to arms almost all the time. They suffered from broken rest all through, and none at all some-
times, and the irregular and deficient food and water. But what mattered it all. They had covered themselves with honour as a garment. They had proved to everybody they were not deficient in soldierly qualities, and they were fighting for the British flag, under which they were proud and happy to enrol themselves. They had been under it, and they would die under it.

The New South Wales Lancers were also a fine reliable lot of men, and had done excellent service. They were quiet and well behaved like all the Australians, but were full of dash and go, and under their genial and gallant Captain and Lieutenant were well spoken of by everybody, and fit to do anything they were set to do. Arthur saw more of them afterwards. Being thus with the Australians, an Australian himself from his childhood, used to horses, and out-of-door life Arthur was born and bred on an up-country station, before he was finished off at the Sydney Grammar School, and consequently from this early out-of-door life, could use an axe like an Australian. He was much amused therefore, subsequently, by the trouble some men of the Scots Greys had in cutting down a tree that an Australian could have gone through in a few minutes without other aid. This tree took a squad. The first man evidently thought that the work would be easier the higher he went. So he commenced to cut as high above his head as he could reach. As using an axe so far above one's head totally does away with the easy swing helped by the weight of it, this man made a most laborious task of the operation, having to support all the weight of the axe in the air, and thus neutralizing his muscle power. So he could make nothing of it. Then other men took the axe and chopped away in the same style to little purpose. They left this tree and went to look for a softer one, which they finally managed to cut about five feet off the ground after a degree of sheer muscular exertion, which could have been dispensed with if they only possessed a little science.

They were cheered when they got their tree down, and they deserved it. But Arthur reflected that these men were, most of them city-bred, and more used to the
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sword than the axe, and axes are not in vogue with the multitude in a city. The wood is mostly cut up by machinery. Men flock to cities now-a-days. England is losing her open-air men. Farming, in all its branches, is not what it was. Men use their bodies and limbs less than they did; even in our mercantile marine you do not see the muscle of the old days. All work is done by steam. It is a rare thing to find a merchant sailor, except in the "wind-jammer," who could go hand over hand to the mizzen-top, from ratlin to ratlin, on the mizzen-shrouds, or up a backstay. Plenty could do this in the old days. But I don’t wish to reflect on the physique of Tommy Atkins, good old Tommy—wherever he is—because they get plenty of other muscular work besides axe-work, and would do that well enough if only taught. Tommy is a hard man, and a tough man, and well he need be, poor fellow, when he is thrown against places next to impossible to take. It wouldn’t be a bad plan to exchange regiments. British regulars to come to the Colonies, Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians to go to England. They might each teach one another something, and would be sure of a kindly warm welcome everywhere. These thoughts were the outcome of Arthur’s contemplation of British axe-handling.

Soon after this, with the advent of Roberts and Kitchener, the tide of the war turned, and the first British successes came to cheer all their hearts. The relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith followed by the capture of Cronje and his followers, and the capitulation of Bloemfontein came in rapid succession. After a short lull the Boers were again sent flying from Karree Kopjes, in which battle the New South Wales Mounted Rifles also participated.

By this time Arthur, after many a hard-fought field in which his regiment had greatly distinguished themselves, got over his sadness in a great measure and became reconciled to his loss. There was hope of still further promotion for him, and so far he had escaped without a scratch. He heard from Richards who, by his direction before he left, made preparations to put up a gravestone on the Island marking the death of Aiotea, her father,
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and sister, and he had written to him. Thus wrote Richards:

Waitahi,
Queen Elizabeth Sound,
New Zealand,
December 15th, 1899.

"Dear Arthur,

"I suppose you have been campaigning it, not without glory. I hear very good accounts of your chaps. Everybody is talking of the usefulness of all the Colonial soldiers, and you bet it's going to make us all a nation of soldiers. There won't be any more humbugging about our army being so small, and not caring to fight for England, and British independence all over the world. We've hundreds of thousands of young active men, hardy enough for anything. And they will turn into the real thing in a month or so. Take 'em out of the bush, the plains, the hills, in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Give 'em a kit, a horse, a rifle, and we can soon manufacture the A1 article. They're born to it, bless you, and a fine hardy lot they are.

"I attended to your wishes about Aiotea's monument, and I have a nice stone of our local granite down at the island now, with a suitable inscription. And it is all neatly fenced in.

"Pearl and I are married, and very happy. We both sympathise with, and commiserate you. The paper is flourishing. I'm sending it ahead, but I miss your articles and help. I have got a young fellow, but, man alive! I want you back. Don't get shot.—Yours, Dickie."

Mr. Arthur Somerset,
New South Wales Mounted Infantry,
South Africa.

Arthur had still a tie with New Zealand. And he knew he had warm friends there. And, of all people in the world, who should he drop across during the fight at Karree Kopjes—near Bloemfontein—but Stanford, in a predicament. They had met before, but in the rush down to
Kimberley, and downwards to Bloemfontein had no time to speak much.

The New South Wales men were extended in fighting line when Stanford crawled up near to Arthur. So bespattered and stained with mud and dirt that full ten minutes passed before either of them recognised the other. His horse—Stanford's—had been shot dead under him, and he had had a heavy fall, having his leg under the horse for a little.

"I lost my troop," said he ruefully, for he was in some pain, though quite unwounded. "My poor horse was shot through the head. I crawled under a rock for a bit, then I came on. There go the rest of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles. There goes my troop into the thick of it, and the Boers are on the run. I'm a sergeant now. Done no end of good our chaps have. I'm glad to see you Arthur, still unhurt. Try and slip over to our camp if we have anything like a quiet time, and have a talk. I've lots to tell you, and I have no doubt, also that you can spin a yarn about a mile long. Whatever sort of place shall we meet in next? When we want to meet and talk there's fighting to do, or duty, or something. When we are not thinking about each other, but only how to beat the Boers and save our own skins, I get thrown up against you, and don't find out who you are for ten minutes.
CHAPTER XX

PLOT AND COUNTER-PLOT

She stands alone: ally nor friend hath she
Said Europe of our England, her who bore
Freedom’s own captains—Warrior Queen who wore
The glaive of conquest, but to make men free;
Then out from Summer’s home, came oe’r the sea
By many a coral isle and scented shore
An old world cry, Europe has heard of yore
From Dover cliffs—“Ready, aye, ready we!”
And England smiled. “Europe forgot my boys,”
Forgot how tall in yonder golden zone
’Neath Austral skies my youngest boys had grown
(Bearing brave swords and bayonets now for toys)
Forgot ’mid threatening thunder—mainly noise—
The sons with whom old England “Stands alone.”

—Theodore Watts Dunton.

The Senor had of course heard of Arthur’s terrible and sudden loss by letter from him, before his departure for the Front.

He had deeply sympathised with him for he had taken a great liking to him, and was also afraid that this repeated checkmating of his love affairs, might make the young fellow somewhat desperate. So he wrote in turn, a letter full of sympathy, and one or two of his letters reached Arthur in Sydney before he left for the Cape. They were devoid of the usual “chaff,” and counselled Somerset to take the evil with the good, and keep his heart up. He also knew of his friend’s good fortune in the worldly way, and could not help thinking that that way had been very hard for him up to the present time. Even with the
access of a fortune the Senor reflected that there was no one to share it with, and blighted affection was not a cheerful companion. Through the Senor and Miss Featherston, Lucy Falconer came to hear of it all, and in secret she was strangely affected by the news. Her ideal man was a hero, or might return one. And she had great difficulty in preserving her usual manner to Frank Osbern, who was jealous enough in all conscience, and might get to suspect the cause of it. Now the Senor was a very shrewd man of the world, and it is also slightly to be regretted that he was also a very meddlesome one, as far as other people's business was concerned. But he generally came out on top, and really did much more good than harm. And for some reason of his own partly caused by his regarding Frank Osbern as a wrong sort of man for Lucy, he was determined to find out for himself whether or not she really cared for Somerset. So in the course of time after seeing a certain telegram in the morning paper stating that Arthur Somerset had received promotion, and mentioning a certain act of gallantry by him; he happened to meet—on purpose—Miss Featherston and her niece on that same afternoon. He had never seen Lucy Falconer to talk to. He of course knew her. In fact he knew everyone in Christchurch, and strangers were at once noticed. But he wanted to see the expression of Miss Falconer's face. He raised his hat to the ladies, more particularly to Miss Featherston herself, and stopping for a brief instant informed her that Somerset had done well, and had been promoted to the rank of sergeant. As he had truly calculated he was first in the field with the news. The paper comment had escaped the ladies. Neither of them read as a rule much beyond the war news, the births, deaths or marriages, or an occasional glance at the fashion column. But the main reason was that neither of them being party-politicians, took in only the weekly edition, as being more for the money. It was some months now since Arthur had gone, and nothing had been heard of him until this brief intelligence. The Senor passed on immediately. And he knew what he wanted to find out, although Lucy, woman-like, made no outward sign. But
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the Senor had seen her eyes. And the Senor was infallible in eye-talk.

"Now here is a pretty complication, a very pretty complication of matters to come," muttered he inwardly, as he walked away. "Dear Arthur gets wounded, or comes back with one leg, or even whole, with a medal. Would one leg make any difference to the senorita? Not one whit. My word I pity that girl if the pig-headed young man finds it out. Miss Featherston is not likely to tell him, but he'll see the news in the paper. There'll be murder over this business yet. A young lady is engaged—quick-sticks—they all get engaged quicksticks. She is not in love. She doesn't know her own mind or her own worth, but she thinks it a fine thing, a very fine thing to be an engaged young lady. The other senoritas of her acquaintance will say, she is engaged! We must all get engaged quicksticks. It is the way of the doncillas. The young man judges her in the first instance by her beauty, but if the love does not go with the beauty, he will kick up a row. Again quicksticks! My poor Arthur, it will either be a battle with the fisticuffs, or a murder. For if I am a capable judge, Mio Pig-Head Osbern, if he really knows that you are the cause of his losing his girl, after all this quicksticks business, mistaken love, and love at first sight, and all that, will kill my Arthur. Also—quicksticks!—whether he has one leg, or one arm, a whole body, and a medal. Such were the Senor's deliberations.

We all of us have some ideal in life of either man or woman, from opposite sex to opposite sex. What more likely than for an attractive girl to form her own manly ideal. It was so with Lucy Falconer. She had always found Somerset a most perfect gentleman. Intercourse on board ship is very, very dangerous, also to two people of opposite sex. Passengers are away from the world altogether. They live in a little world of their own. The "old three-decker for the Islands of the Blest" is responsible for many a love match. In a present day steamer, there is too much crowding. Nooks and corners are not handy, or unobserved, though they are made so and occupied. But there are many nooks and corners in
the old sailing ship much more to the purpose. A game of chess in the tropics. A dance on the poop. Even a game of rope-quoits is conducive to love-making, or love-feeling, anyhow, and there are not so many bystanders in the old sailing ship, and perhaps a solitary observer, instead of fifty pairs of sharp watching eyes. Not being aware of Lucy's engagement, coming out, Arthur's mistake was excusable. Osbern had overlooked the ring. He had a fixed rule about such matters. It was part and parcel of his obstinate disposition. The engagement ring was to be his gift when he got his fiancée to New Zealand, but not until the last moment. He had paid her passage. He was perfectly convinced of that in his own mind. It was his wealth and standing which had drawn her out. As a matter of fact, it was nothing of the sort. The girl had come out to him at her own expense because she wanted to see what he was like in his own country. She wanted to study his character. And by her father's wish she was not yet exactly bound to him. The years of the engagement now being lengthened by her own inclination, were not yet expired. Osbern had no legal right to her yet. But she considered herself bound by her promise. Frank was down at his sand-hill farm. He had got to be uncommonly thick with Rawlings. Rawlings knew that Lucy Falconer was engaged to his master. The young lady had been down at the farm once or twice. He, of course, remembered Arthur Somerset on board the Northampton. On one occasion Rawlings told Osbern that he had seen the two a good deal together. So they had been. But this little bit of intelligence set Frank's jealous heart afame. He pooh-poohed it at the time, and said it meant nothing, but out of revenge stopped Rawlings going for his "frost-fish" in the early morning, on the excuse that it made him late with his work. This touched Rawlings on his tenderest point, the extra money he was making. But for many reasons he said nothing. The place was too good for him to give up. But he got his fish all the same when his master was away. And Frank Osbern brooded and was savage, the more so because he had lately seen in the papers an account of the heroism of one deed of his rivals', and
learned of his promotion. He was himself a young able man, pro-Boer in sentiment, a secret enemy of England, a man who wished to gain his own end by disloyalty. It was not a pleasant light to face, that of his own inner consciousness. And he dared not hint a word of his knowledge to Lucy. He was afraid of stirring up her defiant spirit again. He had seen the account of the death of Aiotea Saunders and the paper had mentioned that the deceased young lady had been engaged to "our esteemed townsman Mr. Arthur Somerset, an Australian gentleman of means." He drank a little more in secret, and with this devilish ally only, promulgated plans of his own. He knew that Lucy was inflexible about the time of the marriage. There was a full year to run yet. The next breach between them would end it all. Of that he was quite sure. So he did his best to ingratiate Lucy and her aunt in his favour.

Lucy of course instantly detected a certain change in his manner, and wondered what it could be caused by. She had given up any hope in the matter of Somerset's return. But she was proud of his conduct, intensely proud of it. She refrained from saying anything to Osbern which might hurt his feelings, but was really much relieved when he absented himself for considerable periods, and passed his time between Wairuru and Sandhill Farm. At the latter Osbern had built a new wing on to the cottage, making it more suitable for his bride's comfort, and was fast succeeding in making a beautiful place of it.

The Senor was perusing in the same old Christchurch lodgings two letters lately received from Arthur Somerset, in which he gave an account of some of his doings up to the date of the last incoming mail. The first was written from Colesberg junction, and was full of interesting information of Arthur's movements:—

**Colesberg Junction,**
**February 28th, 1900.**

My Dear Senor,

No doubt you will be wondering what has become of me, and whether I am still in the land of the living or not. We have gone through a lot since we landed, and though I have so far escaped others have not been so fortunate.
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On Monday last our commanding officer—Captain Legge—you must know that by this time, we ‘footies’ are now turned into mounted infantry—our Captain, I was saying, with Lieutenants Holmes, Dove, and Logan, and 80 men of New South Wales—my corps—and Lieutenant Parker and 20 men of West Australia left to escort Major Butcher on a reconnaissance. Leaving camp in a South-west direction they passed south of Dragoon Hill, the western outpost and made a detour to get the enemy’s position between them and the camp. They spent three hours in scouting the kopjes to the westward, and found that they were occupied by the second Victorian contingent. Moving northwards they carefully scouted as they advanced, and it was found out that the enemy had retired from Knilfontein. Lieutenant Holmes—New South Wales—occupied the kopje and describes the result of our shelling as terrible. The whole kopje was covered with shrapnel, and bandoliers, bandages, and other articles were strewn around. He found the place the Boer forty-pounder had occupied, with a beautiful bastion, cleverly hidden. The ‘pom-pom’ had been fired from a large hole dug with picks and shovels. On the top of the kopje was an enormous grave, about ten feet, by fifteen feet, so their casualties must have been heavy. About four p.m. Lieutenants Dove and Logan, with 18 men, scouted the kopjes in the vicinity of Maeder’s farm, when suddenly they were fired upon, and five men who had approached the farm were cut off and taken prisoners by the enemy, about 80 of whom pursued our men for some distance. In the retirement Lieutenant Dove was wounded, one bullet cutting the tips of the fingers of his right hand, whilst another grazed his leg. Soon afterwards his horse was shot and he ran along on foot until Corporal McDonald reined up his horse under heavy fire and took Lieutenant Dove behind and got safely away from the pursuing Boers. The missing men are Lance-Corporal G. E. Fraser, Private D. Fraser, Private S. Goodsall, Private G. McLennan, and Private F. C. Brock. All, with the exception of Brock, were members of the 5th Regiment—Sydney Scottish—Captain Legge with Lieutenant Parker—West Australia—and 69
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of the men, escorted the guns. They discovered that the Boers had vacated Plewman's farm and removed their laager. The force returned to camp about 9 p.m. About eight horses were shot during the day. On Tuesday at 6 a.m. a reconnaissance was made towards Rensburg, and the West Australians under Captain Moor were ordered to occupy Jasfontein, a position east of Rensburg. The Australian party for Rensburg consisted of Victorian Mounted Rifles and V.R., under Captain McLeish. Lieutenants Chomley and Staughton (V.M.R.) and Lieutenant Pendlebury (V.R.) accompanied him. Leaving camp about 6 a.m. they soon located the enemy in Tailbosch Laagte, and Major Butcher opened fire with his guns from the veldt beyond our outposts at farms, and gave them such an effectual shelling that they soon streamed out and made for Val Kop. The Inniskillings on our left flank, were, however, too quick for them and reached the hill first, when the enemy took up a position in a small kopje in rear, but our artillery again shelled them out, and they retired beyond Rensburg. The Victorians occupied Rensburg, and the little force was soon supplemented by the Artillery and Inniskillings, and a halt was made for the night."

Tents were left behind by the Boers, also a waggon with provisions had been left in their haste. Late that evening we had orders to move to Rensburg at four next morning and accordingly all was bustle and confusion. At 6 a.m. the convoy started and the whole of the men were soon on the road. As we left, a regiment of militia arrived and occupied Arundel in our stead. We reached Rensburg unmolested, the convoy still coming in across the veldt like a serpent for an hour after we arrived. At 10 a.m. a reconnaissance was ordered to Colesberg Junction, and the Victorians and New South Welshmen accompanied by Inniskillings and Major Butcher's guns, advanced. The Inniskillings, scouted to the right flank, and the New South Wales men with Captain Legge and Lieutenants Holmes and Logan, scouted the kopjes to the left. We crossed over the wide expanse of veldt, and reached Plewman's siding about noon, where a halt was made whilst the "nek" between the kopjes was thoroughly searched. At the

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station we saw the wreck of the railway trucks, partially burned and completely blocking the line. There were 14 trucks in a confused heap at the station, and nineteen on the rails further north. We were the first to visit the place since the New Zealanders so gallantly tried to rescue the trucks from the enemy. From this point the road lies through a rocky gorge, and through some very awkward country for two or three miles. The railway has been blown up at all points, culverts and bridges being blown to pieces. Half way through the gorge we came upon about twenty dead horses evidently killed by one of our shells when our gun was in position on Cole's Kop.

At 1.30 p.m. we halted at Colesberg Junction, and I am writing this in a house that was yesterday occupied by Boers. Several messages are written upon the walls, dated 27th February, and directed to Tommy Atkins, etc., but the most quaint was the following which Corporal Malcolm found on a piece of brown paper in the station house at Rensburg. It was headed. "To the British" and proceeded as follows:—"You may conquer for a day, but the sun will shine on the remnants of your wasted army, leaving it to the mercy of the dark shadow of night, and you will curse the day you lifted a hand against the belittled Boers. England was once upon a time a great nation amongst nations for justice. But injustice and hypocrisy has made her the greatest nation of injustice on earth to-day. The virtue of justice you know not to-day. Hence you fall, though a mighty nation you were. But to the will of nature you must bow your head, and as nations have risen and fallen before you, so you shall follow to-day. On Afric's sunny soil your glory and pride has fallen. To-day your hairs are falling from your head. Your head is drooping and your knees are weak, and you are stumbling at every step. You are doomed."

This epistle was unsigned. At the station here—Colesberg Junction—we found 2,000 or 3,000 empty Mauser cartridge cases, evidently kept with the intention of being re-filled, and also some Boer papers full of "victories." We hope to occupy Colesberg which is only two or three miles away, soon.

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About 2 p.m. we entered the town having covered the distance between here and the Junction without molestation. We were received with great rejoicings by the inhabitants, who were very enthusiastic. Flags were exhibited from all available positions and mottoes. “God bless our Queen,” “Welcome, brave soldiers,” etc., were tied up between the trees, whilst an old lady of about eighty, who sat on the step of her house feebly waving a Union Jack, and ejaculating, “God bless you,” added pathos to the scene. Our men were made heroes by the ladies, who brought them refreshments from their meagre store, and pinned rosettes on their tunics, and the loyalists with evident enjoyment watched the process of arresting a number of rebels who had stayed at their homesteads a little too long. Poor people, they have had a hard time for the last three months. All the leading loyalists have been imprisoned during that period, amongst them Mr. Craig, the Wesleyan minister, who was released on Sunday, owing to his health giving way under the strain. This gentleman invited me to the parsonage and whilst regaling me with tea and cake—truly a luxury for I had eaten nothing since 3 a.m. having been in the saddle all day—he gave me a brief account of the proceedings of the last three months. As I have stated, the chief inhabitants were prisoners during the greater part of that period and were confined in the Court house. The tales of glorious Boer victories were dinned into their ears, and occasionally prisoners would be brought in, some wounded, some dying, but although the reverend gentleman begged to be released to tend their last moments, he was refused. Occasionally the whizz of a stray bullet from our men at Cole’s Kop would be heard, and on three occasions a shell burst over the town, one of them being lyddite. He describes the report of the latter to be terrific. It struck the wall surrounding an old Scotch lady’s house, shattering it, and passing on, demolished the side of the house, but luckily the occupant was uninjured. On one occasion a stray bullet killed a little girl walking along the street. Another killed a Free State burgher, whilst sitting in a house. There are a few Boers here down with typhoid, and from the doctor we obtained information of some of our men.
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Captain Cameron of the Tasmanians, was brought here the other day, but promptly moved on to the Free State. He was slightly wounded in the hand and leg, and left a message for our men on arrival. Lieutenant Dove's men were also brought here, and one, Private D. Fraser, died just before we arrived. His brother, poor fellow, was unable to stay with him but was sent on to Pretoria. Private McLennan was shot through the skull, and had not received medical attention. Sergeant-Major McWilliam, West Australia, attended him immediately on arrival, performing the operation of trepanning, but although the poor fellow still lingers, no hope is entertained of his recovery. The other prisoners were apparently uninjured, and sent on to Pretoria on our approach. Sunday was a busy day here, and the townspeople say the Boers were passing through all day with their transports, coming in from all directions. Colesberg is truly an oasis in the desert. On reaching the station there was not a sign of life. The station buildings were deserted, the windows being smashed, and the interior resembling a stable. A sudden turn in the road, however, presented a very different spectacle. An avenue of trees covered with verdure and dotted with houses, snugly placed between the gloomy kopjes was given a finishing touch by the population, in all their Sunday best, as they streamed out to welcome us. Hundreds of women and children both English and Kaffir, dressed in white and gay rosettes of red, white and blue, added to our welcome, whilst one young lady rode out on a bicycle beautifully decorated with our national colours and a miniature Union Jack on the handle-bar. Shortly after our arrival, Colonel Price and Captains Jenkins and Sergeant with a detachment of the second Victorian's and Tasmanian's and Rimington's "Tigers" entered the town from the westward, the main body being at Coleskop, having marched thither from Knysfontein yesterday. General Clements and staff paid a flying visit to the town this afternoon. Provisions were growing scarce as the Boers commandeered most of the edibles, and forage for our horses was exceptionally hard to get, but after a diligent search I managed to get a bundle of hay for my
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horse. Several messages have been written and left behind by the retreating Boers. One worthy, who signs himself Wilfred Denver, warns the colonial volunteers not to fall into their hands, as they are “sick of them,” and alluding to the action on Saturday last during which the Prince Alfred Guards had a hot time, sarcastically suggests that Tommy Atkins should shew them how to fight before trying again. As a matter of fact the “P. A. G.’s” did excellent work, and I doubt if the Boers would have stood the fire those men were exposed to, for five minutes. The hotels, which have been kept closed under Boer rule, once more open their doors, and a sigh of thanksgiving went up from our thirsty men, who had not seen a bar for months. So you see my dear Señor that we are getting on.

I remain,

Faithfully yours,

ARTHUR SOMERSET.

The Señor remained absorbed for a minute or two, and then took up the other letter, which was dated later, as follows:

Osfontein,
March 6th, 1900.

“My dear Senor,

I am a full grown soldier now, and not the first Australian here, by a good many. My countrymen seem to be massing at the front. We are all mounted soldiers now, and don’t make bad cavalry either. There’s the New South Wales lancers for one lot. Of course, they were real cavalry at the start. They had “Aldershotted it” and all that. They were first at the front out of all the Australians. Times have changed a good bit since then, and we’re under “Bobs,” Kitchener and French. Consequently you may now expect great things and startling results. I heard from one of the Lancers the other day that when they landed in Cape Town by the Nineveh which steamer was commanded by Captain N. Allan, that affairs looked as bad as they possibly could be. Sir Redvers Buller had just arrived two or three days before them, and everything was far from in apple-pie order. There
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had been astounding and dreadful British disasters. They were the first of the Australians for the front. When they were leaving England after an unparalleled "send off," through the streets of London, they went down to the ship at the Docks. There was a dense fog, and the vessel couldn't get out. The next morning's papers brought the news of the Boer ultimatum. They—the Boers—were ready, and England wasn't. That was what the Boer ultimatum meant. The steamer got out in the afternoon and the weather was clear. She was flying the Lancers flag. As the first turns of her screw went out in the stream, the crowd at the water entrance to the Docks which had been patiently waiting, began to cheer. I must add that the Nineveh brought the New South Wales Lancers home, and now at the expiration of their home training, the good old ship was taking them out again to fight, the first of any reinforcements from Australia whatever, after the blessed Boer ultimatum. They—the Boers again—had simply been arming for years to upset the British Government, and were all ready with men, mercenaries, guns of the newest style and powers, explosive bullets, poisoned bullets, poisoned water, and a deadly hate for us all. We were to to be swept into the sea. Kruger, the "man who would be King," was going to stagger humanity. Well, away went the Nineveh, her shapely lines looking beautiful with the Lancers red and white flag streaming out bravely from the foremast. "If it was a great send off in the city," said my informant, "the river beat it. Every steamer, every engine, all the works and manufactories up and down the river Thames, in sight, out of sight, and around, blew their whistles at the start, 'Hip, hip, hip hurrah!'" All the people cheered in groups from liner, from ship, from river boat ferries, steam engines, traction engines, launches, from factories and from both shores of the river. Anything that could raise a pound of steam blew with a will. Never was such a water 'send off' to the forlorn little troop, the first to be on the move to fight for Mother England. 'Oh, it did me good to think that I was born an Australian, and to have lived to see this day.' So the Lancer said. 'Even a group of boys far down the river, where the great banks were
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lonely and wilder, saluted us. They had been rabbiting with dogs. They fired their two guns off as we passed, reloaded, and kept on firing until we were out of hearing. It made one's blood course through the veins with pride to think, that as these whistles blew, from mighty syren, from the deep, deep, far-heard boom of the big liner, to the tiny screech of the steam launch, that here was England, dear old England, ever as of yore, watchful, ready for the world in arms, alone and regal in her little island. But the whistles, the applause, the deafening shout, the 'syren's' hoot, the liner's deep roar. What did it mean? They were for Australia—our own land Australia. They were roaring and screaming for us, the little fragment going out, the first to do or die for the old Mother Land. Can you conceive the grandeur of it. The old Land that has braved the battle and the breeze a thousand years, alone, when her own name was concerned was no longer alone! Her sons were beginning to come to her, jealous as young lions of her name, accepting without a word of call from their grey old mother, their duty. It came from their own hearts. They weren't long about it, nor slack about it either. The old grey mother blood was in their veins. From worthy sire to worthy son it had developed into family manhood and pride. The British whistles seemed to say, 'Look out, lads, we're at your back. We have all here, stores and munitions of war, good true brave men. There's more coming. We're on the watch. Fight! yes, we'll fight all round. We're all together. Then all the colonies leapt to their feet MEN! The nations stood together like a strong tower. Away went the first contingents far less in number than was liked by the worldwide colonials. Then came REVERSE. More men, what's the use of a thousand? We could send a million. 'Every man jack of us will go, if we only get half a wink!' such was what the Boers' treacherous ultimatum did for us all.'

Out of fraud, deceit, lying, and trickery flung in our teeth flashed up at once, in us all, through us all, unshaken unwavering, TRUTH, unswerving loyalty, and a patriotism which should dictate to all the nations, that it's a "Family Matter," and they had better let us alone.

"Pardon me, Señor, for my digression, and let me go on
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with my Lancer’s story. When the Nineveh arrived in Table Bay, some men in the first big barge came off and told the news as they dropped anchor. Remember that all the news on the way out for the Nineveh, was ‘Reverse’ at Teneriffe, ‘General Penn Symons killed’ from a passing steamer. They expected to hear something good. And the men on the barge were not jubilant. They told them of more reverses, that whole regiments had been captured. Later, rumour stated that there were 800 Boer prisoners on that big transport in the docks. Not at all, they were wounded British soldiers! That was what the Lancers had to face on their arrival. Enough to dishearten an army of ten thousand trained soldiers. But our Australians ‘bucked up,’ as the Lancer said, and off went the little band of hardly 100. I think these men deserve some credit, don’t you, Señor? But I’m especially proud of my countrymen. And the little forlorn band have done good service since. In fact all the Colonials are real good men, the finest fighting material going. The New Zealanders, amongst whom is my old friend Stanford, have fought like lions and so have the Canadians.

“Now about a little surprise party of our own. I’m in the New South Wales Mounted Infantry. The Australian Horse came up to camp, and had a fight on their own account immediately. But we beat their record, because we had a fight before we got to camp. We are under Colonel Knight, and were camped about seven miles from the main-camp. We were awfully anxious to get a day’s rest for our horses which had the hardest of hard work lately. Our Colonel was just going to ask leave for a days ‘spell’ when in came a picket with the news that the Boers had attached an outpost and shot a sentry, one of the Queenslanders. Out we went—‘quicksticks’—as you would say. There were about fourteen hundred mounted men out, one way and another. Colonel Knight took us out. On we went, about seven miles over these boulder clad hills or kopjes, which, in this inferno of a country, supply the place of trees, until we came to the place where the attack had been made. We sent out patrols and they were at once under fire. Then we dismounted and attacked.
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Three of our attacking party were wounded, and several horses shot. Then on we went again, and sent the Boers flying. The Australian horse came into camp that night after we got back. So we were first in and had the first fights. Next morning, on we went again in force. The Cavalry and Artillery Brigade are about 15,000 strong and away we went south and east for some miles. The ant-bear holes were thick here, and horses went blundering into them, causing us to halt every now and then to reform squadrons. It was pretty dark, for we started at 3 o'clock, but when the daylight came there were troops away behind us in a string as far as ever you could see. At last, bang went the first gun of this attack, a big naval gun away on a kopje about three miles out of camp. We were trying to outflank the Boers by getting behind a long range of hills called the Seven Kopjes, and as we rode along you could see the Boers running about on these hills in great excitement. The big naval gun knocked a cloud of dust and stones off the kopjes, but no answer came. But presently from one end of the hills there was a reply, and a nine pound shell from one of the enemy's Creusot guns came whizzing along unpleasantly near. About a dozen shells were fired and to everybody's thankfulness did no harm. And then the naval gun having found out where the Boer gun was, gave a mighty roar, and the lyddite shell screamed through the air right over to the hill, and a cloud of dust ascended from the exact place where the Boergun was. It didn't fire again, and we pushed on until we were right behind the Seven Kopjes and were going right at the Table Mountain at the bottom of which was the main Boer laager.

We formed up with the Inniskillings, Scots' Greys, and Carabineers in the fore-front of the advance with the guns clattering behind us. It was a proud sight to see all those Australian horsemen and horses holding their place with the flower of British Cavalry in the very front of Lord Roberts' army of fifty thousand men! The Australians all told were only about 5 per cent. of that number. But thirty per cent. of that leading brigade were Australians!

We got between the Seven Kopjes and a low range of hills on our right, and then came the Boer rifle fire. We
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didn't see any of these bullets hit the ground where we were, and didn't know who or what they were firing at. The whole column halted, and we dropped off our horses and ran up a low hill on the right, running, bending low, crawling on all fours and dropping flat on our stomachs when we could see where the Boers were. There was some warm fighting with them, but we were out of range after a bit, as the cavalry and guns drove them further, for we had acted thus to support them. That was our work—the Mounted Infantry's work—and we held the Boers in check until our guns got a chance. Afterwards, when the Boers had all cleared out we followed them leisurely, and their laager was a sight to see for an overturned and hastily abandoned place. Bags of grain and things all over the shop, flour bags and corn bags. We got good feeds for our horses. I shall have plenty of experiences to tell you when I come back, if I am not killed. There's no telling when a Mauser bullet may find a vital part. The air is pretty thick with them sometimes. I have taken your advice, and the bitterness of sorrow is over now. But I shall never cease to regret. Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR SOMERSET.

"Good lad," muttered the Señor, as he finished it. "If I was to show those letters to the Señorita, they would lay Mr. Pig-Head on the shelf—quicksticks. If the war is over within the year, before you are married, Mr. Pig-Head, and my Arthur returns, you will not marry the girl, Mr. Pig-Head." And the Señor carefully folded the letters up, and returned them to their envelope, and, locking that away in an escritoire put on his hat and went out into the city. Frank Osbern sometimes worked hard with Rawlings fencing, for he was by no means an idle man. His hands were hard and rough and sun-tanned with toil, for he had always worked in the open air, and was accustomed to pick or shovel, axe, cross-cut, or long-handle. Lucy had sometimes made unfavourable comments in her own mind between the hands of her two lovers, but truth to tell Arthur's hands were much the same as Frank's, just now, with the hard work he had done in the South African Campaign.
CHAPTER XXI

"MAHINGA KAI, AND SACRED PLACES"

Pass to thy goal of success with blest union,
Let name and true nations be all things to thee.
Bid all live in peace and in friendly communion
Then shall thy commonwealth rise from the sea.
From morn till dewy night, when the fair moon does light
Snowpeaks and meadows and cities' and plains
Then shall thy path be clear. Progress thy mission dear
Friendship efface all the early blood stains.
Rays of the sun at noon,
Gleam of the harvest moon,
All shall declare thee Soon
Land of the Free!

THE Señor had determined also to find out how the land lay with regard to Frank Osbern, and also to learn if he had heard the news. So on the morning following after the reading of Somerset's letters, he donned a walking suit, and having finished breakfast in his lodgings, put on a soft felt hat, and, swinging a walking stick went away by the east belt of the city in the direction of New Brighton. Getting clear of the houses of the suburbs, he struck forward over green fields, and kept on until he came to the river Avon, seawards; in one of its many bends and turns, crossing the stream over the bridge he found at this point. Over the bridge he found himself on the New Brighton main-road, but having a knowledge of the whereabouts of Osbern's Sandhill Farm, he did not keep on it long, leaving it in a couple of hundred yards and going down a lane which ran at right angles to it, and resembled very much
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an English lane, with its gates leading into fields, and hedges on both sides of it of the English hawthorn.

When he left the lane he went over fields for a mile and a half, but at last the civilized, cultivated appearance of the country began to give out, and clumps of flax, and manuka thickets to appear together with a more sandy soil where his footsteps went. Here, however, it was hardly pure sand. There were traces of black loam still shewing in it. He was getting to the fringe of the sand hills. The Señor had never spoken to Frank Osbern, but he knew him by sight. A well-to-do New Zealand farmer, who stopped constantly at hotels, and rode good horses in a city like Christchurch is generally known by name by more people than can claim intimacy with him. The Señor seemed to know his way well enough and after crossing a little more rough ground came to a fence, where- in close by, was a cart gate and a well worn road. Passing through this gate the first sand-hills appeared, and winding round the first of these the road disclosed on a flat space of rising ground a large cottage. Walking straight up towards this the Señor made out a young man lounging in a verandah chair with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, a muscular sun-embrowned young man, with no particularly cordial welcome on his face for the new-comer. He got up and came forward. It was Frank Osbern himself, as the Señor was perfectly well aware of.

“Oh, you’re off the track,” remarked Osbern, surlily. “You’ve made a mistake. This is private ground. You’ll have to go back the way you came. There’s no public road here.”

“Pardon me, sir,” replied the Señor, blandly, in the best Castilian manner. “You are quite right, I am more or less a stranger about this part of the world, although I reside in Christchurch,” added he, looking very keenly at Frank, “but I set out for a walk and as you say, must have got considerably wrong. I shall be obliged to you, however, for a glass of water before I retrace my steps and then I go —‘quicksticks!’”

“Oh, if it comes to that, you know,” said Osbern, half apologetically, “and you are a gentleman residing in
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Christchurch, pray stay to lunch. You've had a long walk. My chief reason for not wishing to have a general thoroughfare made through my farm has been to stop the numerous holiday makers, who are so much in vogue now in these days of bicycles and electric cars. They would soon make a thoroughfare of my place as a short cut to the sea beach. So I stop anyone coming through. But with you, sir, it is different. Your mistake was not intentional. Do me the favour to come in. Excuse my dress, I've been hard at work with my fence this morning. There's the whisky. There's the soda-water in that syphon, and here's a tumbler. Help yourself. Excuse my leaving you, but I'm a bachelor, and my man's away. I go to get our lunch." And Osbern left the room, and was heard bustling about in the kitchen.

"Surly looks, Mr. Pig-Head. But you don't know me," thought the Señor. "Anyhow I've won the position, as I meant to all along. And I shall find out, Mr. Surly, Pig-Head how you amuse yourself, and some other things also." Osbern returned after a little while, with a cold leg of mutton, a bit of cheese, a bottle of Bass's ale, a loaf, butter, pickles, etcetera, together with plates and a table-cloth, all of which he placed on the table, and having put on a coat, joined the Señor at the meal.

"You haven't then gone to the war, sir?" hazarded the Señor, accepting the plate of mutton which Osbern handed to him, thankfully enough, for his walk had given him an appetite. "So many of the young New Zealanders have gone. "But I have no doubt that you have volunteered—quicksticks—'ere this."

"Not I," replied Osbern, snappishly, "I've other work to do, beyond volunteering. There's plenty enough wanting to go. I shall have a better chance to get on if if they all clear out. I'm goin' to get married too, and what's the use of goin' and gettin' shot. I can't see it if the others can. If they like to get shot let 'em go by all means. It aint my funeral anyhow."

"But you might get a medal, or pro-mo-tion," said the Señor with a look at Osbern out of the corners of his eyes. I see that some of the Colonial boys have done deeds,
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worthy of your English Victoria Cross, given by your Queen. I saw a name, Som-er-set, as doing a very brave action."

Osbern started, and turned livid, looking at the Señor as if he would read him through. Then he poured out a stiff glass of whiskey and drank it. "Yes confound the man," said he, "I know him, and wish it had been a bit of lead, instead of bronze, or whatever they make it off."

"So you are not friends? I am sorry for that replied the Señor in a most sympathetic voice, and busying himself with the spearin of a very fine gherkin, from the depths of the pickle-jar.

"I've no great cause to be his friend," sullenly continued Osbern. "He did me a bad turn once, and I don't forget it. That's all. But I daresay it will all come out in the washing."

The Señor made no further remark, and with great tact turned the conversation to farming matters, and having got Frank fairly astride upon his hobby, was cordially entertained, and after lunch, was taken along all one line of the new fence, during which journey all the mysteries of grass-making were explained, and Osbern's intentions were unfolded to him bit by bit. The Señor learned also about the Wairuru farm, and departed again in an hour or so for Christchurch having found out all that he wished. That a rancorous hatred existed in his quondam host's mind for Arthur Somerset, Don Vasquez was very well assured. During the inspection of the line of fence Rawlings had been introduced, and the Señor actually made him laugh heartily, a thing which puzzled Osbern completely, who had never seen Rawlings laugh during the time he had been in his service. But the Señor, during an impassioned argument about wire fencing, had trotted out his "quick-sticks" more than once or twice, and the way he said it, made even Rawlings, the sombre Rawlings, laugh.

The Señor was a man of many parts. He was an excellent companion, though perhaps a trifle argumentative. And he studied human nature. He was also a student of Nature's wonders, as well as the nature of individuals, and during any brief holiday, always made the most of his powers of observation. It was about four o'clock in the
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afternoon when he left Osbern's farm and strolled meditatively back to the main-road he had left soon afterwards when he had crossed the bridge over the Avon in the morning.

For some reason best known to himself he did not seem to be in a hurry to get back to town. So after repassing back through the lane he turned sharp to the left along the main-road, instead of to the right, and after walking half a mile, came to where the road turned to the left again at a right angle to its former course. He walked along this until he came within sight of the hotel near the sea beach at New Brighton, but instead of going on to it, he struck to the left again and made a detour right into the sand-hills. He had thus accomplished about three parts of a circle to the left, since he had left the Sand-hill farm, and was now right behind it seawards, and beyond its boundary fence, which was more than a mile from the sea beach. The sand hummocks which now rose around the Señor were very remarkable. In places they were like redoubts, or walls of fortifications, such as one sees at Southsea or Portsmouth in England, some abrupt, some with slopes, some rounded, but instead of green grass growing on their sides it was all pure white wind-driven sand. In the hollows between these sand-hills, a strikingly variegated rush grows with red and black alternate lengths distinctly marked on the stems, reminding one very much of the fringe on a Maori warrior's cloak or mat, and when Don Vasquez picked a cluster, offwent his mind at a tangent to the old pristine Maori custom, when the tribes were in a state of savagery and not the intellectual, enlightened people they are now, though even in their savagery they were a brave and noble race. Flax bushes grew around the Señor in grand clusters high over his head, and there amidst their greenery shot the flax stalks upwards like spears purple at the base and red brown near their tapering tops which were surmounted and finished off with their clusters of dark scarlet honey bearing flowers. The tui grass with its waving feathery plumes was also scattered about in clumps in many places. From the top of the first sand-hummock the blue line of the sea appeared and the snow-covered Alps stretched away to the Señor's
left again, and slightly behind him from the vantage point
thus gained of an open and far-reaching view. Up and
down again, he went over the sand breastworks, until the
last entrenchment was reached; and nothing but a hard
sloping beach is between him and the roaring, foaming
breakers he has come so far to see.

A sharp, fresh smell of ozone comes to his nostrils as he
strides downwards and draws in his breath in deep draughts
rejoicing in the revivifying excellence of it. There are
many shells to be found along the "ninety mile beach," and
in it also, and the Señor at once finds occupation by filling
his pocket-handkerchief with "pipis;" a species of a very
edible bivalve, to be found in great colonies there. He
scoops up the wet sand three or four inches down. A
squirt—many squirts—of sea-water shew where where these
shell-fish live, as the weight of his foot passes over their
clusters, as they lie not far from the surface of the sand,
each one with its breathing hole. The shell of the pipi is
fragile and cream white, the edible part of it, the living fish
itself is bright yellow, tipped with orange at the extremities.
They are delicious _entrée_, cooked in many ways. They
also make good soups, curries, and stews. The many tribes
of sea-birds feed on these "pipis," and it is no uncommon
occurrence to find the remains of several, emptied of their live
fish. Beyond the third line of breakers large black-fish, and
further out huge whales are to be seen spouting; and the
skeletons of many a dozen of them are to be found further
back amongst the sand-hills,

"How came these whale skeletons here!" mused the
Señor. Could a mighty storm have lifted their big
carcasses in the first instance in amongst the sand-hills
beyond the highest spring-tide water mark or did the old
time Maories hunt them ashore with war canoes? Then
after had dragged them to where they are, they feast on
them? Anyhow, how did their bodies get far beyond high
water mark? It is beyond me to explain it," said the
Señor to himself. For he knew these sand-hills, and had
been there before once or twice when he took a holiday out
out of town, which was but seldom. When he had finished
gathering his "pipis," he retired back into the sand-hills,
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sat down near the skeleton of a giant whale bleached and
dry with exposure, and mused on the by-gone days when
the Maories must have wandered here, untramelled by
any white races. "This surely must have been one of their
'mahinga kai,' or food grounds alluded to by that noble old
chief Rewi, when he said to the leading white men of the time.
"Leave me my mahinga kai, and sacred places." Whether
that hinted a fear of the annexation of the King Country
in the North Island or not I forget, mused the Senor.
The "Sacred places" would no doubt refer to the tribal
burying grounds, perhaps including old battle-fields, and
ancient "pahs."

A whale's jaw-bone of great length lay near Don Vasquez,
segments of the backbone, ribs, and tail, protruded from
the nearest sand-hill. In fact the Senor was sitting as he
smoked a contemplative pipe, on another jaw-bone. The
New Zealand red-gloaming was on. The sea was breaking
on the beach beyond him in great rollers, and though he
could not see them from where he sat he could hear them
only too distinctly. All about him, even the whales
skeletons, shone with a lurid flickering light, as he drifted
away in thought into the old Maori spirit-world. He
seemed to be sitting in one of the "sacred places" that
Rewi has given to tradition. The bones scattered about
took the similitude of giant bones of ancient warrior-heroes,
and the Senor in the latitude allowed by this peculiar drift
of thought became an old time Maori, almost in deed.
Jagged red-black trunks of trees, and their occasional
branches, were imbedded here and there in the sand-hills.
Silhouetted against the reddened sky these trunks and
branches—dead for ages past—took startling and fantastic
forms in the eerie, flickering light: They became in
the Senor's exalted vision, fierce dark-skinned warriors
an uplifted "mere"—fighting stone axe-club—in the hand
of one, the flowing hair streaming in the strong wind—
as if in pursuit of a victim—on the head of another.
There seemed to be the ancient creed brought up by these
fantastic surroundings as it would perchance present itself
to the untutored mind of the old time Maori savage. The
shin-bone of a partially buried—perhaps eaten—victim

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shining in the red light—suggestive of blood—War and victims. The stronger and the weaker. Battle and lust of conquest.

Yes, the dead and gone seemed to sit around him and talk to him. His mind was in the old Maori spirit world. The ancient warriors seemed to speak to him and say:—

Where are you going in these later days, you the understanding ones? We are the braves of ancient days and here is our creed as we learned it. We were kings and warriors, priests, and prophets. When we danced the war-dance and sang the “haka,” the fierce hot battle-blood flowed through our veins in maddening whirl. When we heard the song of our women, plaintive and low, our pulses became calmer. Those were our peaceful times.

Weird-like shapes of our own fathers, seen in the forest, in the tracery on bark of trees, on the seashore, on shells, on the plain and mountain-side by the markings in the sand and dust made by wind-swept tui grass, or tussock-spike, taught us our tattoo-marks. By the salt sea-rollers by the rushing rivers, by the inland lakes, the rhythm and rhyme of the elements kept sonorous time to the death-chant of our ancestors, and taught us more. From nature’s sounds we formed our songs of war, and rejoicing. Our fathers spoke to us as they flitted where you are sitting now, where our food was cast to us by the great waters, where the great whales and fish were thrown up. We heard an Atua in the wind and saw one on the sparkling waters. Aye, and knew and understood him in the roll of the thunder and flash of the lightning. We heard him speak in the storm-gust. When the wind swirled through the “kauri” and “totara” forests, we heard an angry Atua, of wrath and punishment, but in the warm sun and leaping sunbeams on the waters, we beheld the Atua as a spirit of kindness and light. That made us think good things. We found our “mahinga kai,” our food sent was to us in places you know not of. Nor do you know the seasons when we searched for it. We feasted and made merry by the sea at times and in the forest, by the river, and on the mountain at others. We fed our little ones, and we were happy, and gave thanks to the kindly Atua who sent the “kai.”
We are the heroes of the ancient days. Oh, but we were happy then. But the “Taipo,” the Evil Spirit, seeing our happiness grew envious and said, “They are ignorant, these people. Let them be enlightened. Then a great black and white war-canoe came with many wings and many men.” And said they, the wave-warriors on board it, “We are your friends. We wish you well. But you are ignorant. We know all things, and we loved them these wave-warriors, when we saw they meant no harm. But we wanted to kill them at first. Why had they come? At last we stayed with them, and brought them off our Kai, and shewed them our weapons, and our canoes and dress. Then they began to teach us, good things, bad things, and wonderful things. They could kill with fire. They could drink fire. And they taught us these things and went away. They went away to their own country a long way over the sea. And we were sad when they were gone. By and bye they came back. But not the men we knew. Nor was it the same war canoe. Then others came later in other winged big canoes and these stayed, and we learned more of their knowledge, and dissensions arose, and there were wars between us, and among ourselves. And some of ourselves sided with the white men, and the others were beaten in the long run. They fought and fell, and they fought fire with fire, for they had learned much. But the white men had most fire. Then many more white men came, and we of the old days went on our paths to the Great Atua, when our breath left our bodies, and we knew that he would make no difference between us. We are with the Atua now who made us and sent us out over the world, for when the first of us came to New Zealand we came from smaller islands in the sea out over the waters in two big canoes lashed together. The Atua brought us here, and there were smaller men and women here when we came, more like the pakeha in colour than ourselves. We killed the men and kept the women. So now we appear to you in our old shapes with our tattoo marks upon us, as we copied them from the Atua’s drawings on the fern tree stems, and the marks on the “pawa” and others shells. We knew that no hand of Moriori or Maori had made these
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things, nor could they paint them as either or any were painted. The sky, the sea, the forest, the mountain, the air were all in the colours on the “pawa,” and our tattooed faces were in the fern tree stem. It must have been a chief, a great Atua who did it for the “kai,” was in the “pawa” shell, black, but good to eat, and when it was cooked there was that thing which we saw every day in the shell, when sleep had left us. The colours in the “pawa” shewed where our “kai” came from, from sky, sea, lake, river, and shore. So the Atua wandered among us touching a colour here, and leaving a manual there, sighing, and smiling as he passed, for we were his people, and we learned that our Atua was the Atua of the white race also. But to our old race he spoke by signs and through the “tohunga,” and we were told “to be brave that we might live.” But we knew too that in his quiet moods, when he gave and taught us many things by signs, that he also wished us to be immortal, that we should see with our own eyes where all the colours, and light, and gift of sight, and life, and speech came from. We believed that he said “I wish them to be where I am, so that my chiefs shall be near me when I sit in council! And so the Atua made it, and when our bodies slain in battle lay dead upon the ground, the breath had gone back to him who gave it.”

“I shall be turning in to a ‘tohunga’ if I sit here much longer,” mused the Señor, rising and stretching himself. “Yet what grand fellows the Maories are, and how well and bravely they fought. But our quarrel is their quarrel now, and there’s no braver fighting men on earth. They should be second to none in New Zealand’s commonwealth.

Walking along the beach, now lit with myriads of stars and a still lingering light from the gloaming, he reached the hotel, ordered tea, had a rest and went back to Christchurch. When Don Vasquez Ibanes got back to his rooms in Hereford Street, he got out his spirit decanter, and mixed himself a glass of hot whiskey and water with some sugar and lemon in it. He was in no way fatigued by his walk, but felt in a pleasant restful mood, not at all spleenetic, and as he imbibed some of the late, and very scientifically brewed mixture, having ensconced himself
in an arm-chair, he felt eminently satisfied with himself and mused as follows:—

Yes, I should have become a "tohunga"—a Maori priest—if I had stayed much longer. Respectable citizens out for a holiday might have caught me wandering about the sand-dunes, prophesying, and muttering incantations to keep the "Taipo" away, with little clothing upon my body but tattoo marks, and that would have been a nice scandal to get about this town, with its mixture of Oxford and old time English city. Yes, I should have become a "tohunga" most undoubtedly—quicksticks. And now I think over my Arthur's letters again, I notice that he says "He will never cease to regret." I am not so old myself but that I too know what love is. I hear the girl was very beautiful. They are truly a fine race these Maories, and when their blood is mingled with the white, the race does not deteriorate. The old "Pakeha-Maori" knew that. But a white man must be almost a Maori by taste and inclination, to become a regular pakeha Maori. But with the quadroon you get a being with the fine physical qualities of both races, a sort of superior white. If a female, there is full Venus shape, a warm inclination, very many good qualities, without the enervating ones of the civilized female, such as tight-lacing, and abandonment of motherly duties, entailing a still weaker progeny. But really, said the Señor to himself, waving his cigar to give emphasis, the girl of the present era is waking up, and except perhaps in her habit of following out implicitly any new fad of fashion, such as dressing her hair in a particularly new style, which makes one—for they all copy—quicksticks—look exactly like the next one—the girl of the period, I think, takes more care of her bodily health that she used to, so that if she wishes to make herself exactly like another girl she must be excused I suppose.

Now in my "tohunga" mood I wander off to the South Sea Islands. What pretty half-blood children do you not see there. Perhaps our tendencies now-a-days prevent as much intermixing as of old. However I can quite understand a white man being struck with the beauty and intelligence of a girl who was so near his own race that one
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could hardly tell the difference. Ah, me it's a queer world
take it all round. But I have found out what I want.
Miss Falconer no doubt rather more than likes my Arthur, in
fact would infinitely prefer him to Mr. Surly-Pig-Head.
But being a young lady of right and proper ideas, she will
now, no doubt, try to make the best of a bad bargain, even
though my Arthur comes back whole, with a bit of ribbon
and a bit of metal at the lower end of it. She will do her
duty and soften down this jealousy of mind belonging at
present to her intended husband. And as I don't want my
Arthur to make an extra double first class fool of himself
when he does come out again, I'm going to convert Mr.
Surly-Pig-Head from a pro-Boer into a right minded
young gentleman of New Zealand, and thus earn a fair
young lady's gratitude, who shall be nameless. Mr. Surly
Pig-Head invited me down again as he got quite cordial
over the farming talk. It was lucky for me I happened to
know something about it. When I go I shall take old
Maxwell with me. He's just the man to knock the pro-
Boer stuffing out of you, Mr. Surly Pig-Head—quicksticks
—Carrai, there he is. Well do I know his step. Come in
Maxwell, said the Señor as a man clad in grey appeared at
the verandah window. Join, me amigo, and let us talk a
little business. The man entered smiling. He was a
medium sized man of a clear decisive look. A Scotchman,
certainly. He appeared to be about fifty-three years of
age, and he sat down in an arm chair opposite the Señor,
depositing his straw hat on another chair, after a hearty
"Warm—or rather 'hot with' is not a bad thing to-night.
I've been away down on the New Brighton beach amongst
the sandhills until I nearly turned into a Maori with my
surroundings in the gloaming."

"Here's tae ye, Señor," said the Scot, reverting to the
familiar toast with the whiskey, but dropping into his
colonial speech directly. "The world has more sense to-
day I am glad to see. Go and howl out a pro-Boer speech
six months or eight months ago, and people would have
let you howl, and taken no much notice. As I was com-
ing up the street I was moralizing on it all. Way down
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near one of the bridges near the garden was a pro-Boer, or an anarchist, or somebody no very canny. He was spouting his grievances. He's droukit enough the now. The boys carried him off and doused him a wee in the Avon just to cool him a bit. Lucky for the chiel he could swim. They tar and feather them on the other side. That's 'Australia' ye ken."

"Ah well, amigo, I've a young friend of somewhat similar taste, and I was just thinking of him and you when you appeared. Talk of the d—-

"Whisht ye heathen," said Maxwell with a wink. "It's no me. I'm like a father till ye. Ye'll no want to be a deil's bairn surely?"

"I want this friend of mine converted, and your help to convert him. What is a pro-Boer, a socialist, an anarchist: Simply a pest to communities. I hope the crowd half drowned him."

"They did that," replied Maxwell with a laugh. "Eh mon, is it na' juast awfu. A man gets discontented, and doesn't like the trouble of working. So he tries to make laws of his own, and raves against all government. A nice world we should have if these crawling agitators had their way. They set to work to make others discontented, and hatch discord, that parents unrest. I'd make a clean sweep of them if I had my way, just as they threaten to make a clean sweep of all right minded men. What's loyalty, empire, and bright honest dealing to them. A Socialist is but a disguised anarchist, and a pro-Boer is the worst of the whole lot. But this war is opening wise men's eyes, and the snuffling hypocrites are being unmasked. For loyalty read traitorous design. They are double dyed traitors whatever they call themselves, and well they know it. They are against Queen and Country, and haven't a single right minded idea in their heads. Pack 'em all off to a lonely Island and they would all be wanting to be sole king over the others, and have, each one of them, the whole money of the community. Also not to have any work at all."

"My young friend is simply pig-headed, Maxwell," replied the Senor. "He is an ignorant pig-head. Perhaps he has
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heard one of these so called Socialists say: 'We are people who intend to leave the world better than when we enter it.' Acting on this prating creed, which sounds very well, they instantly proceed to make a discontented *inferno* of the very world they live in. They haven't the pluck of the anarchists, who call, "Down with all law and order. We are regicides." Has ever any individual one out of these leagued conspirators done a noble or an honourable deed in their lives? Not a single one of them. They live in discontent and are only happy when they are hatching it."
CHAPTER XXII

AFTER KARREE

But the stimulant which the horseman feels,
When he gallops fast and straight,
To his better nature most appeals,
And charity conquers hate.

—A. L. Gordon.

SOMERSET managed to get over into the New Zealand Mounted Rifles' lines a little later, and after a refection of bully beef, biscuits, and tea, had a conversation with his former crony and housemate over their pipes. "Isn't it grand?" said Stanford, who had managed to get some sort of a wash, and a little quiet for his bruised limbs. What grieved him most of all was the loss of his horse. "Isn't all this grand for us young chaps? Here we are all soldiers, mounted soldiers, all of a jump. It only seems yesterday that you and I were bachelorizing together at Waitahia. When we first got out here there seemed to be some sort of opinion that we were more for show than use. We were to be put to guard stores, or lines of communication or any other job work, a good bit to the rear. I don't believe anyone thought that we were going to be any good. As the papers put it, we were just 'rather nice colonial cousins, who wear such a pretty dress and play at being soldiers.' I wish the lady who wrote that, for it was out of a fashion column, could see us now. 'Dress nicely' and 'play at soldiers.' Faith, I don't see where the play comes in. It's jolly hard work, and very apt to end suddenly. But somehow it was really in us chaps to be
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soldiers. We like a bit of a scrap. I suppose it is in all the British race even if they have ‘rotted in a deadly peace’ for a hundred years. We’re good little growly-wowly cubs. Now the old folks at home are beginning to find out that as men—fighting men—we are really a valuable asset. There’s one good thing about old England. She never bothers her colonies at all. And all of them like her, except in times of concession. We don’t like to have the old mother say to a powerful nation, ‘It was my mistake, I’ll take it all back. And I’ll give you a great lump of land, or a lot of islands to say nothing more upon the subject.’ However, having attained our present position, it makes up a good deal in our favour against the old English opinion that we are all descended from convicts. How they do stick to their little street-bred ideas. It puts me in mind of a story of a Frenchman who went out to Australia and married a girl there, probably a French girl. A family began to come. At the end of a few years the Frenchman went back with his wife and family to see his old mother in his native land. As soon as the family were introduced, the old lady threw up her hands and seemed a little disappointed. ‘Oh my God,’ she said, ‘then they are not black?’ The convict idea holds good for your country, Somerset. We’re out of it. Pity they didn’t trace back some delinquencies of Captain Cook’s for us. We haven’t got a history. But New South Wales is a naughty, evilly-disposed cub, and his good old mother won’t own him until he’s been washed.”

“Yes, my boy,” replied Arthur flushing, “and out comes a nice, tidy little new chum governor, with a clean pinafore on, and cackles by wire about Sydney’s ‘birth-stain,’ and the naughty, dirty, growly-wowly cub shows his teeth. The worst of it was that the governor had been a good stay-at-home young man, who collected snuff-boxes. He might have kept his opinions to himself and read up his back history a bit better. Whose fault was it, that amongst a few hardy enterprising original settlers, a band of convicts, too much trouble to keep in their own native land—the old country—should be dumped down like a bag of rubbish. Birth-stain indeed! It wasn’t the convicts that made the
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the country. They and those in charge of them did their best to unmake it. The people who made Australia were the free settlers, the first free settlers. Drink and dissipation, and harsh treatment killed the convicts. They weren’t a crowd to aid the population of the infant land. After the gold discovery the influx was enormous. But the little fact that the New South Wales colonials were her own children, sprung from able fathers, English, Irish, and Scotch, never seemed to enter the slow old mind of Britain, wrapped in her own growing isolation. It would be a bold man who would go to Sydney to-day and tell them that they were descendants of convicts! Another thing, I hope they will let our own officers lead us, under some competent general, and not go messing us about with such specimens of young British officers as one sees now-a-days, all frills, and no world-ideas, ‘pretty cockies’ my old troop-sergeant-major calls some of ’em. Sort of men you see on a horse—and all over it too—at a big review, in gorgeous uniform and a tin sword, chatting and laughing with a crowd of girls instead of being at the head of their troop. A number of ’em have been born with silver spoons in their mouths, and live up to their incomes and over them. That doesn’t make born leaders of men of them. Give ’em plenty of lush and theatre-going and they’re all right. Likewise dances. We Australians don’t think much of that sort of officer, ‘Bai Jove’ sort of beggars. They don’t know how to drill their men.

‘Look here, Captain,’ said one of them to one of our officers, ‘our men would have gone to hades with—you don’t know how to look after your men. You’re not half strict enough with ’em. Why don’t you put on more side?’

“What do you think of that? That was a question asked by one of these bumptious little tin-gods of a man and a gentleman, a man we loved like a father.

“But the answer was good. The little tin jack-in-the-box was honoured with a calm smile, and the cutting reply.

“Well, I’m first a man, and then a soldier.’

“But the lamentable little idiot didn’t see it. ‘Our English brother didn’t understand,’ as per usual. But he
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will understand a good few things more than he ever did before, after the war is over, if he isn’t shot dead, through not knowing what to do. He’s brave enough. He can’t help that. It’s in his blood. But he has too much ‘side’ on, and ‘side’ doesn’t look nice, nor feel nice to the man he is addressing. Until he works vigorously to learn what he needs to learn, and gets over his idea that he is a little tin-god with ‘side’ on, he will never make a leader of men. If he goes into action, if some wiser head than his doesn’t check him, he’ll only sacrifice his brave men on the field of battle, and get shot himself. ‘Side’ is so conspicuous. It’s a grand target for Boer bullets any way. But thank goodness, officers are not all of the little tin-god lushy stamp. They stand out like columns. And I think the ‘pretty cockies’ get sat upon pretty quick at the front.”

“You’re quite right, old man,” replied Stanford, grunting with pain as he shifted his leg. But this is what gives me such delight. Hear an account of our noble selves. This account specially mentions some of you cornstalks. But I’ve got a bit stowed away in my kit about the Maori-lander, too.” And Stanford produced a newspaper clipping and read it.

“Rensburg, Feb. 6th.

“The Boers during the day made several abortive attempts to decoy the Australian Mounted Rifles into ambush prepared for them, but the Australians were too wide awake to be trapped.

“The Boer method was to move out a slight distance from the kopje, and as soon as the Australians moved forward to get within firing range, the Boers pretended to be struck with panic and bolted into the ravines, hoping the Australians would dash in after them and be slaughtered, but the men from Kangarooland declined the invitation; they simply galloped forward, dismounted, gauged the distance, and fired into the rock-strewn gorges, and then drew off again grinning good-humoredly. They are a cool lot of fellows, and the Boer leaders will have many a headache before they succeed in ambushing them, if the Australian
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leaders are allowed a free hand. The men are enjoying the work immensely, and are quite willing to back their horsemanship, their shooting, and their craft against that of the wily enemy.

"Sooner or later, however, I expect some of them will get cut off, as the rivalry between the various contingents is intensely keen; and the men in each contingent are jealous for the honour of first blood, so much so that their officers find it extremely difficult to keep them from rash acts of daring. I overheard one captain say to his men 'Look here, you fellows, if we do get cut off, fight it out whilst there's a man left in the saddle, no d—- surrender, mind.' And the men took a pull at their bridles, and sent him back a growl like angry mastiffs taunted at feeding-time. I rather think the Boers will know how to spell 'Australia' without the aid of a dictionary after the first hand to hand fight with these chaps."

"That's only our first starting," said Stanford. "We've all done better since then. This bit refers to your first work, before you did anything.

GUARDING THE MARMALADE

"The Australian contingent have now been blooded, but in their time of inaction they were madder than anything between Rensburg and Tophet (says the Daily News). They even put it in poetry, as thus:—

"They cross the rolling ocean,
Back from the fields of war,
To show the British medal
They got for guarding a store.

"To show the British medal,
On stations, towns, and farms,
They got for guarding the marmalade
Far away from wars' alarms.

"To show the British medal
With a blush of angry shame,
For which they went to risk their lives,
In young Australia's name."

"What do you think of that, old man?"

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"First rate," said Arthur. "But we've done better since. We've shed our blood all of us, and it makes me think of Lawson's grand heart-felt lines, when I think of the outcome of all this, when we go back to our homes again, when:—

They'll tell the tales of the night before, the tales of the ship and fort, Till the sons of Australia take to war as their fathers took to sport. Their breath come deep, and their eyes grow bright, at the tales of our chivalry,
And every boy will want to fight, no matter what cause it be,
When the children run to the doors and cry, "Oh, mother, the troops are come."
And every heart in the town leaps high at the first loud thud of the drum,
They'll know, apart from its mystic charm, what music is at last
When, proud as a boy with a broken arm, the regiment marches past.
And the veriest wretch in the drink fiend's clutch, no matter how low or mean
Will feel when he hears the march, a touch of the man he might have been.

"Don't you see what all this is going to do for us? It is going to make a fighting nation of us all, all the colonies.
No longer shall we be the rather despised colonies, but part and parcel of the Mother Land.
There's one thing about us native-born Australasians that we can never forget our countries. Why, if it's only a leaf out of it, let alone a flower, we treasure it just the same as the Irishman does the "dear little shamrock."

Unto each his mother beach,
Bird and leaf and tree.

"I myself as an Australian went to New Zealand, and though I shall probably go back there again, unless I lose the number of my mess, I shall never feel just the same to it as I do to Australia. Nor would you if you went to Australia.
We're blood-brothers now though that is after this war is over. We've stood to arms together for the old Mother Land.
"Shall I tell you what my heart warmed to first when I went to New Zealand, old man?"
"Aye, do."

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"Just two things, the black duck, which you call grey-
duck, and the tea-tree, which you Maorilanders call "manuka." But I never felt the same for the country as I
do for Australia. It is truly a lovely land is New Zealand,
but I'd sooner see a native rose, than a pohutukawa any
day. It's a strange feeling, isn't it? but perfectly natural.
All depends upon where you were born."

"I don't like this beastly country, anyhow," said Stan-
ford. "And yet the British and Dutch like it well enough.
And I'll bet all those born in it like it best of all in the
world."

"Ah well," rejoined his friend, "I like New Zealand,
though, but not in the same way I do my native land. I've
had some happy days in New Zealand, and I often look
back to the time spent at Harboro. What a nice lot of
fellows used to be in at the station. Don't you remember
the way Bakeford used to play "Lights Out," and the
chaffing and the boxing and all that. God speed all those
good fellows wherever they are.

"There's half-a-dozen or more of them here now,"
replied Stanford, "and I daresay there's more in some of
the Cape and Natal mounted corps. They have all turned
out well. All of them were good riders, and a better set of
gun shots I never saw. That free open air life naturally
enough makes a man a good soldier. It fits them for foreign
campaigns, and especially for new wild country. They are
used to it, and can rough it with pleasure, whilst every man
has learned to look after himself, and has not to re-learn
it. Aldershot and swell mess dinners don't do much in
that sort of way. It may put on some frills, a lot of starch,
and regular pipe clay routine, but it isn't real soldiering.
Every officer in the British army should have something of
this sort of life, that is, every new chum British officer, of
the tin-god type. I shouldn't be surprised if a good many
of them didn't really know how to put a saddle and bridle
on a horse, or how to harness a horse in a trap. I've seen
some of 'em shoot, and if you don't get shot yourself by
them, it is rather amusing to see how they handle a gun.
Wonder what they would do if they had to skin a sheep?
And one learns to be a good bushman with being in the
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open air, and in the saddle from daylight till dark. I had a nice adventure one night though. I was going in to the little city from Harboro, and crossed the Awatere after dark. My horse made a great flounder in the middle of the stream, and nearly lost the feel of his feet on the boulders of the bottom. But he scrambled on like a cat. I got a bit wet with the splashing, and it was pretty awful for a second, as it was pitch dark, the stream just fordable, and a thick mist on, as well as the darkness. My heart was in my mouth for a brief instant. Right bang in the middle of the river too, all this happened. Well, we got out somewhere but in the flurry we must have got off the track. Couldn't see your nose before your face. Well, I camped on the river level amongst the manukas and palms. You know at the Awatere there, there's a lot of high banks, not very climbable on a pitch dark night, heavy scrub too, and if you don't keep to the track, it would be hard enough to find a place to get up them on foot, let alone with a horse. The mist was like fine rain, and dripped off the bushes and trees in big heavy drops. I had three matches, and how to get a fire beat me at first. Stumbling about, at last I fell over a big nikau palm log. I found it was as dry as punk inside. So I got a fire under way, which warmed me and went to sleep in a sitting posture on the sand, like a tailor, with my legs crossed, and my head bowed forward on my hands. I went to sleep like that, sitting, and holding the lengthened bridle of my nag in my grip all the time. Poor old chap, he seemed to know that we were handicapped, and hardly moved all night. Sometimes when I woke up with a start I could just make him out close to me, standing motionless, with his nose very near the ground. I expect he went to sleep too. If he woke to nightmares as I did, he would probably dream that he was being swept down a full Awatere, at the rate of knots. Next morning I found I was only about 300 yards from the "accommodation" house, but being at the top of the river terraces, and having lost the road I didn't care to chance it overnight amongst all the tangle and cliffs. Nice thing for a soft little lay wasn't it?"

"I've done much the same sort of thing in Australia,"
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said Somerset. “In new country ‘out-back.’ Made my fire, and turned my horse out in hobbles after dark. Had a pot of tea, some johnny cakes, and a bit of corned mutton. Lit my pipe and turned into my blankets. Next morning woke up by antiquated rooster, a white one. Saw him shortly afterwards. Horse gone; walked round a timber clump a hundred yards away. Saw an out-station. Went up and passed the time of day. My horse was in the stock-yard with the others, hobbles and all. Led him back to my camp, and saddled up again.”

“My poor horse,” said Stanford regretfully. “Hit right through the head with an explosive bullet. I had christened him, ‘Te Whetumarama.’ He was a New Zealander. Don’t you remember that night at Harboro, just after you came, when we got that good-looking brown mare out of the fix she had got herself into. I wish I had her here now. The poor brute would follow me anywhere after what I did for her. Fine up-standing mare she was. Don’t you wish you had her here, Somerset? She’d carry you fine. Well up to your weight, and you bulk big.”

“Yes indeed,” replied Arthur with a sigh. “My poor ‘yarraman’ is pretty well done up. Have to leave him on the veldt next time we have any flanking operations, I believe. But this is a devil of a country for horses, although the Boer and Basuto breed seem to stand it well enough. But go on with your yarn. I remember the mare. You used to ride her. Where did you get her?”

“Well,” continued Stanford, “I’ll never forget the look in the poor thing’s eyes when I found her helpless in a mud hole. She was nearly done. Good thing I happened to come across her. It was at Harboro, I had been down over the creek to see to my own horses, and by good luck I came a short cut back, and running down the bank of the creek, saw her jammed under a branch of a tree in a boggy water-hole. She’d never have got out in a month of Sundays. And her hide and hoofs would have been there yet if I hadn’t chanced to see her. I wasn’t long before I had a big rope and eight or ten of the boys down. She had managed to keep her head above water, and she must have been there for hours. At last we got her out. She was
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pretty stiff, and could only just keep on her legs. But what made her take to me so much was, that I rubbed the mud and wet off her with wisps of tussocks, rubbed her dry, and then ran up to the station for a heavy horse rug. Then I gave her a bran mash, with a stiff dose of brandy in it, and she was all right in the morning, and neighed when I came up to her. She never forgot it. I bought her afterwards from the chap who owned her, and I never had a better hack. I gave her to my brother before I came here, and I hear that all his kiddies ride her now. But there's the 'last post.' When shall we two meet again? Good-night, old chap."
CHAPTER XXIII
A MORAL LECTURE

Enthroned in the midst of the mad, leaping waters,
Which rearing their storm-crests, do cry unto thee.
That peril awaits both they sons and they daughters
Oh! Britain, our Britain what answer we see.

Our youngest are loyal, aye true and devoted.
Australia first, not so long from the womb.
There's another can toddle, New Zealand, remoted
Not far from her elder, when battle clouds loom.

THE Senor and Maxwell wended their way to the sand-hill farm on the day appointed.

Reaching their destination at noon, they were invited to lunch, and sat down with Frank Osbern, who seemed to be in a more gracious mood than he had been on the Senor's former visit. Maxwell, after one or two tentative questions, soon found out for himself Frank's pro-Boer tendencies, and thinking to inspire a little loyalty and enthusiasm in his mind, began a story of his own, in relation to volunteering, especially as it seemed, that by no argument could he convince Osbern of the error of his ways. It was after lunch when they were all seated in the verandah, that he began this narration, and Maxwell returned to the charge in this manner.

"Well, Mr. Osbern," he began. "I hold it as my opinion that every man Jock of us should hold himself in readiness to go to the Front if our country needs us. Volunteers have before now done this country a great deal of good when trouble has arisen with the warlike Maories."
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There will be no more of it now because every mon Jock of the Maories will fecht wi' us and not against us. But they gave us a lot of trouble in the past, and who did better than the volunteers or irregulars under Von Tempsky? Whether it is that a volunteer is always a patriot and therefore ready to do his duty to the death, and fights also because he likes a fight I don't know, but wherever volunteers have had to fight they have done it well. What's discipline? It's something, but not all things. Didn't the Maories fight like blazes, wi'out military training? Didn't the Americans beat our trained soldiers lang syne? Didn't our volunteer irregulars prove the best asset we had in the big Maori war? Regulars are too much like a herd o' sheep mon, wi' a bell wether at their head. They block together too much. Pipeclay and dress routine don't do it all, sir. 'An army o' lions led on wi' asses made o' red tape!' When I was a good bit younger than I am now, there was a rumoured rising o' the Maories in the North Island under Te Whiti, the Maori prophet who held his court at Parihaka in Taranaki. Well I was a member of a volunteer corps in a small town in the Middle Island, and our knowledge of sodgering wasn't extra much. But we had learned the bayonet drill. We had learned to march and many o' us were very fair shots. It came like a thunder clap the need of the Government to move troops there, and our corps pretty well all volunteered. There were one or two Maories in the ranks, but of course they wouldn't fight against their own countrymen. And they weren't expected to, either. Well, the Government put us off, as they always put off if they can. But we sent a telegram to head quarters to say that we thought it would be detrimental to the district if they passed us over. So they wired back to say that we would be accepted, and that one of the Government steamers would be sent for us. Away comes our old bugler, an old soldier in the British regulars at one time—wi' his bugle—mon, he woke the echoes all along the road fra his hoose. In they came, oor lot in a' rigs, and got their rifles. There were about twenty-five of us, and twenty-five more from a neighbouring town in a big agricultural district, nearly all farmers,
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strong able young men. Members of the local corps and some of them crack shots. In came the Stella, the Government despatch boat, and off we went after a warm send-off by the populace. It was blowing a gale when we got to D'Urville Island. There's copper there ye ken, and we lay under the lee of it, after we had passed through the tidal currents, about it, until the gale blew itself out. Then we went out into the night. When we got to Opunake it was a sight. We were the last batch of volunteers. All the others were at Rahotu, the base for the advance on Parihaka, as we found out afterwards. The Stella was anchored, an' lay rollin' in the swell like a sick whale, and the surf was tummin' on the beach wi' a roar like distant thunder. Out came two surf-boats, an' then began the disembarkation. The crews of the surf boats pulled us in over the long rollers, which seemed big enough in the boats, until they got to the big buoy where one end of the wire surf-ropes connecting with the shore was. This rope was hauled into the boat amidships, and it ran on a clip pulley stem and stern, so that she could not broach to. The men in these surf boats were of course experienced hands. On we went, pulling until near to the shore, where one 'comber' racing after us looked so vicious that I thought we were in for it. It just wet a few of us with a lip of spray, and we shot on. Three in succession and the boat touched ground. The crew were out in an instant on each side and with the next wave ran her clean high and dry on to the beach over the sand. And up the hill our body of men went. Opunake consisted of just a few huts in those days, but there was a big depot building to which we went, and where in about an hour we were transformed from a motley crowd in all sorts of civilian dress into a respectable looking body of men with the dark blue New Zealand Armed Constabulary uniform on, wi' silver buttons, and Glengarry caps. I was proud of myself. We were turned into sodgers. And I tell you we felt sodgers too. A snack o' somethin' to eat, and on we went. There were one or two in the ranks who knew something about the Maori methods o' warfare, an' they interpreted signs for us, along the road. One of them in particular, an old man,
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who had been in the cavalry in the old war. But the old chap was just a camp follower, and looked after the tents in camp. He was too much of an invalid to do anything, but had been allowed to come along as a sort of reward for his indomitable pluck... He had been severely wounded in the big war, and felt his wounds even then. After we all got into our uniform, Major Noke of the Wanganui Cavalry, and Commandant of the garrison in the redoubt at Opunake, gave us an address before we left, saying that we were now under martial law, and had the honour of our district in our own keeping. Mon, there's a fine moral lesson to be earned in a' volunteerin'. I mind that the noo from my ain experience. He urged us to be respectful to our officers, an' to obsairve strict discipline. Our swags were a' placed in a dray drawn by two horses, and a sergeant, corporal and six men, of whom I was one, were told off to form an advance guard, and off the fifty of us started at ten o'clock that morning. Smart work? Aye it was that, an' I may tell you that Major Noke himself complimented us because we had got ready in a shorter time than any other corps of volunteers, an' considerin' the rapidity with which we got under arms from Marlborough, and the shortness of the notice given us by the Government, after putting us off, when we had a hundred good men ready, our fifty considered, that never again would they place obstacles in the way of our district again. We were ready at once, and had been ready before, but it is the fashion of Governments to put off and put off everything that might be done at once. They are adepts at piling up future trouble.

Well, awa' we all went on the road a wee pickle o' us, but we knew that there were a lot of volunteers already at the front, and that all was ready for the advance on Parihaka, the Maori prophet Te Whiti's city-pah. We passed several Maori 'whares' along the road, and at some parts where the fine forest timber came in near it, it was wonnerfu' to look at the trees. I just wished I had a big sawmill there in fu' working order. Taranaki, the province we were passing through is jaast the finest province in a' New Zealand, ye ken mon!—nodding pleasantly at Osbern—for dairy
farmin'. O mon, the grass, and the flax, and the rinnin' streams. Mon, it was grand that bright summer morn. The country is the veritable garden of New Zealand. The road all the way was in very good order but the tramp o' us raised the red dust pretty thick. Here and there, say in a mile, or three miles, we crossed rushin' streams up to our middles, regular little rivers, an' the scenery, mon! The sea on our left, blue and sparklin', an' on our right we could distinguish the base o' Mount Egmont, but its snow-capped summit was veiled wi' misty clouds. Everything seemed to presage peace and security a' around us, and had it not been for this prophet-chieftain, who stirred up strife among his people, because he thought he had a divine mission whiles, like old Kruger, and had been the cause of a murder or two of Europeans by a fanatic named Hiroki—all would have been peaceful, and I thought myself if I had known of this country before, I might ha' been here myself wi' a gran patch o' dairy country and a wheen kye an' pigs, an' a lot o' cultivation paddocks. But volunteerin' is a gran' thing, mon. Ye travel at the Government expense and see lands ye havena' dreamed of before. An' travel aye improves the mind, and keeps ye from revilin' your King an' kintra, as some o' the stay-at-home ne'er-do-weels do. Every inch of the ground between the flax bushes and forest timber was covered wi' rich grass an' clover an' mon it would ha' made your mouth watter to see the bullocks, an' cows, an' calves, sleek and fat and shiny, as if they had been fed on oilcake, and groomed every morning. An' the song o' the English lark filled the air wi' melody as we marched along. At one part of the road we saw a large blood-red flag, fastened high up on the branch of a tree, an' the old hands among us said that this was a sign on the part of the Maories that they meant to fight. But—we thought—the morn's morn will decide. It was a hot and dusty march, an' the dust caked on us, after wadin' the rivers, until ye would na' ha' known a mother's son o' us. But there was something new to see every yard we went. We halted near a rushing stream at about two o' the clock, and ate our bread and meat wi' good appetite. An' our camp orderlies had billies o' tea
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for us in no time. Then 'smoke oh' and on again. We reached Rahotu, our base, at about five o'clock, an' even in this time o' threatened war, when all the outlying white settlers were in fear o' their lives, it was queer to see a young fellow in cavalry uniform, just out o' sight o' Rahotu, earnestly colloguing, and colloguing vara closely, wi' a Maori girl in a smart riding habit and plumed hat. Na doot they were lovers, an' mon she was a bonny girl. She had evidently ridden down there from Parihaka. Some o' they women are vera bonnie. Pure Maories too. Bless you they twa didn't mind us a bit as we swung round the little wooded hill they were seated on. Not a bit o' it. It would ha' made no difference to those two if arl the world an' his wife were there to see. As we marched into Rahotu camp among the tents amid rousin' cheers, for we were the last o' the lot, down came the 'Navals' in force.'

"Here, you boys," said they seizing everything we had. "You go off to bathe, and then go and get fed in that big tent there. We'll pitch your tents."

"So they did, splendidly, and filled 'em wi' dry fern, like the good fellows they are. And they had everything in apple-pie order for us when we returned full and hearty. War makes men feel like borthers. The Navals were a splendid body o' men, an' all the arms their leader had was a bit o' a small swagger stick. But the men would ha' stormed the muckle pit after him. There was the dash and 'go' about them which is inseparable from blue-jackets, even if they are a volunteer force, as these were. They were armed with Snider rifles, sword-bayonets, and revolvers. They had their own barbers, cooks, etc., and were the life and soul of the camp. Some of the tents at Rahotu had queer titles upon them, printed legibly in large letters with charcoal. I just jotted some o' them down at the time, ye ken. One was the Royal Gobble-all Rifles, another The Snotting Contingent, an' another had The Anti-Extravagance Detachment over the door. A small Maori whare had Sea View Cottage printed over the lintel. The men were all fu' o' fun, ye ken. A small body of armed Con-stabulary left for the front with sealed orders the morning after our arrival at Rahotu. And that night we were all
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paraded by moonlight. That moonlight parade of 1200 was most imposing to all of us and is not at all likely to be forgotten by any unit of that number. Egmont was towering its snow-white peak above us, and the silvery moon-beams were sparkling on the great expanse of ocean below us. I may mention that a fine cricket ground had been made at Rahotu, which was a very picturesque camp, with a fine redoubt in it. A match or two was played on the cricket ground just before our arrival. All the tents were filled with red-brown dry fern, warm and soft to lie on, and in these bell tents the men lay like the spokes of a wheel, radiating to the centre tent-pole, to which their feet pointed, and around which tent-pole all their arms were stacked. The Post and Telegraph office was a diminutive Maori wharé, built in the European style. And the freshness of the sea air was indescribably pleasant. Mon, volunteerin’ on active service is a fine thing. The vera thrill that aye passes through one when the band plays, or the drums and fifes play a marchin’ air, is well worth the having, and the sense of duty and pride, when ye present airmes when on guard is a fine feelin’. Maybe ye’ll have it, at the vera description o’ it, sir,” said Maxwell to Osbern, with a wink at the Senor.

“The march from Rahotu to Parihaka, the Maori Pah, wis a glorious sight. Battalions No. 1 and No. 2, each over five hundred strong, were early on parade, and were marched away from camp under their respective officers at about daylight, wi’ two days’ provisions in their haversacks. They went from camp by fours, in companies. The Wellington Navals, as soon as we got fairly on the road, started a song about the patriarchs of old, wi’ a grand rollickin’ chorus to it, an’ an impromptu verse was brought in, rankin’ Te Whiti amongst the number, the last words bein’ ‘Pari-ha-ka-ka.’ That was just what was the matter wi Te Whiti. He was too much of the patriarch, an’ didna march wi’ the times. As the large column of men, whose tread made the earth vibrate, passed along, wi’ rifles carried at the trail, other songs were sung, and the refrain was taken up in snatches all along the ranks. One man, when the day was hotter, fell at the roadside
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suddenly in a fit. The word was passed along for a doctor, who was soon in attendance, and when we halted near the outlying constabulary pickets from Pungarehu, the sick man pluckily rejoined us, and was received with hearty cheers. Whilst waiting here, the whole 1,200 of us were thrown out, lying down ‘at ease’ on a rising ground, and three fine-looking and important Maori chiefs were brought down by one of the officers commanding the forces to have a look at us. Captain Hammersley, our brigadier, was very popular amongst the men. He was a fine, handsome, upstanding man, and had served as an officer in the Imperial Army. To this day, I can see him swingin’ on ahead o’ us, wi’ his pipe in his mouth. His men wad ha’ done anythin’ for him. Close by me, where we were thrown out in this imposing manner, were twa men, whom it was easy to see were old campaigners. They had probably been in one of the Maori wars. One was about to light his pipe. ‘Have a care, Bill,’ whispered his mate, alluding to our popular brigadier. ‘Look out for that man. ’E’s got the eye of a ’awk.’ Our brigadier was a man and a gentleman, a merciless drill, as we had to go on until we mastered any movement he didn’t approve of, but he sent us back soldiers at heart and in practice, and wherever he is, may all be well with him. And every one of those who were under him will echo this wish from the bottom of their hearts. On the way up, in fording a rushing stream which we did up to our middles, some wiseacres found a tree which had fallen across. One officer was in the middle of it when Hammersley spotted him. ‘Go back, sir,’ came the clarion order, ‘and do as your men do!’ Mon, there was a roar of laughter all down the ranks. Now we hear the strains o’ the Constabulary band, which heralds the advance on Parihaka, and not long afterwards we went forward at the double, until we took up ground in skirmishin’ order, close to the Pah, with the South Canterbury men, supported by three more companies in the rear. The Navals and Constabulary were close to the Pah on the other side. And then came the ‘haka,’ the Maori war song. Mon, it was like all the deils oot o’ the pit, hootin’ at ye. It was so
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fierce an’ awe inspirin’, that I saw a company o’ Rifles in
front o’ us, takin’ cover behind trees, and hanlin’ their
rifles in grim, savage earnest. But it died awa’ after a bit,
an’ the Maories surrendered. Te Whiti, Tohu—his head
man—an’ Hiroki were taken prisoners, an’ so ended the
bloodless battle o’ Parihaka. But we stood to arms for
three days, close to the Pah, and it was reported that
Titokawaru, a famous fighting chief was marching against
us with a strong force. It never came off, however. But
Titokawaru who hated the Navals like blazes—and he had
good cause for the same—had told one of them that he
was going to eat them up, adding with stinging sarcasm to
his interviewer: ‘Ye praatty blue-jacket!’ On the third
day we were oot o’ rations, an’ the pigs, an’ geese, an’
pheasants were rinnin’ about under our noses. When we
were flat on our stomachs the first day, when skirmishin’
near to the Pah, there were some fine geese came up to see
what manner o’ men we were. I had naethin’ but a tin o’
presairved milk. Our commissariat waggons had not
arrived. Down comes Captain Gore o’ the Navals, and in
reply to some o’ his men who were ravenous, said: ‘Well,
men, you musn’t kill any pigs in camp, you know, but, I’d
wavin’ his hand out yonder, he said nae mair. He hadn’t
the time. Like a shot there were twenty or thirty o’ the
Navals off, helter skelter wi’ sword bayonets. O, mon,
I’d like to ha’ died laughin’. Here goes three pigs wi’
eight or ten ‘Navals’ after them. There goes anither wi’
a pig head over heels. Such a squealin’ and a dirkin’, an’
a roarin’ an’ a yellin’. But they got twenty pigs before ye
could blink ye’re een, an’ oor chaps were nae far behind
either. Such a roastin’, an’ a lootin’ potatoes oot o’ the
Maori pits. Kapa Maori everywhere, till the pigs were
done to a turn. I had got a pig the day before, myself an’
anither hungry mon. He was a sucker, a wee, smart, active
yin, though. We chased him round a tree, an’ the other
chap hit him such a crack wi’ his sword bayonet, that the
little pig jaist straitened out like. ‘Faith,’ says my mate
and shareholder in the pig, ‘that chap hadn’t time to say
a word anyhow.’ Ye ought to ha’ seen the Navals lootin’
a canteen. Twa o’ them would keep the barmen in
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conversation, but there was a string o' Navals all the way to their camp, and buckets fu' o' beer passin' along it fra the back o' the canteen tent. They got pepper for this, an' later, were sent back to Pungarehu. But they were a grand lot o' young fellows, an' if they did loot, it was likely they were disappointed at 'there bein' no fightin'. I mind I made a blitherin' ass o' myself about the second day. We used to be drawn up in full fightin' rig at daybreak, every mon, in case any ruction should break out while the Maories were bein' disarmed an' what not. I had heard a good story that morn, an' the young fellow next me, as I was top man in the ranks, belonged to another contingent. So I says to him: 'Hear this yarn about one o' the sentries last night. He must ha' been a perfect fule, mon,' says I. 'He challenged the 'Grand Rounds.' Says he. 'Halt. Who goes there? 'Officer in charge 'Rounds.' Who's Brown?' said the sentry. 'He'd better stop where he is.' 'I was the sentry!' my neighbor said. Mon, I felt awkward. So I told him another one. 'One of our sentries couldn't answer any of the questions the officer in command of "Rounds" put to him. At last the officer asked him in despair what his own sergeant had said to him when he put him at his post. 'Well, sir,' says this sentry, 'he told me to walk from here to yonder, and to take damned good care you didn't catch me with a pipe in my mouth.' Some of our old hands told us that if it came to fighting, to beware of the Maories, because even if you ran a bayonet through them, down would come their long-handled axe on your head at the same time. Mon, I saw a sight o' sheer, dashin', contemptuous bravery on the pairt o' a young Maori chief one morn, as I was strollin' through the lines o' outlyin' sentries early. There was a string o' these men along the banks o' a stream. On the other side of it were a lot of log fences, an' there were some horses belongin' to the Maories about amongst these fences. Down comes the young Maori chief wi' a tether rope, an' little on him save the black and white seagull plumes in his hair, bound there by a fillet. He was over six feet, may be twa inches or mair: a magnificent, upstanding, muscular man, and such an eye. He paced along in front

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o' the rifle barrels as if they were so much dirt, glancing sternly at us with evident scorn. He caught his horse, an' it baulked at the first fence. Mon, he jaist dragged it over by main force, an' left us feelin' silly like, an' yet admirin' him, even if he scorned us. It was his pluck and determination that took us by storm. What amused and interested me beyond ordinar, was watchin' the Maories, men, women, and children in the beleagured Pah. From the top o' Picket Hill ye could see right into it below you. On this hill we had a Hotchkiss gun, an' could ha' swept the whole place. The men had a big meetin' platform, not a hundred yards from where I an' many others would go in the afternoon when off duty, just to see the seethin' mass. The raupo thatched wharēs clustered so thickly about, were deserted. The men in red and blue and yellow blankets were seethin' in crowds on their 'marae' or meeting platform. They were highly excited, of course, and first one would speak, and then another. The strong force shewn against them had dispelled any thoughts they may have had that Te Whiti was a special God-sent prophet, like the Mahdi, or old Kruger, wi' his Hollander backin', an' the fightin' spirit died out of them when they saw that there was no real good in fightin'. If you asked a Maori where Te Whiti was—this was after he had been taken and imprisoned—they would just point up to the sky. But a twelve months' imprisonment knocked all that sort of superstition out o' him, and them also. I used to go and sit upon one of the many rounded hills when I got a spare hour, and the view of the surrounding country was beautiful. The Maories had many corn and potato fields, and grew and made their own tobacco. From the first hill I mounted, I could see a rushing, clear-streamed river on my right hand, flashing and rippling over rounded boulders. The sea ahead was shining like molten silver, and stretching down to it were open forest glades of every variety and shade of green. Maori farms and vegetable gardens were all around, and strong fences enclosed sections of land that would, and did, make the young farmers in our contingent open their eyes with wonder and amazement at the richness and beauty of them. I could hear an axe at work, and
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saw droves of pigs in the open spaces amid the fern. Pheasants were calling also on every side. I thought, 'No wonder the Maories like this place. Here they have all they want. Tons of fish in the sea, too.' Then I tried to fancy white people there, and pictured what they would do with such marvellous land. No droughts, no extra heat. Springtime, summer, autumn, and winter, in due sequence with a seasonable and full rainfall. A lovely climate. They would make a Paradise of every nook and corner, every square foot of ground would give forth its fruit in due season. The distant clumps of forest near the sea were misty and dim from the driven spray of the rolling breakers, and the hue of the diamond, emerald, and sapphire were reflected near me in the warm sunlight of the beautiful landscape. You should have heard our soldiers, men of the plough and harrow speak of it. They never saw anything like it. The enormous wealth of the district will be realized some day—if it has not been already—when the fruit, the vegetables, the crops, the butter, cheese, and produce of all sorts it is capable of bringing forward, are in the market. It is one of the daintiest pieces of all New Zealand, and the butter brought to us by the farmers was the finest I ever saw.

"At the Pah at other times I saw some queer sights on the children's 'marae.' They were restless little deils, and over 100 would be together on the 'marae' at one time, six or seven under one blanket. Then seven or eight heaps of squirming young humanity would be agitated at one and the same time, and out would dart a scout from each, and off like a flash to hear the talk at the men's 'marae.' Then other scouts would come dashin' back wi' mair news, and dive under the blankets to his particular cronies, male and female. They were never still, those kiddies. Mon, they must have had the most important secrets to tell under those blankets, during those two or three days when the pah at Parihaka was invested. We shifted our camp later to a place beyond Parihaka, and in about six hours made a town of tents of it, making streets and levelling hillocks. I was on sentry go the first night there, and we were all on the alert for an attack, especially as Titokawaru's
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army was rumoured to be approaching. The officer in command of the pickets and reliefs had his camp on a higher hill than the one I was on, and I had to look sharp so as not to let him see me light a match if I wanted to smoke. There were cattle, sheep, horses and pigs, running about all over the place belonging to the Maories. I had been on the flat first, and I volunteered for an extra share of work that night because a very young lad fresh from town seemed done up. So I took his place. I soon found a lovely seat, a regular armchair in thick dry fern, that some other chap had had. It was excitin' work, mon. I gripped my rifle and sat on guard. There was dense forest below me, wi' enormous trees, and great ropes o' rata vines all through it. But there were cattle tracks. I knew there was a sentry below me, but I couldn't see him after the picket reliefs had passed where they had placed the others. The sentry below me was on the verge o' the big forest. So I made myself comfortable in my gran' seat, after starin' about on the qui vive until every bush took the form o' a crouchin' Maori in the starlight and stillness. I could see well into our main camp wi' all the white tents clustered aboot it. I was just deliberatin' whether a bush was moving towards me, or whether it was really a Maori. Hoots, ma very flesh was creepin'. All of a sudden the sentry below sings out. 'Halt! Who goes there?' and I heard the click o' the hammer as he cocked his rifle. We had the old Sniders. Thinks I, if he fires his piece off, he'll rouse the mai guard and the whole camp. So I creeps to the side to look down Mon, it was a coo! Most of our sentries fresh from town challenged pigs, or horses, or cattle that night, but the chap beyond me on the hill was no new chum. I didn't know he was there, nor did he know I was where I was, but during an excursion I came too near him, and he brought me up sharp. After ten days or so, when the prisoners were safe in gaol, all grievances settled and everything right, we got the route. The Nelson South Canterbury and Marlborough men were to be accompanied as far as Opunake by the Manchester Rifles. After battalion parade, Captain Hammersley addressed the ranks in flattering terms. He commended the good conduct of the battalion, and
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considered the drill much improved. He also stated that if he had been able to command them a little longer, the battalion would have compared favourably with any other on active service. He hoped that we should all meet again at the review which was to take place down South. That evening as if for a farewell, Egmont peeped forth with roseate clouds hanging over the snowy purity of its matchless summit. On Friday the 18th November we marched the whole distance to Opunake in four hours time eclipsing any other movement of troops recorded in this campaign. The men were in excellent turn and sang songs in chorus as they marched along, or waded knee deep through the streams. The black fine dust of the district, and the heat of the sun so begrimed and embrowned them on this particular march to such an extent, that they were almost unrecognisable to their friends on arrival at Opunake. Those at home who didn’t go, and who might have imagined that the volunteers who went to the front on that occasion were merely enjoying a holiday jaunt, were much mistaken, and they should have witnessed the arrival of the gallant Nelson men numbering 206 at Opunake, as their comrades of the South Canterbury, Marlborough and Manchester did after their forced march. They were begrimed with dust from head to foot, and nearly all of us went down to the sea at once and bathed. Stern and rigid discipline was enforced throughout this brief campaign, and trained soldiers returned in place of those who first went to Parihaka. Twelve hours picket duty, and twenty-four hours on guard right off the reel was no child’s play, and the bugles were sounding all day for company, squad and battalion drill. Captain Hammersley was no drawing-room soldier and he worked his men hard, never finishing until they gave him complete satisfaction. Embarking in the *Hinemoa* on Saturday we reached Nelson—some 600 of us—after a cold and somewhat protracted voyage, owing to the tide not suitting for our entrance to the port, but the warm welcome we received there will linger long in our memory. Dense crowds of people lined the wharf and the streets and we marched with a band ahead of from the port to the city amidst the kind congratulations and good
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wishes of the inhabitants. Halting in front of a picturesque church, on the summit of a slope, we were formed into a battalion and were the centre of a vast crowd, the various colours afforded by the ladies bonnets and dresses making a beautiful picture. The South Canterbury and Marlborough contingents finally proceeded to their homes on Sunday, and early as the hour was, handkerchiefs, towels, and even shirts were waving from many windows as the Hinemoa left the port. On arrival at Picton the Marlborough men were dismissed from active service, and their commanding officer read a letter from Mr. Bryce complimenting them for the alacrity with which in common with other volunteers, they had exhibited in going to the front."

"An' that's a wee bittock o' my ain experience," said Maxwell in conclusion. "An' that's why I think the volunteer movement will aye prevent conscription in any part of the British Empire. A trained volunteer can never be a skulker, because his heart is in the cause he is going to fight for, but a pressed man may, because he goes unwillingly. An' now, Mr. Osbern as you have so patiently listened to me, I will get you to shew me your method of fencing an' also your mode of grass growing, so as to bind these hills of sand, of which my friend Don Vasquez has told me." Frank was mollified and off the three of them went and spent the rest of the afternoon fossicking about the place, returning for tea, and starting late for Christchurch having apparently made such an impression on Osbern that they were asked to come again and stay overnight so as to be able to be up at a very early hour for 'frost-fish' gathering.

"Gin I get a few more chances I'll convert him," said Maxwell to the Señor when they were well on the road. "He's no a bad chap."

"He's just Mr. Pig-Head as I told you," replied the Señor. "I will leave 'surly' out this time. He improves on acquaintance, and I have great hope of ultimate success. Except because of a certain matrimonial project of his. I believe that we could so loyalise his nature that he would be off to South Africa with the very next contingent."
CHAPTER XXIV

TIMES OF THE PAST

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind?

—Burns.

Whether Maxwell and the Señor had so worked upon Frank Osbern's feelings—those feelings which may have really been in his breast as more natural to a healthy, young man, than pro-Boer tendencies—did not immediately show. But the unearthing of him, the bringing him out of his shell, so to speak; with the company of two such men as the above mentioned gentlemen, paved the way eventually for a better display of good qualities, and with Lucy Falconer, Osbern became brighter and not so moody, inviting Miss Featherston and her charge to meet his mother and sister at the Sand Hill Cottage which now boasted an added wing of very comfortable and tasty dimensions. These last three months—for he had met the Señor and Maxwell again in Christchurch, dined with them, and gone about generally with them—had however produced a still better effect, and when he got Lucy alone he pressed his suit for an earlier marriage in a tenderer tone than he had hitherto used—looking upon her as an absolute possession—and his behaviour too towards her likewise having been consistent up to this time, she consented. The wedding, therefore, was to take place four months hence, which would be about the date agreed upon when Frank left England.
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Nothing further had been heard from Arthur Somerset, and the telegraphed news from the seat of war had been of late contradictory and perplexing. Lord Roberts was waiting at Bloemfontein. He was strengthening his position, increasing remounts and supplies, mending bridges, and otherwise taking all those precautions worthy of so famous a general. The relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith, the defeat and capture of Cronje, were all affairs of the past, and the final advance was hopefully, but somewhat anxiously looked forward to, for owing to the siege of Wepener and the number of detached Boer forces hovering in various parts of the Orange Free State, matters did not look very auspicious at the present moment. Meanwhile, Arthur Somerset was having a bad time of it with dysentery and low fever in Bloemfontein hospital, which left him such a wreck that he was finally invalided and sent down to Capetown. Afterwards by his own wish—the doctors deeming it necessary for him to move to save his life—he embarked on a steamer bound to New Zealand and arrived at Wellington, still weak and emaciated, but vastly better for the voyage. He had indeed escaped from South Africa in time to save his life, and with such a fund of knowledge for his paper at Waitahi, that for a month after his arrival the Gazette was teeming with his own personal recollections, and completely bowled over the fossil, which had no such thing as a special correspondent in South Africa, and consequently could give no information on the subject, beyond clippings from their rival. But they did that unblushingly, and were well taken to task for it by the Gazette.

Thus our hero escaped from the war untouched by bullet or shell, but for a long time he went about feebly, until his good constitution pulled him through. Horncastle Richards and his wife welcomed him with open arms, and he was petted and made much of at their house, until he was strong enough to go over to his own cottage and take up his work again. Somerset had almost forgotten Lucy Falconer but had written to the Senor, who promptly informed Miss Featherston that Arthur had been invalided back. And meanwhile, Arthur had made the acquaintance of a man advanced in
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years, who occasionally wrote local pars for the Gazette, a dweller on Pelorus Sound, who invited him to go and stay with him from Saturday till Monday. This old fellow had been educated at Nelson College in his young days, and was quite a character in his way. He had had a strikingly varied knowledge of many parts of all the islands of New Zealand, and proved to be a most entertaining companion. So Somerset most thankfully accepted this invitation, and went over on the very next Saturday with him in his boat. They pulled to the narrow neck of land between the two sounds, and crossed on foot over the hill and down the other side to where his new found friend had another boat. In this they pulled over to his place about three miles distant. This new companionship just suited Arthur. Harry Austin was inclined to literature, and had a vast fund of information about the Maories which Somerset found very pleasant to listen to. All things seemed to be dead against Arthur at this period of his life. His sudden sickness brought on by privation on the field of battle, being drenched through on the open veldt after repeated privations of food and clothing besides other horrors of dead men, cattle and horses, had destroyed any hopes he might have had of seeing the war through and distinguishing himself in any great measure. It was quiet over at Fern Glen, Austin’s beautiful residence. Good sport might be had without much trouble. And in fact he meant to stay a week there. He had, of course, been to see Aioea’s grave, but the memory was very saddening, and Queen Elizabeth Sound brought back such painful recollections that he thought of travelling far away for a year, until the memory of his sweetheart’s sudden end was obliterated. In any case he thought he should never care to reside permanently in the neighbourhood of her sudden and untimely end. The paper was doing well, and he intended to let the money he had put into it remain, but he had not as yet told Richards of his intentions.

Austin was married, with a small family of three little girls and a boy. He told Somerset on the way over that his wife was a good shot, and a good oar, that he had a gold mine on his place, but that he lacked the capital to work it
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with. He also told him many more things which made
Arthur think that the life of a married Sound-dweller, if a
good all-round man, fond of open air life, was not a bad one
by any means, especially in these large water districts where
towns of any size were few and far between. He found
Fern Glen a charming place. The house, a large, sub-
stantial weatherboard one, was built on the summit of a cliff
at the head of a beautiful bay, with sandy beaches below
it, and around the topmost curve. And the promontory
which shot a mile away from the house was possessed of
many another beach and bay until it came in again not far
from the house, but on the other side of it where another
fine bay opened out. Thus the house had two water front-
ages or entrance bays, both close to one another. And
the promontory enclosed many acres of hill, park-like
forest and grazing ground. To the right, over the bay
again from the house rose heavy forest, and at the back, and
stretching upward for a considerable distance grassed open
rising plains, backed by more timber which grew thickly in
the seaward gullies as well as in clumps on the hillsides.
"I cut out many of my bad gullies, burning all the timber
felled, when summer comes," explained Austin, "and this
gives me more grass. I always have plenty of work to do
here, and my children make money—when not at school
over the rise yonder—by collecting the fungus, a peculiar
sort which grows when the fallen timber is dry. This is an
export for the Chinese market and pays very fairly well. I
make a living from my sheep, have a cultivation paddock
or two, a fine garden, one part of which I call 'New Zea-
land,' for everything in that part is of the soil; including
some importations from other parts, and I have a Maori
garden or two on some of the promontories of my land. I
grow my own tobacco. Had I the capital I'd buy a fine
little steamer of forty or fifty tons burden, a powerful sea-
boat, and adapted to the carrying of fish, and do some
exporting. There are many bays within a few miles of me,
where there is magnificent and valuable timber. There are
oysters, pipis, mussels, cockles, lobsters here, fish of every
variety including fine flounders and schnapper. And I know
of a particular mud-oyster the like of which I never saw

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equalled. Our commoner sort is the rock oyster. But come inside and speak to the 'missus,' and the children, and sit down by the kitchen fire and smoke. We hardly ever use the parlour but always prefer the kitchen. Its more commodious and comfortable I think, without the many knick-knacks and hangings which always seem to stifle me." Somerset found Mrs. Austin to be a comely young woman with a bright little quartette of young children, and thought his friend was extremely well off. After tea, over their pipes, Austin told him that at one part of his young days he lived in the neighborhood of Napier and Hawkes Bay in the North Island, and that period being in the early days of the colony. He had formed the acquaintance of a wonderful Maori chief named Renata, who had told him some strange things about the Maories, and Arthur, who was always deeply interested in any old tales concerning this wonderful race, composed himself to listen to the forthcoming yarn, while Mrs. Austin and the children sat down quietly near the fire.

"I had not seen Renata for over a month," said Austin, "although I had continually looked for and enquired about him, but I dropped across him by accident one day. It happened in this wise, I went out for a pig hunt on this particular occasion. I had a couple of first rate hounds with me, of the breed known in Napier at that time as 'Joe Dykes.' At the mouth of a gully rather more than half way from Porangahau to Black Head, I fell in with an immense wild boar, and sending in the dogs we tackled him at once. We had a brisk time of it for a few minutes, and the boar ripped both dogs badly. Watching my chance, I got hold of his hind leg in my left hand, and leaning forward gave him a heavy stab behind the left shoulder. To my disgust the knife would not pierce the thick hide, but the force of the blow I dealt drove it back through my hand inflicting a very severe cut across the palm, which, for the time, rendered the hand nearly useless. To make matters worse, my dogs became exhausted, leaving me to bear the brunt of the battle alone. I was afraid to let go, knowing full well that, if I did, the now thoroughly roused brute would have me in a second! Matters began to look
very serious, and I was on the point of chancing a run for it, when, to my great delight, the chief Renata came bursting through the ‘toi toi,’ tomahawk in hand. The rest was easy. Quick as thought he buried the tomahawk in the pig’s brain, and the combat was over. My hand was bleeding dreadfully, and, through straining with the pig, looked far worse than it really was. As soon as it caught the chier’s eye he tore off the sleeve of my shirt, and bound it up. ‘Now,’ said he, ‘all you want is some bark from the Pukatea-tree on it, and it will soon get well. If you like to walk with me to the next gully, I will get some and put it on.’

‘Of course I assented gladly, for, independent of my desire to have the wound healed up quickly, I knew I was almost certain to hear some ancient record from the chief before he left me.

‘How was it you turned up so opportunely?’ I enquired.

‘I was watching you from the hill there,’ replied Renata, ‘I saw the pig before you were in sight, and intended trying to stalk him, but when I saw you coming with your dogs, I waited, knowing that you never take the meat home. As soon as I saw you were in trouble I ran to your help. If I had not been handy it might have gone hard with you, and all through your own fault. You should always hamstring a big pig like this as soon as you get up. It takes half their power away and is done in a moment. If you had hamstring the pig at first, your dogs would not have been so badly injured, and you could have left the pig when you liked.’

What the chief said was perfectly true, but I did not think of it at the time. However, I have taken his advice since and found the benefit of it.

A few minutes’ sharp walking brought us to the mouth of the gully the chief had spoken of and then, selecting a tree, he cut into the sunny side of it, and extracted some of the inner bark, which he applied to the wound. ‘Now,’ said he, as he rebound it, ‘if you keep it dry, and do not disturb the bark for a week it will be well again.

‘I followed the chief’s advice, and found that his words
came quite true; in fact, puketea bark is a sovereign remedy amongst the Maories for all cuts, bruises, and sores, but the inner bark must be used, and the best is from the sunny side of the tree.

"As we returned to the pig, I remarked to the chief that the Maories ought to be grateful to Captain Cook for turning out the pigs, as they had nothing to hunt before.

"'Nothing to hunt?' exclaimed Renata, with a smile of derision. 'You forget our inter-tribal wars, or do you think a Maori warrior was easier to kill than a pig? I tell you that these same gullies around us have been the site of bloodier scenes by far than you have seen to-day. Alas! the memory of our brave ancestors is dying out fast from amongst us, and before long even we, ourselves, shall be forgotten, and the Maori will be spoken of as a being of the past.'

"'I cannot see that,' retorted I. "Why should not the two races intermix, and the Maori merge gradually into the white race?"

"'Impossible,' said the chief, with decision. "It cannot be. The white race like wives of their own colour, and the Government has brought them into the country by thousands. Had your Queen really desired to see the two races free she should have given every white man who chose to marry a Maori woman, a substantial grant of land, but even then her object would not have been attained, for nearly all of the mixed race die young. In the old time, before the white men came, the Maories never died naturally, the few men who escaped the warfare that raged continually, saw four generations whilst still hale, and might have lasted longer had not a violent death overtaken them. No, no,' continued Renata. 'We Maories know well enough, that with us it is only a question of time. Waiwera, our old Waikato chief foretold our fate 300 years ago.'

'Who was Waiwera?' I asked. 'I never heard of him before.'

"'Waiwera,' replied Renata, 'was a mighty chief in the old days. Victory followed him in all his raids, so that his name became feared from his home in the Waikato through all the southern part of this island. It happened one season
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that the Ngatikahungunu were seen fishing in the Porangahau river, and this being against Waiwera's express orders, he determined to inflict signal punishment upon them for utu or payment.

"Accordingly he gathered his warriors together, and, dividing them into two bands, gave command of one to his favourite son, and marched at the head of the other himself.

"A few days journey brought them into the country of the Ngatikahungunu, where, from the top of a neighbouring mountain, they saw the pah and fortifications of the foe.

"And now a curious thing happened to Waiwera. The reckless bravery for which he had been noted deserted him entirely for a time, his heart melted, and he felt as nervous and timid as a woman. It took all the resolution he could muster to hide his depression from his warriors, for, had they known that he felt timorous, not a single man of them would have fought at that time, for they would have considered it unlucky. Knowing that something must be done, the chief gathered himself together as the night closed in, and ordered his son to crawl with his men after dark to the other side of the pah, and there await the signal for attack. This signal was to be one small fire which would indicate that Waiwera and his party were advancing to the assault. When Waitoto—for that was the name of Waiwera’s son—had departed the old chief led his men within half a mile of the foe, and there awaited the approach of the dawn.

"All that night Waiwera kept himself apart from his men, brooding gloomily alone. He was filled with forebodings for which he could not account, and more than once he was on the point of recalling his men and returning home, but was deterred by the loss of prestige he would sustain if he withdrew, well knowing as he did that his warriors would only respect him if he was successful. He tried to restore his courage by thinking over his past victories, and to revive his anger against the Ngatikahungunu, but it was all in vain. His intellect was benumbed.

"'Can it be,' he thought, 'that I am to die? If that were all I should not care, Waitoto tamaiti o taku Ngakau
(Waitoto, child of my heart), is fit to rule my tribe, and I have looked Death in the face before. My fathers died on the battle field, and I hope to do the same, and yet, Kanui taku pouri (my soul is dark, very dark) still the night is passing away, and I must put my men in order. They shall never know that Waiwera faltered.'

"In the meantime the Ngatikahungunu were not asleep, as their enemy supposed. They had seen the Waikatos the day before, and had taken every precaution to ensure them a hearty welcome. Not that they had any hope of victory, they had simply come to the determination of men when they are most desperate, namely to sell their lives dearly. Their old men, women and children were securely hidden in the neighbouring bush-clad ranges, in order that the tribes should not be annihilated, and the occupants of the pah determined to fight to the last. Also, in the hearing of all their chief Kaitangata had given the old men strict orders to burn with fire any warrior who shirked his fate, and joined them. This order was given for the double purpose of making his men fight to the death, and ensuring that the Waikatos should have no chance of following fugitives to the hiding-place of the tribe.

"Just as the first streak of dawn appeared in the east, the Maori's favourite hour of attack, Waiwera, with his own hand, lit the signal fire, and then, placing himself at the head of his own men made a grand rush for the pah.

"Waitoto, on his own part, was not backward, and both parties reached the stronghold at the same moment. Though greatly surprised to be met by a brave and watchful foe the Waikatos did not flinch, but gallantly tried to carry the pah by storm.

"'Waikatos!' shouted the chiefs. 'We have eaten their grandfathers. Let us eat them also.'

"'Come on then, come on!' yelled the Ngatikahungunu. Why do you stop trembling out there. Come in! We wish to eat your heads before breakfast.'

"At this insult, the greatest that could be offered to a Maori, the Waikatos became infuriated, and after a few desperate efforts fairly gained the inside of the pah!

"There the fight grew fierce and furious. No quarter was
asked or given. Men fought in couples until they fell, and in many instances continued the deadly warfare when down, rending and tearing each other with their teeth in dreadful hatred until death closed the strife.

"Waiwera, who had regained his courage the moment the fight begun, fought like a lion. Man after man went down before the deadly thud of his mere, but his own men were falling fast around him, although not suffering so severely as their foe.

"Waitoto, on the other hand, was sorely pressed. He had, with a few others, got detached from his party, and was now fairly surrounded with his foes. Raising his voice he shouted, 'Ehau, ehau,—rescue, to my rescue,'—fighting bravely all the time.

"Waiwera heard the cry, and looking round, saw his favourite son's danger. Calling his men to follow, he bounded like a panther towards him, but alas, he came too late.

"It was some few moments before his men could second him effectually, and by the time he had broken through the ring of opposing warriors, Waitoto, his son, was slain.

"With a howl of rage and despair Waiwera brained a Ngatikahungunu who was still mutilating his son, but while in the act of stooping to raise him, Kaitangata smote him across the back of the neck with a mere, cutting every muscle and sinew fairly through, which caused his head to fall forward on his chest and left him completely powerless.

"But now a body of Waikatos came with a mighty rush, and surrounded their fallen chief. Quickly despatching Kaitangata and his band in a short time afterwards, every Ngatikahungunu was slain.

"There was loud lamentation amid the Waikato warriors over the fall of their chiefs.

"Waitoto was laid in a whare, out of his father's sight, but the old man commanded him to be brought to his side in the battle-field, from which he refused to be moved. The subordinate chiefs sat around them all the rest of the day, but towards sunset it became evident that Waiwera's hour had come.

"The old chief, who had laid silent for a long time,
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with his arm clasping his dead son, suddenly shouted out:—

"'The Pakeha! the Pakeha! I see thousands of white men in red coats, spitting fire! Alas for the Maories!'

"Then raising his voice to a piercing scream he cried, 'Kokiri, Waikato, Kokiri!—Charge, Waikato, Charge!' and fell back stone dead.

"His warriors thought him delirious at the time of his vision, but his words were handed down from generation to generation, and when at last Captain Cook came, and the then existing Maoris saw the marines in their red coats, they remembered Waiwera, and their hearts re-echoed his last words:

"'Kokiri, Waikato, Kokiri!'

"Such was the tale told me by Renata," concluded Austin uttering the Maori war cry to the intense amusement of his youngest boy, who appeared well used to it, "but I will defer relating it to you, until by and bye, as I am going to take you out in the boat flounder spearing to-night, and its about time we were thinking of getting everything ready, even to the bull's eye lantern. The moon will be all right for us in an hour."
CHAPTER XXV

A RACE OF WARRIORS AND OLD TIME CANNIBALS

Tidal currents swirling past thy rugged basis.
Surge of Ocean ever hoarsely cacophonous.
Moan of wind through tree-tops bare and desolated.
Ritual Resonant

GOING down to the water in an hours’ time, they found the moon peeping over the tops of the dark green forest, and lighting up the waters and foreshores of the bay. There was, therefore, no need for the bull’s eye lantern, for the forms of the flounders were easily to be seen in the shallow sandy patches, as they lay flat on the sand. They secured about a dozen fine fish, and went back to the house, where at a conclave round the hospitable fire, as it was not yet much beyond nine o’clock, Austin fulfilled his promise of relating some more Maori old time legends. The children were safe in bed, so the audience consisted of the three elders.

"With regard to the death of Waiwera and his vision, I have another death of a very celebrated fighting chief, 'Lizard Skin,' who was reputed to have killed his own father in an inter-tribal dispute, and the spot where the deed was done is exactly opposite to the Auckland Museum at the present day. What says Manning—the ‘Pakeha Maori’—to this remarkable incident. Here is the account. The old man was propped up in a reclining position, his face towards the assembled tribe who were all waiting to catch his last words ‘I stood before him,' says Manning,
A Race of Warriors

‘and I thought I perceived he recognised me. Still all was silence for a full half hour. We all stood there, waiting patiently for the closing scene. Once or twice the tohunga said to him in a very loud voice, ‘The tribe are assembled. You won’t die silent.’

“At last after about half-an-hour he became restless, his eyes rolled from side to side, and he tried to speak, but failed. The circle of men closed nearer, and there was evidence of anxiety and expectation among them, but a dead silence was maintained. At last, suddenly, without any apparent effort, and in a manner which startled me, the old man spoke clearly out in the ringing metallic tone of voice for which he had been formerly so remarkable, particularly when excited. He spoke ‘Hide my bones quickly, where the enemy may not find them. Hide them at once!’ He spoke again—‘Oh my tribe, be brave. Be brave that you may live!’ Listen to the words of my pakeha (Manning) ‘He will unfold the designs of his tribe.’ This was in allusion to a very general belief among the natives at the time, that the Europeans designed sooner or later, to exterminate them and take the country, a thing the old fellow had cross-questioned me about a thousand times, and the only way I could find to ease his mind, was to tell him that if I ever heard of any such proposal, I would let him know, protesting at the same time that no such intention existed. This notion of the natives has since that time done much harm, and will do more, for it is not yet quite given up. He continued—‘I give my mere to my Pakeha—my two old wives will hang themselves—(here a howl of assent from the two old women in the near rank) ‘I am going, be brave after I have gone.’ Here he began to rave. He fancied himself in some desperate battle, for he began to call to celebrated comrades who had been dead forty or fifty years. I remember every word—‘Charge!’ shouted he—‘Charge Wata charge! Tara, Charge! Charge! Then after a short pause—‘Rescue! Rescue! to my rescue! ahau! ahau! rescue!’ The last cry for rescue was in such a piercing tone of anguish and utter desperation, that involuntarily I advanced a foot and hand, as if starting to his assistance, a

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movement, as I found afterwards not unnoticed by the superstitious' tribe. At the same moment that he gave the last despairing and most agonising cry for 'rescue,' I saw his eyes actually blaze, his square jaw locked, he set his teeth, and rose nearly to a sitting position, and then fell back, dying. He only murmured 'How sweet is man's flesh,' and then the gasping breath and upturned eye announced the last moment.

"The tolunga now bending close to the dying man's ear, roared out, 'Kia kotahi ki te ao. Kia kotahi ki te ao. Kia kotahi ki te po!' The poor savage was now, as I believe, past hearing; and gasping his last. 'Kai kotahi ki te ao!' shouted the devil-priest again in his ear, shaking his shoulder roughly with his hand. "Kia kotahi ki te ao. Kia kotahi ki te po!' Thus, in a din like pandemonium, guns firing, women screaming, and the accursed tohunga shouting in his ear died, 'Lizard-skin,' as good a fighting man as ever worshipped force, or trusted in the spear. His death on the whole was thought happy, for his last words were full of good omen: 'How sweet is man's flesh.'

"I have found the Maori green-stone chisels here," said Austin. "In fact, our children found a beauty only the other day. To-morrow, I can show you a system of trenches on the hillside at the back of the house, from whence there is a straight look down to the bay. Some curious scenes have been enacted here in the old days, I have no doubt. At Ngakuta you know, in the other sound, there was a great battle in old days down to the peninsula, where the attackers drove the others right on to the heights at the end of it, and from thence clean into the water, where I have no doubt those in the war canoes finished them."

"I have seen it," said Arthur, "there are a lot of old graves at the end of the peninsula."

"But I must tell you another story which came to me from Renata," continued Austin, "which will show you that the spirit of revenge lasted a long time amongst the Maories of the old generations. When I was stock-riding at Porangahau, I used daily to ride through a village at Black Head.

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The country about there for about half a mile inland, consists of swamps and low, conical shaped sand-hills covered with coarse grass and stunted rushes. Looking for cattle there one day, and being unable to find them, I dismounted, and tying up my horse, climbed to one of the highest mounds, hoping thus to obtain a good view of the surrounding country. To my great surprise, on reaching the summit, I found that the mound had, either by some freak of nature or Maori exertion, been hollowed out to a depth of fifteen or twenty feet, forming a basin about thirty feet across the top, from whence it sloped gradually, being about twelve feet in diameter at the bottom. Observing two white objects below me, and a small semicircular patch of burnt-looking stones, I slid easily down the sandy slope to satisfy my curiosity. Reaching the level, I found the two white objects were two immense skeletons lying side by side, every bone in its place, and, but for an ugly gash in each skull, appearing as if they had lain peacefully down to sleep, and forgotten to wake again.

"The holes in each skull appeared to have been made with some heavy blunt instrument, for the bone was splintered in every direction, and I had no doubt from what I saw that the whilom owners of these bones had met with a terribly sudden and unexpected death. It would have been impossible for one of them to have killed the other, unless by mutual consent, and simultaneous blows, and I could conceive no position in which two men might be placed as to necessitate the plan of mutual extermination. They had evidently been surprised there by someone else. The blows on the head of each were identical, and both blows in the same place as near as possible.

"The burnt stones were the remains from a small Kapa Maori, or Maori oven, a sort of cooking pit into which red hot stones are placed. This oven had probably been used by the defunct for cooking human flesh. That their own had not been eaten, I felt certain, or their bones would not have been undisturbed. No, they had lain there ever since death had come upon them. How long ago was that?"
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“Being of an imaginative turn of mind, my curiosity was greatly excited, and I longed to know how they came there. I examined every inch of the basin, seeking some clue to the dark deeds that had been therein enacted, but my search was in vain; nothing could I see but the gaunt bones of the dead men, whose grinning skulls seemed to laugh in derision at my efforts. Stooping down, I examined the pearl like teeth in each jaw, in none of which could detect the slightest flaw, while wondering how many human beings they had masticated in their time. At length, seeing I could find out nothing more about them I resumed my search for the cattle, resolving to question the natives at the Black Head village on the first opportunity. I could not account to myself for the interest I took in those skeletons, for I had seen cartloads before about the district. Lower down the coast at Castle Point, the sandhills are one mass of human bones, which shows how dense the population was at one time, and every heavy gale, by shifting the sand, exposes fresh heaps of buried bones. Oftentimes, when gazing on these sad relics of humanity on which God’s wind blew, and sun shone, have I wondered if—as the ages roll away—some individual of a race as far in advance of us, as we are in advance of the old Maories, would gaze at our bones bleaching in the sun, and feel the same thoughts vibrate his brain, as I had when I gazed at the relics. ‘So many men, so many minds.’

“The skeletons in the district were so numerous, that while at Castle Point I frequently saw the station hands playing a game called ‘duck-stone’ with the skulls, and heard them laugh gleefully when a good shot broke one up. The next day, I made it my business to call at the Pah, where I was always welcome, having generally a little tobacco to part with. After exchanging salutations with the natives, I told them where I had seen the skeletons, and asked if they knew of them.

“To my surprise, the moment I put the question, men, women and children, rose simultaneously and spat on the ground with every demonstration of disgust, leaving me alone in less than a minute. Of course, I saw at once
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that somehow I had made a mistake, and a very serious mistake, but for the life of me I could recall nothing in my gestures or words to account for it. And why they should show such marked disapprobation at that particular time, and shun me as if I were accursed, was utterly beyond my comprehension. However, I was determined to find out, so walking after a young fellow named Matai, who had lived long enough on different stations to be half a white man, I asked him how I had offended his people. He grinned, and answered, ‘tapu;’ that hill ‘tapu’ long ago. The moment he uttered the word ‘tapu,’ I knew the mistake I had committed, for at that time the old Maori law held good in the Napier country, and the greatest rudeness one could be guilty of was to mention any person or place under the ban.

"With Matai's help, however, I soon regained my friendly footing with the natives, and although I did not offend again, I was the more determined to find out all about that mound, the next time Matai came to the station, if tobacco would buy the secret. Accordingly, when he appeared about a week afterwards, I presented him with half a pound of tobacco, and asked him to tell me about the ghastly inhabitants of the mound. To my disgust, he told me, that the place being ‘tapued’, he dare not speak about it, but that if I applied to Renata, the head-chief, who lived on the bank of the Porangahau River, he would, no doubt, relate to me all the particulars.

"The following Sunday found me at the Porangahau Pah seeking an interview with the chief Renata. It was my first interview with him, and turned out to be the beginning of our acquaintance. To my surprise, I found Renata to be one of Nature's own noblemen, tall and straight as his own spear.

"I could see at a glance that he belonged to the real red-boned Rangatirars, the native aristocracy of New Zealand. Though not exceeding five feet eleven inches in height he looked all six feet, and possessed a front and brow more suited for an Egyptian King, than a New Zealand chief. I found that he could converse fluently in English, and was quite willing to relate the story I required,
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only he could not spare time that day. However, he said he would see me again soon, and with that assurance I was obliged to be content.

"A few days afterwards, whilst leisurely riding along the beach road towards Black Head, I was startled at the clatter of a horse's hoofs on the hard sand behind me. Looking hastily around I was agreeably surprised to see my new friend, Renata. Reining up his horse with a jerk, he shook hands and asked where I was going. Finding that I was merely riding for pleasure, he exclaimed, 'All right, then I will relate the story you asked for, but you will see and understand better if you will come with me to the top of yonder hill.'

"The hill he pointed to stood about a mile inward, and was nearly eight hundred feet high. I had been on it before, and had noticed from the number of totara slabs sticking here and there, that it had once been a strongly fortified pah.

"Putting our horses into a smart gallop we soon reached the foot of the hill. We left our horses there, and half-an-hour's hard climbing brought us to the summit.

"Pulling down a dry slab, the chief seated himself and invited me to sit beside him. After a few moments' earnest thought, he related the following story, which he called the

DEADLY FEUD

About six hundred years ago, my ancestors arrived in this country forming part of the great, or second expedition that left their native land which they called Hawaiiki. They belonged to the true Rangatiras, and brought a number of the inferior order of people to do their work. They landed in the Waikato river with the rest of their party, but separated from them there, and worked their way south as far as the Whareama river. At the time they arrived New Zealand was thinly populated by a small pale-coloured race, with blue eyes and reddish brown hair. They were an inoffensive people, living chiefly on fish, shell-fish and fern-root. In fact they were little in advance of animals in their primitive way of living, and of course fell
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easy victims to the invaders, who slaughtered and ate them without mercy, only saving such women as took their fancy. By these women they had children and although the cross-breed eventually died out, at the present day there are remarkable instances in some families of the truth of the story. Occasionally Maori women give birth to reddish-brown haired children with blue eyes and skins quite as fair as the Europeans. Arthur remembered Aiotea, also that her sisters had never had her pure pink and white complexion. ‘Did you ever see any?’ said Renata to me continued Austin. ‘Yes,’ I replied. ‘I saw one at Waipukarau and thought at first she was the daughter of white parents, but the natives assured me of the contrary, and said the phenomenon was quite common long before the white men came.’ ‘Exactly,’ said Renata; ‘sometimes a family would run clear for three or four generations, and then suddenly a white child would appear without exciting any surprise. As time passed, my people multiplied greatly, and built strong pahs on all the suitable hills down the coast; one of the strongest being erected here. This one was kept in good repair for more than three hundred years, and would have still retained its strength had not your countrymen intro-
the dreaded musket, thereby upsetting most of the previous fighting tactics of my race. About one hundred years ago my grandfather, who, from his great strength and ferocity was called the ‘Taniwa,’ then ruled our people the Ngatirukawa and contracted a great friendship with two young chiefs of the Ngatiawa, who lived on the opposite side of the island. This friendship after existing a few years, was brought to an abrupt conclusion in the following manner. At the Ngatiawa Pah on the West Coast there dwelt one of these very singular tribal peculiarities we were talking about, and a very beautiful young woman she was. Pukunui was the name of this very handsome girl, and the moment the ‘Taniwa’ saw her he resolved to make her his bride. Unfortunately both of the Ngatiawa chiefs had formed the same resolution, so as a matter of course the ‘Taniwa’s’ proposals were refused. This being the case, he returned to his people foaming with rage and disappointment.

“After resting a few days, he constructed a strong litter
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and taking fifty picked men, departed by a secret way to the Ngatiawa country, determined to carry away the beautiful Pukunui by stealth. In this design he was quite successful and gained his own strongly fortified pah without losing a single man. On his arrival he at once carefully examined his defences, knowing full well that the Ngatiawas would soon be along looking for reprisals after the great insult they had received. He caused all the pits inside the stockade to be filled with water, tons of stones to be gathered up and sent swift runners down the coast for reinforcements. Three days after his return the hill was surrounded by a thousand warriors all longing for revenge and the recovery of their beloved Pukunui. The ‘Taniwa’ had not more than three hundred men in his pah at the time, but he knew that if he could hold out for a day or two, three times that number would flock to him from his pahs down the coast.

“The morning after their arrival the Ngatiawas commenced their attack by slinging red hot stones into the fort, hoping to set fire to the dry thatch on the whares. In this they did not succeed for the women were vigilant, and as soon as a stone fell, it was drenched with cold water. Getting tired of this method of attack the Ngatiawa chiefs ranged their men in two compact bodies about seventy yards from the main entrance to the fort, and performing their war-dance tried by every variety of insult to induce the the defenders to sally forth and fight. But the ‘Taniwa’ ordered his men to keep close, knowing that until the rest of his tribe arrived, his only chance lay in holding the pah. Among the Ngatiawas, one warrior was immensely conspicuous by his bravery, and the insults he heaped upon the besieged. Addressing Taniwa he exclaimed, ‘Come out, you dog. You paltry woman-stealer. Come out. A woman-stealer like you is afraid to come out and try the strength of the Ngatiawa. Come out and eat fern-root. A piece of man’s flesh would frighten you!’ Whilst giving vent to this torrent of abuse, he advanced to within ten paces of the pah and hurled his spear at the pah sides, with such a force of rage that it shivered into splinters. As he turned to depart the Taniwa leaped like an infuriated tiger from
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the walls, and with one stroke of his club, knocked him senseless. Picking him up in his powerful arms he ran and regained the fort before the Ngatiawa could reach him.

"Loud were the shouts of exultation raised by the Taniwa's men at this daring and successful exploit, and in an incredible short space of time they erected a stage in the centre of their enclosure, some three feet higher than its walls in order that their enemies might behold the fate of their warrior.

"The man, who had recovered his senses, was then lashed on his back to the stage, and Taniwa after dancing round him thrust his spear deep into his breast, and kneeling down he applied his lips to the wound, and drank the warm blood as it flowed! When he was tired the next in rank took his place, until the victim was sucked dry. After this sanguinary repast, the Taniwa, from his elevated position addressed his foes. "Ngatiawa, Ngatiawa," he cried, "I have drunk your blood and it was sweet, and now my mouth will be constantly open to devour your flesh. Who will feed the Taniwa next? The Ngatiawa is a rat, it is too easy to kill him. Begone before I devour you all!"

"His speech brought a shower of stones about him from his foes, who then came on with a rush and made the most desperate efforts to take the pah, but after an hour's hard fighting they retired, having suffered severely.

"Early next morning the Taniwa's forces arrived and began to mount the hill. As soon as the Taniwa perceived them he sallied forth with his men and commenced a terrific onslaught on the Ngatiawa. The latter finding themselves between two foes, formed in a solid phalanx and made a desperate charge down the hill. The carnage was dreadful, but the powerful rush they made carried them through their foes. Still they gained nothing by it, for the Ngatirukawa forced them to run at the foot of the hill and there the battle was fought out. The Ngatiawa were almost annihilated, but the young chiefs escaped. After the battle the victors had a great feast, the bodies of their slain enemies being roasted whole, and devoured with a relish incomprehensible to Europeans. About ten years after the battle the Ngatirukawa began to lose
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members of their tribe in a most unaccountable manner. Sometimes a man, often, very often a woman, and a child more often still. And no one could tell how or why it was done. The people disappeared mysteriously and the tribe began to get alarmed. It was noticed that all the missing ones were last seen or known to be among the sand-hills which at that time were covered with scrub, and through which they had to pass on their way to and from the beach with shell-fish. At last the people believed that the sand-hills were populated with Devils, and would not go through them at all.

"In the meantime Pukunui had borne Taniwa two fine boys, whom he intended to make rulers of the tribe after his death, but here he was doomed to disappointment, for on arising one morning the boys were gone and not a trace of them could be discovered. Of course the Maoris blamed the devils in the sand-hills, and talked of moving further down the coast, for these boys, and a few other late cases besides had been spirited away, even out of their pah at night, when all the people slept.

"But Taniwa was made of sterner stuff and said he would go to the sand-hills that very night and would fight all the devils he should meet. He had some suspicion that a human foe lurked there, and would have gone by day-light only he thought it probable that the enemy to his tribe, or devil or whatever it was, would have seen him leaving his pah, and in that case would be sure to decamp. He knew that his children were dead and most likely eaten and that nothing remained for him but revenge. Therefore he determined to act cautiously, so that he might not be baulked.

"That night the wind rose to a gale, and dark masses of black clouds flew through the air, adding to the darkness. This just suited the Taniwa.

"Taking the sacred "mere" of his fathers and his own trusty club he started on his lonely expedition. He had wandered about for the best part of the night, and was about to give up the search in despair, when during a heavy gust of wind he saw a few sparks of fire blown out of one of the sand-hills. Crawling on his belly like a great lizard
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every muscle alert for instant action he saw by the light of a few smouldering embers below him—for he was at the top of the sand-hill almost directly—two forms asleep. Sliding gently down he crept close to the foe, and then springing to his feet, he delivered a crushing blow on the head of each. No more was needed, a few quivers, and they were dead.

"Having made sure of this fact, Taniwa added some brushwood to the fire, and by its light saw a sight which filled him with horror. Besides the mutilated remains of his young sons, were other bones put on one side which were probably some belonging to the later victims. He could see also by the light of the fire that the men he had slain were the two Ngatiawa chieftains who had once been his chosen friends.

"He retraced his steps to the pah to inform his tribe of the discovery and his terrible vengeance, and when the day broke he sent a party to remove the relics of his sons and the other bones of their late feast. But he gave this party the strictest of orders not to move, or even to touch the bodies of his foes, whom he vowed should have no burial, but should be eaten by insects and worms, and their bones left uncovered.

"To make this threat sure, he then placed all the sand-hills under the strongest ‘tapu,’ which will remain on them while one of his descendants are alive.

"And," added the chief in a mournful voice, "the day is not far distant, when the Maori like the moa, will be extinct, when the only record of him left will be the pits cut in the side of many a hill, in which he stored his ‘kumaras’ and sun-dried fish."

As Renata finished speaking he nodded his head walked with long strides down the hill, and mounting his horse, rode off at a furious gallop, but I often met him afterwards, and many and wild were the tales he told me of the war-like deeds of his ancestors.

"And do you think the chief was right about the disappearance of his race from New Zealand?" asked Arthur with interest. "Truly it would be a sad pity, for they are a noble race, very intelligent, and now intensely loyal."

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"The Maoris are not the only ones who have prophesied their disappearance," replied Austin sadly. "Dr. Hochstetter, as far back as 1867, said in relation to the disappearance of the kauri pine, that valuable timber and gum producing tree, that 'the extermination of that noble tree progresses from year to year, at such a rate that its final extinction is as certain as that of the natives of New Zealand. The European colonisation threatens the existence of both, and with the last of the Maories, the last of the kauris will also disappear from the earth.' The Maoris themselves say, 'as the white man's rat has extirpated our rat, so the European fly is driving out our fly. The foreign clover is killing our ferns, and so the Maori himself will disappear before the white man.' It is indeed a sad prospect, for having fought bravely against us, they now assimilate and associate with us. They are pleasant companions and intensely hospitable to the whites whenever they go to their settlements. But they think so themselves. And now as you look tired, Mr. Somerset, we will all have a steaming hot nightcap and go to bed."
CHAPTER XXVI

CHANGES DURING ABSENCE

Oh for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still.

—Tennyson.

ARTHUR spent a most delightful week with Austin, and at the end of it went back to Waitahi, his newly made friend accompanying him to the bottom of the hill on the Pelorus Sound side. Arrived home again, Arthur felt the same sort of melancholy feeling he had experienced before, and again thought he would never be able to live at Waitahi, where every manuka-laden breath of air, every gleam of sunlight from the waters of the Sound, brought Aiotea and her happy laughter back before him again. He had always blamed himself for not going down with her on the day she was drowned, and it added keenly to his present misery. On entering his cottage in a very lonely mood he found two letters awaiting him, one from Miss Featherston, and one from the Senor which he at once opened and read. Miss Featherston's letter was:—

Verbena Cottage,
North Belt,
Christchurch.

My dear Mr. Somerset,

Lucy's wedding is to take place shortly, and I write to you, and I ask you as a favour to come down to Christchurch and be present at it. Some spiteful people made spiteful remarks at one time, and I should like your
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presence to put them to the blush. Lucy has no idea that I am writing to you, nor does she know of the remarks that were made, but I do. Lucy will be both surprised and pleased to see you. Any little tiff she and her intended lover have had, have long ago ended as lovers' quarrels do end, and I must say that Mr. Osbern has vastly improved of late. Would you believe it? He has given up his pro-Boer opinions, and is quite convinced now that they only wished to supplant England, who has treated them only too leniently to her own great disadvantage. This pleases Lucy greatly, and they are quite reconciled. Do come. I so long to have a chat with you about your South African experiences, and hope you are daily getting stronger.—Yours faithfully,

ADELA FEATHERSTON.

A. Somerset, Esq.

The Senor's letter ran:—

Dear Arthur,

I have given Miss Featherston a hint to ask you down to the wedding. I have worked hard myself to bring that wedding about, but I have not done it—quicksticks—I had to convert a new friend of mine, Osbern himself, from a pro-Boer view to a knowledge of his mistaken sympathy, and I have succeeded at last, but by no means—quicksticks. I have now conceived a friendship for this young man, my convert, as I secretly call him, only second to that which I bear for you, my Arthur, and as I have a peculiar method of bringing round people to my way of thinking, he himself is willing to meet you in a friendly manner, although, believe me, at one time if ever you two met, I always feared the fisticuff business—quicksticks—from two such explosive subjects as you were.—Yours ever,

VASQUEZ IBANES.

So that after an interview with his partner, and thanking him and his wife most warmly for their solicitude and friendship, Arthur left Waitahi that very same evening for
the south, arrived two days later by steamer at Lyttelton and was installed with the Senor at his old lodgings shortly afterwards. His old affection for Lucy Falconer had been eclipsed by the love he bore for Aiotea, and he was determined to show to the best of his ability his disapproval of any existing comments made relative to himself and Lucy. He would prove that there was no real cause for spiteful remarks, and let his detractors eat their own words. As it so happened, however, he suffered occasional relapses, the cause being an after effect of his previous severe illness, and consequently was rather gloomy and silent when he met the Senor who eyed him narrowly, but said nothing. That evening after answering a few questions put to him by the Senor briefly, not feeling inclined to talk much, he called upon Miss Featherston in the North Belt, was cordially received by that lady, and Lucy and Osbern coming in later, all were re-united in a most friendly manner. The Senor, however, was a most extraordinary being, and could not account for Arthur's rather sombre manner. He had now with a sort of variableness peculiar to him taken quite a fancy to "Mr. Surly Pig-Head," as he formerly termed him. And though he said nothing, he thought a great deal, like the parrot of old time memory. Arthur had not shaken off the extraordinary feeling of melancholy he felt at his return to Waitahi, and was disinclined to talk about it. He felt a foreshadowing of something to come and it made him uneasy and restless. His recurring dreams about Aiotea had puzzled him. He had never forgotten her last words, that she would be always near him, and before his illness he saw her, in a brief wet sleep snatched on the veldt. Since then on occasions he had been with her in dreamland, but somehow he could never see her face. And the Senor knew nothing of all this, for of his thoughts on this subject so nearly relating to his own self, Arthur Somerset would speak to no one. At Verbena Cottage he heard that the wedding was to be celebrated in a week, but that on the morrow a long talked-of and arranged for picnic was to come off, to which he was warmly pressed to come.

The gloom that rested upon him was noticed, but the
two ladies with womanly intuition attributed it to its right cause, and spoke warm words of comfort and sympathy. Osbern seemed totally changed and much brighter and pleasanter in his manner, and Lucy Falconer also appeared to be her own self again, the merry laughing girl that Somerset knew so well on board the Northampton. The only news that transpired relating to Osbern’s affairs, was an item he told Lucy during the general conversation, and that was, that he had dismissed Rawlings for purloining some whiskey, and he seemed to be rather put out and annoyed at the necessity of it. Still feeling moody and sad, Arthur went home early and went to bed. The Senor was out, and so the pair did not meet that night at all. Nor did they meet the next morning either for Arthur went to have breakfast with Osbern by invitation at his hotel, and finally arranged with him to escort the ladies down to New Brighton, as he had pressing and unexpected business at the Addington sale yards, induced by a telegram. He—Osbern—however, would join the party later on, by riding from Christchurch to the Sand Hill Farm, and from thence he would walk to the sea and join the party on the beach. The following day they were all to go to the Sand Hill Farm, and spend the day there, come back to Christchurch in the late afternoon, and dine with Osbern at the hotel.

“I’m going to have a regular round of festivities,” said Osbern to Somerset at parting, before the auspicious day, and I count upon you for all of them.”

The morning fixed for the picnic had turned out to be a most promising one, and Arthur found the pleasant task of being a squire of dames congenial, as he was in charge of no less than four of them, including Miss Jane and Carry Verner, who did their level best to monopolize him, feeling the deepened interest in his saddened and sober manner, and regarding him as a hero. They set off therefore in a large waggonette with a pair of horses, and enjoyed the drive to New Brighton immensely, in spite of the strong nor-wester blowing. “We shall find it difficult to cook our beefsteak to-day in the sand hills, auntie, with this breeze blowing,” said Lucy Falconer.
Changes During Absence

“What shall we do, dear? We will get Mr. Somerset and the girls to get plenty of sticks and light our fire down near by the water. But perhaps the wind will spoil it too. The sand flies so dreadfully before these nor-westers. I'll tell you what we will do after all. We will have lunch at the hotel, and cook our beefsteak later on, before we start back. We'll have a beefsteak tea if the wind goes down.”

Lucy’s brightness did not conceal the fact from her own inner consciousness, that the young gentleman with them, now laying himself out to please her friends, Jane and Carrie Verner, was at one time very much in her thoughts and near her heart. Lucy had been a little jealous too, and often wondered what Aiotea had been like, until she saw her photograph, then she saw more clearly. At first she thought that it was out of pique that Arthur had engaged himself to this half-forest, half-garden flower, but she was sure now that he had loved her. And she pitied him as only a true girl could, and yet asked herself a question: “Had it been otherwise, what would have happened?” As for Arthur his thoughts were far away. He was thinking of his future, and thought the conversation of the two lively girls near him drew him out of himself a little at times, still at intervals the curious forebodings he entertained clung to him, and at one time he started so violently as to draw attention to himself, for he had a distinct feeling as if some one had placed her hand upon his shoulder. And he knew the feeling came from Aiotea! He knew the touch. It was exactly the way she used to touch it when he was abstracted and she wished to draw his attention to anything. It was some time before he could regain his equanimity, the sensation was so very real. For the second or so that the feeling lasted, the impression upon his brain was so intensely real, that he might have been away with her by the slopes of East Bay, or walking with her through the streets of Waitahi, sitting quietly in some shady nook under the wineberries or “karakas” at Durock’s place, or asking her advice in the office. Ah me, he would never see her again in the flesh. He could almost hear her voice. Her face he could not
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see. Quickly rallying however, he became himself again, amid varied counsel of how to take care of himself from all the ladies at once. On arriving at the hotel they put up the horses and ordered lunch, it being so much easier and more comfortable than carrying everything along the sands. And they preferred by unanimous vote to be quite untrammeled in their explorations, for Lucy having heard from some mysterious source, probably through Miss Featherston, at second hand from the Senor, of the large bleached segments of backbones of stranded whales being numerous among the sand hummocks, expressed an intense desire to annex some for rockery work about her garden—presumably her after-marriage garden—and when joked with about the dragging of these portentous fragments, showed some of her power by commandeering Arthur Somerset to carry out her wishes after lunch, to which he willingly enough assented. Perhaps he also thought, that considering her nearness to him once, he might have a chance to speak a few words for her ear alone, and obtain from her a maiden's sympathy for the lost maiden. It was not unlikely that these thoughts flashed simultaneously through the brains of these two, for each had been burning to say a quiet word of sympathy and comfort before they were legally parted for ever.
CHAPTER XXVII

THE NEW BRIGHTON SAND DUNES

Blown wet shadows of the summits, dim sonorous sprites of foam,
Here and there my days are wasted shorn of leaf and stripped of fruit,
Vexed because of speech half spoken, maiden with the marvellous lute,
Vexed because of songs half shapen, smit with fire and vexed with pain,
Part of thee and part of sorrow, like a sunset pale with rain.
—H. C. Kendall.

The New Brighton sand-dunes, or sand-hummocks, or sand-hills, as they are variously called by various people, are to say the least of them remarkable, and tempt a stranger to wander among them, and marvel at the curious things to be found among their hollows.

Being drift sand formation, moving and altering their shapes with it, borne on the mighty wings of the north-west wind, and extending from the New Brighton side of the Sumner estuary right away to, and beyond, Kaiapoi, commencing just about high water mark, running parallel with the ninety mile beach, and extending back for a considerable distance, they are well worth exploring. Patches of grassland—often extremely fertile—crop up amongst them.

Picturesque clumps of thick manuka, albeit with that wind swept appearance about their tops so noticeable in trees near a storm-swept sea, but with sturdy rugged stems to support the foliage and branches, feathered golden plumed “tui grass,” grand clumps of honey-flowered flax, the heath like “tahine,” and other bushes spread here and there. A scarlet-rooted grass, strong and coarse in fibre, binds the constantly shifting sand in some places, but does not attain in sufficient quantity to prevent it in other parts. And the sand hills grow and move onwards, until their tops are cut off from a gale, and sent flying far down the wind. And the south-east wind shifts them back again. In other
places amongst these sand hills where water collects, a curious rush, variegated in regular lengths, throws a rich colouring through the changing effect of yellow and yellow greens, banishing monotony; as nature always does, if only on a moss-grown wall, which otherwise would be all one colour. With a perfectly blue sky overhead, a glance from the top of one of these sand hills through the rows of piled up and breaking blue water, emerald green in its curves of the breaking wave, with a silver surf fringe, an outline of rugged peaks, or a snow mountain dazzling white against the clear atmosphere, these sand dunes are romantic, and the ever-changing scenery as you mount an escarpment or drop into a hollow again makes you think that your outing is not all for nothing. The inner, landward sand hills thus possess a strip of vegetation, where the scurrying rabbit and even a stray pheasant or a partridge may be seen. Nearer the sea, however, sand hills gleam cream-white and salient, scarp after scarp, ridge after ridge, trench after trench. You would think you were amongst artillery fortifications as you wander on. In the shrewd nor-westers which vex this coast, the tops of the hummocks are cut off flat, hurled forward to the next sand dune to bank that up, whilst the hummock behind whirls basement and summit and side material to the denuded one. Thus they are ever shifting, ever moving. Sometimes you will see the whole slope of an escarpment slip along the face for a few inches in a slow deliberate manner, another time it comes down like a rushing torrent and gathers ground forward, and one effect of the whirling sand-mist, is to obliterate footsteps entirely. On a windy day, the traveller through these regions leave no traces behind him, ten minutes after he has passed any particular spot. Even cattle prints are filled up in a very short time. 'The effect is the same that a driving snowstorm would have.' Should a man get lost, and all depended in the tracing of his footprints for his chance of rescue, he would have a poor chance indeed. But happily unless fortuitously buried in the sand which might occur in a case of unconsciousness, people do not lose themselves in the sand hills around New Brighton. Should a picnic party, however, attempt to cook a steak
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for the mere pleasure of eating it, during these nor-westers, the sand-pepper will be terrific on its absorbing surface, and the result a failure. Necessarily, however, the sand flies low on the sea beach itself, as there are no tops of sand hummocks there for the wind to cut off, and the holiday makers can greatly escape the inside turmoil, by getting near to the breakers; where the light, and the musical rhythm of wave following wave, the lovely scenery and the pure invigorating ozonic air will chain their minds and senses with admiration.

Our picnic party, however, by lunching comfortably at the hotel have escaped atomic confusion amongst the comestibles, and also the horrors of adulteration, such as sand with sugar, sand with butter, bits of dry grass, sticks and sand with jam tarts, and consequently have not destroyed their sense of enjoyment; such mixtures as the above being unrefreshing, incongruous, and uneatable. No, they have lunched well, although Frank Osbern has not yet put in an appearance; and with the inner man and woman fortified and satisfied, are wandering in two's and three's amongst the sand-dunes, where, like the birds, the plumage of the only male companion, assimilates to favor, until at last Lucy Falconer and Arthur Somerset found themselves alone in a picturesque amphitheatre, with an island dune in the middle of it, like an 'island in a lake surrounded by sand mountains.

"Look at this variegated rush," Miss Falconer, "doesn't it remind you of 'wampum' beads or what one fancies 'wampum' beads must be like? I saw a Maori mat in a 'curio' shop the other day, and it left upon me the same impression with its fringes that these clusters of rushes do now."

"It is indeed pretty. I must have some. Will you be good enough to cut me a large bunch with your pocket knife, Mr. Somerset? That accomplished, please climb to the top of the highest sand hill you can find, strain your eyes somewhere in the direction of Christchurch, and tell me if you can see anything of Mr. Osbern. He will leave his horse at his own farm, and come straight across. He knows the way about here well. Would you believe it? she and a friend once hired a cottage in these sand hill, and lived in it for a fortnight for the sake of the varied
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Sport this locality afforded them, for the sake of the shooting and fishing—in the latter case—getting up very early, and picking up what the waves sent them. They used to get rabbits, hares, partridges, and an occasional pheasant. Then every morning before daylight, and the sea-gulls; they used to be on the ocean beach to get the ‘frost-fish.’ Frank said he could have made quite a sum of money if he had taken the trouble to send the fish to town, enough to have paid their expenses for the visit. But they gave them away to their friends instead. A ‘frost-fish’ is quite a valuable article of commerce, don’t you know? A large ‘frost-fish’ will sell for ten and sixpence. It is an epicure’s dish when properly cooked, and is much sought after by the proprietary of clubs and hotels. It was after that visit here, that Frank bought the very cottage he and his friend had been staying at; together with the land, and he is now turning it into a dairy farm, Frank says.”

“Bother Frank,” thought Arthur as he extended his hand and arm to save his fair companion from a trip. “I hope he won’t come at all. It was a good move dodging away from the others, for now we can both say what has to be said.”

“Here, Miss Falconer,” he said shortly afterwards, “is the best I can do for you, as he handed her a large carefully cut and tied bunch of the variegated rush. As he did so his eyes rest full on her animated face, and he is conscious himself of a heightened colour and a queer sensation about his heart, with a bitter feeling that she now can never be his. Lucy is crimson, and it was now that a few words were spoken by each, which either will never forget, and which yet bear some comfort to each of them; before their ways turn aside into the path of duty and every day life. Those few words over, Arthur mounted the nearest sand hill, where he could see a long way round him, and at one time whilst looking in the direction indicated by Lucy, thought he saw a man advancing by a very distant flax clump, but on turning round at an exclamation from Lucy, who was at the bottom, lost the object.

The exclamation from Lucy was caused by the advent of the rest of the picnic party, still a little distance away, to the utter exclusion of any more engrossing conversation,
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ev.en if studied and conventional, where the knowledge of
a former affection could be expressed by the eyes of each,
without words. But, almost unwittingly, the girl possessed
such a subtle attraction for him, that he felt it was punis-
ment to be near her, punishment to be away from her; and
a suppressed execration was smothered inaudibly as he
realized his irrevocable position.

Volunteering to go and look for Frank Osbern, and telling
Lucy that he was sure he had seen some one coming in their
direction, he left the party to their own devices and started.

After traversing a full mile to no purpose, and seeing
nothing of Osbern, he was on the point of returning, when
he heard a shout instantly repeated. He kept on in the
direction from whence it came, but he heard no farther
sound, and after taking a considerable circuit, and mounting
several sand hills, he retraced his steps muttering, "some-
one calling his dog, most likely, or driving some cattle home.

Just at this instant he started violently, and, truth to
tell almost burst into tears, for he felt Aio-tea's hands on his
shoulder again, for a brief second, as if they were clasped
there in her old favourite position. Was he disloyal to her
memory? It could not be that. She would be anxious
for his welfare, although lost to him for ever on earth.

Twice that day had he felt the old familiar delightful touch,
for Aio-tea's habit was to clasp both her hands together and
lean on his shoulders with a sort of gentle pull-down,
especially when she used to converse with him on various
subjects. It was a confiding, loving, possessional sort of
attitude; and Arthur started because he thought he would
hear her voice in his ear, as of aforetime. He couldn't
argue himself out of it as he walked back. It was no
sudden twitching of the muscles, no branch or pressure of
flax leaves. It was the old familiar half embrace that he
knew so well, and twice that day had he felt it. It was an
immense comfort to him to know that her presence was
with him still. Rejoining the holiday-makers after a full
three-quarters of an hour absence, he found them all down
in various attitudes exploring for shells. Then they all
went in for "pipi" gathering with renewed interest and
vivacity, expressing however in intervals their great
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astonishment at Osbern not yet putting in an appearance, and when at length the party, tired out, loaded with relics in the shape of flotsam and lagend, and drowsy with the effect of the sea-air, got into the waggonette again, and drove off homewards, one general opinion possessed them, that Osbern for some reason or another had been detained at the cattle sale; and found it impossible to carry out his intention of joining them on the ocean beach at New Brighton.

When Lucy and her aunt reached the cottage after depositing their young lady friends, there was no message, and "no one had called." What can have kept him had been Lucy's constantly recurring though. "Perhaps, aunt," she ventured, "he has bought some cattle, after disposing of his own, and his preferring to see them safely on the road to Wairuru has kept him from us. I shall send Mary to the club to see if she can gather any tidings. It makes me feel quite uneasy about him."

But neither from a club source, nor any other, did she gain immediate information concerning the missing man's whereabouts. A telegram marked "Urgent" and despatched to Wairuru, only elicited the reply. "Frank in town—Don't understand—Why not with you?"

A message was then sent to the police-station, and to the hotel, and after the necessary delay in instituting enquiries and following up clues it was ascertained as a startling fact, that Osbern had attended a cattle sale at the Addington yards, had sold his cattle, visited the Bank, paid in some money, cashed a cheque of his own for a considerable sum and ridden away. He was then traced to a wayside inn on the New Brighton Road, where he had stopped for a glass of ale, from thence to his farm on the outskirts of the Sand-Hills, where he had put up his horse, which was still there, under charge of a neighbouring farmer. He had announced his intention of doing so to this particular farmer, who lived about a quarter of a mile from the Sand-Hill Farm and nearer the main road. The farmer was to give it water and see to its feed an hour after Osbern had left. There was no caretaker or man about the place at Sand-Hill Farm. He had told the farmer the he was going to walk across the sand-hills to
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join a pic-nic. But it was long after dark before this information was gathered by Lucy and Miss Featherston.

From the time Frank Osbern had left his own farm and disappeared among the sand-hummocks, he was lost to the ken of his fellow-creatures!

The sand-hills were explored next day by two constables, the outlying farmer, and his boys, far and near. Not a footstep, or a trace of his belongings were found anywhere. There were no quicksands to engulf him in the immediate vicinity, "but," said a constable, "if he had dropped dead, and been covered with the sliding side of a deep sand-ridge, many years might pass on in that waste of moving ridges before his bleached bones might be again exposed to the light of the free heaven and the open air."

"Gone—Gone—Gone! with no trace left." And these were the words that were ringing in Lucy's ears, and throbbing in her head, as, aghast and trembling, she received the news in company with her aunt, from the lips of the Inspector of Police himself. Who shall say where the body is? Not, surely below those liquid dimpling waves this lovely summer's day? Not under those pitiless sand-dunes? Not hidden away in those thick dark, manuka clumps? Not lying there surely, with perhaps? Oh, merciful God! some dreadful wound calling out for retribution, some darkened stain on the surface of the earth—mutely invoking justice!

"For with whatsoever measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again!"

Surely not that dread punishment? Not the necessity for the demand of the law, of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life!

"Oh Auntie, how dreadful!" sobbed Lucy, after the Inspector had gone, promising to move heaven and earth to discover the missing man. "How terrible it all is. Do you know I did not think I was as fond of poor Frank as I ought to have been, considering that he was to have been my husband. But I did intend to be a dutiful wife to him and I might have got to love him better in time, but it is terrible—terrible—to think of him as dead—I am sure I shall never see him again—I feel it." And Lucy broke down altogether and sobbed violently.
CHAPTER XXVIII

MYSTIFICATION

I could not love thee, dear so much.
Loved I not honour more.

—Lovelace.

The S.S. Wakatipu was steaming out of Port Lyttleton, and is well clear of Godley Heads on the evening after the eventful day of the pic-nic recorded in the last chapter.

Just at this time too, a man browed by exposure to the sun, arrived in the bar of the Norman Hotel in the Port, and straightway proceeded to call for refreshment.

The "Norman" was not exactly what is called a "swell" hotel, but was a comfortable enough old-fashioned hostelry, where the traveller would find good quarters for man and beast and where, in the evening, music, song, and a mirthful company of frequenters, both sailors from the ships in harbour, and citizens might be found. And here also the engineers and many officers of both steamers and ships resorted frequently. It was a "sailor's house."

Standing at the bar, the new arrival took stock of others, who were also imbibing, with a keen glance, and on turning his head, caught the bright eyes of the pretty barmaid fixed upon him, with a look of amazement in them. Something in her glance caused him to hold up a warning finger, and, presently, sauntering carelessly into the parlour, he beckoned her to follow him. When she was quite near he said, in a quick whisper: "Don't give me away, Polly. Yes, you are right it is me. Can you send your sister to the bar for a little while? I want to speak to you."

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Going out, the girl called along the passage, "Alice, Alice, you’re wanted," and then tripped back into the parlour.

The stranger, after a furtive glance round said:

"Tell me, in a few words as possible, how many passengers by the *Wakatipu*, came in here before the vessel started."

"Well, four altogether," replied the girl. "One was a stout, big man. One was a tall, dark, slim, man. One had a reddish-brown beard, and the other was a Maori. Ordinary looking men, you know, all of them. One of them carried his arm in a sling. I remember that one, and also his making a remark to his companion who was the Maori I mentioned, about his steamer going."

"What was the man like who had his arm in the sling, my dear?" asked the stranger.

"Why, that was the one who had the reddish-brown beard," responded Polly. "He looked pale, and I’ll tell you what I thought about him, and that was, that he had just come out of the hospital."

"Was there no scar or mark you could identify him by?" queried the man.

"No," said Polly. "Where would you have me look for it?"

"On his left hand my dear. Was there no mark, or dislocation of any finger?"

"How could I see? His arm was all wrapped up. It was in splints and bandaged, and I thought it would benefit the poor man, when he was sufficiently recovered to have those splints taken off, and his arm and hand washed, for the tips of his fingers were remarkably dirty."

"Ah well," murmured the detective. "It’s no consequence. It’s not my man evidently."

"And now—" asked Polly vivaciously and with a charming smile—"now that you have wormed all my evidence out of me, Mr. Coppin, what is your reason for coming down here and mystifying me in this manner? You couldn’t deceive me, you know, I saw through your disguise, but it is very clever though."

"Well, my dear," replied Mr. Coppin. "The reason that brought me here is the usual reason. I came to see some-
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one that I am more anxious to have an interview with than he is to accord it to me. And at this stage, Polly my dear, I don't mind if I do—just one—neat!"

But although Polly blushed a little, she said nothing, and certainly did not fill the gentleman's glass, who after a whispered caution, and a round half dozen more—"neat!"—walked off and inserted himself like a dealt card into various shops in the neighborhood.

He flicked himself into two restaurants, slid into a hairdresser's, turned face down into three more public-house bars, but the faces up in all instances were plain cards not trumps, and after shuffling the whole pack, Mr. Coppin required another deal. So he put the old pack into his pocket and started a fresh one of conversation cards, dealing himself first to one by-stander and then to another, requiring to be directed here, and re-directed there until finally, after a deal that embraced wharf, landing stage, back alley, and by way he flipped himself as the last blank sample card, abstractedly into a departing train, and whirled through the Lyttleton tunnel on to the Christchurch plains, from thence to the city, where he disappeared.

In the mean-time, that is to say, from the discovery of the disappearance of Osbern to a period of a week afterwards, during which interval nothing had transpired to enlighten anybody; the police, from the latest joined constable, to the Inspector, were working double-tides stimulated thereto by the newspaper reports, and the ever present motive power lying in their own esprit de corps, which made them wish to prove their abilities as efficient and effective members in tracing and unearthing a hidden mystery to the public, to whom they were the keepers of the public weal.

So far, with a few additional scraps of evidence, as to words, and gestures used by the missing gentleman, they had only certain proof that before his disappearance, he had reached a certain point. Beyond that, the disappearance was absolute. It was, in the then state of public excitement over the news in the papers, like a total eclipse of the sun after a morning of brilliant promise, and their surmises were just as much darkened as of those of an anxious
observer of the natural phenomenon, when the nebula of
the moon comes into perihelion, between the orb of day
and the spot of the world whereon that observer is located.

Lucy Falconer had suffered great ups and downs, of fear,
anxiety, fright and grief tempered at intervals with slight rays
of hope. No news—to her—as to Arthur, frankly speaking,
was good news. Though suffering gloomy forebodings and
dreadful anticipations; the body—that grim and appalling
fact and reality—had not yet been found. There was thus a
ray of hope, and as time progressed, this ray became ever
brighter. Some strange freak might have possessed Osbern.
He might have gone away. Anything—even the breaking
off of their engagement would have been infinitely better
and happier for them all than the finding of the body.

Still Lucy was much alarmed and startled by turns. De-
spondency made room for terror. She could not sleep, and
then she gave way to a morbid uneasiness which hinged upon
the morale of Frank’s plighted troth. Had he a secret? guarded hitherto as the apple of his eye. Was there
another girl in the way? Was she sure there was not?
Was this the first divulgment of it? No, surely not.
Frank was surely a gentleman in that respect. Then why
should he have left the country? He must have been
found if he was in it. People can’t be in a country like
New Zealand and not be found, if the utmost human means
of intelligence was employed, as was the case now.

Such distracted thoughts as these had possessed both
the ladies, and Arthur’s sympathetic calls only had the
effect of making him agree with them. If Osbern hadn’t
been killed, he had left the country, that was pretty evident.
Suicide was out of the question. And these were rather
mournful re-unions all round. It took up a link in their
past life that had been dropped, and somehow Lucy began
to look to Arthur for sympathy. Dangerous relation! and
one so natural under the circumstances. More dangerous
still when all they had borne and suffered, each in their
own way, was considered. A mutual sorrow brings people
together very quickly.

Mrs. and Miss Osbern came down to town, and the
quartette of ladies kept entirely together, and much out
of sight, drawn together by the common bonds of family suffering.

As aforesaid, neither the efforts of the police, nor the strenuous exertions of friends and relatives, could discover one trace or sign of Frank Osbern from the spot where he had finished his outward and daily existence. Despite enquiries, despite search parties scouring the sand-hills assisted by Somerset, Senor Ibanes and Maxwell, who knew the locality, despite the efforts and suggestions of the Press, despite the gathering of the details by newspaper reporters, the mysterious and silent sand-hills had the best of it.

The sum total of Press work, police news, public and private effort, brought forth but one quotient when divided by the existent grade of progression:—that a young man, well and favourably known, had been in health, strength and spirits, at a certain hour on a certain day. Ten minutes after that time, nobody could swear to him. Nobody known could see him. Nobody known could prove his existence. He had drifted from a fairly lightsome, hearty life behind a dark, lowering cloud of misgiving, doubt, and ugly surmise.
CHAPTER XXIX

A GAME OF BILLIARDS

God help the man, whose trials
Are tares that he must reap,
He cannot face the future,
His only hope is sleep.

—H. C. Kendall.

To say that Arthur Somerset and his friend the Senor, who knew Osbern well and intimately, were non-plussed at his abrupt departure out of their small world of acquaintances, would be strictly true and to the point, but nevertheless, it would be a very vague way of expressing either of their ideas upon the remarkable and startling occurrence.

Somerset had been moody and depressed ever since the picnic. He had been moody and depressed ever since he left Waitahi. He said little, and only referred to the affair as being unfathomable. But he was strongly of the opinion, though he did not publish it abroad, that Osbern would yet turn up somehow or other, though at times, there was an expression upon his face, which if keenly read, would show, that with the facts as they were at present, uncertainty and suspense, were the best tidings as far as he was concerned. The Senor noted that look. Save for the proof of Osbern’s death, not yet accorded, mere personal selfishness would suggest the exact turn things had taken for Somerset. His rays of hope were luminous also in this selfishness. Perhaps he has run off with some girl. He might have been in debt. There’s no telling all of which scantily furnished reasons, pro se, the Senor took note of.

But in the midst of all this temporizing came a dark

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remembrance to Arthur of the sudden shouts he, and he only, had heard upon the sand-hills, and his heart stood still as a certain undefined, yet awful, fear fell upon him, and a shadow seemed to hold a ghastly pall before him in the midst of his every day life. Small wonder, indeed, if he were moody and distraught.

In the excitement at the sudden arrival of the picnic party at the moment he had volunteered to go in search of Frank Osborn, Lucy Falconer had not seemed either to understand or hear him when he said—for her ear only—that he had seen an advancing figure. And in thinking the matter over during his return from the unsuccessful search, and finding no reference made to it on her part, he tacitly ignored the fact in her presence afterwards. To satisfy himself, however, that there had been no foul play, he had on two occasions volunteered to go with the search party, and finding the place again where he and Lucy had been standing, he diligently covered the ground until he came to about the spot where, as he judged the shouts came from. He said nothing about the shouts, either, to anyone but Lucy, and he only mentioned that as an after circumstance. He had been over three quarters of an hour away, and had been clear out of sight of the ladies. It was an awkward position, the more he let his mind dwell on this fact. If people knew that he had seen a man, and heard shouts also, they would conclude that he must know something about the whole matter. Did Lucy hear him or not? The Senor had been with him in both searchings at the sand-hills, but he had told him nothing of the shouts or the man he had seen. He hardly knew why he hadn't. There was nothing in it if he had. But suppose Lucy had said he had to anybody. To her and to her alone therefore, belonged two admissions that would incriminate him, or raise attention to him as a bearer of later news than anyone. They would want to know why he suppressed his knowledge in the first instance. But to the Senor remained the noted fact that Arthur was three-quarters of an hour, and more, away from the rest of the party. Arthur was relieved on the score of the admission about the sight of a man, and the shouts, for on drawing Lucy
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Falconer near to the subject, he found to his great delight, that she had not heard him say anything. In the excitement of after events she had forgotten it, anyway, even if she had heard. But the damning fact of his lengthy absence from the party Somerset overlooked altogether. There had been no attempt at deception on his part. He had been much upset lately, and looked it; but the moment he began to face these uneasy, self-culpable statements and concealments, he became even more irritable and moody, often compelling a covert stare from his friend, who was disgusted with his behaviour altogether since he returned from Waitahi. The Senor couldn't make it out, and if he did he didn't say so, and if he didn’t say so, he thought Arthur's conduct strange. He simply became reserved himself, and answered Arthur's silence with silence. Arthur had been subjected of course to a searching enquiry by the police, and at one time about two days after the enquiry, meeting a shabby-genteel man three times in one day, was certain that he was watched. His conscience being clear except in the matter of certain concealments, which though trivial and forgotten at the time seemed awful now, he began to mind the fact a great deal. And he watched every other shabby-genteel man with keen eyes of suspicion. Then came the thought. "Had he acted unlawfully?" Surely not. He was not bound to crimate himself, and the days of the rack were over. Catch him going to make a voluntary confession now. It might be as much as his life would be worth. Mightn't they imprison him on his own admission? And, if the body turned up somewhere, wouldn't they hang him? He sat down and wrote a letter to Horncastle Richards, omitting nothing, and telling him the whole case from beginning to end. Then he went out to post it, and the Senor apparently making an attempt to rally him from his gloominess went out with him, and took a turn over by the river with him. When they came back again, back came the bugbear thought. If the body turned up, they would hang him. Was he suspected already? He was a comparative stranger over here. He was ignorant and quite inexperienced about the laws of the
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inhabitants. Pshaw, they were under the British flag. "Circumstantial evidence, circumstantial evidence," seemed to be the words which rose to his mind and droned away in his brain. Admittedly, strong suspicion might attach to him, popular opinion, and circumstantial evidence might hang him even if he was innocent. Hasty dispensation of his own knowledge, made without a sign that anyone else knew of it, might place him in an awkward predicament. And, again, he might hang even if he didn't disclose all he knew. Why hadn't he done so at first? Well, he wouldn't do it now, anyway. He would never give it now of his own free will. The world was before him yet. He was well off. Osbern was nothing to him. A stumbling block more than anything else. He might lose his life if suspected. All his late troubles were culminating. These and a thousand other dark suspicions were surging through the young man's brain, and it was little wonder that he looked gloomy and sad. His former love and lost love. What would he not give if she were near him now in life. His present unrequited love. It was his first, and had been very strong. Was it unrequited though. Could he not call a blush to that fair face. Could he not bring a sparkling moisture to those dark eyes? Had he had but a fair field he might have been Lucy's accepted lover. "Confound that Osbern," he mused. "How was I to know that she was engaged when we were together on the Northampton. It is he that has been my bane, and brought me into all my late trouble. Whenever I have had any sort of dealings with him, even in a friendly manner, ill has accrued to me from it. I wish I had never met or seen him."

Such thoughts were passing through the brain of Arthur Somerset in gloomy review one evening about three weeks after the fateful date of the picnic. He was looking out of the Hereford Street window.

Sitting in a chair in the corner of the room was the Senor, apparently engrossed with a book, but in reality he was trying all he could to read the mind of the young man gazing so moodily and abstractedly out of the window before him.

"Carai," murmured he suddenly to his inward self. "I believe he did it! They are all alike, these young men
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with their calf love. And he did it, did it for the love of this girl. 'Tis passing strange. I could never have believed it of my Arthur. For me, these damsels raise no emotion. They are too easy. Once give them a young man—dudish—debonair; they throw themselves at him—quicksticks—before there is time for another of their sex to do the same. Ha! ha! ha! and they coquet with another young man all the time. In my country our fiery damsels attach themselves to one man only, and if he depart from the straight line of their all devouring, all sacrificing love, let him beware of the stiletto thrust—quicksticks—Carai; these young men are like the roast-beef of their country. Pah! let them eat it and have gout and fatness. And yet, my Arthur, I loved you full well until lately."

With a volatile surface, there were deeper forces in the Senor which, when once roused, made him a man of energy. A good friend, he was a dangerous, crafty, and uncompromising foe. Scheming was one of the consistent parts of his character, and he was hard to beat in the determination with which he carried out a project once developed. Fairly rouse but a suspicion and he would verify it if possible, even at the risk of personal injury to himself. To the young Australian he had taken a personal liking, despite his late behaviour. And he made considerable allowances for that. They had been together off and on a good deal, though the Senor's odd whims and fancies caused his departure from their common dwelling. At all hours and seasons they had played together, taken their meals together, and sung together.

The Senor looked over carelessly at Arthur as he turned from the window, and thought to himself, "What a fool he must be to wreck himself and his prospects for a woman? Have I not tried to prove to him over and over again, having been once as young as he is in experience, that the sea is swarming with young women—the matrimonial sea I mean," thought the Senor, correcting himself. "Have I not asked him of late why he wishes to throw away his liberty! And so well off as he is too. Well, he didn't heed me, and it would be better for him this night if he had fallen off his ship when he first came out here, than standing where he will be before two hours are over his head—in a
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prison cell. Yes, he did it. What makes him so reticent? And the Senor's eyes looked mournful as he cast them down. Just at this moment Arthur went out into the garden, and returned with the evening paper, closely followed by the Senor. After turning it over, he uttered an exclamation, and turning to Ibanes said:

"Look here!"

What had caused him such astonishment was an advertisement worded as follows:

TWO THOUSAND POUNDS' REWARD

WILL be given by the undersigned for any authentic news of the whereabouts of Francis Osbern of Wairuru, New Zealand, farmer, if living.

If dead, FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS will be given to the discovery of his body, or for information which will lead to the discovery of his body.

Apply to TAIT AND FOWLER, Solicitor, Christchurch.

"They are determined to find him, amigo," said the Senor. "Let us go shares in the adventure, and find him ourselves. A thousand pounds a piece is worth having. Ah! that first large sum represents the old lady's love for her son. The corpse is not so valuable, you see."

"I don't think they will ever find him," said Arthur aloud, but in a tone of voice as if he were thinking to himself, and the Senor's eye rested on him wonderingly.

"Why so? my friend," asked he:

"Because I firmly believe he has run off with some girl. He had plenty of ready money to back him up—it appears. He cashed a big cheque before he disappeared. I thought he might have been in debt more than once. Perhaps he has accomplished the 'Pacific Slope.' Well, this advertisement will set the country agog, anyway. The sand-hills will be dug up I suppose. But they won't find him."

Again the Senor's eyes were fixed upon Arthur with penetrating wonderment.

"It is enough to make a man feel dull and out of sorts is it not?" said he, "to think that an individual can be spirited away in a country like this, and nothing be found out about him?"

"I should think it was," said Arthur, "but suppose we go out for a walk. I want your company."—The Senor
A Game of Billiards

winced. "Will you play me a game of billiards this evening, Senor. It's dreadfully dull here, and this disappearance is a disagreeable topic also." How the Senor's eyes flashed and went out! "And once in a way a drink or two won't hurt me. Come along, Senor."

"I can't come to-night, my friend, I have an important engagement. Where will you go to?"

"Oh, the old place you know."

"Well, good-bye for the present. I'll join you later on, if I can get away."

On the road down to the billiard rooms, Arthur picked up a chance acquaintance, and chatting with him, passed down the lighted streets, quite ignorant of the fact that the instant he had passed the corner of the street he lived in, after taking the first turning, a black shadow issued from his own gate and moved after him—though out of sight—like an avenging Nemesis.

Could it have been the Senor?

If so, it was a very strange fact, that two minutes after Arthur Somerset and his friend passed into the billiard saloon he had been bent upon going to, the shadow was making restless movements, and lightning changes in the guard-room at the city police-station!

After losing two games, Arthur, seeing nothing of Ibanes concluded that he had been detained, and suggested to his friend to give up the table. "I don't know how it is," said he, "but I feel as if something was hanging over me, I suppose it's all trouble, and the nervousness and worry connected with it. Let us go out into the street."

"Not just yet," said a strong well-knit man with reddish whiskers, who, with another, had been apparently much interested in both games. "Not just yet," continued he, advancing and laying a detaining hand upon Arthur Somerset's shoulder. "I arrest you for having caused the death—some people say it's murder—that's the correct term—murder—for the murder of Mr. Francis Osbern at New Brighton, on the date herein mentioned, shewing the warrant. It's all fair and square, sir, and I'll trouble you to go with me and this gentleman," indicating his companion. "No fuss, if you please. I have a cab outside!"
CHAPTER XXX

COMPLICATIONS

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden
Whom the Angels call "Lenore!"
—E. A. Poe.

As the unfortunate young man, Arthur Somerset, and his captors rolled away in the cab to the police-station, he was conscious of one idea haunting him through all the terrors and anxieties of those troublous moments. "Who was his captor?" Mr. Coppin, a well enough known detective, his name alone familiar as a household word. "Where had he seen his face before? Had he had dealings with him before at any former period of his life? Had he seen him in South Africa? One saw so many strange faces there. Bowed down with grief and apprehension as he was, that man's face haunted him, scandalized him in some way. One long steady look he gave at the immovable face at his side as if he would penetrate through that iron reserve to the heart beneath it. The man—Detective Coppin—was strongly built, vigorous, and possessed red whiskers and hair, with a corresponding florid complexion. He—Arthur Somerset—must be dreaming. Probably he had seen him often enough in the streets of Christchurch. This sudden whirl of unforetold and disastrous events had prostrated his intellect for the time being. Surely it was all a too horrible dream! No, facts were too plain for fancies to be patent. Sight, sound, and feeling were only too vivid and real. Those handcuffs on his wrists bespoke him a considered criminal, arrested on a very serious charge!

"The cab stopped at the police station. Detective Coppin and his assistant marched the prisoner into the guard-room
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and searched him in the presence of the Inspector, a Sergeant Major, and two or three others, who all looked very keenly at him, as if mentally noting his height, build, peculiarities, complexion, and everything that would tend to his future identification even if he escaped. He had an uneasy feeling that he was being carefully snapshotted. And his height was taken by measure, and very soon afterwards, Arthur Somerset found himself the solitary inhabitant of a whitewashed police cell, with a truckle bed, a Bible, and a basin and jug for water in it. He had particularly asked to see Senor Ibanes, and the detective had promised to send for him. His gaoler had noted also the address given when asked for drinking water, but now Arthur was left severely to himself, and his own melancholy thoughts. There was no walking out of that heavy iron studded door. No means of escape through the tiny ventilator up in a corner near the top of his cell. Arrested on suspicion. They must have got strong evidence. That damning three-quarters-of-an-hour absence, that he formerly ignored, was what had done it. If they had got the body, and there was a deadly wound on it, nothing would be more certain than that he would be tried for his life! The suspicion would develop into a certainty at that trial. Over three-quarters-of-an-hour away. And he had come back in a disturbed state mentally, owing to Aiotea's warning. They must have noticed his gloominess. Had Lucy given evidence which would make him an object of suspicion? A chain of circumstantial evidence might have been forged link by link by the police until he would be writhing beneath it—his condition now—or perished beneath its iron pressure. What would any of his own kin in Australia think and say if they could see him now under existing details, a criminal in the sight of the Law, and one suspected of having committed a murder? Suppose he got off the capital charge and was committed to prison for several years on a charge of manslaughter? That was nearly as bad, with the exception of the hanging. His character and reputation would be lost for ever. Was it really possible that he was suspected of murder and the concealment of the body.”

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"By whom was he suspected? Surely not by any member of the picnic party? Who laid the information? On what grounds was it laid? Was the body—horrible thought—found at last. Was Frank Osbern lying there dead in those thrice-accursed and gloomy sand-hills? Had it been taken away. Was it even now within a few yards of him in that prison. Would he have to look at it, and be watched all the time by detectives, and his very expressions snapshotted as evidence against him. What a perilous latitude he had steered his bark into. And those shouts he had heard, were they in menace or were they cries for aid? Could it possibly have been Osbern who was calling, in peril of his life? Was he calling for assistance in the despairing hope of some friendly succour?"

And the young man felt his better nature surge within him. Even though Osbern was an impediment to him, even though he had brought him bad luck, his manliness forbade him to place let or hindrance in his course, to throw any impediment before the chosen husband of the girl he had loved and still loved, even though that man should be his favoured rival!

He would have fought side by side with him to have helped to rescue him from death or assassination. Let him try to reason it out bit by bit, or he would go mad! He had volunteered to look for Osbern. He and Lucy had exchanged words that neither would have cared particularly for the whole world to know, just before that. What would she think? A just cause of suspicion. His own chagrin at Lucy's engagement might have given his face a guilty expression. He had thought that some of the party had looked distrustfully at him.

A man's life. A terrible thing to be guilty of taking it! A life for a life! Yes—that was the law!

What a blow it would be to Lucy. A blow? Worse than fifty blows. Wouldn't she abhor him? Who could have done it? An escaped lunatic. A homicidal maniac at large? A desperate convict escaped from prison? Who was the man he had seen in the distance amongst the sand hills? He looked like a murderer even at that distance. Didn't he disappear suddenly? He must have caught sight of him on the top of the sandhill? He would give all
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de this evidence now at the trial. He would tell his solicitor. He had already told Richards. Richards would come down. He wasn’t the man to stand aloof from him—his own partner. No, “Dickie” wasn’t. He was sure to come down. Suppose he was convicted. Well, they would all—his friends including Austin—do all they could to prove his innocence. It was monstrous, the whole affair. Monstrous! Unheard of! The hours dragged on. His solicitor came. Arthur told him all, suppressing nothing, but he could not help thinking that this gentleman did not look very hopeful. However, he told him to keep up heart and he expected that all would come right. The night drew out its serious phases of doubt and fear, like a crawling horror, a phantasmal reptile. Sleep was impossible. Arthur Somerset could only brood, and brood, and brood, over a crop of thoughts repellant as the armed soldiers who sprang from the dragon’s teeth, after the sowing of Cadmus.

Springing up they assailed him, even in the armour and security of his innocence. “You will be implicated,” they said. “A criminal intent will be proved, from the fact of your first concealment of those cries. An accessory to the fact? Yes, if the body has been discovered. The duration of time you were away—enough time to conceal the body—will convict you. Lucy herself will give the evidence to the Court which will convict you. She must believe you did the deed!”

Towards dawn, worn out in mind and body, Somerset slept. And in that brief surcease from sorrow and anxiety, he found himself seated under the dark green “karakas” with Aio tea at his side, in her old dear and loving position. And her face was radiant and smiling. He woke with a start, with her sweet kiss on his lips, and her voice in his ear: “Take courage, dear!”

It was daylight, broad daylight, and as the hour struck eight, some breakfast was brought him by the warder, and at eleven Arthur was brought before the magistrate, a portly, kind-looking, almost venerable man, in whose presence the charges were made in reading. The usual questions were asked and the Inspector applied for a remand of eight days to consolidate certain evidence.

Then the prisoner was removed to the gaol.
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It was a trying time, but he managed to bear it patiently, and falling in with the drift of the life of those around him saw much to be regretted, and much to be learned and pondered over. To some characters, the chance event of being imprisoned has the effect of making or unmaking them. Some take the lesson to heart, and learn much to their benefit, whilst others are hardened by it.

At length the day came for the formal inquiry pending. Either he would leave that assembly a free man, or he would be convicted upon the evidence adduced and have to stand his trial—a criminal arraigned for murder! “Dickie” and Austin arrived post haste on the previous night, had seen him, and cheered him up, pooh, poohing the idea of his being guilty.

Somerset’s statement, repeated and noted by his own lawyer, was in reserve evidence. He concealed nothing. What if he had blundered, or something should crop up in evidence which would criminate him. He had attended as reporter several criminal cases, and remembered the power of a certain lawyer, who got a man off on one charge entirely by his own eloquence. But the man was convicted on another, simply because this particular lawyer, took the case up for the other side. Pleasant! for the idea of even-handed justice. A lawyer could do just as he liked with a case. That was his experience of the Law? What did Lucy think of him? Where was the Senor? He had never been near him all those weary days. Surely it was very unfriendly, to say the least of it, on his part, never to have called to say a kind word to a fellow who had shared his lodgings with him. What could he be thinking of? Out upon such friendship! It was not worth having. If he got free he would change his residence, and have nothing more to do with him. He would give him a bit of his mind too, that would tune him up a bit.

Arthur’s solicitor was hopeful, even if he believed personally in the young man’s guilt—a fact almost everybody admits after an arrest—and this assurance was comforting.

Again, as the time went on and drew near to the dreaded and yet longed for hour, Arthur’s mind reverted to the Senor. “How strange it was, his not coming. He had asked to see him several times. Made sure of his coming. He had
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known him to visit gaols as he said, purely for the purpose of moralizing upon human nature, felon human nature, but he had not even written to him. Perhaps he had left town."

A gleam of hope, however, shot into Arthur's heart, when the ubiquitous Mr. Coppin, after a visit late in the evening, before the morning of the judicial enquiry, gave Arthur's warder, a small note to be delivered to the prisoner worded as follows:—

"You are innocent. I can prove it. Keep your pecker up. Say as little as possible. I've got evidence. I can save you. Mums the word."

THOMAS COPPIN.

The warder, who was a friendly fellow, evidently pitying Arthur's cast-down look, thrust this missive into his hand with an air of great secrecy, and our hero, not knowing whether he should be doing wrong if he had the piece of paper concealed on his person, or discovered torn to pieces on the floor of his cell, did what he considered best for all parties concerned, after a hasty perusal of it. 

Fearing to get into trouble himself, fearing to incriminate anyone else he crumpled it up, and thrusting it hastily into his mouth chewed it to pulp, and swallowed it!

Paper, as a rule, is not on the list of delicate viands, though it adorns a cutlet, or beautifies a ham, but hope revived in combination of its taste—a combined flavour of Coppin, the warder, Arthur—and toughness—made the morsel when fairly swallowed quite a delicacy.

But a startling shock came to Arthur from his lawyer, who met him on arrival at the Court, and had a short hurried conversation with him. Keenly noting his face and saying: "We have just obtained material evidence. Your friend, Mr. Osbern, I grieve to say is dead. Part of the body has been found.

This was indeed a shock to Arthur. Everybody seemed to be looking at him. Overtasked in brain by worry and excitement, sleepless nights and reaction from his recent severe illness, the room seemed to be swirling round with him, and stammering out some incoherent words, he fell fainting to the floor.
CHAPTER XXXI

THE SEVERED HAND

It fled, but away and away in its wake,
There lingers a something that time cannot break,
The past and the future are joined by a chain,
And memories lie that must ever remain. —Kendall.

A pair of strong arms were around him a moment afterwards. A voice murmured in his ear: "Keep up, my lad. I've good news for you!" Water was dashed in his face, and a strong "nip" of brandy and water administered. It was Coppin who did all this. Coppin, the ubiquitous Coppin, the thief-taker. As Arthur revived, he heard the welcome words, "All right, my boy, evidence against you will not convict."

"But is not everyone against me," asked poor Arthur.
"Not as I know of," replied the detective, "or if they are they'll change their opinions this very day."

One thing appeared certain. Mr. Coppin had evidence. No one but himself as yet had mastered the details of the said evidence, and even Arthur's counsel only knew in part what had happened. A hurried private conference, however, took place between that gentleman and Coppin in relation to Arthur's case, and from time to time the wily lawyer's eye sparkled, his brow cleared, his manner changed, and he gave a re-assuring nod to his client, who could hardly gather his senses together. At length the Court opened. Arthur saw and spoke to "Dickie" and Austin
The Severed Hand

who were both there. The examination commenced. Inspector Treherne conducted the prosecution on behalf of the police and Arthur's counsel, cool, confident, and radiant with coming victory, stood by—notes in hand—to put in his peg when occasion required it.

On Arthur being placed in the witness box everybody was instantly all attention. The Court was full—reporters were ready to rush their notes out—and all eyes were fixed mercilessly upon the one object, the man about to be examined. It was a trying moment, a trying moment even for that spotless angel, Innocence. What must it be when dark-plumed Guilt stands at the bar? For the prosecution, therefore, the prisoner being duly sworn, the identifying evidence came, slowly and distinctly, affirmed by Arthur sometimes in speech, at others with a nod of assent.

"Your name is Arthur Somerset? You are Australian born, and a journalist at Waitahi in the North?" This was confirmed by Richards and Austin. "You knew Mr. Frank Osbern of Wairuru?" All this being affirmed to, Inspector Treherne proceeded.

"Did you know Mr. Osbern intimately?"

"As intimately as I could know an acquaintance of a few weeks' standing," was the reply.

"Had you any feeling of animosity towards him?"

"Hardly animosity," returned Arthur. "I didn't dislike him personally. He was a man I couldn't make a bosom friend of. He treated me in a friendly manner, but I believe at one time was not very well disposed towards me."

"Then you admit that there was a sort of grudge between you?" said the Inspector, like lightning. "What was the cause of this personal grievance?" At this point however, there was a decisive passage-of-arms between the Inspector and Arthur's counsel, who saw what the opposite side were driving at, and wished to save his client any reference to the concealed part of his life relative to the positions held by both young men in regard to Lucy Falconer, especially wishing to keep her out of the discussion.

The Inspector, deferring to this point, next raised the hopes of the criminal side by extracting from Arthur the most complete details of even the drive down to New
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Brighton, the shouts in the sand-hills, the time he was absent, and various other minute items as to locality, etc., retiring satisfied with the case as he had presented it. But all the trouble he had taken with the prosecution side of the case went to the wall quickly before Coppin's persuasive eloquence. To the surprise of everybody he took the prisoner's side entirely and utterly upset the police theory. He begged the magistrate to inspect personally the contents of a large hermetically sealed glass jar he had in his hands. He went into lengthy details as to finding the contents, and in spite of all protests from legal luminaries, court critics, the Inspector, and the whole \textit{posse comitatus}, insisted upon being placed in the witness box, and being instantly sworn. Briefly as possible, his evidence ran to this effect:—

"My name is Thomas Coppin, your Worship. I am a member of the Detective Force. From information supplied I went to Patrick Leach's farm at New Brighton yesterday. I spoke to Leach. His children had been playing in the sand hills, in the neighbourhood of Mr. Osbern's farm. When they returned, their dog—a mongrel collie—was observed to be carrying what appeared to be a bunch of bones and skin. It was a human hand your worship? \textit{A human hand severed at the wrist!}—Immense sensation in the Court, and great applause, which was promptly suppressed. The hand, as I received it from the farmer, now lies in the jar in front of you, your Worship, except that it is hermetically sealed, and steeping in aquafortis for preservation. It is a left hand!"

"Very true!"—in a solemnly audible whisper from a rising barrister who \textit{would} have his joke.

"The fingers were curled up in a cramped position," continued Coppin, and the whole hand was considerably decomposed—Choking fit, from slow subordinate of rising counsel, who has just discovered the 'joke'—"In my own judgment, and that of experts, I find there has been an accident to the third finger of that hand which has formed during the lapse of years a callosity of the bone, and leaving the finger out of shape in a remarkable manner. In life it could not be straightened by the will of the owner. It is the result of a dislocation never properly attended to, and
The Severed Hand

is of many years’ standing. I am prepared to say, your Worship, that that hand before you never belonged to Mr. Francis Osbern!”—Plaudits, disturbance, and cries of “Order”—“I know Mr. Osbern personally. Have often been in his company. I will swear that he had no malformation, the result of old accident, on either of his hands. The hand found cannot therefore, in my opinion, be the hand of the missing gentleman.”

Mr. Coppin stood down.

Two or three witnesses who knew Osbern were examined, and they corroborated the previous statement.

From this point the prosecution broke down.

As the counsel for the defence put it, there was really no comparison between the two hands in question. The hand produced was—or had been—a big-boned muscular hand, and might have belonged to a dock labourer, an artisan, or any other man whose manual labour was as daily as the sun. There was no body found, no traces of a scuffle. The hand might have belonged to a wrecked seaman, torn off by sharks—“cast up on the strand by the sea,” as Arthur’s counsel stated in his new-born eloquence; “found and carried into the sand hills by the fowls of the air or predacious animals—“cats and rats,” from the joking barrister; “and mice,” from the slow subordinate who was promptly frowned down and otherwise nudged and sat upon for his audacity, until he broke out into a cold perspiration, “until in the unerring dispensation of Providence, it was placed before the erring eye of man—living man—your Worship, by a dog—a sagacious animal, your Worship—especially to confound human judgment. And the tail of that dog, your Worship, would no doubt wag with intense and pleasurable satisfaction, at having saved the life of an innocent being, whose worst crime has been to be unfortunate.”—Immense applause.

There is no need to go into further details of the proceedings. Evidence enough transpired in the severed hand itself, before their close, to acquit Arthur, and he passed out of that court a free man, accompanied by his lawyer and his two Waitahi friends, who went with him to his lodgings and promised to call again during the evening.
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The Senor was out, little dreaming that a considerable rod in pickle was awaiting him, but as Arthur had not seen him in Court he was still dubious of his whereabouts. His landlady, however, who looked at Arthur with visible terror, informed him that he was about as usual, and departed, giving Arthur a letter. It was from Lucy Falconer, as follows:—

Verbena Cottage,
North Belt,
Christchurch.

Dear Mr. Somerset,

We were all horrified to hear of your arrest, Senor Ibanes brought us the startling news. However, I am sure it is all a dreadful mistake, and as the Senor assured me of your release yesterday, I write at once to let you know that you were never suspected by your friends, in the hope that you may receive this assurance on your return home. I must see you personally. We are all in terrible grief and mis-apprehension as to Frank's sudden disappearance, and I learn from his mother that at times lately he has been moody and abstracted. She inclines to the idea that for some reason or other, which of course we cannot fathom, he has left the colony suddenly. For my part I am more than surprised. I hope and pray it may be true. Better anything than doubt and distrust with regard to the dreadful alternative.

Sincerely yours,

A. Somerset, Esq.

LUCY FALCONER.

As Arthur finished perusing the letter, the Senor entered, and taking a seat, said, despite Arthur's look of disgust and resentment, at what he considered his unfriendly conduct:

"Young man, you have had a very providential escape, from what turned out to be a very awkward predicament. If the law had once got its steel grip upon you, there is no telling what might have happened. But I have a secret to tell you, which I may as well divulge at once." Arthur had been staring at the Senor most intently. "Ah, I see you know me—as Arthur gave a sudden violent start—I am a detective, and my name is Thomas Coppin."
CHAPTER XXXII

FURTHER DISCLOSURES

It well may be that I saw too plain, and it may be I was blind,
But I'll keep my face to the dawning light, though the devil may stand behind
Though the devil may stand behind my back, I'll not see his shadow fall,
But read the signs in the morning stars of a good world after all.
—Harry Lawson.

"I AM both your arrester, and preserver, added Don Vasquez Ibanes, alias Thomas Coppin. I have given, and could have adduced before the court, such circumstantial evidence as would have convinced your judges of your guilt, but instead of doing that I have withdrawn my evidence, and substituted such plain fact as to procure your instant dismissal. I own frankly, even though I have been a fellow resident with you in this house, that owing to your relations with the missing man, I have been impressed with your late moody and abstracted manner, and I suspected you strongly. I have owned to a considerable friendship for you, I could not exceed my duty, and I first warned, and latterly was almost sure of your guilt. From your abstracted behaviour, and putting this and that together, I did think that you might have been tempted in a sudden access of passion to deal your rival a heavy blow, perhaps with a weapon. Concealment of the body was easy in the sand hills. If buried, even with your hands at the base of one of those large sand hills it was quite feasible, and a prevalence of the nor-wester would have added thickness upon thickness of drifted sand. Then I got that hand and
examined it. It is cut clean off at the wrist, looks as if it were done with a tomahawk—I thought at first that you might have hacked the body in your passion. Calm reflection and a keener inspection of the mutilated fragment proved your innocence. It was not Frank Osbern's hand. Whose was it? I will now make a disclosure to you that I have been compelled in my own interests, and those of the police to keep secret,—I tell you as a friend, and of course I shall expect secrecy on your part. I speak of my habit of masquerading as Ibanes. The Senor is well known. He has been resident here for some years now. It sometimes happens that I am after young gentlemen in commercial employ, who try to do the Pacific slope, and my own proper appearance would scare such unaged birdlings.

There are other sparrow-hawks of prey, that Ibanes is useful for. You have heard of the confidence trick. These gangs of sharpers know all the police by sight, and name, but Ibanes is generally about to protect the sparrows, they are often in the form of ignorant countrymen, with balances at their bankers' and who are down in town for a brief spree. The countryman comes to town. Down swoops a sparrow-hawk. He is well dressed and of good manners. He introduces himself, There are many varieties of the way it is worked. I will give you one. The countryman is delighted with his new acquaintance. For a day or so his new friend takes him to see all the sights in town. Perhaps one day they are going along the street, when a gentleman,—another of the gang—accidently drops a pocket-book. The sparrow-hawk picks it up, draws the countryman's attention to it, and hands it politely to the stranger. He is thanked warmly. The stranger says, "Thank you, my dear sir. It was very careless of me, but I assure you that I would not have lost that pocket-book for a thousand pounds."

"Dear me," says the sparrow-hawk, who has returned it, "its lucky I was on the spot to return it to you. Other people might have failed to do so, but though I don't boast much of this world's goods, still I'm honest. Had you really all that money in it. It is a large sum to carry about in a big city like this."
Further Disclosures

"It wasn’t money," says the stranger. "It was something I value more than money."

The countryman is much amazed. What can it be? thinks he, that this very pleasant gentleman, thinks so much about."

"My new friend is a sharp fellow, keeps his eyes about him, and knows the way of the city so well. He has already prevented me on several occasions from spending my money too extravagantly. I am picking up many wrinkles."

They adjourn at the polite stranger’s request into a quiet hotel where they drink each other’s healths. It is pleasant and very friendly all round this meeting. It is so pleasant to feel a brotherly feeling for really good-hearted philanthropic men, as they all are—but upon rogues and vagabonds! they are not worth associating with. But those who have honesty engrained upon their hearts, are the true men, the real nature’s gentlemen.

"And so say all of us!" Well, the agreeable stranger takes out his pocket-book, so strangely and opportunely restored to him, and after great secrecy, extracts from it the portrait of a charming lady, who shall be nameless, but who is very dear to the affable stranger. She is fabulously rich also. She is a philanthropist. She adores honesty. Honesty and open dealing is very precious to her. One of her great hobbies, is to assist honest gentlemen. She has authorized the affable stranger to assist to the utmost of his power any one at any time who is proved to be honest.

The sparrow-hawk becomes slightly interested. It is hinted that the affable stranger is making a tour to carry out the lovely lady’s wish. When he has rewarded a certain number of honest men, he is to go back to her for her reward. He wishes to surprise the lovely lady. He reciprocates her hobby. He always doubles the sum she gives him. He is authorized to give every honest man £250. This is the lovely lady’s gift. He doesn’t wish to be mean, so he gives £250 also. This makes the sum £500. He then says he will give the sparrow-hawk £1500 for returning his pocket-book, £1000 as the sum he first valued it at, for holding the portrait of the lovely lady, £250 as
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the lovely lady’s gift, and £250 as his share, because he does not wish to be outdone by the lovely lady’s generosity. He has a little surprise for her when he goes back to the tune of thousands spent in the above manner, on bona-fide honest gentlemen. The lovely lady will be in ecstasies. He never dreams of going back on his word. But people do not as a rule carry such large sums in their pockets. He should have to go to his bank to draw it. Again, people don’t often have such large sums at the bank. Some people have not £1,500 at the bank. Have either of his companions? The sparrow-hawk has. The countryman has. Well, just to show their honesty, let all three meet to-morrow with this sum of money in their pockets. This hotel would do. The proprietor was a very decent fellow, though it is hardly stylish enough for the affable gentleman, it would do. The countryman goes and draws his £1,500, they all meet, and show their notes. The affable stranger and the sparrow-hawk have “flash” notes. And they get the countryman’s good one’s. They go away at intervals, first leaving the countryman to guard the whole of the notes. He is not curious, and carries out the contract honestly. It is honest to trust the affable stranger and the sparrow-hawk implicitly. Then the affable stranger remains with all the bundles of notes in his possession whilst the countryman and the sparrow-hawk go out for a stroll. When they come back there is no affable stranger. “Oh, he’s taking a rise out of us,” says the sparrow-hawk. “He told me he was going to frighten us. I’ll soon get him. It’s a rare joke. I know where he is. You wait a minute.” The sparrow-hawk goes out but doesn’t come back. And the countryman is minus his hard earned £1,500! Next day they meet. The affable stranger, and the sparrow-hawk admit that it is a joke, but as it has been done for a bet, and they are each to receive a large sum of money, which they will, of course, halve with the countryman, it will be all right if he just appends his signature to the bottom of this form. It is to prove the truth of the whole joke. The countryman does so. The next day the sparrow-hawks meet the dupe, and tell him he has signed his name to a forged cheque,
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and after a lot of terrorising him, they give him a couple of pounds to clear out of the city. He goes, well victimised and considerably alarmed, for forgery is serious, even if it is done by mistake. The poor dupe is not quite clear what he might have done, as he has been imbibing pretty freely, and thinks it best to go.

That is only one way of ringing the changes in the confidence trick, but it is very prevalent in the colonies just now, and here it is also where Senor Ibanes comes in, because the sharpers know him only as Coppin.

"I effect the change, my young friend, for their benefit in a very simple manner. To remove the Señor, I have but to hold an interview with a wash-hand basin into which certain drops of a chemical solution have mingled with the water therein. By manipulation of sponge, soap, and the liquid element, I am freshened into my own proper self. With another liquid I produce the Señor; no longer reddish—carrotly if you will—but dark Castilian, and at your service. The necessary changes of clothing belonging to the dual character, are of course, part of the programme. The Senor possesses a few. Coppin possesses many. Like most artistes, I act the unreal character to the life. When I am the Senor I have a castle in Cordova, or Seville. A miniature does duty for a certain dark-eyed doncella at home, languishing for my return. I am a Spaniard, and my blood is blue with the heritage of a hundred haughty hidalgos. Even my landlady, our mutual hostess, does not suspect me—even when I call here, as I have done as Coppin the detective. And my friend, she is as deaf as a stone wall. Like a wall sometimes, she has ears, but they don't do her any good, and take her altogether, she is a great comfort to me. She carries on the business herself, and only admits two gentlemen of respectable character beneath her roof. They have separate bed-rooms, one common sitting-room, and her "hash" is beyond reproach. My boxes cannot be tampered with, for I always keep them locked. My materials and make up are effective, and here, as the Senor, when released from the trammels of office, I lurks for unsuspecting flies!"

When I wish to effect a metamorphosis, I go to the
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police-station. Ibanes enters. Coppin comes out. Will you pardon me for any apparent fault I may be guilty of in your eyes? I could not visit you in gaol, for instance. Coppin was too active!" And the Senor slapped both his knees with his strong hands, and laughed in a silent manner.

"Willingly," replied Arthur. "Now I am in the mystery, I should wish to be on the same terms of intimacy and friendship with the Senor as I was before that troublesome individual, Coppin, turned up."

"And so you shall," said Ibanes heartily, extending the Castilian hand. "But go and wash and shave and bathe. Dinner will be ready presently, after which we will go to the Park. You can pay a brief visit to a certain domicile, but remember your vow of secrecy. I do not want to be known there as other but the Senor, my friend. There—you remember the two thousand pounds reward, I dare say—Coppin may want to handle it. But go, my Arthur, I have much more to impart."

Having paid the necessary attention to his toilet, and discussed a tolerable meal. Arthur and the detective took their way to the North Belt, where a brief interview with Miss Falconer afforded Arthur the gratification of knowing again from her own lips, that she had never distrusted him.

As the papers were sure to be full of the severed hand mystery, so lately disclosed, Arthur re-assured her about Osbern, explaining the circumstances, dreadful as they were, and stating his firm conviction that the missing Frank had left the colony. The remains found, no doubt, belonged to digger, swagman, or sailor, perhaps drowned. He did not deem it necessary to tell her that the hand had been cut clean off. She would know that soon enough.

The Senor and Arthur, after terminating the interview during which they were introduced to Mrs. and Miss Osbern—who both, as indeed all the ladies, exhibited traces of suffering—found themselves at one of the river-bends of Hagley Park, and entering one of the plantation "spinneys" in the openest part of it a little further on, the part where all the coursing takes place, sat down under the shade of an imported variety of peppermint scrub gum, a rarity in that district; and stretching themselves
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at full length on the sward prepared for the impending colloquy.

"Suppose you gather your notes as I go along," said the detective coolly. "I shall do most of the talking. It so happens that I have several theories of this case. Anyone of them might apply, but which is the right one? That is the question? Are you prepared for a startling revelation if I should offer it? Have your nerves recovered from your late troubles sufficiently?"

"Go ahead," replied his companion. "I think I can stand pretty well anything now except re-incarceration. I've gone through a pretty considerable lot in the last year"—with a sigh.

"Well, my friend, it is a knotty skein to unravel: a nasty, undecided, twisted, tangled affair. I wish I was well at the bottom of it; that I could prove instead of theorizing it. At times something keeps cropping up in my mind, which makes me think that after all, our poor friend, for he was mine you know, lies buried in those sand heaps, and his assassin escaped beyond the reach of justice."

"Well," what is one of your theories? asked Arthur anxiously, as an uneasy suspicion shook his former confidence. Was he still shadowed? Was this apparent friendship of the dual character only a mask? Could the detective still believe him guilty? It was a passing thought, and a repellent one. However, doubt dispersed as does the dew before the sun, at the detective's story, theory, or surmises, as he continued.

"Looked at in one light, my theory is plain, and it is as such, that I am going to work it. Osbern goes to the outskirts of the sand-hills, where he is personally known to a neighbouring farmer. That farmer by request is to look after his horse, which he is going to put in his own stable, at his own farm, a quarter of a mile further on. He tells this farmer that after he has put his horse in his own stables, he shall leave on foot, to join a party of friends on the sea-beach. The distance to them straight across the sand-hills is about two miles, and he knows the country. He vanishes. So far, all that is plain fact. He never reaches his friends. Shouts are heard, but whether they are shouts
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of distress, or a man driving cattle, is not known. I believe they were Osbern's shouts. Suppose he had an encounter with someone. How do you incline to the suspicion that your friend instead of yourself, was the murderer?

"What an awful suggestion!" replied Arthur. "Do you really think so?"

"It's mighty like it. Suppose he murdered the owner of the severed hand? What would you think of that?"

"I don't believe it possible," said Arthur.

"My dear friend," said the detective. "All things in the way of murder are possible in a sudden gust of passion. Our friend was a strong young fellow, not likely to give in without a pitched battle. I don't say he murdered anyone in cold blood—in fact murder is hardly the term—but he might have committed a milder phase of it, and escaped from the country in order to avoid the exposure and consequences of it. Perhaps in his terror at finding what he had done, he got away at night to the ranges, hid himself, got out of the country somehow, or committed suicide during a fit of remorse. It's quite on the cards you see. But I don't think it would be easy to kill Frank Osbern. He was too tough and active to kill, unless struck unawares, and I think he must have been armed with a tomahawk, a very unpleasant weapon in the hands of a roused determined and muscular young man, like himself. Between ourselves, I am going to try to prove that Osbern is still alive, and that the owner of the severed hand is alive too.

"How on earth can you do that?" queried Arthur in great astonishment.

"I said I was going to try to prove it, my friend. I cannot jump at conclusions in this case. It is too intricate. But come with me to-morrow. I am not coming back to our mutual home to-night. I may be the means of affording you some considerable excitement. When I leave the police station in about half-an-hour's time, I shall be plain Coppin. Do you care to join me in Port Lyttelton to-morrow? If you do, and can, meet me at the Norman Hotel at ten o'clock in the morning. After a refreshing sleep to-night in your old, undisturbed quarters, you will feel more yourself in the morning, and I wish you to have

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the place clear to-night for your Waitahi friends. But be secret. To-morrow the fresh air and exercise will do wonders for you. We will part here for the present. But ignore both the Senor and Coppin in the meanwhile altogether. Ta, ta, mums the word, my Arthur.

Somerset strolled leisurely homewards reflecting seriously on the curious possibilities of the case, as it had been put before him, and thoroughly reconciled with the Senor, who after all had done a great deal for him. He found Richards and Austin at his rooms, and they enjoyed a long talk, until after tea when they left for Waitahi.
CHAPTER XXXIII

MR. COPPIN’S QUEST

Aye, count your beads deftly, and keep your ways wary
For the sake of the Saviour, and sweet Mother Mary.
Pray for your peace in these perilous places,
And pray for the laying of horrible faces.

—Kendall.

The next day, after a quiet night’s rest, and in accordance with private instructions from Coppin, Arthur told his landlady that neither he or the Senor would trouble her for a couple of day’s time anyhow, as they were going on a botanizing excursion to Guam—supplying that name on the spur of the moment to put the old lady more at her ease.

It mattered little. Her knowledge of geography was very defective, and she would have been equally contented with either Timbuctoo or Vancouver’s Island. To her—stout, plethoric and of the “frump” species—Hereford Street was the hub of the universe. Anything or anywhere beyond the next town-section was an unknown region, and wasn’t worth botherin’ about.

“All right,” said she, ‘as long as you don’t come a rackittin’ an a gallavantin’ back in the middle of the night, an’ a throwin’ stones on the roof, or at the windys, an’ me at my last gasp with Chinamen, an’ ’awkers, an’ sewin-machine men all day long. I can’t abear to be chivvied out o’ my bed at my time o’ life a-thinkin’ its burglars, or fire, or my sister took bad, or my sister’s ’usbin’ drunk agen, an’ my nerves all of a tremble with my parlour
Mr. Coppin's Quest

boarder bein' took up, an' a quiverin' with 'orrer to think of 'im bein' 'anged, and took down agen, and buried with a stake through 'is 'art, at a cross road; an them aralgers, a tearin' an' a ackin' at my 'ed, an' me in hagnies, I must arks yer to let me know for certing when you will come back, so I can have everythink all right when you do."

Having satisfied her also upon this head Arthur departed, and boarding a train ran down to Port where he found Coppin at the appointed rendez-vous, got up exactly like a country farmer and enjoying an exceedingly lively conversation with Miss Polly Winter.

Packing up a few necessaries, they were soon on the road in a two-wheeled trap hired by the detective, and bowled merrily along the winding cliff road towards Governor's Bay, passing a gang of convicts at work under the supervision of armed warders.

"Some of these gentry you see here," remarked Coppin, "are indebted to a paternal government for food, clothing, and board, through my own endeavours. Do you see that tall young fellow standing up there with a long-handled shovel in his grasp. He has turned out quite a model of propriety since his imprisonment. In about six months' more he will be free—an altered man. It's a sad story. Drink, dissipation, and extravagance in the old country. Sent out here by his relations as irreclaimable. Gambling and debt in this colony started him on to levant with some of his employer's cash, and landed him in Port Lyttelton gaol. But it's a case of reformation. We go in for pretty drastic measures out here in New Zealand, and I can assure you they will be the making of that young fellow. After the first shock of remorse and shame—in what I call a good case—where folly and debauchery are leading to, crime and ruin, a little gentle taking in hand like this is productive of an immense amount of good. Repentance will follow, and he will be vastly improved in bodily health when he leaves. Men like him take kindly to the good wholesome literature provided for their spare moments. They get little news of the outside world, and therefore concentrate their thoughts upon themselves. Thus the individual will see the need of moral improvement for his
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own well-being, and will naturally enough be inclined to lead a better life for the future. The prison warders too, though you mightn’t think it, are a kindly, manly set of men, and if a prisoner is tractable and obedient, generally manage to give him some brief inkling of his real position, and a word of advice, or kind treatment will work wonders, even upon the most obdurate, and will soften and give courage to many an ignorant man. But here we are at Raupaki. I am going to leave the trap at a settler’s a little further on, and then I want you to accompany me to the smaller Maori settlement, yonder, at the turn of the road, where I want to get some news about the present object of my journey. There’s an old Maori there who can tell me something I want to know. His name is ‘Himi,’ and he is devoted to my interests.”

Having disposed of the horse and trap they made their way to Little Raupaki, and whilst Coppin prosecuted his enquiries, Somerset, seated on a low, projecting point above the water, conjured up visions of departed Maori warriors flitting all about the harbour in canoes setting out or returning from a day’s fishing or foraging. Old “Himi” had a great deal to tell, gesticulating and pointing vehemently across the bay, where a tall, wooded peak shot a dark blue silhouette upward against the sky, contrasting strongly with the yellow tone of the tussocked hills in the foreground. “Himi” was persuaded to accompany the pair, and after a longish walk round the head of the bay over a yellow spur, and again over another, dipping into a gully running towards the range, they came upon a place dense with supple-jacks, thick with undergrowth and diversified with huge boles of forest trees, a remote lonely and almost unapproachable spot, where, close by the decaying structure of an old deserted whare, lay some human remains, and a few sheds of scattered cloth. The wild pigs had been busy, and only a skeleton glistened in the light of day!

“Somerset,” said the detective, “is my surmise correct, or am I dreaming? Where is the left hand that should be here to make that skeleton complete. Is it not in the hermetically sealed glass jar that was produced at the inquiry?”
Mr. Coppin's Quest.

“You have the eyes and ears of both Argus and Cerberus, oh most potent Senor. How on earth did you track the possessor of the severed hand from the New Brighton sand-hills to this lonely spot?”

“'Tis a story that needs some telling, my Arthur, 'Himi' supplied the details of a supposed suicide. That brought me here to-day. But we shall have to ferret out the local constable, and adopt means for the fit and proper disposal of the relics, which will be subjected to a 'crowner's quest,' and a deuce of a lot of red tape, documents and phrases upon, and concerning the deceased. The pigs have eaten the deceased's documents I am afraid—but the legal documents will be numerous enough—for perusal, and pigeon-hole, before the burial of the bones.”

It was late next day when all this was accomplished, and the remains placed in the morgue at Lyttelton to await inspection. It had been a black north-easter all day and the fleecy dirty cottony-woolly clouds were driving overhead in misty columns, completely obliterating the extreme tops of the hills. The gloaming was sombre, but the air was warm, balmy, and free from rain, though rather threatening, as Somerset and Coppin mounted the range at the back of the town, and sat down, well out of ear-shot at the side of a gully to follow out the thread of the new discovery.

“'It's a varied conundrum,” said the detective, astutely, fanning himself vigorously with his hat. “Loss of hand. How did it come to happen? First theory—Done by Osbern, who has fled to escape consequences; Second theory—done by deceased himself, improbable, but not impossible; Third theory—Done by neither one nor the other of them in which case we are at a loss about the homicide. In the latter case the man would have gone, or have been taken to a doctor and I should have known of it before. ‘Himi’ came across these remains whilst out pigeon shooting. What prevented the deceased going to a doctor? Fear of consequences of detection, no doubt. If he had been an assassin or a robber, he would have avoided observation as much as possible. Are you aware that a sailor was discharged from the Northampton after
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you first arrived from England? It was on her second trip, continued Coppin. Since his discharge he has been in Osbern’s service until a little before his master’s disappearance. Description, grey grizzled hair, strongly built, blue eyes, wearing blucher boots, billycock hat, grey tweed coat, moleskin trousers. When last seen was on the Sumner Road going towards Christchurch. Last not least, finger of left hand badly dislocated. Now which of the men on board answered to that description?”

“Rawlings,” replied Arthur. “He was a drunken sweep, would steal if he got the chance. He was suspected of broaching cargo on the voyage out, and on one occasion the Captain was obliged to put him in irons.”

“Right,” said Coppin. “That’s the man. The severed hand belongs to him. Those bones, I believe to be his remains. I came down here the very day of the picnic after him. Petty larceny in Christchurch, after his dismissal by Osbern. But I was completely mystified and thrown off the scent. He couldn’t have been here then. He must have been lurking in the New Brighton sand hills, where he met Osbern, who had a large sum of money on him. Rawlings demands charity, Osbern, a rich man, probably complies, thereby disclosing the fact of a well filled pocket book. They separate for the moment. Rawlings follows, and tries to murder Osbern with a view to robbery. There is a hatchet used. Rawlings gets his hand chopped off, rushes away in rage and terror. Osbern is injured in the fight, lies insensible in the sand-hills, dies, perhaps is killed on the spot, falling by a steep sand-hill. His fall brings down the whole side. He is smothered and buried, even if he is unconscious, and not wholly dead. It is a mystery, whichever way you look at it. And where on earth is Osbern? Shall we ever find him alive or dead. No living soul answering his description has left the colony from any port by steamer. The news for identification was telegraphed all over the colony. He must have been so disguised as to be unrecognizable if he has done so. And now we will spend the night at the ‘Norman’ my Arthur, and I will introduce you to Miss Polly Winter, a very particular friend of mine.”
CHAPTER XXXIV

STARTLING NEWS

A man is manliest when he wisely knows.
How vain it is to halt, and pale, and pine.
Whilst under every mystery haply flows.
The finest issue of a love divine.

—Kendall.

At the inquest on the human remains, which Arthur attended through Coppin’s influence, a verdict was returned of “Found Dead,” with a rider of “but how deceased came by his death there is no evidence to show.” It was proved, however, that the remains belonged to the discharged seaman Rawlings. The shreds of clothing were identified as also was the iron grey hair adhering to the skull. And a sheath knife found close by the skeleton had H. Rawlings plainly and neatly cut on the handle. The “severed hand” also bare ghastly evidence to the proof, and after voluminous testimony was adduced to swell the bulk of the police reports, Arthur and Coppin found themselves back in Hereford Street, the latter in the personal role of Senor Ibanes, which became him so well.

Consequent upon their arrival came a note from Lucy Falconer requesting Arthur’s attendance at the North Belt.

“Such a startling surprise,” she wrote. “Frank is alive! Has sent notice of his whereabouts and Mrs. Osbern and her daughter go forthwith to Sydney to be near him. They go to-day and will be greatly obliged if you will see them off.”

“Ah,” said Ibanes, after these important details had been divulged to him. “I have a little pressing business down town, that will occupy me considerably. It is probable, my Arthur, that the business will detain me some time. I shall not turn up again for six weeks at the least.”

The letter which Lucy read to Arthur on his arrival at
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the North Belt was a remarkable one. It had been dictated by Osbern, who it appeared, was now a patient in the hospital at Newcastle, New South Wales, where he had been very seriously ill, and the letter had been dictated to, and written by a lady, the characters being very neat, angular, and decisive, so that it was easy to infer that the correspondent possessed a will of her own. It was addressed to Mrs. Osbern, Wairuru, near Christchurch, Canterbury, N.Z., and had been sent down to Lucy's address, with the other bi-weekly home letters.

"It is indeed a pleasant surprise for us," Frank's mother had said to Arthur, as he held her hand in brief farewell near the steamer's gangway. "I shall be overjoyed to get my boy back at any price, but it may be some time before we return, as the state of his health is evidently very uncertain."

The letter read by Lucy ran thus:—

Ward A, Newcastle Hospital.

My dearest Mother and Sister,—Pending enquiries made by the police, I send you details of the unforeseen accident, which caused my abrupt, and to you, no doubt, most distressful departure from New Zealand.

I have been dangerously ill. My kind nurse, Miss Spencer, at my earnest wish sends you these lines, as I am quite unable to write myself.

To be brief. I was suddenly and unexpectedly accosted by a man—Rawlings—on the day of the picnic. He came out of a clump of manuka, and had evidently been waiting for me. I had, as you know, discharged him for theft only a few days before this. He said I had ruined him, and asked me for work again. Failing that, he asked me for money. I supplied him and went on, recommending him to take to the seafaring business again.

Shortly afterwards I felt a stunning crash on my head. I was dimly conscious of a struggle in which I fought desperately to save my life.

Then all was a blank. I was cut and knocked about a great deal during the struggle, and must have lost consciousness from some of the blows I received. When I came to I was partially buried with sand. The moon and stars were shining, but they seemed to be all mixed up,
Startling News

and the earth seemed to be rocking and whirling about me. It seemed to me to be a convulsion of nature. I could not remember how I came to be where I was, nor where I had come from. I felt horribly frightened. I thought the end of the world had come, and rushed frantically away to escape destruction. I saw the waves coming in gently on to the beach. There didn’t seem to be any wind at all, but it was cold. The waves seemed to be rippling, but they were all red like blood. A black object drifted in—a boat. Then I remember being seated in it, pulling frantically away from the mad confusion ashore, for hours, it seemed to me. Then I lost consciousness again. Then I heard a shout, saw lights, felt a sudden shock, and sank under water. When I recovered consciousness again, I was surrounded by sailors in a ship. Then I became insensible again. There was a doctor on board, working his passage as a seaman. It was one of Anderson’s steam colliers, outward bound from Port Lyttelton. Having slipped off, and dreading stress of weather, they were anxious to clear the coast off which they had picked me up. I learned afterwards that it was somewhere near Godley Heads. They took me with them.

My head was injured. I was only conscious at intervals. The doctors have trepanned the injured part, and removed a bone pressing on the brain. I can’t remember things at all sometimes. Then I can a little, but it hurts me to think. I believe I wandered dreadfully at times about a hand severed at the wrist. I remember seeing Rawlings roaring and howling and moaning. I think his hand was cut off. He had a tomahawk, or a club or something, but I can’t remember. I know I saw him rushing away, and I know that I got into the boat, because I thought he was after me again. My mind is confused. The doctors say it will be sometime before I get all right again. Come quickly, mother and sister, to your anxious son and brother,—Frank."

"Not a single word of Lucy in all this letter!"

"Strange," mused Arthur,"he forgets her in the thought of self." Lucy herself seemed uneasy and slightly mortified, but she said little, and it was not considered advisable for her to go.
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However, a month afterwards, a letter came from Mrs. Osbern saying that owing to legal enquiries, which were very terrible, involving some suspicion of her son being a murderer, the whole affair had upset them all terribly, and affected Arthur dangerously. His head had been severely injured. He had a constant recurring and harassing nervousness with regard to any subject connected with New Zealand at all. They dared make no reference to the subject of the picnic or New Brighton or anything connected with it. Under these circumstances she thought it best, at her son’s request, to relieve Lucy from her engagement, stating that in the doctor’s opinion, travel and removal from anything connected with the accident or the murderous assault, would be the only way for a likelihood of his perfect recovery. Any name mentioned drove him almost to frenzy. She considered it absolutely necessary to forbid the marriage. Frank’s mind was unhinged with the shock, exposure and injury. When he was a little stronger, he would write.

Three months later, another letter came. It was from Frank himself. He released Lucy completely from any promise on her part. She would see it was quite for the best. He was completely broken down, and very forgetful at times. He was doubtful whether he should ever be quite the same as he used to be. Any revival of the past made him worse. It was a hideous dream. They were going to England. Wairuru was to be sold. Lucy would always be respected and esteemed by him, and there were a few more lines we need not pry into, but which were pathetic in the poor fellow’s need, for they made the decision arrived at unalterable and final. They were, however, almost a tacit admission that he had lost his heart to the nurse who had been so unremittingly careful of him in his sad condition.

And so the Osberns drifted away from Lucy’s daily life. Unwittingly too, her heart was estranged,—had really been estranged all through, although she had tried, like a loyal maiden, to perform her duty, or what she considered to be her duty. Her heart was Arthur’s all the time. They had been thrown so much together, they suited each other so well. All the old feeling was there in both of them, though it had experienced many buffets in the way of
the world. It had been affection tried in the fire, and these two were now at liberty to console each other if they should so decide. There was nothing now in the way of a happy union.

Lucy thought much on the subject, and to tell the truth, became brighter as the time went on and her thoughts became occupied with the real object of her affection. He had been so kind-hearted and thoughtful in their first days of loneliness and estrangement both to herself and her Aunt, that he was esteemed as a regular paragon of masculine virtue. So much so, that when, six months later, he asked her if she could forget all the events connected with that "severed hand" business, and think of him alone, she said "Yes" with such relief and thankfulness in her tone, that she betrayed her secret, and they were very happy.

The judicial enquiries held in Australia where Frank's evidence substantiated proofs in New Zealand cleared him from the suspicion of Mr. Coppin, who had gone over to Newcastle from Sydney, as Senor Vasquez Ibanes, returning to New Zealand in propria persona gay, and cheerful, not without a passing pang perhaps, that he had not the handling of the "two thousand pounds reward" as offered in the newspapers. However, Mrs. Osbern did not forget him, and he returned jubilant. The finding of the court upon the remains was after all "Death from injuries inflicted by himself, probably from loss of blood, or mortification of the injured part" as a doctor put it. The evidence made out that there had been a fierce struggle for mastery between Osbern and his desperate assailant, that in the demoniac passion of the sailor, a descending blow had been diverted by an impending root, or by a chance and violent effort of his half-stunned victim. The sharp weapon had inflicted judgment upon the would-be-murderer himself. It was probable that his arm for the moment was under the neck of his victim, the hand being exposed on a root or a stone. The nervous force expended in making a heavy downward blow at Osbern's head would facilitate such a result if diverted, and the wrist would be severed.

The retribution had been swift and horrible. The assassin had fled, aghast at the bleeding stump of his own arm! had made some roughly improvised tourniquet to stop
Zealandia's Guerdon

the flow of blood, had become mad with horror, and the remorse and shame of his own misdeeds and humiliation. He had fled across country to the remote place where his remains were found, never doubting but that he would be taken up as a murderer near the haunts of men. There he had probably died from the effects of the wound—inflammation of the part affected.

So said the Australian court of enquiry.

Even if Frank Osborn himself, who really was entirely innocent, had so mutilated the man, who tried to kill him, it would have been "justifiable homicide." And on these grounds by the laws of both countries, the mortal remains of the sailor, long since buried, were left to moulder in their first sepulture.

And the whole of the past obnoxious and harmful coil of fate was wound up on the windlass of passing time, and placed among old police archives—out of sight—and where the intricate mazes of adversity had stopped the progress of our pair of lovers, a crop of golden promise sprang up, faltering no more under rude blasts of affliction.

At the wedding the Senor appeared in full Castilian manner in a white waistcoat, and blooming with an extra-gorgeous button-hole.

"After all," said he to Arthur, "I have been the means of procuring for you a blushing and most charming bride, whose health I now drink in this foaming goblet," emptying his champagne glass as he concluded.

"Yes," replied Arthur, with a bright smile, "but your attentions were deucedly unpleasant, and intensely annoying at one time, my friend. However, I reciprocate, and pledge you in return."

The happy pair went to Wellington for a few days, as part of their honeymoon, and thence to Waitahi, where they were warmly welcomed by all Arthur's old friends, especially Horncastle Richards and his wife, the Durocks, and the Austin family. Stanford had written several times and expected to be a lieutenant by the time he got to Pretoria. So far he had been uninjured, and said he was in splendid health and "as keen as mustard," as indeed all the colonials were. There was a slight hint about a certain young lady too, and all the married ones instantly affirmed
Startling News

that he was booked for matrimony also. Mrs. Richards
took to Mrs. Somerset amazingly, and they became the
greatest of friends. Arthur and Lucy traversed all the
old spots of interest in the Sounds and visited more than
once the monument to Aiotea, her father, and sisters at the
Island, where they both reverently placed wreaths of kowhai
and clematis-stars inside the railings which surrounded the
memorial tablet. Amongst the wineberries, and under the
karakas they wandered betimes over at Karaka Bay,
where they were always heartily received by the Durocks.
It was a strange but happy honeymoon, a sort of celebration
of a new bridal and the hallowing of one that might have
been. But they both wished it, and before they finally left
to go to Sydney they planted a red rose tree, and a tree of
life over at the Island where the memorial stood. Aiotea
came to Arthur in his dreams the night before they left.
She looked lovingly at him, pointed solemnly upwards, and
disappeared; but in after life at a crisis in his family, in
his own affairs, whenever she is most needed she comes, and
is very welcome. And in Arthur's study, for he has given
up the paper—though his interest remains, and is profitable
—and taken to authorship, in doubt or sorrow, sickness or
distress, at the opportune moment Aiotea comes, and
Arthur is conscious of the loving, pleasant pressure, the
old familiar attitude, and he knows his spirit bride is near
him, and he again thinks of the passionate clinging kiss she
asked for and gave on the afternoon before her sudden death.

In love and duty she comes, and when their first baby
was born, and the mother was in danger, Arthur was
conscious of her presence as a comforter more plainly than
he ever was in his life before. And the baby, being a girl,
was christened Aiotea, Lucy.

And the mother recovered rapidly. Aiotea's portrait
is in his study, and the influence she exerts on his life is
pure goodness and well doing.

And now, to wind up our tale. Frank married his
nurse, but, owing to the severe injuries he had received
was for a long time anything but a cheerful, or companion-
able husband, and required much care, which happily his
"better-half" was eminently qualified to give.
Zealandia’s Guerdon

Coppin married Polly Winter, and is bringing up his first-born to the “profession.”

We do not, it is noticeable, see so much of the Senor at the present day, but on certain occasions he may be seen walking in the neighbourhood of Hereford Street. Albeit there is a grim thoroughness with which he “shadows” any suspected person, especially those of the genus “dude,” he is discovered to give way to melancholy moods at times. There is not enough crime to fit his category.

“The world is getting too moral,” he says. “Absconding gents are getting scarcer,” and he has packed so many “confidence gentlemen” off to the penitentiary out of harm’s way, that the others have done the “Pacific slope” in various directions, chiefly towards Australia, and there are very few fish of this description now left to be entangled in the meshes of the Senor’s net, “or,” says he to himself, “I would cast it over them—‘quicksticks.’” His heart seems to linger about his gay bachelorhood, when he made a lasting impression upon Miss Featherston, but he rallies at times, and becomes gayer as Coppin, and decidedly stouter in both characters.

Horncastle Richards and his wife have never regretted the quest for contraband, and have a rising and interesting family. “Dickie” has boomed the Gazette to such an extent, that it leads the whole district by the nose, and he has as editor, an ex-member of Parliament—not the illiterate one who threatened to swamp the place, but a bona-fide Boanerges, who scatters terror and dismay all over the place for the opposition, and writes with extraordinary old stumps of penholders and ancient nibs, in a fashion known only to himself.

On one occasion a humble citizen wishing for support, having just invaded the outer press office to get a recommendation for a new hop beer factory he had just started, left three bottles carefully labelled, with the young gentleman who was keeping the books of the great daily, attending to advertisements and interviewing people. “Give these to the editor, will yer,” this applicant for fame asked this young gentleman. “Yer might ask ’im if he will give me a short parrygraft upon my hop beer factory. Better wait a bit, until
Startling News

after I’m gone, and then take ‘em in, and arks ‘im to sample of them. They’re just like fizz, they’re that good.”

“Will you advertise?” asked the book-keeper. “We can give you six inches over the leader.”

“No, thanks,” replied the hop beer hero. “Not just yet; another time, thankee.” And disappeared.

The book-keeper invaded the editorial sanctum with a bottle and a glass.

“Oh, Mr. Boanerges, Little Popkins has just called. He wants you to taste his hop beer, and give him a “par.”

“See him damned first,” said the editor. “I assure you on my honour I won’t taste his mixture. Rags and bones and that sort of thing. I ain’t a teetotaller, and I assure you, my dear Hopkins, if I was to drink a bottle of that stuff you have so kindly placed before me, I should have to go out at once, and drink a bottle of Barracouta whiskey to cure myself, and the Gazette would have no leader to-morrow morning. You can have them. Perhaps as you are younger your constitution won’t feel it so much as mine. I’ll ‘par’ the little brute.” And he did next time he got the chance. “Dickie” comes down and confabs earnestly with Boanerges over political matters, and Mrs. “Dickie” has discovered a never failing source of revenue and assistance in Mr. Hopkin’s office drawer at the table behind the screen in the front office, which has now no less than three windows, upon which all the art and blazonry of a skilled sign-writer has been expended.

The amount of postage stamps that smiling, cheerful, pretty Mrs. “Dickie” absorbs from that drawer with neatly gloved hands, to place daintily into a charming little red morocco purse is truly alarming, and if Mr. Hopkins was not a friend of the family, he might think that his defalcations in petty cash would be sharply brought to book. Mrs. “Dickie” is not above assisting herself to half-crowns, or stray half-sovereigns either. She can’t be bothered to ask “Dickie,” you know. He’s always so busy! And it is generally believed in the front office that Mr. Hopkins always leaves a few stamps and some loose silver, as well as a stray half-sovereign in his drawer, on purpose to aid the fair thief. And he has his reward in a bright smile
Zealandia's Guerdon

and a roguish look, for when did a pretty woman not love to do something of this kind, and make herself fancy it was illegal, and that no one knew it. However, she well knows they do, and her pilferings don't matter, as the Gazette is too firmly set to harm by tens of scores of hundreds of such acts of petty larceny.

There are many other visitors in the front office of the Daily Gazette. All the "old identities" of Waitahik come in at different times and expatiate upon how they made the place, and had roads made to their own doors by the Borough Council. But they forget in their exuberance, how, when they were members of that august body, they made rules and regulations to have the street lamps lit up only on bright moonlight nights. On dark nights the passengers and strangers in the district had to invade the local stores for matches to strike against the lamp-posts to see where they were, and to avoid the pitfalls in the streets. And they forget also in the "go-ahead" times how they made the edict to encourage cattle and horses to be turned out in the streets to eat the long grass, which was generally dry and tinderly. The passengers were continually in collision with these animals. "Pah!" says "Dickie," "You were all afraid of your old wooden sheds being burned down by the passenger's matches, setting fire to the grass. That's why you turned out the beasts, that's all." "How about the whiskey still?" queries a white haired old gentleman. "Dickie" smiles superior, and points to his wife.

As time goes on Arthur and Lucy, over in Sydney in their own house, are completely happy, and prosperous, and devoted to each other and their children. As they are occupied in such a manner to the exclusion of other matters, except Arthur's book-work, Miss Featherston concentrates her unlimited talents to the entire management and subjugation of their household, which she controls completely to everybody's satisfaction. She is never more amusing than when she relates her experiences on board the Northampton, nor the impression she made at one time in a southern city upon a rich and handsome Spanish gentleman.
L'ENVOI

Old ocean enwraps thee with on-rushing mountain.
A chlamys of white, and of emerald green.
The sun glances bright on thy rivers and fountains.
And pours down his glory in glittering sheen.
Peaks tower far-around. Snow-capped, or misty-bound
Girdled by forests in bosky array
And down the mountain side, echoes with rushing tide
Many a river-source, speeding away.

Land of the fertile plain,
Land of the golden grain,
Land of the laden wain,
Land of the Free!

Thou daughter of Ocean and Nature, surpassing
All Isles of the South scattered over the sea—
Let Peace and fair Plenty their riches amassing
On thy shores rule thy Nations so brave and so free.
You were a wayward child, erst in thy manner wild
Warfare had shadowed thy land with its doom,
And as thy mood did change, far up thy mountain range.
Spread a dark mantle of storm-cloud in gloom.

Princess of Southern Seas.
Thus do thy forest trees
Whisper in passing breeze
Let all be free.

Pass to thy goal of Success with true Union;
Let name and brave nation be all things to Thee.
Bid all live in peace and in friendly communion
Then shall thy Commonwealth rise from the sea.
From morn till dewy night, when the fair moon does light.
Snow-peaks and meadows and cities, and plains.
Then shall thy path be clear. Progress thy mission dear
Friendship efface all the former blood stains,

Rays of the sun at noon,
Gleam of the harvest moon,
All shall declare thee soon,
Land of the Free.

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