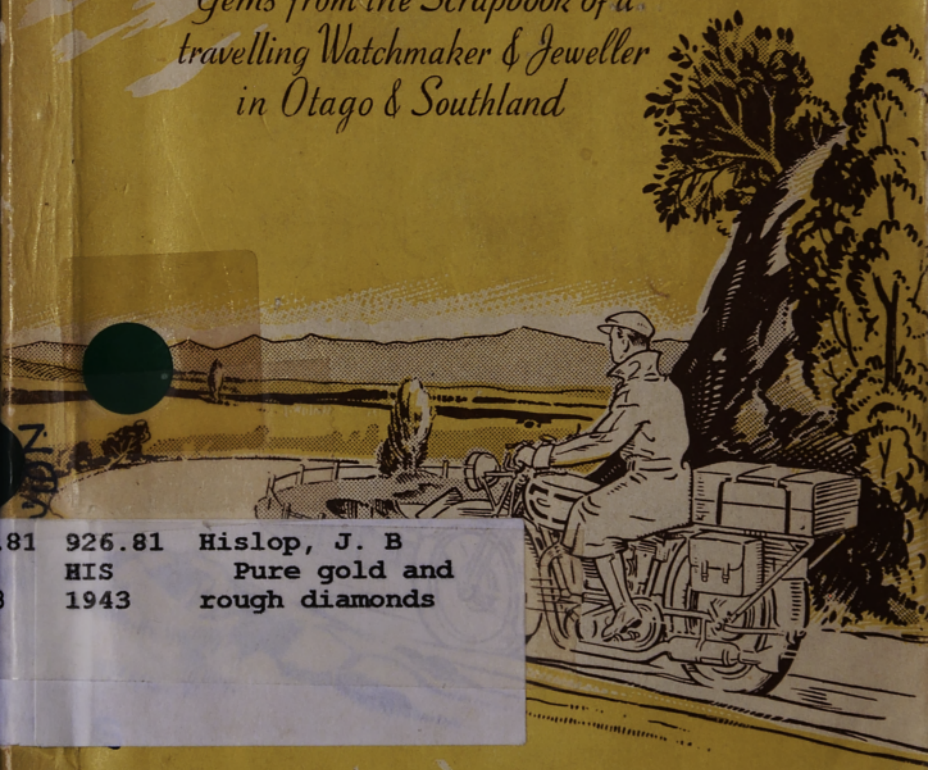
PURE GOLD AND ROUGH DIAMONDS

Gems from the Scrapbook of a travelling Watchmaker & Jeweller in Otago & Southland



J.B.HISLOP

PURE GOLD
AND
ROUGH DIAMONDS

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Here is a fine collection of gems from the sample case of J. B. Hislop, well-known Watchmaking and Jewellery representative.

During his many years of travelling throughout Otago and Southland, he met many entertaining characters and collected many stories worth retelling.

His lively reminiscences of experiences on motor-bike and car, in farm-house, hotel and mining town, all bear the imprint of the author's personality, and often leave the reader chuckling.

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and
ROUGH DIAMONDS

Gems from the Scrapbook of a
travelling Watchmaker and Jeweller
in Otago and Southland.

by

J. B. HISLOP

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Contents

Introduction

WHILE convalescing from a lengthy illness I received a small publication in connection with the trade from which I had retired. I was not on the mailing list as a subscriber, nor did I receive an account, so I decided to at least communicate with the Editor.

Much to my surprise my appreciative letter, with no doubt its anecdotal touch, appeared in the next issue, and I was therein requested to supply more matter dealing with my experiences as a jewellery and watchmaking traveller in the abounding realm of my beloved Central Otago.

Co-incidentally, a good old friend, Bill E., of the Central, paid a call and, after we had mutual laughs over happenings of the past, I re-acted favourably to his suggestion that I could and should write diverting and unusual stories arising from my many enjoyable business trips through the historic and varied hinterland mentioned.

Thus began my humble adventure as a contributor to the *New Zealand Horological Journal*. I should state that these commentaries from the well of memory are personal and original, and if they have given pleasure to readers my efforts to recall and describe activities, incidents, individualities, and the life and atmosphere of happy years, will have been sufficiently rewarded.

Should it be that my literary whimsicalities have caused faces to beam with the stimulating tonic of smiles, my gratification will be the greater for, as the beckoning day is conquered by the smile, thereby also is the sunshine of life broadcast for all to enjoy.

Opoho, Dunedin, 26/3/43.

To J.B.H.

I've been readin' the Horological Journals,
An' the stories yer tellin' therein,
They made me feel, Jim, I was haverin,
For each tale to ma "dial" brought a grin.
What a mon ye hae been for the lassies,
At that trade ye were nae doot well skilled,
For the bonnie wee things doon in Central
Say yer place has never been filled.

Frae Kingston tae Queenstown and Cromwell,
Frae Cromwell tae the braw toon o' Clyde,
Frae Clyde tae cauld Alexandra,
Tae Ranfurly thence on tae Hyde,
In yer auld "flivver" car wi' yer samples,
I can pictur' each "movement" ye made,
Tho' ye seem to hae had lots o' fun, Jim,
Yer "mainspring" was aye for the trade.

Mon, it's pleasant tae read o' yer memories,
O' the days that are gone for aye,
For even awa' doon in Central
They are reachin' the modern way.
At times we auld folk go a' wonderin'
If the days o' Guid Auld Lang Syne
Were more filled with fine social spirit
Than the days o' this troublesome time.

'Tis forty years noo since we met, Jim,
It does not seem quite so long,
And ye bring back the days o' the past, lad,
When ye mention some auld-time song.
Can ye ply a pair o' the "tweezers"?
Can ye fix an "escapement" fault?
Or, like me, is yer "movement" noo stallin'
An' at practical work called a halt.

I must now no' weary ye further,
'Twas yer stories that stairted ma pen,
And ma drivel maun cease as I'm hearin'
Some buddy a'callin' me ben.
A Good Xmas Greetin' I send ye,
An' the Journal that broadcasts yer tales,
May yer "balance" o' days be extended
To recount hoo ye made a' yer sales.

G.W.L., Masterton

1st October, 1944.

[The above was received direct by the N.Z. Horological Journal from a Masterton reader, an old retired tradesman.]

PURE GOLD AND ROUGH DIAMONDS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
N.Z. Horological Journal

Editor, N.Z. Horological Journal.

Dear Sir,—If you are prepared to accept this with the good spirit with which it is written, I will do my best to apologise for my long delay in acknowledging receipt of this handy little publication. I have been a very sick man this last two years, but being on the mend again I thought it was up to me to act up to my New Year resolution and send you a sub. which please do not advertise. Although late in the year, may it find you all right on top of the world for 1943-44-45, and maybe in 1946 you'll get another card. But, jokes apart, I have been very dilatory about this matter, and at present, as I have to hold this pad down with my teeth while I write, you understand it is awkward writing at all, and having nothing else to do I thought, like the good Boy Scout, I would do my one good deed to-day and tie you in a knot trying to wade your way through this while I sit in the sunshine of Opoho.

I could write you many amusing incidents of my days on the gold fields, and when you meet our old Cromwell friend President Jack Murrell again, ask him for me where did he find the ring he lent his friend for a dance one night in the mining town of St. Bathans. I am sure Jack can still take a joke as well as he could pot a rabbit the day he took me across the Kawarau River in the miner's chair, which to me seemed 500 feet above this great river. His dad, who was still in business in those days at the tail-end of the great gold dredging boom, worked at the bench for my dad in the 1860's and '70's before he started out on his own account in Cromwell. Jack sure did have the wind up that night, and he didn't find the ring under the floor boards where he had been sitting, as it did not roll through that knothole. We were great pals although we were in opposition, and like myself he was natural and did enjoy the country dances. It was about the only chance a chap had those days of giving a girl a squeeze on the quiet, in spite of their old-fashioned steel and whalebone ribs going the wrong way, but I am sure Jack was too staid for that—he would rather shine squeezing a cut lemon over a plate of Bluff

oysters. They were great days, great dances, and great girls. The man with a few beers on his breath did not have a look-in if he wanted a dance. The folk did really dance, and there are few young folk to-day who know what a dance is like. But I am wandering. Everybody had a nick-name—mine was "Jimmy the Jewellery Man" to many of my friends. Jack's was "Spring Heeled Jack," and if you watch his steps this may still go quite well for him, for he had a sprightly step all his own. Jack Murrell informs me it would be correct to say his ring was found next day by a referee going to a football match who, on donning his Sunday-to-go-meeting togs again, found it in his coat pocket, where it had been accidentally left by the lass who had placed her gloves in his pocket while having refreshments. The ring was over-size and had slipped off with the glove and had not returned with it, and was not missed by the very excited lass for some time, but after the ball was over Jack did start an unsuccessful hunt for his missing sample.

Yours sincerely, J. B. HISLOP, late Jeweller, Dunedin.

(The Editor's reply to the above, which he published :—"Mr. Hislop,—I hope you won't mind my publishing this letter outright, as I feel it is the kind of letter we need. It is interesting, it is reminiscent of early days. Please write again, if it is not like hard labour these days. Incidentally, there is a clock in the Wellington Museum marked 'Hislop.' Know anything about it?—Ed.")

My first reply was as follows:—

Dear Sir,—I have only once before written a letter to any paper, and that was not so long ago, when I was trying to condemn the German owls for destroying the wonderful bellbirds and tuis which come and sing and feed right up to the windows as they drink from the cups placed there for them every winter.

To take you back about 80 years I would have to refer you to my old friend, Mr. Romans,* of Arrowtown, now in his 101st year and still going strong and doing all his own gardening. A fine old gentleman who could keep you interested for hours on his stories of the good old roaring days on the Otago gold fields. It was in his shop in Arrowtown when I called one day, attracted there at first by the noise coming from the old Pelton wheel as it rattled out the power to the mincing machine and was, no doubt, sweet music to his good old partner, Sam McSkimming, uncle of those two

nippy All Blacks down here. Sam was making sausages. The mince was getting rather thick for the purpose, so while throwing in half a bucket of water Sam said: "This is the stuff that pays"; and they were some sausages those days—no meal on the market then made for the purpose of taking up the space intended for beef, etc. Sam had a great collection of quartz and nuggets, many of which I made up into different articles of jewellery for his good wife and daughters—that was 38 years ago, and wouldn't it be nice now to get our hands on the gold one used to handle those days! Fancy a man to-day handing you a tin of small nuggets in payment for a £25 gold watch, and leaving it to your honesty *re* weight of which he was not sure! This happened in the wee town of Bannockburn (a good name that!); there was 50/- too much, which led up to the sale of a gold albert. It was about this time up that way where I had put in an hour making a clock take a new lease of life in a farm house. Dad was busy with the sheep, but "Wait till he comes in," said his good wife. This suited me fine, as I was miles from accommodation—it meant stopping all night, which gave me a good chance with the samples, and as all the clocks in the house were going by this time, everybody seemed happy. Dad in much earlier days happened to be a great old pal of my Dad's, who also put in his days up that way with his cradle and tin dish in 1862. The old chap had six daughters and no boys. Sales that night and others were six 18ct. ladies' gold Hunters and six 9ct. gold muff chains in Secret Links, Spanish Tie, Bernsteine Diamond bits and Rugby patterns. (How many of the lads in the trade to-day know these patterns when they see them?) Breakfast came in the morning, so did the porridge, of course. "Have some cream, Mr Hislop," said dad, as he handed me a large jug of it. "Who doesn't like cream on his porridge?" "Thank you," I said, "and would you please pass me the sugar?" (which was handy to him). "O mon," he said, "ye dinna want to mak' a puddin' o' it." He was a "Mac" and did not take sugar on his breakfast. I will leave the old Central Otago at that in the meantime, and may return to Mr. Mac. later on and refer to him as a waggoner before Dunedin was very much in the news and before he took up farming in a very quiet but lovely spot well off the beaten track to Arrowtown. There were open doors all through Central in those days for me, and to do a clock or two for a farmer—well the pleasure was all mine, as I used to say when they

wanted to pay me for the job, and in all cases it was a real pleasure.

*Mr. Romans, the Grand Old Man, has lately passed away; aged 103.

A PIPE FULL OF GOLD AND NICE BUSINESS

In my first reply to the Editor of the *N.Z. Horological Journal* I promised to still further refer to my old friend, Mr. Mac. During my many calls to his farm this hardy old pioneer told me many very interesting stories of his early days on the Arrow gold fields. Of those I still remember, the one that took my fancy was of the times of the shortage of stores, and just before he and others came to the rescue of the miners with dray and waggon loads of stores picked up at Waikouaiti. To run short of flour at that time meant a walk of about 14 miles to Mr Rees's homestead at Queenstown, and the Shotover River and swamps had to be forded. The homestead and station buildings were then just where Eichardt's Hotel is to-day at the shore end of that most beautiful little bay in Lake Wakatipu. It was here where flour could be purchased at 2/6 per pannikin full. Mutton could also be purchased, and a whole dressed sheep (80/-) by itself was no light load to carry back to Arrow. Mr. Mac. related to me the story of a miner during one such shortage offering his mate—"a ca' canny chap, no doubt, who had put a wee bit past"—a pipe full of gold for a pipe full of tobacco. Of the result I do not know, but I can picture the tobacco. It would most likely be that "black as your hat" sailor's twist, or dark Juno, which the miners could either smoke or chew. I remember it alright, for many years before I started travelling a few of us kids got hold of a piece of this black weed, pinched from somebody's Dad no doubt, and had a go at it—and was I sick!—I went the colour of tripe, but didn't hurry home. There were no Juicy-Fruits or Spearmints on the market in those days.

Mr. Mac. also told me that £110 per ton was what they charged for carting to the Arrow—about 159 miles there—and to use his own words, on his first return to Waikouaiti he found himself riding on the axle of his dray, having sold all the boards off it to the miners at any price he liked to

ask to make sluice boxes for their claims. His was one of the first drays on the roads. Waikouaiti was then the main starting point for all traffic to the little known Central Otago, through the Shag Valley and Pig Root, but it could not hold its place as Capital of the Province, as many in those days expected it to be, and no doubt was at that time. Shipping used to call in there then, and I have a very fine water colour in my possession, painted in 1867 by G. O'Brien, showing the groins on the riverbank where boats could tie up, but there is no sign of that to-day. As time went on, Mr. Mac. said, I purchased a waggon and good team of horses, and many the good order I had for your old Dad. On my return from the fields on one occasion he said I had to take back with me twelve ten-guinea English Hunting Levers to the miners. "Nice business," I said. "The same watch no doubt that Mr. Editor recently had sent from Nelson to report on, and many of those old faithfuls, as I have heard them called, are giving real good service to-day.

Talking about these watches, I could take you much further away than Nelson to find one of them. In 1937, a few years after I went off the roads, my wife and I took a trip to the Old Homeland, and you can imagine my surprise when chatting to the proprietor of the big hotel at John o' Groats, to see him produce one of my Dad's old watches still in good order and purchased by his late Dad in the early days in Dunedin. The two old gentlemen were great friends, so he told me. But a more remarkable and amusing incident happened when I was a lad at the bench. An old farmer friend of my Dad's called into his shop and, after talking travel for a while, took from his pocket a watch key stamped "John Hislop, Watchmaker, Dunedin, N.Z.," as was the custom in those days to advertise on keys sold for sixpence each, "and of all the places in the world, he said he had picked it up in the streets of Aberdeen!" So after all this famous old Scotch city is a place where you can get something for nothing if you only keep your eyes open, as I bet that old squatter did all the way there and back.

As I come to the close of my very happy memories of Mr. Mac. I may mention that he gave me as the value of the gold won in the first few weeks at the Arrow was the very nice sum of £100 per day per claim. There were soon over 1,500 miners at work, and the claims were cut down to 24 feet square—the legal limit. There were over 5,000 miners at work on this and other rich fields in the Wakatipu dis-

trict, and gold escorts brought in 59,000 ounces for the first three weeks' returns from these very rich fields. In time my old friend retired to live in the North with his only unmarried daughter, where he died some years ago at a great old age. There is, no doubt, something in the Otago Central air that gave these fine old chaps a great bit of extra kick to retire on. What great old boys they were, and how we all do miss them! Things are so changed to-day—travel is so fast and their doors are no longer open to the man on the roads, for they themselves have knocked on the only door that really matters, and it has been opened unto them, for at heart they were real good men.

MY FIRST TRIP, AND OTHERS

WHEN I first went on the roads there was no motor traffic or transport at all, and the bag man, as the C.T.'s were sometimes called, had to travel by horse and trap, buggy or waggonette, according to the weight and bulk of their samples. Another term—and a more appropriate one—applied to them at times was Knights of the Road; and no doubt about it, they were really a fine lot of chaps. In spite of their hardships and discomfort of travel, as compared with to-day, they always had to come up smiling, and be hale and hearty, otherwise they would not last many trips. They had to smile their way through anything to hold their jobs. Many of them would start out from Dunedin with a dozen or more heavy sample crates on their waggonettes; others, who were more fortunate, travelled by trap, carrying only a few price lists and order books in their pockets. Any samples they might require would be in liquid form, and probably not last the journey, especially in the winter, when it took them through villages like Hills Creek, the highest in New Zealand, being close on 2,000 feet.

I will always remember good old Sim Inder, of the Hills Creek Hotel. He always seemed so pleased to see me and have a chat, as he was a mate of my Dad's in the rough old days on the early Victorian diggings at Bendigo. They

were at Eureka together during the famous stockade riots.

It was Wilf., one of the jovial light-travelling knights, who induced my late brother Jack to send me through Central Otago with him on a trial trip, as he thought I would do well and he could introduce me to the country and many of his own good friends. There was no opposition in high-class goods in our line, as it was only a short time before this that the late Mr. Frank Hyams went off the road, sold out his well-known business in Dunedin, and opened up in Bond Street, London. You can imagine how keen I was at the idea, and to travel through the towns and districts to which I had in my time been accustomed to post hundreds of repairs, etc., to the country customers.

My first day out took me to Palmerston by rail, and after a scout round from Mrs. McDonald's most homely Waverley Hotel (now demolished), my C.T. friend Wilf.—old C.T.'s will remember him well—was glad to pick me up for company's sake on my first leg and to his next stop, Macraes Flat. After passing through Dunback the road takes a sharp and steep turn inland, up-hill all the way for the next 10 miles, a great deal of which we walked. It was at Mrs. McDonald's Waverley Hotel mentioned that the Dear Old Lady in her wee white lace cap or head-piece would come to the bar with watch in hand reminding anybody lingering that it was 10 o'clock. When being reminded on one occasion that the police were well out of sight, she said "I am the police in this house."

Macraes Flat is right on top of the range, and was in its time the scene of great gold mining activity. The Chinese were there in their hundreds. It is also one of the very few places in New Zealand where scheelite has been profitably worked. Everybody in those parts knew old Hughie, the Scheelite King of the last Great War period. There are still two hotels there; one too many for the size of the place. Both their proprietors were great old timers, and lived to a grand old age. When one of them was telling me about all the money he had put into gold and scheelite mining, without any great return, he said, with a peculiar click in his speech all his own, "O well, you cannot have your cake and eat it too." This old chap had for his motto, "While I live I crow," but I never saw him stretch his neck in the attempt like the cock which he had carved into a block of stone with motto, all in colour, inserted into the solid stone wall over the private entrance. The good old chap has passed on

many years ago, but the old cock is still there, stretching its neck to breaking point against the bluestone wall of Stanley's Hotel. It was one of the best tucker houses on the road, and with bacon and eggs for breakfast, the hungry C.T. who was usually found stopping there the night would have a full ashet to help himself from, placed before him. From there, all round the gold fields, with very few exceptions, the breakfast menu was chops and sausages, sausages and chops, and, of course, porridge, on which Otago was built in the first place. However, it was hot, good and welcome after having at times in the winter to break the ice in the old-fashioned water jug in the morning for a wash. Very cold water no doubt, but with great results, and much better than hot, which could be had on request. There was always the oven-heated brick or stone gin bottle in the bed at night—not a bad tip to replace rubber bottles, which are so scarce to-day and were not made at that time.

This was my first night on the edge of the gold fields, and Wilf. took me to the other and very good hotel, perhaps for business reasons, as very few of the C.T.'s ever made a change. I was given one of three or four rooms which opened out on to the public footpath in the village. I was not given a key at the time, it being late. Wilf. and I had a wash and went into tea, after which, with all my thoughts on my small case of valuable samples (which care was not necessary in those honest days), I went to see if it was still in my room. It had vanished! Did I ever have the wind up so much before? I don't think so. Wilf, also got on his toes, and put a stiff whisky away, as we and the proprietor's son Charlie started out on a hunt. We stirred a swagger from his dreams, to which he was snoring in the stable hay, but he had not seen it, and the case did not turn up until the daughter of the house returned from a visit up the street. On hearing I had valuables, she had shifted my bags into another room inside the house, and had gone out without advising me of the change. This was my first fright on my first night out on the roads.

It was at Macraes, some years later (1915), when I gave the Patriotic Committee a lady's gold watch to raffle in aid of their war funds at a carnival being held in their fine big hall. I took one ticket myself (2/6) in the name of a wee niece at West Taieri and to my surprise, on returning to the city, I was told that she had won it. To-day she is still wearing it as a wrist watch. Now this same wee girl of

those days has her own bonnie wee lass, whose friend's photo appears in to-day's Otago Daily Times as having received the D.F.C. for his work in the R.A.F. over Germany. Time does march on! (The lad was lost in a raid over Berlin.)

The following night saw Wilf. and I finish a long day through Hyde and Kokonga by arriving at Waipiata, on the edge of the wealthy Manototo Plain, just in time for a late meal—(no 40-hour week then)—and to join in a dance which was about to start a few yards from the hotel. As we arrived at the hall the M.C. was busting himself calling out "Only two more couples wanted here," and to a few backward lads at the door, "Come on, you chaps, do your bit." Wilf. and I took no coaxing, for in he went with "Come on, Jim, we are in this," and at the same time making a bee line for a nice young thing sitting out, leaving me the only six-foot wallflower—sunflower, I should say—sitting out in the hall. I noticed a smile from some of the lads, none of whom I knew, but was soon to know the reason, as I threw out my chest like a fantail pigeon and asked for the pleasure. I had many good dances in Waipiata after that, and many a time I was reminded of my first one there, as I got my arms round a bag of chaff when on several occasions I would be helping a farmer friend to cut and bag his chaff over the week-end.

It was at the Waipiata Hotel I arrived one night with my pocket full of watch and brooch repairs, each one being wrapped in its own envelope with instructions thereon. In my hurry into tea I planted them all in a small drawer at the side of the old-fashioned duchesse, and on returning parcelled them all up, as I thought, for posting to the city. Several weeks later a very good customer—the daughter at that great farm, Station View—wrote in asking for her greenstone brooch I had taken for repair. As I could not trace it, I sent her a new one. On my return trip to the same hotel six months later I happened to get the same room, and on pulling out that drawer for some reason or other, there was the lost brooch, which I had overlooked, and so did everybody else, housemaids and all, over that long time. I suppose there would be a traveller in that room every other night. I thought this a great joke on the house. When returning the brooch to the customer on my way round the following day she had a good laugh, as she decided to keep the one I had sent her to make good the loss. "I like it ever

so much better," she said. I can see that brooch to-day, with its two fine bars of greenstone with 9ct. gold end mounts and a pearl buckle in the centre and sold at 25/-.

The old hotel was later burnt down, like four others not so very far away.

It was at one of these hotels one night that Boots, or the rouseabout, Ginger, as he was called—and very well named,—came to me asking a favour. He had them pretty bad, but was making very poor progress with Rosie, the fat cook—and she was fat and fair, rather good-looking, and very cheerful. Ginger's heart was good, and his feet were willing, but he just did not have that little Hollywood way of whispering sweet nothings down Rosie's neck, and he wanted me—to use his own words—to make his ally good and put in a good word for him. If I did he would buy the diamond and ruby (£6/10/-)* ring which he had already chosen before he came at me with this proposition. I told him I was not experienced in approaching nice young things in such ticklish problems and, in any case, as there may be somebody else in the running for the hand of his lady love, I did not care to take the chance of getting a black eye from some hefty young chap, who may be used to throwing bags of oats about, or rolling 3cwt. bales of wool around like a big snowball.

On my return trip Rosie was still there, but Ginger had moved on, perhaps to try his luck where the colour scheme did not seem to clash so much.

The 3cwt. bale of wool mentioned would contain 60 to 65 fleeces, and it would take some pressing under the hot iron roof of a Central Otago woolshed; that was only one of many ways I was very glad to put in a week-end, if it was not skirting and rolling for some good friend. But I took the cake when I put thirteen horsehair stitches into the tummy of a young split pig, when one day a farmer's wife asked me if I thought I could fix it—but that is another story, and will keep, although the pig did not. I fixed it all right. It never had a chance. Perhaps the last stitch, which I put in for luck, crabbed its hope of recovery.

*Lately I saw the identical £6/10/- ring marked up in a Christchurch shop at £32/10/-

EARLY DAYS

WHEN strangers to Central Otago enter the great Cromwell and Kawarau gorges they cannot fail to notice the way the riverbanks and terraces have been washed away and scored for miles all the way through to Queenstown by the early-day miners; and the neatly placed stones, some stacked up to form stone walls and tail races or gutters, some of which are very deep, to give the fall for the tailings. Also to be seen are the remains of the miners' sod huts and shelters, these in some cases being built right under huge overhanging rocks. To throw the stones anywhere would only mean rehandling again when the lead of gold went under them. Thus came about the neat stacking of the stones, which used to make me wonder when on my first trips through these most interesting gorges. Across the river can also be seen the remains of the first road built between the Dunstan, Clyde of to-day, and Cromwell, the Junction of those days, at the cost of £9,000 to the Provincial Government of that time. This road was only finished when it was washed into the river by a cloud-burst on the mountains, which go up with the curve of a hockey-stick from the riverside.

It was in the flood of 1862 that over 100 miners lost their lives, not to mention the number not known lost in the snow on the ranges. The sudden thaw on the tops brought the flood down so suddenly at night that the miners had no time to get out of their tents, built close to the water's edge and on banks which were undermined, and slid into the river before they knew what was happening. Those not losing their lives mostly lost all their gear, and the claims were destroyed.

It was in 1878 that the Old Man Flood, as they called it, happened and swept all the bridges away between Cromwell and Balclutha. After a record snow, warm winds and rain got to work on the mountains and melted the snow at such a

rate that every gully into the gorges became a raging torrent. The Shotover River, which joins the Kawarau two miles below Lake Wakatipu (a beautiful stretch of wide water for the angler), actually turned in its course and backed into the lake, forming a dam and causing the water five miles away at Queenstown to rise three feet inside Eichardt's Hotel. The brewery collapsed, also a few hotels and sod-built homes. The Clutha, which takes the overflow from Lake Wanaka, joins the Hawea River from Lake Hawea at Albert Town (another very famous spot for the angler), and in turn this great body of clear water joins the Kawarau from Lake Wakatipu at Cromwell, thus the early-day name of the Junction for that town. The great Molyneux River is thus formed—the richest river in the world, and the fourth largest, with its 1,690,000 cubit feet per minute discharge. The River Nile comes next. It was a few miles down the gorge from the meeting of these great waters, some years ago, an old schoolmate of mine foolishly built his very nice home right at the mouth of one of the many smaller gorges. In front of his home he also planted a very fine orchard, which was well established after years of work, when a cloud-burst on the mountains behind his property turned that deep ravine into a roaring river. The noise of the rocks coming down could be heard miles away, and had the house been built a few yards nearer the centre it would have gone into the river about 300 yards across the road like a box of matches. As it was, one side of the house was torn away, and the four occupants in the front rooms had a very narrow escape, as the back rooms were filled with heavy gravel and stones. Doig's is the name of that railway siding to-day, called after the late Hughie Doig.

There are several bonnie burns coming down the mountain sides to the river, the largest of which are the famous Roaring Meg and the Gentle Annie; and a visitor, if he is in no hurry, may wash colours of gold from almost anywhere while his wee wife boils the billy. But a gold dish is necessary, and not the lid of the billy, in which my own good wife, when she gets the gold fever, reckons she can wash gold specks, and when she mistakes the numerous bright mica shist specks for 24ct., of course it is me that is colour blind! Gold may also be washed from anywhere on the Queenstown side of the Frankton arm of Lake Wakatipu. A day with a prospecting dish is real good fun, and will often give the novice puddler visions of gold that will put to shame the

goose that laid the golden eggs.

If you are ambitious and have the gold fever in your blood, you might find yourself away up at Skippers, miles over the mountains at the back of Queenstown, where you can wash out a nugget or two. There are bags of gold still left in Upper Shotover River for you, if you only have the ways and means to sluice away a few million tons of overburden and send it all through the long narrow boxes over the ripples and down the tail race into the river. Skippers gold is noted for its nuggety form; it is just the opposite to the purest gold proveable in New Zealand at Naseby, which is very fine and bright. I have seen a large enamel washhand basin full of it in one of the banks. It was a very pretty sight indeed but, worse luck, one into which you could not get your hands.

About two miles below Cromwell is the site of the old Hartley and Riley claim, and when you look at the roughness of the gorges it makes you wonder however the abovementioned pair managed it with all the gear and provisions they had to carry; also the thousands who followed them after they had declared their claim, from which they had taken 1,114ozs. of gold in a few weeks in the middle of winter. This news in Dunedin and at Gabriel's Gully (now Lawrence) sent the miners mad with excitement, and away they went in their thousands to the new fields, many of them not experienced and not well equipped for such a rough journey over the 5,000ft. mountains in the middle of winter. This is where we wonder and ask ourselves: How would they have fared had it not been that in 1857 two young Scotch pioneers, Alexander and Watson Shennan, to mention only two of the few, had already explored the Central from a sheep-farming point of view, and established their stations all through the country and were thus able to save many a man from starvation with their precious stores of flour and mutton? Dunedin's debt to these great men can never be paid.

This new rush could only be expected, as the Hartley and Riley and other claims produced 16,000ozs. of gold in three months, and caused 10,000 men to set out on this stampede to the Cromwell Gorge. The winter going was too severe for many of the inexperienced who never got to the gorge, and of the hardy ones a few unfortunates never returned at all. Some made quick fortunes and "blew" them just as fast in the saloons and gambling dens which sprung up near the

spot, while many returned with either a fair fortune or enough wealth to set them up on farms or in a business. My Dad was one of the latter; he at once sent home for his mother and three sisters. His first shop in Rattray Street was a big leg-up from his first venture as a watchmaker in Bendigo, where he opened up in a tent on the great Victorian goldfields.

It was during this gold fever of 1862 there arrived in one month alone 10,000 miners from Victoria, and the city had 15,000 of its inhabitants living in 430 tents. Before that year came to a close 560,000ozs. of gold had been escorted into Dunedin during those roaring days, as they were called, and no doubt they were, for they produced £24,000,000 in gold before the end of 1871. I have often "whipped the cat" for not getting from my Dad more of his experiences during that rush when, as kiddies, he used to keep us spellbound with his stories of the Victorian fields at Bendigo and Ballarat. There was a bit of Deadwood Dick about them. The Otago fields were not so Kelly-gangish, although a few rough necks did get the rope in the finish. I suppose at that time I would be more interested in grabbing my "dumps" out of the ring at school, when some quick eye had noticed that a young pointer had tried to get away with placing a stinkie or a chalkie into play with the rest of his marbles. Then "Grab your dumps" was the roar, as we all rushed in for our own, and anybody else's one could get.

Mr. Watson Shennan was the only one of these pioneers I had the pleasure of meeting in business, with the exception of a still much earlier one—Mr. Francis McDiarmid, of Woodside. This fine old gentleman arrived, with his wife, in the second ship to Otago, the Phillip Laing, in 1848. He died at the age of 96. A walk of 22 miles into Dunedin and back with as many provisions as he could carry was nothing to him, in spite of the river and swamps he had to ford. I mention his son Frank in later letters. It was he who took me down to Lee Creek, in front of his fine old home, "The Poplars," and started me off as a lad in the art of casting a fly and landing a trout. That was 48 years ago, and I have never missed a season since. "Mon, that seems a lot of money to cast after trout!"

But you must pay for your sport, and I think the angler gets more pleasure for his money than the next man, and if he doesn't land his fish he knows it will live to fight another day when expectation may again be better than realisation.

I have never intentionally poached a trout, but, of course, I can't say the same about eggs, for served with spinach they do give you the pop eye feeling, so my good wife says. My only poached trout came to my spear when one day I went after a big eel which I knew should not be in the same hole as a lot of young trout in the Lee Creek. On carefully holding back the weeds I could only see its nose, and with a stab I gave myself a shock to find I had a 2lb. trout on the barbs. To add further to my unpleasant surprise, Alex. Gow, the ranger, was on top of the bank getting an eyeful of fun at my expense. Of course, I did not hear him up there, and was only too pleased to hand him the trout with a request for its wishbone when he had finished his meal. I wished him far enough all the same, as I was on his property, and as we were pretty good friends he accepted my story, which soon went round the lads of the village at Woodside.

No doubt Rugby is a great game for the lads. It taught me on the wing, the art of falling, when my machine would upset me in any old mud or place and get me down and kick me, so it seemed.

Golf is good, but from a social point of view it cannot be compared with the good old game of bowls. You might hole out in one at times, but you cannot kiss kitty in the ditch. Give me a fly rod, a good stretch of likely water, a pipe, a snack, and with an odd rise or two, the world is mine. So say my old friends Jimmy and Alf, for many a time we have cast our flies together at Queenstown and thereabout, and have our memories well hooked for all time.

It's a great pity more of the early pioneers did not write an account of their experiences. What priceless gems they would be to-day in the Otago Early Settlers' Museum, which is recognised as one of the finest memorials in the world to the pioneers of any land. There is nothing like it in Australasia. It is a place where every child in Otago should at some time be taken to learn the early history of their province and city. Dunedin was the first to put New Zealand on the map with its goldfields in 1862; the Union Steamship Co. and the frozen meat industries also had their birth here, to be followed by the first chemical and woollen industries, and later on the first hydro-electric plants at Waipori, which made way for electric tramways and all the advantages of cheap power and light into the homes and

industries of this bonnie Edinburgh of the South, which has been so well served by its Scotch engineers of the past. The early pioneers were landed from row boats right at the north corner of our Post Office in Princes Street, and the spot which is now a quarter of a mile from the water-front has been marked by that very live body, the Otago Early Settlers' Association, by the inlaying of a bronze tablet with inscription into the pavement.

DONALD BREAKS HIS OWN RECORD

I WILL leave Arrowtown and my many friends there, but might return to that pretty corner in the mountains once more, as the country between it and Queenstown holds many happy memories for me. About halfway home from the Arrow, as it is called, is the little town of Blacks, with its scarred slopes, a witness to the many nozzles that used to play and blast away there in the miners' efforts to work the brown sugar, as I sometimes used to call it, from the hard gravel formation. This once large miners' camp got its name from the Black brothers, who were about the first men to take up miles of that country in the fifties for wool-growing. At the time of my first visits one had to rail from Dunedin to Ida Valley, coaching the rest of the way through that wonderful farming country and over the range into Blacks. If lucky, one could get a box seat beside Jas. Sutherland, Jimmy Dungey or some other of those well-known whips so highly thought of by travellers in those days. It was a treat, especially to a man not used to horses, to watch the way those hardy chaps could manage their four and sometimes five in hand with so large amount of reins to handle. I will never forget the skill with which those horses were driven round high rocky faces with about a foot to spare, and down steep hills as clouds of dust swirled up to meet you—one was wise to sit still and shake it off at the jour-

ney's end, when you would find it in the folds of your dust coat by the spoonful. It was at the door of Donald McRae's hotel at Blacks where I walked up to some chaps I knew. One of the lads asked me if I would take his watch for repairs and a new glass. My old friend Donald, who had also joined us, cocked up his ears from behind the best example of long red whiskers I have ever seen. "Darned carelessness breaking your glass like that," said he. "You young fellows don't know how to look after a good watch," and on taking out his own timepiece and opening it, said: "Do you see that watch, Jimmy? I bought it from your father over twenty years ago and, believe it or not, I have never yet broken the glass—that is the original one. Now, isn't that a record!" "It certainly is, Donald," I said, "and we will hae a wee one on the strength of it." As we all moved into the old-time bar Donald was still holding his watch, while requesting of us what we would have. He went to close the case, and instead of using both hands he depended on hooking down the lid with the tip of his thumb, as many do. His sense of touch must have been at fault; he missed, and did not know it until he put the pressure on to tightly close the lid which was not down, when he crashed the glass to pieces and bent the hands. Donald's honest old face went the match for his whiskers as a great laugh went up. He just stared, and with a big "D" quietly said, "Now what do you say about that?" "Och-aye, Donald, you have broken your own record, and bang goes saxpence for a new glass," said I. However, we wet our whistles and had a happy half-hour together. This joke by Donald on himself is not a bad one and is recorded word for word. It was a few trips later on that I was returning home through the great Teviot fruit district, by motor cycle this time, on a 7 h.p. Bat, the first heavy machine to go through the Central In those days one had to be very careful of horse traffic, and I did not get off without a few narrow escapes to all concerned. The machine had automatic intakes, shaft-driven magneto built into the tank—a very good point indeed when pushing or riding through streams and low rivers, as I often had to do. No kick-starters, gear boxes, or chain drives in those days, and to stop meant to get off and push to re-start, with an extra high and careful leg-up to clear my solid and well protected sample case on the carrier. It was with this heavy outfit I came upon a very bad stretch. A gold dredge near by, in following the lead of gold, had ripped up the

road. I had to get off and push over the make-shift track and through the shingle tailings. It was as bad as the sand patches to be traversed at that time on the Cromwell Flat. However, I got clear, and a few miles further on I was glad to put in at a quiet little hotel. I have never seen a home that so much resembled Robbie Burns' cottage as did this homely old hotel. A very dear old lady had owned it for many years. She had a few grandchildren for whom she usually purchased something nice. I seldom missed here with an order, and was successful again, despite the fact that I started well off on the wrong foot when I said, as Mrs. S. greeted me, "If I had my way I would not let the dredge tear up the road the way it is doing. I have had a very hot time in those tailings." "Young man," she said, "you should be very careful what you say. I may have an interest in that dredge." She had, and her sons also. "Well," I said, "I am as dry as the dusty road. I will have a light shandy" (my limit.) "You will have nothing of the sort. Young boys lke you should not drink beer. Sit down over there and I will bring you a cup of tea," she said. I was twenty-four at the time! "Over there" was a small alcove off the bar with two forms and a long table, where a few waggoners could rest and enjoy their snack. What a great old lady she was, and where will you find her like in the trade to-day! Many a weary man was very glad to pull in at her Horseshoe Bend Hotel. When you pass that spot to-day all one sees left of that old house is a heap of overgrown sun-dried bricks, but nearby is a very nice bridge erected by her boys over the bonnie wee burn which served the hotel and stables for so many years—a very nice memorial to one of the real old identities. To-day only a few of us look aside and cast our memories back to those hard but very happy days as we hurry past on a five-hour trip to Queenstown which, in earlier times, used to take three days and the changing of many good horses at the numerous stages on that very interesting 190-mile trip from Dunedin to Queenstown.

THE BITER BIT AND MY OLD PAL, CHARLIE

To CONTINUE, may I mention that the records of sales made at times may not interest many of my readers, especially if they do not know the country, but they serve to show that a small thing may lead up to a good sale that will hold your customer as long as you are in business, provided it is followed up well.

On receipt of a note by post from the Wedderburn it did not take me long to make up my mind and start my Xmas business trip a week or so earlier than usual. This time I travel in my three-seater Arrol—Johnston, and the first five miles out take me round the high slopes of Mt. Cargill, unfolding that magnificent view of the Otago Harbour and beyond. Another twelve miles and I am over the top of the big Kilmog hill and past the school as the kiddies are making their way home. As usual, I stop and fill the car with happy youngsters and continue quietly down the hill. There were no school buses in those days, and the wee folk had to walk miles, which seemed nothing to them. I said to a wee girl who was crowded in beside me: "I suppose that little chap beside you is your sweetheart." "No, he is not. I have a better boy than him about a mile up the road past our gate," she said. "I never asked you to be," chipped in the shy young man. I had a good laugh and continued on, dropping them off at their various gates, all smiling and "Thank you, Mr." The last wee girl started to cry, and on pulling up she informed me that I had gone past her gate. I was all apologies, and gave her the remainder of the sweets, a bag of which I always carried when I thought there may be kiddies to lift home. It was a treat to see their sparkling eyes as they all sat sucking and chattering around me.

It was not long before I was at Jim Summers' hotel in Waikouaiti enjoying a cup of tea and selling an albert and pendant to a customer. My pad of pendants was opened

out—"a very nice selection"—when in walked a big clumsy smart Alec. He pretended to be interested, but I could soon see that he did not want a pendant, and was only trying to be funny, as he kept on picking up articles and offering me less than half their value. I lifted a showy greenstone with 9ct. mount from the pad and asked him what he would give me for it. "Ten bob," he blurted. "No, you won't," said I, "and in any case I don't believe you have got the price of it." This, as intended, got him where he could not scratch it. "Haven't I," he said, as he produced four half-crowns and held them out to me in his open hand. I quietly dropped the pendant and, picking up his cash at the same time, thanked him, with "Well, you are not a bad picker this time, it is only 9/6." The other chap who had been taking it all in had a good laugh at the expense of this shrewd head who I bit for a sixpenny bit.

An hour later saw me pull in at the Waverley Hotel at Palmerston for the night with the intention of going on first thing in the morning, "a Saturday," but my old friend Duncan McDonald said: "Leave it until after lunch, Jimmy, and I will see old Jack to-night and arrange for him to bring out his net in the morning. We may get you some flounders to take up Central." "Right into my hand, Duncan," said I, "and I have a good reason to be keen, old sport." Jack also, as usual, was as keen as ever. Seven a.m. on a glorious summer morning saw us all on the road in the car to the mouth of the Pleasant River, only five miles out. The net was only a short one, but heavy enough for three of us to trawl; the going was good, and noon saw us back at Duncan's hotel with about half a sack of nice flounders—a great catch which had also included a few spotties; but, of course, these were put back into the river. I was soon on the road again for the White Sow Valley at the far edge of the Maniototo Plain with my share (18) of the flounders—all I wanted. Calling on a friend halfway there, and leaving him a few fish, also a reminder, if it was necessary, to keep his memory fresh as he was going to get married. A cup of tea and off again, as it was getting late—thirty miles to do, and I still had to get those flounders up in time for Charlie's tea. However, I arrived at his beautiful farm, and was he pleased to see me! Fresh fish is a luxury in the Central in the summer (but there was always the river in season and when I had my rod and flies).

Charlie was a champion farmer but no mechanic, and

many a job I did for him during the week-ends I spent with him that would not have bothered the average farmer. Jean, his sister, was some cook, and what a lovely tea the four of us had, including Charlie's friend. All I had to do was to show him the corner of the three-dozen ring case in my breast pocket. He was a jovial chap. "Give me that," he said as he grabbed it. He had seen it before many times. He didn't need to ask his lady friend to follow him into the front room, as he told me to help Jean with the dishes, and at the same time giving me an old pirate alarm clock off the mantelpiece to set going and to keep me occupied, also with a warning to keep out of the front, which of course was quite unnecessary. The clean-up finished, I started on to the clock, but broke a pallet pin—carelessness. I remembered seeing an old clock out on the grass by the ash pit, into which it had not gone when thrown out there by Charlie, and as it seldom rains in those parts it was none the worse for that. On retrieving it for a spare part I found it to be a better clock than the one I was working on—a dust up and oiling, with a change over of glass, and it was quite good, and went well for over five years after that. Jean and I were having supper when the happy couple returned, all beaming and lit up with the smiles of true love. Charlie handed me the case, and at a glance I saw that the most expensive ring was missing. "Congratulations, old pal," I said as I gave him a good handshake; then everybody seemed to start kissing each other in their joy, but as I was always a bit shy to try my hand at that, I felt quite lost for a minute or so! ! (This is where I can see Mr. Editor coming in with his smile and saying, "You're telling me!") However, everybody was very happy, and even the old alarm rang out its joy chimes from the mantelpiece, as I had set it for 11 p.m., just in case the love birds had not returned and to let them know there was still a bit of life left in the big warm kitchen. I still had to thank bonnie Jean quietly for letting me know that her brother was very happy and walking on a tight rope. That was why I lost no time in taking this trip, with the above-mentioned happy results, and it proved to be a really happy union—so many years ago. Wee Charlie, jr., himself is now married, and his brothers are doing their bit in North Africa while he carries on. So closes another of my happy week-ends at this lovely spot in the White Sow Valley, for I am off again on the Monday chasing some of that very nice business I used to run into on the wealthy

Maniototo Plain. I must say that without a doubt I could never wish to travel better country or meet kinder folk than the farmers from that part of Central Otago.

MADE IN GERMANY AND A MIXED DEAL

In my notes to follow my memories take me back to the Great War I. In 1915 the jewellery trade, with me in any case, was hard hit, and at that time wristlet watches were only coming on to the market as the fashionable timepiece. The best selling article I was handling at that time was a parody on the Iron Cross, cast with "LIAR" across the front. I sold dozens of these at 2/6 each in aid of the Hillside Workshops Queen Carnival Funds. They were cast at the works, and all the sales went to helping along their manager's lovely daughter, who was standing in the Queen Carnival as Queen of the Dardanelles. The war had been going a few months; a great many of my country pals had joined up, some had already left N.Z., and I lined up with the rest. Up to the present I have made no mention of my defective hearing which I have had from early boyhood, and which affected my trade of watchmaking, for when it came to taking the beat of a clock it was quite an easy and effective matter to use my teeth as sound conductors, but with watches—well, it could not be done. However, I was turned down, and a few months later, not wanting to be drawn in the ballot which was about to take place at that time, I enlisted again, with the same result. To help myself along I secured from Messrs. M. S. and Coy., of Christchurch, the Otago Agency for their Gloria petrol lighting plants, etc. I did away with my big sample case and cut my samples down to a few good watches and rings, and was soon away again out on the roads introducing my new line, about which I knew very little. It was such a simple contrivance that it was not long before I was installing a plant

on an average every four hours from the time of unpacking. It was the best money-maker a handy man could wish to sell, as only a very few light tools were necessary for the erection, including silver and solder and a small jeweller's blowpipe for all connections into the unions. The sales themselves were the best recommendation as to their usefulness. I had to be on my toes, as there was very keen opposition from Auckland, but as that is the life of trade, I enjoyed it. I had a wonderful pull in my connection and in the confidence the country folk seemed to place in my recommendation. Besides, I knew I had the goods. What more H.P. than this could a salesman wish for to send him chasing business over any sort of road or track that lay between him and some wayback homestead. At first I had to do a lot of talking and also crack a joke at times to liven up the conversation. I put a few good ones over, but fancy telling a farmer his hens would lay two eggs a day if the kitchen light could be so arranged to shine its strong beam on their roosts in the trees! But it was a fact that at one farm where I had used this joke, and where the poultry could see this bright 500 c.p. light from their perches, the cocks did start to crow. I did not hear them, but when Mum and the girls started to laugh as they said, "There you are, Dad, the hens are getting up already," I said "Perhaps there is something in my gag after all." It was about 9 p.m., and I had just got all the lights going. This happened at the West Taieri, where I usually put up with a married sister and where, before I let this good agency go, I had well over 100 lighting plants to my credit in this small county alone. Of course, there was no electric power in those days, only a small plant at Outram, which was the first town in N.Z. to have hydro-electric power. Dunedin did not follow for a few years later; first again, as usual, in N.Z. with big enterprise in its big Waipori power stations. That was the end of petrol lighting plants on the Taieri, but I had a good start and there was all the rest of Otago still left for me to work. However, I could not wait all day on the above job to help Mary gather the eggs and count the hens, and on my way back to Dunedin I was hailed by an old friend with "Hi, Jimmy, where yer goin'?" "Into town, Sandy. Hop in," I said, as I could see he was all dressed up and making for the train. He was a most likeable old character, but most of his time he was on the roads with his bullock team and waggon, the last to be seen in these parts of the country.

"Thank you very much," he said, as he got in beside me, and continued with "I am feeling pretty crook to-day, Jimmy, and I am going in to get a tooth out. Can you lay me on to a good dentist?" I recommended one of our best, and on arriving in the city I asked him into my office while I got rid of my bag and samples. On entering he at once clapped his eyes on some alarm clocks on display. "Just the very thing I want—a good alarm clock. What do you want for one of them?" he said. "They are good and not too expensive at 12/6," said I. "Oh, that will do me. Wrap me up one," he said. I had it about ready to hand over when he very suddenly remembered there was a war on. "Hold on, Jimmy," he said, "I wouldn't have it on my mind. Take it away, the blimey thing is made in Germany. It's no good to me at any price," and again, "I wouldn't have it on my mind." "Hold on, Sandy," I said, as I unwrapped it, and on holding it up to him remarked: "Look, can't you read. It is printed on the dial, 'Made in Wurttemberg.'" "Oh, that will do me fine. Wrap it up again," he said. There was nothing much else on the market in those days, and, putting it into his bag, away we went up the street to the dentist, and I trust it did not alarm while he was in the chair and stir up his doubts again.

I must now mention that about two years before this my brother-in-law, Frank, at Woodside, had given me two calves and said if I could buy another four he would graze them for me for a year or so. We were not long in securing the calves at 5/- each. It was this good old pal who gave me my first push bike when a lad. He is still going strong at 88.

I was not long in meeting old Sandy again. He was always about the Plain. He again hailed me, this time with "Hi, Jimmy, what do you want for those calves at your sister's?" "£3 10/- each," I said. "Oh, go away, far too dear. I will give you thirty bob for them: a fellow's got to live," he said. "That's just why I want £3 10/-," said I. "What did you give for these?" I enquired, as I pointed to a lot of calves he was driving and were now wandering all roads looking for something to chew on the wayside and in the hedges. "Thirty bob," he said. "Well, somebody must have been a mug to let you get away with that," I said. It was a glorious day, and I was enjoying my first deal in cattle, and after about half-an-hour's barney I left old Sandy and still without my calves, in spite of his several advances

up to £3 each. Not so dear after all at £3 10/-! A week or so later I was installing a lighting plant for an old customer in his beautiful home. It was a big plant. I was early on the job and started off very well by also selling him a very fine diamond ring for his good wife during the stop for morning tea. At the evening meal, when all the new lights were burning well, big Alex. (as he was known to his intimates) also started bidding for my calves. I knew there would be no beating about the bush with him, but I did not know at the time that old Sandy was very likely only buying for him, and when I told him that he had offered me £3 each, which he also thought was too high, I told him in that case they should be good enough for him at £3 10/-. However, I said: "Mr. ——, as you have always been very good to me with all your business in my own line, and if you like to put the price of the ring, the plant and the calves all on the one cheque, I would split the difference and let the calves go at £3 5/-." "It's a deal," he said. Thus ended my only deal in cattle. I had a lot of fun out of it, and a good profit, but not enough encouragement to send me out to Burnside on sale days to try and pick up some more easy money.

To add still further to the variety of my business at the above wonderful farm, on my next trip out I took and erected on the wall of his office a small air-tight show case and arranged therein 20 very handsome gold medals and trophies Mr. —— had won with his cattle and horses at various A. and P. Shows in the South Island. This was an idea of my own, and it pleased the old gentleman very much, as his trophies had been getting neglected put away in any old corner of his big desk. They made a very fine show, as the gold medals were all beautiful work in 15ct.

THREE WAYS HOME
THE DOCTOR TRIES HIS HAND AT TICKLING

In the following chapter I make use of a racy saying, one so often used by those in and out—mostly out—investors who at least have picked a winner, and in their excitement get carried away by declaring it loud and strong as "home and dried" as they rush away to the tote to collect. I suppose they mean by that their fancy horse was hosed down, dried, and back home in its stall before the other neddies had also crossed the line; perhaps they picked the winner in their dreams, while others would try their luck with a pin through the programme. But, as the old saying goes, "it will never get better if you pick it," and if you must throw your money about, do as I once did with great results at a city meeting—back the first horse you see in the race as they come out to parade. I only missed on one in five bets, through one of my few owner friends advising me not to back Sir Swithen, which was the first horse I had seen, but to be on his own good gee-gee, which in the following race came third. Sir Swithen won and paid £14 10/-. As I was holding very well on the day, I did not mind. It was an honest tip, "Bluewood," from an honest pal—not Bill this time, but a brother of jovial old Andrew of another story. Sir Swithen was not home and dried, nor was he home on the pig's back, as some would also say of an easy win. I do not know what this means; I am sure the term was coined long before that very successful old trotting trainer started to mix Berkshires as a very profitable side line with his horses, as no doubt it was, for after all, I have never heard of a porker being born without trotters, so naturally they do seem to blend very well. However, I don't think old Peter could explain it, in spite of his lifelong experience in horses and pigs, but to see him going round the trotting track with one of his champion porkers hitched into a sulky, if he could

get it to step it out, would be a wonderful draw to any of the patriotic race meetings that are being held to-day, and would bring him right back into the limelight and shining like a new sovereign, as of a few years ago.

After all this racy rambling, I come to the third way home, a term of my own coining—"Home on the lamb's tail." To use the expression of the wayback shed hand, it is real dinkum, especially if he saw me getting away with that armful of lambs' tails from the foot of the post in the yards. It came about one day when I was returning from Otago Central through the Shag Valley. It was as hot as it can be in that narrow gorge, a bad day for punctures, several of which I had that trip. They were quite common in those days; the tyres were not so heavy and good. The roads were ever so much worse. Repair patches were not of that quick and sure sort we get to-day, and the solution was very "iffy" at times, and inclined to lift in the heat; and in spite of my roadside repair experience, I found myself stranded, after using my last dab of solution, which again failed to "stay put" in the heat. As luck would have it, I was handy to the home of an old farmer friend. Over the fence I hopped to see if Mr. MacL. had any cycle repair outfits in his farm necessities, leaving my valuable sample case on the machine without a thought, as the roads were as honest as the day at that time. I met the lads at the yards, tailing the lambs, and to my disappointment was informed that they only rode horses. A large pile of lamb tails at their feet gave me an idea, and on picking up an armful of these red and white rolls of springy wool and soft bone, started a great laugh, as one of the boys also gave me an old sack and a length of binder twine, for which I had asked.

After a cup of tea at the house with Mr. Mac. and his good wife, away I went to my B.A.T. cycle, and soon had the back tube out again and securely tied back to the frame to prevent chafing and to clear the wheel, with the circumference of the rim measured up. I soon had a long cushion made of lambs' tails and sacking tied in close sections to prevent creeping. This well filled my cover, which I was anxious to save on the next three miles into Dunback for a new repair outfit. I travelled very slowly, standing on the big spring foot rests with which only this splendid make of machine was supplied, and leaning as far forward as safety would allow to take the weight off the back tyre. A few of the lads of the village, in to collect their mail, wondered at

my "here's my head, my tails are coming" sort of attitude on the machine, as I pulled in at the store. Their laugh was good to hear as I threw out half of an old sack and a dozen fresh and gory lambs' tails from my back tyre as I got down to repair the tube with a fresh outfit. Thus the term, "home on the lambs' tails" came about, but it was only used once, and quite enough for me. My cover was none the worse, as the road was good.

When I go through Dunback these days, perhaps for a change of route on the way to Queenstown, I am always reminded of the many happy evenings I have put in with my fly rod on the Shag River. It is a bonnie stream and full of nice fish, with great flounder trawling and Maori curio digging at its mouth. I have had a good go at both. It was close to the scene of my lambs' tails experiment that I met the local doctor from Palmerston, and what a great sport he was! I will give him his Rugby name—"Bricky." Everybody knew him as a rep. in the Otago team, and, if I am not mistaken, with C. Gilray, A. Adams and Wee McPherson. Some team it was with these 'Varsity All Blacks behind the scrum, and "Bricky" right in it. This day he was displaying a very sorry looking finger. He was on his way home from the Shag Valley, and perhaps being reminded of the nice trout I had given him on several occasions by the river flowing so clear and cool close by, maybe he thought a nice fish would not be out of the way to take home. As my way of catching one was too slow for him this time, he thought he might be able to tickle one, so down he went on his knees—but not the way his dear old mother taught him—along and under the grassy banks, with coat off and sleeves rolled up. It did not take him long to find his fingers stroking the tummy of a fish well worth going after, so he thought, with visions of a very choice meal before him. He was about to close his fingers tight on the gills of that fine fish which, with hard luck for him, also had its own ideas of a good feed, when, with a split-second action, out came his hand minus the skin on one finger. He had been tickling an eel, and when I told him they were quite good eating, and he may have landed it had he not been in such a hurry, and drawn his hand out more slowly, he told me to go where I could not buy an ice cream. It was at the doctor's home shortly after this where I was having tea with him and his sister, who was keeping house for him and getting things very nicely arranged for his approaching marriage.

You know, there is nothing like a lady in the house, especially when you are tired, hungry or sick, and she is an N.Z.R.N.; and don't I know it!

However, we were enjoying a cigarette over a cup of coffee when the sister returned to the dining-room to tell the doctor he was wanted in the kitchen. I was left on my own for a few minutes, but it was not long before I was to learn the reason for a call to the back door instead of to the surgery entrance.

Of course I could not hear the fun that was going on, but was invited by Miss —— to come and see it. I saw it alright, for as soon as I entered the kitchen I was pinioned from behind the door by my good old friend Bob, the village blacksmith, with long and sinewy legs and with muscles on his brawny arms that stood out like spiders' legs. His vice-like grip had me beat, and up in the air I went, while several other of my pals, including Teddy C., their M.P., rushed in for their own pet holds on this chicken. They could not manage me that way, as I about shot Teddy through the wall when he had my feet safe, as he thought, one under each of his arms. I had to put up a fight, otherwise their joke would have fallen flat. They then got me on the floor, and my friend Duncan McDonald, of trawling fame, sat on my chest. It was then that I knew why he was so good on the end of a long net full of flounders, for as his stern came down on me I thought I was going under that of the Queen Mary. That was the end of my kicking. Off came my boots and sox, and on went the nugget polish. When they let me up, there was "Bricky" about busting himself laughing, and with his feet as black as the Ace of Spades. I was then informed that as I also was about to be married they decided to make a double event of this old Scotch custom, which was quite new to me. It was a great night's fun, but with me they did get in early, for it was fifteen years after that before I decided to do for myself the best job I ever did in all my life. If the nugget could be made to stick on leather as it does on your skin, the company would have the monopoly in the boot polish line, and it's "Bricky" and myself that know it. I wonder if any of my readers have ever heard of the custom of blackening the chappie's feet a few days before he is married? It seems to make a bird of him having a good scrub. I think I would much rather be tubbed crossing the line on the way home to Merrie England.

A BONNY SPOT AND EASY MONEY

HERE I am again away back at the Arrow, after a few days' scout through the pretty country that lies between there and Queenstown. Lake Hayes, on the way, is a gem of a picture, and under the right conditions is one that will remain in your memory for many years. What a perfect holiday an angler can have there, with his good wife to knit and boil the billy while he tries his skill with his rod and flies against that of the great trout which seem to make the water boil when the flies are on the wing and they are on the job. Many a time a pal and I have fooled a nice fish from that cold water into the hot frying pan, after a perfect day and before the pipes are relit as the stories of the great fish that got away are told.

I was returning through the Arrow to be in Dunedin for the Forbury trots, where I usually joined in the procession of the mugs, as I have heard it called. My main attraction was to meet my many country friends, and I consider the pound or so it may have cost me at times was money well spent in keeping happy memories fresh.

This time I had arranged to meet a friend from Arrow on the course, where he would take delivery of a diamond ring on which he had decided, as he did not want the costly article before being required in the city. On the day I placed the ring well down in my top left vest pocket, a very safe place in my mind. Not having met my friend, and while studying the tote I felt for my programme which, in my carelessness this time I had folded up and also put into my safe pocket—a place I have never found it before. On lifting it out, without a thought of the ring, I felt something tap me on the toe, and on looking down there was my wee packet at my feet, ready to be trampled into the soft wet lawn. On picking it up I said to myself, "There is a good dividend if I do not get another all day." I had lifted it out in the folds

of the programme and, in falling, it had landed on my toe.

While on the sporting side of my notes, may I refer to the way I made a good sale at the Trots and, within ten minutes, had placed the price of it into my friend's pocket. I met a very good friend of long standing, but not as long as that of our dear old Dad's, for theirs went back to the 60's. Bill McL. was in hopes of a good win as the track was very heavy, and his good horse, Royal Step, was well back, but this did not put him off its chances as it did the other wise heads with all their home and dried sure things. Bill, in his usual good-heartedness, advised me to have a pound on his horse (a splash for me), as he liked it very much in the going. As the bell had been ringing some time, away I went, and on coming away from the tote bumped into Andrew A., one of the most likeable old chaps I have ever met. On shaking hands, I congratulated him on the good sale of his farm, into the homestead of which I had installed a lighting plant some months previously, and on reminding him that he would miss his new lights I asked for a repeat order. He at once gave me this and asked me to install the plant, at my earliest, into his new home, as it was a real good thing, and he would not be without it. While I was noting this down he asked me what I liked for the next race and, on showing him my ticket on Royal Step, I advised him to hop in before he got shut out, and it would pay for the plant (£29 10/-), and we could go and watch the fun together. In informing old Andrew that Bill liked his chances in the mud, I knew I was only doing what Bill would have done himself for one of his own old friends from the same district, provided it stopped at that, which it did; but the fun did not, for old Andrew was about kissing me at the result of this cake-walk. Bill, who was well in on it, shouted us all dinner that night, with a box of cigars and a flash holder as an extra for myself. Horses were his hobby, and he was in the game for the fun of it. Naturally we were all delighted to see such a fine sport land the good £1 dividend of £31 15/-, besides a handsome stake of £350.

I still meet Bill at times. He is usually in the city for the A. and P. Shows, if it is not to watch one of his neddies kicking up the dust or mud, according to conditions, at Forbury Park. He has won many good races in his time, from Christchurch to the Bluff, but as I never was a chap to pounce on any of my few owner friends for a tip, like a

hawk on a piece of fat, I have not always caught them, and as he is now settled on a very fine station down South, I do not meet him so often. After thirty-odd years it is very nice to listen-in to the Otago Hunt Club Cup Steeplechase at Wingatui and to hear of Bill still going strong and landing that £500 race and a £26 dividend with his good horse and name sake of the very bonnie home of his young days in the Shag Valley. Where was I this time? And although he goes very easy, I do trust he had another £25 going on his chances To finish up this easy-money talk, you only hear the easy side of it. It was at the second day of a country meeting that a friend advised me not to back my fancy, as he knew for a fact if it did win it would be disqualified on the very poor showing it put up on the first day. So I backed something else, with the usual result, for my ten bob went up the pole, and so did the green protest flag for which I had been looking. This was many years ago, when Stone Ginger and Cast Iron were sometimes in the money. My old sporting friends, if they wish, may get the year from that, and no doubt my friend knew something when he advised me. They say that folk hard of hearing, although they miss a lot at times, usually see a great deal more than the average person, and I think there is something in it, for no doubt it was so with me as I went down off the stand with my chin on my chest, and maybe moaning my ten bob. Naturally, my vision was on the ground, where I saw a No. 4 ticket looking up at me, as much as to say "Easy money—what about it?" It was on the second horse. This set me off busy, and on hunting about for more within a short time I found myself holding £15 worth of torn and discarded tickets. The protest was upheld and, as there was no second dividend, that horse got all the money.

I might have also considered hunting up the careless owners of those tickets, but to have done so they may have thought that I had escaped from Seacliff, which was not so very far away, and, not wanting to make that stately old stone building with its unfortunate inmates my summer quarters, I was taking no chances; so I will leave it to my readers to ask themselves what would they have done with those discarded tickets? Never destroy your tickets before the flag goes up is not a bad rule after all.

One does not often get such good trotting tips as my old pal Bill gave me many years ago, and it is less often that you hear of the parson chap handing one out. It was only the

other day that my very good adviser and friend from my church in the N.E. Valley called on me for a chat and a joke, many of which we enjoy in our conversations, that he sprung this new one on to me. At the time he was preaching at Epsom and, as was usual with him, he always chalked his Sunday's subject on the blackboard in front of the church. This Saturday morning saw "Floodtide" announced in bold lettering for all to see, and many good folk took notice, but not in the same way as did one of the hard heads living opposite, for when he opened his race book to study the acceptors in the first race at the Auckland Trots that day the first horse to catch his eye was one named Floodtide. Remembering the parson's invitation to come and hear him preach on that subject, he took the tip and went straight away and backed it instead, to collect the best dividend for the meeting.

I don't need to remind my sporting friends that they have got about as much chance of a win by accepting such an odd tip as they have if they get it, as they sometimes say, straight from the horse's mouth. I wonder how much of that good dividend did that chap hold by the time the last race came round, and how much of it did he drop in the church collection box that Sunday, provided he came away from the course with more than his tram fare home.

So closes my racing rambling in these stories, as I have not been on a racecourse for years. But my friendship with my parson pal I can never drop. He is a great sport and can enjoy a joke as he can give good advice. He is without doubt the most welcomed friend at some times of our lives, especially towards the end, when some of us come to realise what a lot we have been missing in life.

TWO CHINAMEN

I NOTICE in a letter to the journal by our friend, Jack Murrell, that he gives me the tip to tell the story of the dead Chinaman. As Jack lived near the spot for many years, and was well acquainted with many of the good old timers in the Central, I think he could put this over better than myself.

It is about a very old and well-known joke played on the powers that be by a few of the lads of the village. I will pass it on as I got it from a very old mining friend, while we were having a cup of tea at the last Winter Show in Dunedin, and enjoying a chat in general of the good old days of our youth in Central Otago. He was a lad at the time, but as his memory of the fun the joke caused at the expense of the man in blue was so good I got him to let me have it in full.

It appears that a very well-known Chinese storekeeper had decided to sell his business and retire to China, but before doing so he also decided to take a tour round some of his countrymen at their claims on the Old Man Range and river banks, and collect, if he could, outstanding accounts for goods received.

So away he went, hoping in all justice to add still further to the weight of his money bag, which he always carried with him, and on this occasion it was known to contain a considerable sum.

That was the last ever heard of that likeable old chap. As search parties sent out failed to find any trace of him, the Chinese also offered a reward for the finding of him—dead or alive.

The supposition was that he had been robbed and murdered by some scoundrel, upon whom he had called to collect an account, and his body had been thrown down one of the abandoned mining shafts, many of which could be found in any likely looking gold-bearing gully on the mountains.

The old chap's disappearance caused a lot of excitement, and was about to be looked upon as only another of the many unsolved mysteries of the early days on the Otago goldfields, until one day it was reported to the police at Alexandra, by a well-known miner, that he had found a body washed up on one of the river beaches, but he had not examined it closely.

Away went the bobby on horseback to investigate. On arrival at the scene, one look at the sorry sight from a few yards was enough for him and, as gas-masks were not in use those days, he made arrangements with the jokers, who were working their claims quite handy and who were keeping an eye on their plant from a safe distance, for the body to be taken into Alexandra for an inquest.

The following day they delivered the corpse, after a three-mile trip by boat, and as it had got about that murder had been committed, the excitement was high and a fair crowd had gathered at the appointed time.

A vacant room had been hired by the police to act as a morgue. The Clyde doctor had also hurried into the town to help the local man with the post mortem.

As the body was brought into the room and placed on the table, a stern command rang out from the Father of the Town to the bearers of the corpse to take their hats off and put out their pipes in the presence of the dead. "It is a very sad day for the town," he said. Off came their hats, but they did it hard putting out their pipes, which no doubt were acting as fumigators.

The doctors, with lance in hand, lost no time in getting to work.

"Cæsar's Ghost! What is this?" one of them exclaimed, when his hand came in contact with a lot of wool, as he opened the old coat and shirt, if nothing else.

The jokers were to receive one pound each for their trouble, but they knew too much to collect it on delivery of their awful burden, for only they knew the corpse, to which everyone present was paying so much respect in their solemn and hatless attitudes, was none other than that of a very dead sheep.

It was all dressed up to perfection, even to the pigtail, the hair for which had been taken from an old goat. An old hat was pulled down hard over the head, leaving the pigtail showing; pants and boots were all there, in a very bad state, to represent long immersion in silt and water.

When the result of the inquest got about it caused a great laugh all through the Central, especially for those who did not handle the dead sheep after its delivery at the Morgue.

The police were glad to come in with a smile, and let sleeping dogs lie, as they could not come at the four jokers for collecting a reward under false pretences.

There were hundreds of Chinese miners at work on the river banks and terraces at the time. It was years before I went on the roads with my motor cycle and samples. The only Chinaman I came in contact with was a very lively one—Chun Dun was his name—but he was better known as Billy McNab. Our first meeting was at Kawarau Station, which is about three miles out from Bannockburn, the wee mining town I will always remember as the place of my first sale of a gent's 18ct. gold hunter for a tin full of nuggets.

My luck was out at the homestead, as the folk were away on holiday. I found my way through the yards into the station cookhouse, where I found Chun Dun in the act of taking from the oven a tray of buns to add to the big supply he had already baked.

"Good day, John," I said. "Why for you all the buns? You have enough there to supply the township for Easter."

"Oh, me Billy MacNab, me velly good cook," he said. "A lot of men here they like my buns."

He made me a cup of tea and, with one of his hot buns, I can tell you it was good.

I did not meet Billy again until a few years later, when he was acting as handy man at one of the hotels in Clyde. He was a very small, active chap, and always at your service.

On one occasion I sold him a very nice gold bangle, which he told me was for his boss, as she velly good to him, and did not bully him about or give him cheek.

To conclude the story about Billy without referring to how he got his Highland title would be leaving out the best of it.

Some years before I met him he expressed a wish to one of the travellers to go on a station as cook, but he had nobody to put in a word for him when replying to an advertisement—Cook wanted for station in Southland—and, thinking a Scotchman would have a better chance of getting the job than Chun Dun, he got a traveller to write out an application in the name of Billy McNab. He got the job, but you can imagine the surprise of the old Scotchman, who

was also a MacNab, when Billy arrived on the scene, all dressed up and full of beans. All the satisfaction Mac. could get out of him to his questions and regarding his clan, etc., was: "Me velly good cook alle same ."

He saw the shearing out, and the last time I saw him he was at Clyde, back in his old job, and also gold-seeking when the fever got him, as it did at times.

Clyde is one of the bonniest towns in the Central. It holds many happy memories for me. Dunstan was its early-days name, and pages could be written on its early history, for it is right at the entrance to the most interesting gorge in New Zealand.

Across the river from the township is the well-known Earnscleugh Station, of 130,000 acres when I knew it first. The first crossing was by punt, at Mutton Town Gully, a short way down the river. It was taken up by only a lad just out from the Highlands of Scotland in 1860, William Fraser, later Sir William Fraser, who filled a high Government position so well, besides representing his district in Parliament for several years. He only made one mistake in his long and very useful life in Otago, and that was allowing rabbits to be taken over the river as pets to his station. No doubt they would have got there in time in any case.

What a wonderful, real old-time homestead it is, with the finest walnut and willow trees to be seen anywhere. I have spent several happy, restful nights under those trees, sleeping in one of the several well-built shelters, in which the young folk of the family at that time also spent their well-earned rest.

It may not seem credible, but it is a fact, that after Mr. Fraser's 30 years on his station those few rabbits had increased to such an extent that his land was eaten out and, coupled with the low prices for stock at that time, he had to let his land go. The following owners could do no better, with the exception of the late Mr. Spain, who went to work with an army of rabbiters and, after a few years of hard work, got the stock built up again. He was very lucky in starting out on what seemed to be a hopeless task just as the market returned to normal. Despite the fact that Mr. Spain took 125,000 rabbits off the station in his first year there, the Government summoned him for failing to kill the rabbits on his big holding. It was looked upon as a great joke by all the Clyde people.

It was the late Mr. Fraser who, in 1862, kept Hartley

and Riley on their feet, along with hundreds of others, with their precious station stocks of flour and mutton, and thereby was indirectly responsible for the great discoveries of gold in the gorge that sent Otago ahead like a house on fire.

My old friend, Mr. Harry Partridge, of Hartley's Arms Hotel at Clyde, once told me that when he first went up there you could not see a bullock lying down in the grass on the hill opposite. "Look at it now," he said, "as bald as a billiard ball, eaten out by the rabbits. You cannot grow wool and rabbits, but the latter will have to go, and the Central will get a wonderful leg-up and come into its own when the thousands of H.P. which are going to waste in the river are harnessed to quench the thirst of a land that will grow almost anything."

P.S.—Mutton Town Gully mentioned got its name from the fact that miners could buy their mutton at the river crossing there.

AROUND THE MANIOTOTO PLAIN

FUN ON THE RUN

When I travelled through the Central via Waihemo, I did not consider myself well on the road until I had passed the Old Grange Station homestead, which is about 14 miles inland from Palmerston. What a lovely picture the home makes, with its old-fashioned gables, looked at from across the river at the Shag Valley entrance! It is a great subject for any professional artist or photographer, I should say, with its large plantations, which set it off like a gem in an article of jewellery.

The same applies to all the big old-time station homesteads throughout Otago. The early pioneers, who in the late fifties explored the vast trackless land and then battled through to their selected holdings with their stock and goods, made no mistake when they planted out their shelter

belts of poplars, willows and pines round their early homes. To-day in many of their lovely grounds are walnut trees of great size and beauty, and fruit gardens which seem to grow anything; and there is always the usual vegetable garden tucked away in some pretty corner of the plantation.

Of course all these big holdings have been subdivided years ago, but the beautiful old homesteads and their enormous woolsheds are still there, with miles of country left for them to carry on.

About a dozen miles further up the valley is the very beautiful well-known Shag Valley Station, which has been in the Bell family ever since sheep were introduced into the Central.

You continue to zig-zag up hill and down dale, rising slowly all the way and passing many fine properties as you go, including Isla Downs, the home of my old pal Bill, of an earlier letter. Over the big Brothers Hill from here the road breaks into more open country, and you soon pass Longlands Station, on the fringe of the Maniototo Plain. It is here you notice all the streams are running in the opposite direction to those you crossed an hour previously, and are now flowing into the Taieri River as it leaves the Maniototo at Kokonga, and before it flows through the Capburn Gorge to Hyde on its way down the Strath Taieri Plain, passing the old-time stations of Heartfield, Taieri Lake, Cotterbrook and Gladbrook at Middlemarch, through the Sutton and into the Taieri Gorge. It strikes the Taieri Plain at Outram, 20 miles from Dunedin—an awful gorge to take the railway through when the Shag Valley route was there at a quarter of the cost, so one of the contractors told me many years ago.

Three miles from Longlands Station is the Kyeburn Post Office; six miles away to the right can be seen the great plantations at Kyeburn Station—a very welcome sight to many a weary tramper in years gone by. Kyeburn Station was always a home away from home for me, and no matter how early in the day I made my call I was always expected to stop the night, although Naseby was only six miles away. It did a lad good to get under the roof of the late Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair Andrews for a night, especially if his own parents had started him out in his youth in the right way. It would take a large book to record all the many unknown kindnesses handed out to all on the roads by these good folk during their long life at the station. It's grand to sit back in

one's old age and to just think of them; their reward will be great.

A few miles to the left from Kyeburn Post Office lands you on the Maniototo Plain, which is divided from the Strath Taieri by the long and lofty Rock and Pillar Range, which drops away to rolling downs as it pushes a huge hairpin bend into the course of the river at Kokonga.

To name the big stations of the earlier days that used to bite big slices out of the plain's fertile land that was so very essential to the miles of mountainous country they held may be interesting.

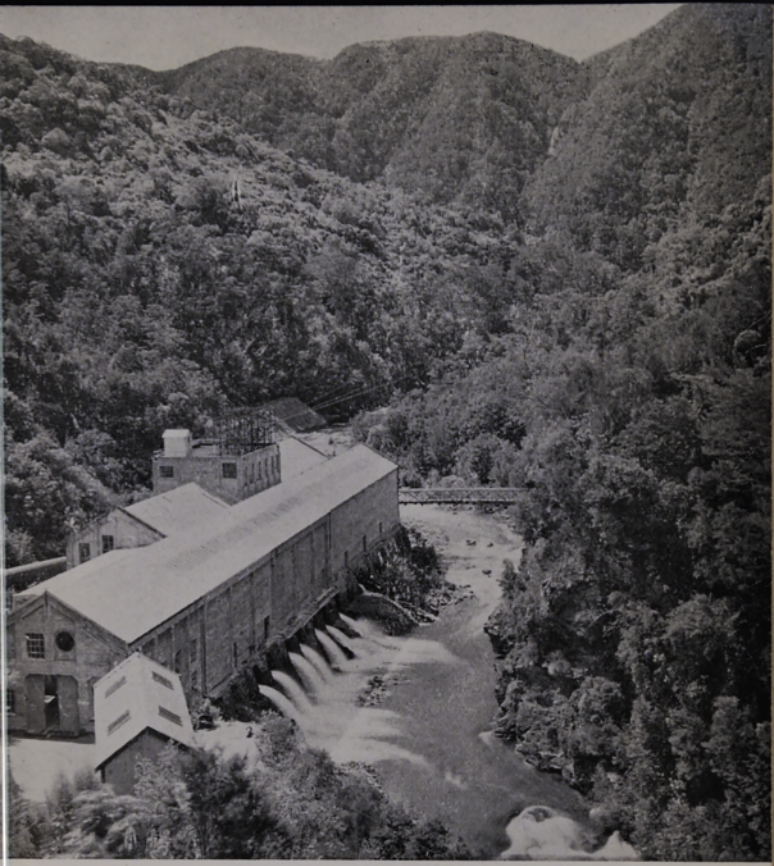
Hamilton Station (40,040 acres) is the first old homestead on the east side, not so far from the township of the same name on the mountain side. This village boasted of thirteen hotels and shilling drinks in the roaring days on the goldfield, but these all disappeared with the miners as the gold ran out or got too deep for profitable working. Waipiata Sanatorium, so well renowned for its great results, is also quite close, and far enough up the mountain to command pure air and a wonderful view.

It was in Hamilton Station sheep yards one day, over the pen rails, I sold the owner a very nice selection of Christmas presents for his family. Just as I arrived there was a lull in the drafting, at which the good old gentleman had been very busy with his boys. On completing his purchases he directed me to the homestead, and told me to go into his smoke-room and, as usual, have a look at his very old French clock. He was very fond of that old relic, and seemed to depend on me to keep it right up to date for him, which of course was a labour of love.

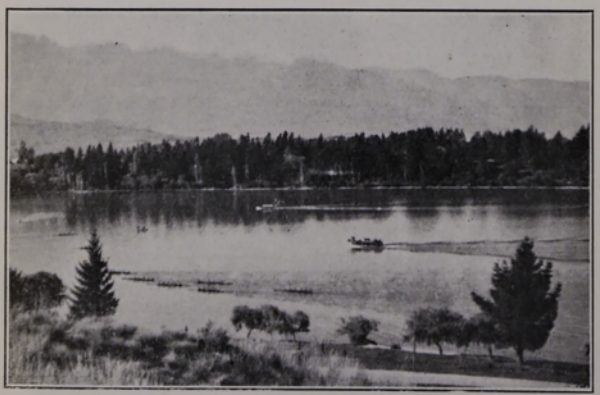
That nice sale, and another good one made in the middle of the Cromwell sandy flat to a bridegroom to be, were the only two outdoor sales I ever put over. I had met this chap while on my way to Bannockburn, and did the business on the spot, out in the tussocks, and just in time to dodge a sandstorm.

About seven miles past Hamilton Station takes you through the old mining town of Patearoa, and another six to Patearoa Station (54,150 acres). A mile further on the river emerges from the Upper Taieri Gorge to worm its way through the plain.

The homestead is a very pretty sight, with the usual plantations, which make all these bonnie spots appear as islands of green in a sea of tussocks. With a good glass you



DUNEDIN CITY CORPORATION POWER STATION
Waipori Falls, Otago. N.Z.

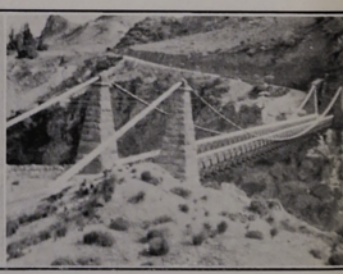


EASTER REGATTA AT QUEENSTOWN

SUGAR LOAF CLAIM—ARTHUR'S POINT

MINERS' CHAIR OVER CROMWELL GORGE

WHERE ROARING MEG MEETS THE KAWARAU



KAWARAU BRIDGE

can pick most of them out from the Sanatorium.

About six miles across the river, to the west, is Mr. L. S. B. Shennan's Linnburn Station, which he has lately sold, adjoining his late father's Puketoi Station (51,050 acres), which the old gentleman took up in the late 50's, after selling Galloway Station, which was the first to be established in Central Otago.

The miles traversed in passing these two historic old spots brings us well up the west side of the plain, past Closeburn Station, with Maniototo and Eweburn Stations on the north boundary. Kyeburn Station (133,770 acres) completes the circle away in the north-east corner. It is a great trip round a wonderful piece of country, no matter from what angle you take it.

There are 90,000 acres of this thirsty land, with an annual rainfall of 17 inches, to come under an irrigation scheme, and when it gets the water from the Styx Flat it will be one of the farm show places of New Zealand.

Dozens of lovely homes have been built on the Maniototo since I first took to the roads, and it was to one of these I called one day to meet my old pal Charlie. He gave me the usual good reception, and on this Friday evening, as I pointed to a mob of paradise ducks in his turnip field, he invited me to put the week-end in and have a shot at them. As I jumped at his kind invitation I jokingly remarked that it would be his only chance to have duck for the week-end, as he could not shoot for nuts. Although I was not much better, 6 o'clock next morning saw me sitting in the turnip field, a hole in the ground with a dozen big swedes stocked around to hide me. A cold spot in the very heavy frost, but with dawn showing and a prospects of a good shoot I did not notice it. I had to depend on my eyesight, as I could not hear the ducks coming in, and thereby missed a lot of sport, and perhaps ducks also; but with the small shot I was using it may have been that the three ducks I had brought down must have, with their keen eyesight, mistaken it for oversize turnip seed and gone after and into it when I pulled my triggers in their direction. However, I made a big noise, and got Charlie out of his warm bed about 1,000 yards away. I did not know it until well on to breakfast time. I heard a shot behind me, and there he was coming over the fence to pick up a duck. But he made the mistake of picking it up too soon and too close from where he had fired his shot. He came striding along chuckling to me, holding up the duck,

and throwing off at my small bag, with the words "First shot!" You cock shot, is that all you have got?" "Gee whiz, Charlie," I said, "if it didn't die of fright you must have hit it hard; you have knocked it stiff!"

And it was very stiff, for it was one I had shot in the semi-dark two hours earlier, and had not noticed it fall over the fence in the frosty paddock.

It was a good morning's sport, but my good old sporting pal at Patearoa would have had a dozen in the same time, for he can shoot, and even to-day, after these years off the roads, I can always depend on a few ducks from him at the first of the season. This year he posted me six, and all ready dressed to receive the stuffing. That's the way my wife likes to receive them, and into the freezer they go until required. There are very few sporting pals who will go to all that trouble when sending ducks to a brother sport in the city. He very seldom misses a shot; but I can get it all over him with the .22 repeater, in spite of the fact that I have seen him shoot a seagull at 250 yards with a .303, shooting through his front door while lying down in the passage of his cottage on the run.

To settle a friendly back-chat argument one day, after I had potted a paradise duck at 180 paces with his long Marlin .22 repeater, I spun an old alarm clock dial around on a nail in a post and shot out any one of the numerals at 30 yards as he liked to call them out. If any of my readers "hae their doots" about this, let them try it—it's quite easy with a bit of practice in their dreams.

A day out on those hills and rocky gullies with a .22 repeater was hard to beat, and with skins a good price they were worth collecting, and many a dozen I added to Cecil's store.

On one occasion, to settle another of my arguments, we had a skinning competition, but as he had tackled 600 rabbits after a big strychnine poisoning he had his hand well in. So with rabbits lying handy, and knives ready, off we went on a one-minute race. I was picking up my third bunny, while he was throwing down his fourth. His record is six per minute, he tells me—eight is the best ever recorded by a Central rabbiter. One year, after a disastrous snowstorm he had to get busy on skinning 300 sheep which had got smothered in the snow. He put these through at the rate of one every five minutes—a pretty handy chap with the knife, but not quite so fast as the famous Scotch fisher

lassies in Aberdeen, where, in 1937, I tipped a lass a florin and told her to go for it as I timed her. Off she went, and there were dozens of them at it with their very short-bladed knives. Up came a herring—in went the knife—out came the gills, bagpipes, and a', all in one piece, at the rate of 60 per minute. I was told by the overseer of these huge works that if a smart Alex. tried to be funny with the girls they could land a herring fair in his eye without looking up from their work. I took this as interesting, and not as a tip.

But never have I seen anyone move so fast as Cecil did one day. I had noticed that to cut off the power from his big oil engine when cutting chaff he had to walk a few yards to do so, and as he had already flavoured one bag of chaff with the tip off his big finger, I rigged up a gadget on the spark plug with a wire along the belt staging to a lever at his hand on the cutter. It worked very well, but he thought he could improve on it, and replaced my big wooden switch with a pretty brass one. On going out to help him on the Saturday morning to fill his chaff house, he remarked it was not wet enough underfoot for gumboots. But he was soon to find out another use for them. We were doing fine, I with the fork and he feeding the cutter, when he had to stop the engine and bring his bright idea into play; and it did play, and so did he! I have never seen the opera company put on a better show in so short a time to so small an audience. He got the shock of his life, as he just about jumped over the chaff house and into the river, two miles away on his boundary. The air went blue with his few lines of French, which he would sometmes use on a budding young champion huntaway, when it would race off in the wrong direction to his instructions. He blamed the damp ground for the shock, but all the same he soon dismantled his pretty brass switch, which was shining on the rough old staging like one of his 9ct. dog trial medals, dozens of which I sold with other trophies to the collie dog clubs all through Otago and Southland for one of the most interesting sports one could wish to attend. To watch a good sheep dog working a mile or so away on the mountain side to the directions of its owner's whistle and wave of his arm is a great sight. These clever dogs do deserve the fine trophies they win for their fortunate owners.

A NARROW ESCAPE AND A SALTED CLAIM

I AM off again to Queenstown. It's only five months since last I visited that bonnie spot, when I witnessed the Easter Regatta, which was rowed off under perfect conditions. The sight from the Western Terrace, which commands a grand-stand view of the races from start to finish in that magnificent wee bay, was one to gladden the eye of the most critical expert looking for something out of the ordinary to shoot a few spools on, as the oarsmen raced past, leaving behind the most unusual sight as their wakes fanned out to disturb the mirror-like surface and reflections of the Remarkables on the far side of the bay.

There are no mountains just like the Remarkables, which get their name from their sheer, barren boldness, and to the fact that they appear so different from different angles. My wee wife is with me this trip, and I am getting in early with those well-known W. and H. goods which seem to sell themselves for the tourist season to folk requiring only the very best in silver table service. What a good agency it was to hold from Christchurch to Bluff for so many years, especially when fashions had put good every-day jewellery right off the market. I can say I had a very happy life on the roads, and to any young chap starting out may I also say: "Sell only the very best, no matter what line you handle. Don't worry about price if you have the goods—they are worth it, and your customers will be yours for all time and will always be glad to meet you. There is great satisfaction in selling only the best article—let the other fellow sell the shoddy if he can. I found that out many years ago, when I first went on the roads and came in contact with dozens of my late dear old Dad's reliable watches, and his reputation for an honest deal, and I can tell you I nursed that introduction for all I was worth, for it saw me many a time welcomed at some outlandish station or farm to whose owner I was at that time a complete stranger.

Returning to my present trip—my Olds. is purring away through the Kawarau Gorge like a sewing machine. Lawrence, Roxburgh and Cromwell are well behind, and I slow down a little on that present 50 m.p.h. road to enjoy the sight of the water gushing from the spillway of the newly-erected power station at the Roaring Meg corner of the Gorge. This heavy stream, which breaks so suddenly on the stranger from its very rough surroundings, got its name (according to early-day tradition) from the fact that Meg, one of the two girls on their way to a dancing saloon at Arrow, created such a fuss at crossing this turbulent water that the vibrations of her voice loosened rocks on the mountain side to add still further to the roaring of the stream and of Meg herself. There are different versions regarding the naming of this stream, and maybe some of this one is my own. Do you blame me if I had rocks on the brain, which I very nearly had! They say that rolling stones gather no moss—so my mother used to tell me—and I will always remember that, although I hae ma doots aboot it all the same, especially after my experience with my moss-green car and one of those rolling stones which came down the mountain side many years after Meg's voice had spent its force on the rocks and the pack horses and their leader, as they battled their way over those early-day tracks in the only form of transport through the gorge at that time.

It was at the Meg corner, where the late Sir Julius Vogel was supposed to have seen visions of the river bed carpeted with gold; thus the name Vogel's Vision for a claim once pegged out at that portion of the richest river in the world. There are many, myself included, who still believe there are bags of gold left behind rocky bars and crevices in inaccessible portions of the river. A few miles further on the next stream to be crossed is the Gentle Annie, called after Meg's pal, who no doubt was a much quieter type of tourist than Meg herself. Before you come to this crossing the natural bridge may be seen from the road which is now well up the mountain side. The river at this point, in spite of its huge volume, goes right out of sight to come up a yard or so away, as it boils from under a great mass of rock in its pressure to get free from that natural barrier. It was at this part of the road that I came within a split second of very serious injury, if nothing else, and perhaps a crash into the river. It seems very strange that on this, about my sixtieth trip through this gorge, and this time with my wife

beside me, I should be on a certain spot as a large rock, dislodged by the late thaw on the tops, should come tearing down to bounce off the high bank and, with the wallop and crash of a pile-driver, tear its way into the back door of my car. I have had too many heavy upsets, at all speeds, without injury, from my old heavy B.A.T. motor cycle in past years to be easily rattled, but with a "Cæsar's ghost! What's that?" I kept moving for the next fifty yards or so, and just in case that boulder had a few relations playing round on the frosty tops and had changed their frolics into a game of follow the leader. On getting out to find the cause and damage done, I could not find one inch of glass in the door or on the road, but there was the boulder right in the track of other cars coming that way. It took some force to roll it over the bank, as it was not far short of a petrol tin in size. What a mess the door was, pierced and ripped open and stuck hard. Was I lucky, or was I not! The road, which was being reformed, was wet and in the worst state I have ever met it. I was going slow in second gear over that greasy stretch, and had I arrived on that spot a fifth of a second later I would have received that crash on my hip and steering wheel, and perhaps lost control of the car, with the bank only a yard or so away, not to mention where the shattered front glass would have struck us. If I *had* to receive that rolling stone it could not have struck me in a better place, for had it landed eighteen inches further back it would have crashed the mudguard down on the wheel, which most likely would have been buckled and we would have been stranded. A 'Varsity student, who is now a doctor in the North Island, was supposed to have occupied that back seat, but as she could not leave her studies in time to suit she missed this trip and also serious injury. It's only a question how she would have survived the flying glass, which was level with her face had she been in that seat. We were soon on the way again, and on arrival at Queenstown the few locals who were about came round advising me to take a ticket in "Tatts." I patched up the open spaces with canvas for the return trip, but before doing so my old friend, the late Mr. Frank Curtis, fell for a wish from my wife to join us in a picnic up the lakeside, and he might show us where to do a little prospecting.

Frank and I have had many good days together. It was he who introduced me to dry fly fishing, which brings out all the best in a good angler. He was a champion—methodical

to his finger tips. All his guns and other sporting gear were kept like new pins, as also was his hotel. His main hobby was collecting butterflies, etc., and being a very keen naturalist he could keep you interested for hours with his talks, microscope and slides. His very fine collection from all over the world is still on view in the hotel at Queenstown; it is a great attraction on the dining-room walls. We were soon away on our picnic, crossing the one-mile, the two-mile and the four-mile streams; the five- and seven-mile streams are further on. All these bonnie streams come off Ben Lomond and cross the road from Queenstown at distances as their names signify. They have all been well worked in the early days, but it was the four-mile claim which produced many thousands in the yellow metal during the roaring days on the goldfields. It was here that Frank decided we should boil the billy and try our luck. He was not long in filling the dish with wash right from the roadside, but I could soon see that he was no prospector. He also had ideas other than looking for gold, although his first dishful did produce two very nice flat match-head samples. "What is this heavy prospect doing so close to the road and in that innocent looking wash?" I said. "Oh, there is plenty more of it there—go for it," he said, as he handed me the long-handled shovel and dish. I had a good smile at his joke and my wife's excitement as off he went up the hill with his net and dope bottle, and I bet he had a great chuckle to himself as he jumped about and swiped his net at flies, etc., hoping to secure a rare specimen. On his return all he had to show for his hike were a few flies in his bottle, but I did not notice any Lover's Lures, Greenwell's Glory, Red-tip Governor, or any other of his favourites which he so dearly loved to cast, with a pal, in artificial form after trout. "How did you get on—where is all the gold?" he asked on his return. His eyes popped out as I displayed to him two very pretty half-ounce nuggets which did look very fine back again in their natural element in the dish with just enough water to make them shine at the best. "You did not get those here," he said. No, and I did not get them in the Bank before coming out either. They were a nice pair which I had been carrying for twelve months in my *hip* pocket (next to my heart) just for luck. Frank could drop his gold (procured at the Bank, no doubt) from his mouth into the dish for his salting, but I could not do so, as my salt was too heavy. It was a very nice outing, but this good pal will no more in his jovial manner

jokingly salt a dish or give his many friends a happy time. Nor will he cast his flies again on any of the fine waters in the Wakatipu district. When it comes to telling a real good fish story, perhaps of the big one that got away in the very heavy waters of the Kawarau, or of flies, etc., for the different waters, there is nobody left in Queenstown who can do it just as well as Frank. To those of us much older chaps who have been spared ever so much longer than Frank to enjoy the glories of Nature, the sport and friendship of that great Lake district, may I say "Thank God for His great goodness in placing us all in such a wonderful land." There is no place just as good.

THE OLD KITCHEN CLOCK AND A DOG FIGHT

It is some time now since my old friend Bill, from Mount Ross, called on me for a chat, which included several old-time jokes on the road and a couple of his own pet bedtime stories which I will herein retail. As time hangs heavily when one is not in the best of health, he gave me the idea of writing these memoirs, and when I start to write I just jot them down in a natural way as if having a chat to a fellow-angler while waiting for a breeze or the evening rise on one of our bonnie lakes. Although I have not mentioned him in any of my previous notes, it is not because he comes casually into my mind—far from it, for his dear old parents have given me many a happy hour at their lovely homestead, and caused me once again to think of the great blessing some young folk have in their God-fearing parents. But, like myself, a few of the young birds have to grow a bit older before they come to appreciate their good fortune in this respect.

It was at Middlemarch one afternoon when I met Bill's dad just as he was about to return to the homestead. On several occasions I had the pleasure of serving the old gentleman from behind the counter, but how much nicer it

was to meet the jovial old chap out on the country road and, as it were, right in his own backyard. After a handshake which spelt friendship itself, I opened the conversation by referring to the wonderful winter just past, and to all the sheep he had not lost in the snow or over the frozen cliffs in the Taieri Gorge, which was his boundary in places. When I mentioned the station clocks, jewellery, etc., he said an old man like him was no good to me, as he had no eye for jewellery. "You should come out to the homestead, stop the night, and let the girls see the samples—they are the ones who like looking at pretty things." I thanked him and took him at his word. Late that afternoon saw me over the ten miles of up-hill road which seemed to me at that time to be leading to the back of beyond, and arrived at my destination not far behind him. After the usual cup of tea I gave all my attention to the kitchen clock, and also a French one, both of which did badly want a run and a drink. At that time I would find a real good clock idle in almost every farm house, and by giving them a new lease of life for the love of it I broke a lot of ice with strangers if there was ever any to break. However, my only sale that evening was a double gold albert to which the old gentleman had taken a fancy, and after all his good-natured banter in the township he was so far the only customer, the daughters only getting as far as admiring the rings, etc.—perhaps with an eye to the future. As there was not enough daylight left to demonstrate a pair of binoculars, I gave Bill the tip to get me out early in the morning before he and his brother went mustering. That morning at 5.30 saw me out on the front lawn in my pyjamas trying to pick out the earmark on Gladbrook Station sheep, twelve miles to the west on the Rock and Pillar Range. I had to tell the boys the light was too poor to distinguish between a fork and a bit in the rght ear, but if they put them on to the Middlemarch Church (ten miles away) on Sunday it would come so close they would be able to hear the organ playing. After a lot of happy chat I made a sale about which Bill has at times chitted me for what he called my keenness. It certainly was a case of the early bird landing the mustard before they had mustered! After an early cup of tea with them, away I went back to bed to dream on it, leaving them all smiles and whistles as away they went with their keen dogs and to mount their "neddies" for a long day's mustering in those lovely tussocky hills and gullies.

The mention of the old clock, which was sold by my dad in the 'sixties, introduces Bill's first little story of a very near miss he had for a runaway with his waggon and six-horse team. It happened only a few years before my first visit to Mount Ross, and when his dad had just taken up that fine property and was leaving Blackstone Hill Station, which he had managed successfully for so many years. Before giving the clock its dues some readers, although they do know Otago, may be interested to have an idea of the size of these first big stations. Blackstone Hill Station took in 360,000 acres away to the north-west of the Maniototo Plain; in season it took 24 shearers to shear its 70,000 sheep of the fine wool which no doubt supplied the owners, who also held Lauder Station adjoining, with the wherewithal to carry on their very famous Roslyn mills in Dunedin. Morven Hill Station was even larger with its 450,000 acres, and carried 100,000 sheep, which kept 36 shearers very busy —not to mention dozens of shepherds and other shed hands. It had a frontage of 40 miles between Lake Hawea and Cromwell, and extended for miles back through the Lindis Pass towards the Waitaki River in the east. It was taken up in 1858 by the three McLean brothers, who all made fortunes and retired. Mr. Alan McLean, who died in Christchurch, endowed that city with the beautiful McLean Home for gentlewomen. These stations all had their very hard times, but in 1882, when mutton was sixpence per leg, they did get a big lift and a new lease of life when the frozen meat industry was established by the first shipments from New Zealand to London, through the enterprise of Dunedin's Scotchmen. They also had at times very severe winters to contend with, but it was the record snows of 1895 that gave them their severest test of all time. In that year my old friend at Kyeburn Station lost 13,000 sheep from his flock of 28,000, but Blackstone Hill was hit much harder with its loss of 33,000 sheep from its 70,000, in snow lying frozen for several weeks and deep enough to cover the fences. The stock in this case was never able to fully recover before the country was cut up for closer settlement. In another chapter I have referred to these beautiful old stations and their plantations as very interesting old landmarks of the early days. They are still there carrying on as usual, but on a much smaller scale, which does not affect their beauty as they dot the lowlands of that wonderful mountainous country like emeralds in a sheet of gold.

Returning to Bill and the clock. He was saying goodbye to his birthplace and was about ready to start off with a waggon load of furniture, etc., for the new home at Mount Ross, eighty miles nearer Dunedin. The last of the old home reminders to be handed up to him as he sat in his high seat was the old clock for its special place of honour beside him, and out of harm's way. But the old faithful had its own ideas of being shifted from its life-long place on the big kitchen mantelpiece from where it had witnessed so many happy games during the long winter nights, when the staff felt too comfortable to retire early. When it came aboard with its idle hands and its face to the sun, which was enough to give it the blues, it took the chance of a lifetime to put in a protest when being placed on its back by tripping off its striking gear and letting the world and horses know what it thought of moving day by going on strike with a non-stop motion. The horses, just like any other "neddies" at that time, especially those brought up on plenty of oats in their chaff, did object to any noisy cargo. One had to be very careful about creating any mechanical clatter near them, and well I know it! Those equines' ears went up at the sound of the old time bell; they danced a few side steps and, getting up on their toes, off they went on a tango. But Bill was equal to the occasion. He held on to the reins with a vice-like grip, and the pull of a tractor, and with the big brake about pushing his boot off he managed to tone their step down to the quieter time of the good old fashioned barn dance. Had the clock not given up its ghost with the last inch of its spring released when it did, he would have found it very hard to control those dancing "neddies" and thus prevent a nasty mishap. To give the clock my final wind—the last time I saw it it was occupying a place on the mantelpiece of an old-time kitchen exhibit in the Dunedin Winter Show of 1942 by the ladies of the Women's Division of the Farmers' Union. Bill's wife, who is one of the leading lights in that great organisation, told me that money could not buy that old relic, which was at the time acting as timepiece for all the other stalls in that part of the Show, and keeping up its reputation for the last 75 years.

I could point to several clocks sold by my dad at about the same time to banks and other offices throughout Otago which are still doing their best to beat the sun, but, as Bill says, the sun will have to keep moving to beat his old clock which now adorns the kitchen of his new holding in the pick

of the lovely Clarendon district and quite handy to Dunedin.

As a parting thought on leaving the great Blackstone Hill sheep country let me take you over the Manuherikia River, a great fly-fishing stream which passes in front of the old homestead, to the old mining town of Cambrian, or Welshman's Gully, as it was sometimes called. It was a ride of 16 miles every day to school and back for Bill and his brother, but they thought nothing of it. It was here, at John Beattie's homely old Welsh Harp Hotel, that the travellers received such great fare and attention, and I must say Jeannie was the champion housekeeper in Otago—and that is saying something. The feather beds—and there were none like them—and in the winter the hot gin bottles were a great comfort. The good old lady's pet hobby was turkey breeding (thus the feathers), and more than once I had to dodge a dozen or more of them with my motor cycle, while a few geese also getting ready for the market would add to the obstruction by stretching out their long necks and making faces and hissing at me in their own queer way to dispute my right to the road. They were great birds, and at times I had more than a sample of them in their right place on my plate, and not under the front wheel of my motor cycle.

It was at the kirk nearby that Bill's other little "three-to-one, bar one" bedtime story came to light. As he said, the parson at that time was a great old character, and to leave a wee bit in the bottle for the mornin' after a wedding breakfast was no good to him. No doubt he, or the bottle, would be somewhere else by that time. It happened one fine Sunday while he was conducting service and, as usual, Bill and the family were present. There were also the usual few sheep dogs about, and a dog fight was quite a common sight; but they seldom behaved so badly as they did on this afternoon, when two of them started to fight outside the church door and kept it up until one decided to quit and backed into the church, maybe to find its owner. But the wee brown dog which had been getting the best of it was looking for a few more mouthfuls of its rival's black hair and charged in and tackled it again. They were hard at it and making a great noise when the parson, on stopping his service, looked down at them from over the top of his glasses and said in a clear voice, "I'll back the wee broon yen." This remark from the pulpit went very well with Bill and his pals, who soon had the dogs removed and the service went on as usual.

WHISPER AND I SHALL HEAR AND A RUNAWAY SKELETON

COMMENTING in my last chapter on the early morning sale of a pair of binoculars to my old pal Bill reminded me of the sale of my last pair of those powerful Busch glasses. We had twelve pairs in stock at the time, ten of which I sold to runholders. The purchaser in this case was an old lady, and were a present for her good man, who held a fair-sized hill country run. She found them very useful herself, so she said, in detecting her own stock from the back door should any be wandering on the roads. They also saved her boys many a wild goose chase when a sheep, heavy in wool, was only having its forty winks and was not cast, as it appeared from the distance. Many a time I have dismounted opposite a cast sheep, hopped over the fence and put it on its feet again. If one gets on its back when heavy in wool it has not got much of a chance of getting up again, and it is quite on the cards that a seagull will come down on it and peck its eyes out. The Otago Central lads will always pot a gull if they get the chance. They make a great flying target for a .22 repeater. If they are flying handy throw out a handkerchief and they will come over you to investigate, and receive a bullet if you know how to shoot.

There was a case when the glasses were of no use at picking up missing stock. As it happened, four young steers a few miles away, in their desire to get shelter from a storm, accidentally pushed open the door of a very seldom used sun-dried brick hut, and in they went. Once inside, their bumping about closed the door again and they were imprisoned. For a time their disappearance was supposed to be a case of rustling, until they were found all starved to death. This happened on a run away in the S.W. corner of the Maniototo Plain where I always looked forward to spending the night at the adjoining farm, where there were

two very capable lassies—and real land girls they were, who could help Dad and brother Archie with any job on the farm. Mother was a very dear old lady, and she did pride herself on her baking. Potato scones were one of her specialities, and I must say they were good. She proved she could take a joke when one day, at her request for my opinion on them, I told her they would make great tiles if sundried, or shanghais if cut into strips when taken from the oven; but I knew my friends before I started throwing such compliments about. If I was not busy on a clock I might be helping Archie with the separator. I had to keep moving somehow until tea-time, after which a game of quoits with rubber rings and numbered cup hooks on the wall introduced my samples, unless the girls were anxious to see the rings first, which was usually the case. I always put up a prize for the quoit game in the form of a pair of silver hatpins, or perhaps a gold bell pin, both very fashionable adornments at the time. Win or lose, I had the pleasure of making the presentation to the girls or Archie. But they did like to get hold of my ring case and try on one or two, and at times a mock proposal was quite a lot of fun, with me down on one knee, one hand on my heart, and the other holding forth the ring. I had to hold on to something, and although I became quite good at it (so they said), I never had to face a breach of promise case, as I never used my talents in that direction for my own benefit. Man, those Central Otago girls were bonnie lassies, but maybe I had too much respect for the size of some of those farmers' boots and their packs of very well trained dogs! However, it was in Dad's backyard one morning where I was letting him try out the glasses. The two girls, who were as keen for him to purchase as I was to sell, were also present, when I heard one of them say to him in a loud whisper, as he was looking for rabbits on the cliffs, "I wonder who that is coming in the gate?" as a rider dismounted to lead his horse in at the boundary, half a mile away. "I do believe it is Mr. Patterson." With my hearing, I was not supposed to hear that. On taking the glasses from her Dad and handing them to me she said, "Here, Jimmy, see if you can tell us who the chap is coming in the gate." Getting him into focus, I had to admit I did not know him from Adam, but I said, "I can see he is wearing a ribbon watch-guard" (I was quite safe, as many of the lads wore one at that time), "and I can also read quite plainly the engraving on the gold shield. His initials

are A.P." "By gosh! Jimmy," said Mary, "I do believe you are right. It's Mr. Adam Patterson, that's who it is, Dad." "They must be great glasses—let me have another look." I had a great laugh, but I did not tell Dad that Mary had already given me the initial "P", and I was lucky enough to guess his first one, which was "A." After that fine demonstration I did not make a sale, and on letting them in on the joke off I went to sell the same glass to the old lady referred to a mile or so away.

That was not the only joke my hearing let me in for. The other occasion was when it nearly cost me a new front for a big show case. It happened not so many years ago, when I had a fine show-room full of everybody's desire, when the very best in silverware was required. A bonnie lass, and very easy to look at with her Dunedin complexion, all her own, called with a much older friend. I had met her before in business and had made several good sales to the big hotel for which she usually did the buying in my lines. On this occasion she pointed to an article low down in the show-case and asked me the price of it. To save going round the case to get the article, I tried to read the price ticket by going closer up with a slight stoop to bring it into my line of vison. I was about to quote when I heard her say to her friend in a quiet voice, "I like dealing with these deaf chaps, they have to come close to you." No, I am not a dark horse; it was just her gentle voice which had the carrying qualities of the beautiful bellbird, and she did not know it. When I straightened up with a smile and said, "But what a pity I am such a shy young man," she fell up against the corner of the case for support, and their laughter was real good to hear as it about shook The Parson's Daughter, Old Charlie, and other Royal Doulton figures in their beautiful robes off their pedestals. Although I may not hear so well at times, I have a very quick eye, and have had a lot of fun. "I bet you have," says the Editor. While other good old pals may wonder if the old bird ever did any work at all—many a time a split second's action and keen sight have saved me from being smashed up on my old faithful B.A.T. (best after tests) motor cycle.

Weather and time do not count when one is keen and out on the roads for a living. It's a great life, with all the good sport and true friendship of Central Otago thrown in, but a fellow would starve on a 40-hour week. He has to go for it all the time.

Bill's story of his near miss for a runaway in an earlier chapter brings to mind a similar episode which was enough to take the smile off the face of any circus clown, but in this case the clown was not in his box seat. It gave me the fright of my life, but it was not so sudden or unexpected as the time when a rock came off the mountainside and crashed into the back door of my car. I had just left Kyeburn Station, where I had spent the night with my good friends. I was well on the way when I could see a waggon some distance down the flat going in my direction. As I came close I could see I would have to be very careful, as the wind was against my old bulb tooter, and my own good whistle, which was strong enough to get me a job sitting on the cow-catcher of any locomotive with a defect in its steam pipes. Blowhard as I may be, I could not make the two passengers on that skeleton waggon hear me. It was a timber-carting affair—no sides, no floor—and the driver with his pal was sitting on the front axle with the reins tied to the high seat well out of his reach. and letting the six horses amble their way along the broad beaten track through the tussocks—for that is all the road was at that time. As I came within a hundred yards or so of them, and running slow on the silencer, I decided to take no chances and took to the tussocks with the hope of cutting them off and giving them a wide berth as they rounded a big bend in the road. Many a time I had ridden on a rougher surface than that, but in this case I soon found I could not keep one eye on the horses and another on my front wheel, which suddenly went down into a rabbit hole, and off I went, and so did the horses at the sound of my racing engine, as the back wheel came off the ground in my upset. They did travel, but not far before they also came a cropper. I was not long in picking myself up and pushing my heavy outfit back to the road and up to the scene of the mix-up, where to my surprise I found nobody hurt and very little damage done. Had the middle horses, which had no bits in their mouths, not fallen and piled the waggon and shafters on top of themselves, with the two day-dreamers out of their beauty sleep on the axle, they may still be charging along like the old-time fire brigade. The sudden fall caused the two leaders to break away with the traces, and by the time I arrived on the scene the other four horses were up on their feet again looking none the worse, although a bit excited. The two dreamers, who were well awake by this time, were busy sorting out harness and dusting them-

selves down, while the leaders were a few hundred yards away looking down from the top of the ridge, with their heads well up, as if to say "We have seen a few grasshoppers round our feed bags at times, but you are the first jitter-bugging hopper we have met so far, and we don't like you or your contraption." That was the only bit of bother I had on the roads with horses, but I have had many close calls through sleepy horsemen, slippery roads and dry irrigating ditches (traps) across the roads. A broken main engine support and only seven spokes left on the belt rim side of my back wheel were only two of the smacks those dry ditches cost me, but on that occasion I managed to tighten up the good spokes well enough on that "wonky" wheel to see me six miles on the way to catch the train at Kokonga, which I knew was about due, and return to Dunedin for repairs. The music from that buckled wheel was not very sweet to hear, but it got me there. I would very much like to meet the chap with a like record of biting the dust and slithering in the mud. We surely could have a great time cracking jokes and telling yarns, for after all those early motoring days one must have something left to remind him of those hard but happy times on the roads as I certainly found them at that time.

IN HAPPY MOMENTS DAY BY DAY

"WHISPER and I shall hear," quoted in my last story, comes from the old-time songs, dozens of which I could mention, but only one or two would be necessary to bring some of the old folk back to the good old times when a song evening in one's home with several lusty young voices joining in filled the house with the joy of living in those happy old days. It was a very pleasant event to go home to sleep on, and remember. This fine social spirit was also very evident at the dances, when all the kick was in the dancers' feet and

not partly in bottles out in the cars. A fellow did not cling to his partner all the evening like the green-fly on a rose, or the woolly aphis on a perch, but was as free as his partner was to enjoy any dances with other friends, and to produce a flask on the quiet would bring him as much popularity as would the production of a pop-gun. To waltz to "Daisy, Daisy," or barn dance to "The Lily of Laguna" tunes was a treat, especially when your partner helped you along by singing snatches of the songs as you guided her round the hall. Of course, the pace was always too hot in the Highland Schottiche or the Irish Quadrilles for anything but a few "och's" to still further stir up the air as laddies did their best. Had a "jitterbug" got up to perform in those days, the local lock-up man and doctor would very quickly be on the spot—but times have changed and may be, for the good of all, the old-time dances will return. The mention of one of the old favourite dance tunes brings to mind one of my first trips to Clyde, where the dances were always of a very high order, for the wee town was noted for its many bonnie lassies who could really dance. I was passing through the hall of the Dunstan Hotel to an appointment and, on meeting the proprietor, I jokingly asked him where all his wealthy friends were who may have an eye for a real good article. On coming to the door with me he directed me to a cottage down the street. "You can't miss it," he said. "It is 'In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree' at the gate." An enormous willow to be correct, which made the gateway as dark as the ace of spades that night. "You go in there, and you will meet the 'Queen of the Earth,' and tell her I sent you. 'She's just come up from Somerset' on holiday, and is a very likely customer for you." Off I went, stepping it out in the frosty air to the tune of "Hullo, Hullo, Who's Your Lady Friend? Who's the Little Girlie I've to Find?" I had no trouble in finding the cottage, and about collided with old Alec's queen in the darkness as I went to open the gate, over which she was leaning. For all I knew she might have had a date; if so, she was not chewing it. As I introduced myself, through Alec., she gave me a very fair reception, and although it was freezing hard there was no ice to break. After a few chatty words, and by lighting a cigarette I was able to get a good peep at the Queen of Spades, I did not offer her a cigarette, as nice girls did not smoke at that time, and although she was nice and up from town, she was not one of the "Two

Little Girls in Blue." As she did not appear to be interested in my line of business, off I went with a "Goodbye, Dolly Gray," to keep my appointment. That evening was a very pleasant one, thanks to an old friend, and maybe a wee bit business was transacted with him to cheer a laddie on his way back to the hotel. "For Old Time's Sake" I have rambled among the old songs so much, and in connection with the above story to mention that lively Irish Quadrille tune may not be out of place; it is "Don't Make Dem Scandalous Eyes at Me." The first time I heard it sung was when Pope and Sayles, the great negro corner-men pair appeared in Dunedin with Dix's or Fuller's vaudeville shows. This was not long after the clever Fuller family, with the good old gentleman (a great tenor) singing "Come into the Garden, Maud," as if he really meant it, used to hold their popular concerts, or "Sixpenny Pops," as they were called, every Saturday and Wednesday evening in the Garrison Hall, and before they moved into the City Hall, which they remodelled and renamed "The Alhambra Theatre." Here, also, I first heard the song, "The Man with the Ladder and the Man with the Hose," never thinking that years after I would find myself whistling it as I departed from a small fire at which I was the only fireman, but I had no ladder and I had no hose. With apologies to the Molyneaux, our own "Old Man River," may I call it "The Wabash Far Away" on "Ye Banks and Braes" of which I called one day at a sundried brick miner's home. With its sparkling whiteness and in its setting of poplars and weeping willows it was a real picture. The mother and her daughter were the only ones at home. "The Bonnie Wee Thing," after an hour with my samples, busied herself with afternoon tea. What a pleasant call it was. I remember collecting sufficient very small nuggets to cover up a large 9ct. letter "M," which used to be a great seller in brooch form. That was only one of my good selling ideas in mounting nuggets, and there were plenty of them about at that time. Just as I was about to leave, and as we sat chatting, smoke appeared from behind the big mantelpiece over an open fireplace. As it was coming up in a fair cloud, the dear old lady in her excitement rushed out for a bucket of water, while "Bonnie Mary of Argyle" and I cleared the mantelpiece of its clock, vases, peacock feathers, etc. On pulling for all I was worth at that big slab of wood I managed to tear it away from its support, which was a heavy beam

built into the bricks. As this was smouldering at the back, and with no way of getting water on to it, I hurried out for my big air pump and, by using it as a syringe, I was able to direct good squirts of water into all the corners and soon had the fire dead out, and without flooding the room as the old lady wanted to do. There was not much chance of a flare-up in such a solid brick house, but all the same I was very glad to be there and to help the good folk. They did thank me as I went on my way, leaving "Poor Old Joe" the job of re-erecting the mantelpiece when he returned from his claim to his "Wee Hoose on the Hillside."

A wee bit of sporting chat comes into this story when I mention "Yankee Doodle," a great old tune for the Lancers. It was at the Kurow races where I made my first appearance on a racecourse. I met one of the boys who reckoned he had a good mount for the day, so to give him a little more faith in his judgment I lent him a greenstone tiki to carry in the race. His trotter "Yankee Doodle" won and paid twelve pounds, but being a ca' canny lad I was not on it, so did not grab at what they call beginner's luck.

I crossed the Waitaki here, going north as far as Geraldine, a trip which at times would show good results. It was shortly after the Kurow meeting I found myself on the Timaru racecourse with a casual acquaintance. This chap talked me into going halves with him in a double. I did not know at the time what a double was, but when he explained that for five shillings I might win sixteen pounds, I thought I would give it a go. Later on I was very glad to see the first leg, as they call it, come home. Then up bustled the smart Alex. with "Here is your five bob." Thunderer, the second leg of the double was not going to start in the last race. I might have been green, but said, "You keep the cash until we see what horses go out for the start before you come at me with that." However, Thunderer did start and won easily, giving me "The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo" (an old Alberts tune) sort of feeling. The sharper had vanished, and on going to see Len, his bookie, I was told had I been present when the bet was laid he would have paid out to me. However, it was a good tip for me never to go to the races with the get-rich-quick idea in my head. It was not long after that that my would-be friend had a very convenient fire in his business which, in time, saw him where all these birds eventually land—right on their uppers.

Returning to the Central, I find myself "Riding Down from Bangor"—I beg pardon, Bendigo,—a very busy mining camp in its time, a few miles out of Cromwell. It was late Saturday afternoon as I called in at my last visit for the day. I was invited by my good friends to stop the week-end, and as Donald was going out on the Sunday to try the wash in a near-by burn, I thought it a great idea. It appeared they were having duck for Sunday's dinner (another good idea), not Donald Duck, but maybe it was one of those birds I have mentioned before—the duck that laid the golden egg. If not, it must have been a very close relation, as "Jessie, the Flower of Dunblane" in dressing that bird took from its gizzard a one pennyweight nugget, which I was only too pleased to mount on a 9ct. safety pin as a reward for her keen sight. As gold can be found in many places of that part of Otago, it was quite on the cards for a duck in its nosing about the water's edge to pick up an expensive morsel. I was the duck's successful prospecting that gave Donald the gold fever, but all we got for our trouble with the tin dish were a few colours and black sand, which is always an indication that you are in gold-bearing wash. I have heard of gold being taken from a duck's gizzard before, but this is the first time I have come in contact with the actual gold or duck, and there was no mistake about contacting the duck that Sunday. I have been on a bank at Arthur's Point, three miles from Queenstown, where I could scratch with my finger in a trickle of water from the gravel and watch a speck of gold float down, mingled with the black sand, every few seconds. It was at this point, just over the Edith Cavell Memorial Bridge, where, in 1862, a shed hand, Arthur by name, with a mate from Rees's Station at Queenstown Bay, washed up 200 ozs. of gold in eight days, and finished up with a return of £4,000 worth for two months' work. This was the start for the great rush that set in for the Shotover River and its upper reaches at Skippers, Moke Creek and Moonlight. Some time after Arthur had made his pile and was well out of the rags he arrived in, an old Victorian miner washed up 200 ozs. in one day, left behind by Arthur and others. A much richer strike came the way of two Maori lads much further up the river at a spot called to-day Maori Point. When these two lads left Dunedin on their 200-mile tramp they took with them their pet dog, no doubt with the idea of catching feathered game, which was very plentiful—(at that time rabbits did

not exist in Otago),—and had no idea that it was to lead them on to the richest claim ever discovered in New Zealand. On reaching a spot on the Upper Shotover they were surprised to see their dog on the other side rolling itself in the sand on a little beach. They had no thoughts of crossing that swift current, but one of them did so to bring his dog back, and as he stooped to pat his pet he noticed that in rolling on the beach it had picked up specks of gold on its coat. On his pal also wading over they started work on that spot, and washed up 300 ozs. for the first day's work. As a parting thought to the old-time dances, there is one very good one I cannot miss, and it took the mention of dogs to bring it to mind. It is the "Washington Post," and if you do not know its steps it is a "hound" of a dance to get up to.

As time is getting on to 2 a.m., let us all join hands before we go in singing Robbie Burns' ever popular "Auld Lang Syne" and before the caretaker turns down the big oil lamps on one more of the good old-time dances in Central Otago.

A HIGHLAND REWARD—MY EMERALD RING

In one's many years on the roads one is sure to come in contact with some great characters, and I must say I have met a few in my time. One of these made me smile one day when I passed him on the road near his home, never thinking that some time later the old chap would be writing into the firm for a centrepiece for his wedding breakfast table. Alexander Gordon Mackay was his name, but before he came to the colonies it was just plain Alex. Mackay. He was known to his neighbours as "Night-and-Day Mac," owing to the fact that he could at times be heard working well into the night, when they were thinking of going to bed. He was a great Highlander, and had a kink for a bit of his national dress, and was never without a splash of tartan somewhere on his person. On the occasion of our passing on the road he was stepping it out like a young fellow, which

he was by no means, but to me he did look odd with his big tartan plaidie over his shoulder beneath a stiff bun—they did not seem to blend. He was a very well educated old chap, and as I remember from his long letter it was most beautifully written and compiled on foolscap, and he made no bones about letting us know exactly what he wanted. It appears he had made up his mind to get married and wanted the centrepiece for his wedding breakfast table to be made up in the form of a large silver pig. The specifications for this important article were—it was to be made in solid silver, with a large hole in its head to hold salt. The left ear was to be missing, also its tail, and a severe spear mark specially shown on its left side. Then came the reason for the pig and the explanation how he got the title of Gordon tacked on to his name. It appeared as a lad he lived in the Highlands of the Chieftain Gordon. There was great consternation among the small farmers, who were losing a lot of lambs, and their fields were being rooted up by wild pigs, several of which they had killed. One cunning old boar seemed to know when a trap was laid or when danger was about, and so kept up his career of crime in spite of all the menfolk could do. His reputation as a charger was so high and his tusks were so long that they were afraid to tackle him, until one day the generous Gordon came into his village and put up a notice offering a very generous reward to whoever could kill Mr. Boar, and as a proof of doing so bring its left ear and tail to him. With visions of a bag of wealth before his eyes, young Alex. decided to go after that killer of lambs and the reward tacked on to its ear. Arming himself by securely binding his long sheath knife to the end of a stout stick, off he went to the well-known tracks of the pig. He was out all day, but at last his patience was rewarded, for as he crouched behind the heather and the shrubs in a selected spot there came to his ears the sound of a slow trot away up the track. "The show was on," for it was old man boar all right, sauntering along on his way to the lamb paddocks. Young Alex. got all set for the lunge, which he had been practising for a few days on a sack of straw and which he thought was to change his fortune. Judging his time to perfection, he buried his knife to its hilt in the pig's left side as it passed his shelter. Being unable to hold on to that squealing mass of pork, he made for a tree which had already come into his plan in case a retreat was needed, and from a safe perch had the satisfaction of watching his

victim add still further to the colour of that patch of purple heather as it gave up the ghost. Down came Mac from his perch to give it a crack on the head with a large stone to finish it off. Out came his knife and off came its left ear and tail, and away he went shouldering his gory weapon to report his success to the villagers and their chieftain. After a lot of excitement he came forth to congratulate the hero of the day as he waited for his reward. On shaking young Alex. by the hand, and patting him on the shoulder, he praised his courage and great service to the farmers and said: "As a reward, my brave lad, henceforth your name will be Alexander Gordon-Mackay." This title he carried to Otago with him many years ago, and the older he got the more he seemed to cherish his reward. Of course, we made no attempt to supply that silver pig. The nearest we had in stock to his wish was a small silver one with a blue velvet pad let into its back to act as a pin cushion—(I remember them well)—when those useful articles were made up in all kinds of attractive designs. They were great sellers at the time, and maybe it was from these that Mr. Alexander Gordon-Mackay got his idea. I do not remember any reply to our letter, but the old chap was still a prosperous bachelor when he died many years ago and before I went off the roads.

I remember another very peculiar request coming in from the country by letter. I had not long returned from a trip which took in one of the most outlandish districts in the Central. I had called for the first time at a very nice homestead, where I was received with the usual hospitality. When visiting strangers for the first time, I always carried my ring case in my breast pocket and found, should things appear a wee bit frosty as the door opened to my knock, to casually open the case as I introduced myself usually paved the way to a full inspection of my samples. My ring stock included some very nice articles. One I can remember so well on this trip was a large square reconstructed emerald surrounded by diamonds. The price was £35. I can also remember good old I.J.R., the Wellington diamond merchant who supplied us with that ring. On this occasion there was only the good lady at home, and after a very happy hour or so, which included afternoon tea and the setting in action of a French clock, off I went on my way without any business being transacted, but I received what was every bit as good—an invitation to be sure and call on my next trip, when

Mr. —— would very likely be at home. I am very sorry to say that some time after we received the letter referred to I was informed by one of my stock agent friends that the kindly lady who was the writer of the letter was at times subject to hallucinations. It was no doubt on one of these unfortunate occasions that my trip and the emerald ring must have come to her mind, as she wrote the following lines: "Your traveller called on me a few weeks ago and displayed for my inspection a case of diamond rings, one of which in particular took my notice. It was a large square emerald set in diamonds, a most unusual article. If you will be good enough to look up the English Black and White Journal, of such and such a date and page, you will notice therein that identical ring on display, with Mary Queen of Scots jewels in the British Museum. I am very anxious to know how you came by it, for, according to papers I have in my possession, I am entitled to all those jewels, and I would be much obliged if you would please post it to me by return mail." The good lady passed on many years ago, and I have not called at that lovely home in the mountains since, for the simple reason it was so far off the beaten track and, as trip followed trip, I found it very hard to get in all the calls I would like to in the six weeks I had going through the Central. It only took two successful calls to fill in an afternoon, especially as they were often miles apart, and when I started on to the towns my average knocking-off time would be about 10.30 p.m. It was a hard life at times, but there was always a little sport round the corner if a chap could work his trips to arrive at the right place for the week-end.

As I write this letter in the sunshine at Opoho the postie girl hands to me a pair of ducks (dressed as usual) from my old friend Cecil, as a reminder of the many happy days we have had together in the first week of May. He very seldom misses the unfortunate ducks which come within range of his gun, and when he has them to spare he never forgets me—some good old sport and pal after all these years.

It was at one of these wayback stations one evening that generous old John of Maratangi said to me: "You can't go on the roads to-night, Jimmy. Take my gun and a dozen cartridges and have a crack at the hares. There are plenty of them in that ring-fenced paddock, and as they can't get out of there you should have a lot of fun; but, by heck,

don't come back without some dog tucker or you won't get any tea yourself." I was soon over the fence and into the tussocks stirring up the hares. The fun was there all right, but I am sure the hares had most of it, barring the one I got with my last shot. I could not miss it, in spite of the gun. The way they ran and dived through the tussocks at the reports made me think they had the joke on me. When I returned with my only bit of dog tucker, Jack laughed as he said: "I forgot to tell you that since I had an accident with the gun it shoots round corners." "You don't need to tell me that, Jack," said I. "Besides, with both hammers on full cock, the kick from the right barrel sends the left off after it." I found that out when I let go in a hurry at the first hare to rise. I am sure I got a bigger shock than it did as it went through the tussocks like greased lightning, leaving me to wonder from where that kick under the jaw came. On examining the barrels I found a crack in the brazing on the right barrel side, and talk about a hair trigger—I do believe you could have blown the left one down with a long drink straw. It made me careful, but the hares did not seem to mind very much. However, it was a good evening's sport, and not the last I had in that same paddock and round about.

John's lovely homestead was only three miles up the valley over the river from Kokonga, where I have spent many a happy evening with another old pal, Jock by name, a great customer and as a friend as solid as a rock. Billiards usually filled the winter evenings, while Billy Williams sang himself hoarse on the gramophone in some of his old favourites as "Johnny Get Your Gun," "Save a Little One for Me," and others. At times I have helped Jock with his wool pressing, branding, harvest, and milked his cows. In fact, by the time I came off the roads I had my feet well on the first rung of the farmer's ladder. Eel bobbing and rabbit potting usually filled the summer evenings in slack periods for me at Taieri-side. It was Jock who asked me late one Friday afternoon if I could spare him a day, as he was a man short for the morrow's mustering. He wondered if I would take the dray (as the river was too high for the car) and all their gear eight miles down the river to his Mareburn run and have tea ready for them on their arrival with their dogs. Of course, the pleasure was all mine, but what a rotten road it was, and I got there in good time without rolling the whole outfit down those steep banks into

the Taieri River. There were some jokes going round that night in the two-roomed shack full of bunks. Jock and his three other mounted musterers were off up the mountains at 4 a.m., leaving the sleepy cook with instructions to have that hindquarter pot-roasted by about noon, when they would arrive at the yards with their sheep. This was my first attempt at station cooking, but as I usually tried anything once—as I did when I put the thirteen stitches in a young split pig about that time,—I thought I could manage that roast. However, it was a real good job, or maybe it was only the great mountain air which made the appetites of us all leave nothing but grease on those bones. After a hand in the wash-up, away went the lads with their yelping dogs to mount their "neddies," leaving me to lock up and return to meet them for our next good meal at that bonnie homestead of Taieri-side at Kokonga.

SCHOOL DAYS AND LATER

INCLUDED in my many Central Otago customers were the doctors, whose life was much harder in those days than a doctor's life to-day, and quite unlike the coachmen and the C.T.'s, who always had a good idea of how much sleep they could expect each night. They were on call at all hours, and I did not envy them their many midnight drives at all seasons over some of those hills and valleys. They were great chaps, and as easy to approach and get on with as the C.T.'s themselves. Of course, there were no motor cars on the roads then. The first one of these to almost chase me off the road was the property of a very enterprising old friend at Patearoa. It was what they called an International motor buggy; it cost £244, and to my mind it was more like a fire engine to look at than a conveyance for comfort. It had solid rubber-rimmed tyred wheels—like the up-to-date handsome cabs of the day—and derived its power

for its 25 miles per hour on a good road from a heavy horizontal air-cooled twin engine under the seat. This sent it along at the start with the noise of a chaffcutter and smell of a London bus, as it rattled on its fourteen miles to the gallon. Its one fault was due to the fact that on soft roads the narrow wheels would dig themselves in and cause no end of bother. I am quite sure my friend received much better satisfaction from the 18ct. Hunter I sold him many years ago. In fact, he only rang me lately wondering where he could take it for its second overhaul.

Although the motor buggy was the first on the Maniototo Plain, the late Mr. E. C. Cutten, magistrate in the bonnie wee town of Naseby on the north edge of the plain, owned the first motor car. But he had to get rid of it on account of the great trouble he was causing to the horse traffic from all over the district, and maybe there was a big chance of losing some of his clients to his opposition in the town. The doctor at Waipiata also tried his luck with one of those noisy Darrocqs with the same results, and as soon as my Patearoa friend could improve on his motor buggy he did so, and purchased a Buick.

On one of those early trips I sold to a doctor's wife a lady's silver Hunter, 15 jewelled, and a great wee watch it was at 65/-, but on my return trip she was full of complaints in her very nice way, as the watch was going very fast; "in fact," she said, "it is fifteen minutes fast now." On asking her as to when she had last set it to time I was told that she had not set it at all, and as she wound it every night it had never stopped since I sold it. "Well," said I, "as that is six months ago, it is not bad for a new watch, and I will not try to improve on it, as it is only gaining two and a-half minutes a month." On looking at it that way she was quite satisfied, and decided to set it to time herself and not wait for my return.

On another occasion a doctor's wife on the Southland border took a great fancy to a round unset cameo about the size of a shilling. When I drew a design for a brooch in two knife-edge scroll bars in 15ct. she decided to purchase it. In due course the brooch was forwarded per registered post, but it was not in the packet when it arrived, so she said. However, as I was lucky enough to have a match for that cameo, I mounted it up and sent it on. Some months later, on my next trip, this honest lady produced the packet and told me to examine it, as she had kept it for me just as it

arrived, packing and all—even to the string and label. On opening the wee box and unfolding a fair-sized piece of tissue paper, out rolled the brooch on the table. I must say I did enjoy the joke and, knowing her very well, I was able to advise her to see the doctor about her eyesight. As for her surprise, she covered her face in her hands, and on apologising told me how very easy it would have been for her to have taken advantage of my trust in her word.

Little did I think when in my school days that the teacher who used to let us youngsters have it good and hard with his strap (which did us no harm), was later to be one of my best doctor customers in the Central. Many a chat we had of the days when he put our names on the blackboard in shorthand, and how he would cut up a pluck on his table in giving us a lesson in physiology. It was a great, but messy, idea, and showed us how part of our own make-up below our collars worked and what it looked like, and little did we know he was also getting his own hand in for years to come I had him on his toes at times in his attempts to get a squeal out of me, but he never succeeded in that. I made him smile when reminding him of the day he went out of the room, leaving us at lessons. Up jumped Hugg at the back of the room and threw a cricket ball to me in the front row under the side window, from where I had a good view out into the passage. Buzz, away at the other end, also stood up and beckoned for the ball, which I let him have over the heads of the class, and he threw it back again to me. But, like the big cock-shot he was, it went yards too high and out through the window into the street, and just as I sat down on the approach of the teacher, the squeal the girls let out at the crash would have made you think a mouse had got loose among them. Out we three were paraded and into good old headmaster Darby's office, where we were informed that by the time we had told our parents and collected from them the price of a new glass, he was sure they would have given us enough punishment. Of course, boy-like, we did not do the George Washington act and tell our parents, and as we heard no more about it we looked upon it as a great let-off. Hugg, who started the catcher game, was the late Hughie Doig, who lost his fine new home in a cloud burst in the Cromwell Gorge many years ago. Buzz was a real clever chap at school, but as a Rugby forward was as rough as anything his father's Highlands ever produced.

The mention of Buzz brings to mind how I got the idea of stitching a pig. It is a long story, but may be worth recording, and if he who is now one of the big chiefs in the N.Z. Reserves Management ever sees it, I do trust it will make him smile and not send him down to Dunedin looking for me with one of his insect spraying gadgets or pruning knives. We were neighbours and great pals, as were our Dads since their arrival from Scotland. It so happened that three or four of us had decided to have a game of hockey—in other words, plain shinty, and in the way we liked it, with any old sticks and tin or pine cone. In my attempt to give the tin a terrific swipe, my extra long stick swung well over my shoulder, as if driving a ball to the long hole on the golf course. Somehow Buzz had got behind me, and in my back swing I also hit him on the tip of his long nose. Gee whizz! By the gory mess of his face I thought I had killed him, as away he went home like a scalded cat. A few hours later I thought I had better go and see how he was, as I was sure the tip of his nose was only hanging on, and to my surprise he was fit for another game with a perfect crescent scab over one of his good points. "Gosh, Buzz!" I exclaimed, "how did it heal so quick?" "Oh, my mother put pepper on it. It's a great cure for a cut," said he.

It was only a year or so later that we had a bag slashing scrap at school. We were sharpening our pencils while the first assistant J. Fitzgerald—Fitz., as we called him—was chalking a lesson on the blackboard. There never was a better teacher anywhere than Fitz., as any of the old N.E. Valley or Kaikorai pupils will agree. I don't know how it started, but Buzz was trying to make another cut in the flap of my bag. I grabbed his wrist to prevent him, and just as Fitz. looked our way to see what the trouble was we drew our hands apart, resulting in a deep cut right across the back of my hand. Out came my toe rag, as we called our handkerchiefs, and up went my other hand. "Please may I go out?" "Go on, and hurry up," says Fitz., with no idea I wasn't going for an ice-cream and only making for the tap to try and stop the bleeding. This I managed, and on arriving home for lunch I made for the big pepper pot and a clean handky, taking care that no one was the wiser by hiding the cut up my sleeve. Back at school I started playing cricket while waiting for the one o'clock bell; I must have re-opened the cut, for it started to bleed again so badly that I had to admit to Fitz. Tom Begg, the pupil-teacher, took me into

hositpal, where I had the pleasure of seeing the pepper taken off and four stitches put in.

It was this simple job that gave me the idea years later of stitching my good old farmer friend's split pig. I still carry the scar, due to the fact that, boylike, I thought I would undo the bandages and have a look at it, and as one of the stitches had cut through the flesh I thought I would take them all out myself, as I was not keen on returning to the hospital. This I did with an old pair of tweezers. My Dad employed six watchmakers at the bench at that time, but I cannot remember any one of them making me a present of a few old tools. I must say that Buzz's old-time pepper cure did form a good solid binding on my cut, as it did on the point of his nose, and if he is not carrying the Turkish Crescent round with him to-day, I bet he saw its stars at the sudden end of our gentle game of shinty in the 'eighties. I do trust he does not object to my using his nick-name of over fifty years ago. We all had one, my own being Flukes, and my brother Jack's was Fluner. I know he is a very busy chap but, should he be on a loose end some evening, he may find it interesting trying to sort out some of his old N.E. Valley schoolmates from the following. I can remember and place them all, and only mention them as a reminder of the old school days. Nosser should give him an easy start, but who were Squeaks, Ginger, We-We, Pig in Harness, Clumps, Scabby, Sailer, Runner, Nigger, Darkie, Chilly, Sanner, Wid, Cumbo, Rat, Juno, Nicky, Curley, Fatty, Skish, with the only one I remember to make an extra good opening for himself in a most appropriate place. He was Jumbo, an engineer, who went to India many years ago. Poofter and Irish were two of the girls, but I will leave them at that, as I must keep off the grass with my evergreen memory where they are concerned.

While on the old school form, may I mention the 1889-90 New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, held on vacant land where the present Winter Show Buildings now stand. It must have been considered a bit out of the way at the time as a tram line was laid to it for the benefit of old folk. All we North-East Valley School kiddies, infants excepted, were one day taken along in several trams to the great show, and it may interest the publishers, W. and T., to know that as we passed their premises, and those of Horsburgh's in George Street, they came in for a great booing from all the wee blokes as our disapproval of the hard lesson books they

supplied to all the schools. But my only recollection of the Exhibition itself is the fact of handling Lord Nelson's sword, the switchback railway, Thomson's lemonade and Johnny Brown's threepenny pies, which were as full of mince as Thomson's bottles were of drink. A relic of the day may still be seen, as one of the Exhibition domes is doing duty on a farm on the Brighton-Taieri Mouth Road. As for the old horse trams, which used to run about a mile past the present Normanby terminus, several of them made their last run to many of our bonnie coastal camping grounds to be converted into real good cribs.

BOTCH JOBS—BRING ME GOOD SALES

On several occasions when reading the *Horological Journal* I have noticed some writers commenting on what they call botched jobs. Call them what they may, but I think circumstances alter cases, and after I have described two or three of the A1 botch jobs which I have put through myself, and always free of charge, these good tradesmen, if they like, can call me a crackerjack on the lead soldering, known to the trade as tommying. Of course, I cannot understand anyone using tommy on a watch repair, and well I remember as a lad how my big brothers used to roar at me if they found me using the acid bottle anywhere near their benches. During my first few months at the trade I was very fond of using the tommy, and also trying to turn out brass cannon on the lathe in my spare time. A model clockwork coal mine and a patent self-feeding shaving brush with the cream in the handle were my best attempts at imitating Edison. The brush idea was a good one and did work well, as did also a screw-on tap for kerosene tins of that time, but when I attempted a flying machine I found I was soaring too high for a lad, although had I stuck a propellor in front of my model I do believe I would have got a kick out of it. The only tin propellor I made to fly off a stick went just

about out of sight, except one day when the cord tangled and it flew back to me instead of away, resulting in a bad cut and a very close shave for one eye—so that was the end of that.

My old bench-mate Steve, who is still with Peter Dick and sparking on all cylinders, had as much chance of flying as my model had. It was only lately that he gave me a chit about the machine that flew away and never returned.

Botch job No. 1 came to light one day when I called on an old farmer friend in the Upper Taieri Valley, where he only received his bread and mail once a week at the local hotel-post office and store all in one. I found the old chap wearing his old-fashioned spectacles tied on with a piece of elastic and trying to read his Otago Witness through one lens. When I told him I thought I could fix the frames if he was not particular as to the appearance of them, his eyes brightened up at once, although he doubted by ability to do so, as he had no solder. In my hunt round I managed to scrape enough off an old tin from his rubbish dump. By using the hot wax off a match for a flux over the heat of a candle, I soon had the frames in shape again, leaving a good bead of tommy over the break in the bridge for strength, and I can say I never remember seeing a customer so delighted over a job as that old chap was. It was a real botch job and worth sixpence as repair prices were at that time, but I preferred a good walking advertisement by saving my friend a wait of seven days or more had he posted the repair to the city.

Botch No. 2 came about in a farm house at Kyeburn. My old friend Jesse and his good wife were missing the striking of their clock very much—winding it up, off it would strike the eight days in as many minutes. I soon had the movement out, and to save time I turned the wheel round to the side of the plate, from where I was able to replace the lock pin with a little tommy; for the heat in this joint I used spirits. I remember so well asking the old chap not to mention who last repaired that clock should he ever take it to town, little thinking that in ten years' time he would bring it back to me for an overhaul. By that time all the farmers had motor cars, and a hundred-mile trip into the city was a joy-ride for them. By the time I retired I had been many times repaid for the very pleasant hour spent on that botch job. It introduced me to all that district's A.A., Collie Dog, and Rifle Clubs' business, in which his son was

very interested.

By the time I have related Botch No. 3 my readers will be calling for a halt, especially the diamond setters. I was in Christchurch at the time, and being at a loose end one Sunday I found myself on the way to Sumner. Here I was surprised to meet my old friend Mrs. S., from Earnscleugh Station. While sitting chatting on one of the beach seats she showed me the diamond Marquis ring I had sold her some years previously. There was a small diamond missing from the side, and when I told her I could fill that gap in the setting she smiled as she handed it over. I did this by pressing into the setting a small bead of bright tinfoil from a chocolate, and by pricking it to make it shine I surprised myself with the result as I held it up to the sunlight. "There you are, Mrs. S.," I said. "Diamonds while you wait." "Upon my word you are a real fraud," she said. "They may all be made of that stuff for all I know, for they look the same to me." Of course in her jovial manner she was stretching it, but we enjoyed our little chat, and I left her wearing the fake, with a promise to call in at Dunedin for a new stone on her way back to Clyde.

I cannot mention Clyde without very happy memories of the great hospitality I received at Earnscleugh Station and of Mr. and Mrs. S. and their bonnie family. While stopping a week-end there it did not take me long to make up my mind to join the three girls in a picnic to the Fraser River, where they thought I might catch some fish. It was a very bonnie spot they took me to, and as the prospects looked good I was soon whipping the big stream. After an hour's fishing with little luck, one of the lassies came upstream with her camera, asking me to hurry up and get a good one on, as she wanted to take a snapshot of me landing it. "I can soon arrange that," I said, "but we will make it of the big one that got away." (Fake again!) Reeling in and tying a stone on the line where my cast should be, and throwing it well out into the stream again, I was thus able to put a good bend into my very light split-cane rod. So far so good. Now for faking the big fish as it would splash the water in its attempts to disgorge my fly. I advised Miss G. to get ready and take the snapshot as another long stone I was holding hit the water a few feet from where my taut line disappeared from sight. The first shot was too early and exposed the stone flying through the air, but the second one was really good, and all you could see was the splash of

the big fish (stone) as it performed close to the surface. It was a real good photo, and the only one I ever had taken of "the big one getting away," and like most anglers I can say I have missed a few good ones. That was my only day on the Fraser River, and if I did not get many fish on that occasion, I can say I had a lot of fun and am sure I could return to the very spot where my big one is still lying. No doubt those were the days! I can recommend this fine example of an angler's skill at playing a big fish, as it makes a great snap-shot of a battle for life between a ten-pounder on the end of a 3x cast and an anxious lad at the ready with his net. Try it on, some of you young sports, some day when the fish are not on the job.

For the final fake may I record the time, as a lad, a customer was upset at losing a pebble from her old Scotch brooch, and of course without a hope of replacing it. I put on my thinking cap and made a real good brummy one out of red and green sealing-wax mingled with brown shellac. It was surprising how well the fake looked, and how pleased the old lady was with her hard wax refill.

It was only a month ago that an old friend visited my wife. On noticing the centre stone missing from her large and beautiful old daisy design pebble brooch, I asked to have a look at it. She informed me that none of the jewellers would look at it, so, after forty-odd years, back I go to the fake and into my Dad's old tool chest again. It was only a matter of a few minutes until I had that vacant setting filled in with green wax and shellac to form a perfect imitation Scotch pebble to match. Our old friend was very pleased with this botch, and she agreed with me that had I been in business, and she a stranger, she would have been a new customer for keeps. Of course, the bright shine does not last for many months on these fakes, but a gentle heating with a match will bring it up again for "state" occasions.

I could count these botch jobs on my finger tips, as I did not look upon giving some faithful old clock a run and a drink as such, and there was no doubt they at times lead up to further business. Country folk are not in a hurry as a rule, and I can record a good sale or two through being the same, at times. I had met old Tommy (as he was called) at the Waipiata saleyards, when he asked me to call in any time I was passing his farm. The following trip saw me entering his back yard just as he was making for the cow-shed with a bucket in each hand. "You're just in time for a

cup of tea," he said. "Come along inside and see the wife, and I will see you later. I won't be long." With the three daughters busy in that big kitchen I could see a very likely sale if I could only get Dad interested around my samples, for I knew I had the goods. He was a long time over those cows, and to spin it out myself I got busy on a Peep-o-Day alarm clock which the dear old lady told me had had its day. As I was about ready to go and wish Dad good afternoon, or see how he was progressing, he returned with his buckets of milk. "Oh, you can't go away to-night; you are too far from the nearest hotel," he said. "Stop the night and we will play cards." Thanking him very much, I accepted his hospitality, "and we'll play shops also if you don't mind," I added. After tea the girls did not give their Dad the chance to produce a pack of cards, and I am quite sure I did not encourage him either. Sales that night were £55/10/0 cash. Very nice business I may quite easily have walked away from had that alarm clock not required a drink.

The next best sale, directly due to filling in time on an idle clock (and there were dozens of them, especially before farmers owned motor cars), was at Horse Flat, where I went three miles off the road to take the pulse (as I used to say) of an old friend. But I did not like my sales prospects, as he was up to his eyes drafting sheep, and the day was very hot and he looked the same. It was as bad as calling on Monday morning, when the soap-suds would likely be flying about like thistle-down caught up in a whirlwind. At the mention of clocks I was at once directed to the house to have a look at his grandfather clock (a real old-timer it was), which he said he would give anything to see going again. It took me all afternoon to get the old relic back to doing its good work, as I had to make a hammer spring from a fine knitting needle. George was delighted with that job and made me take ten shillings for my trouble—(pleasure I should say)—and as with other jobs, although I could not guarantee them, I had a good idea they were right for a few years. Of course, that meant stopping all night, and it also gave me a chance with my samples, and with my friend at his best, his pipe going strong after a good tea. I could not have wished it better, for besides putting the first spoke in our lasting friendship, I did a very good night's business. So why hurry!

It is to meet these good old pals that I go out to the

A. and P. Shows these days, and, man, I can tell you it's grand to meet them again and have a chat and a handshake which has always counted for so much between old friends in Otago.

A SHOCKING SALE AND A TWO-IN-ONE SHANDY GAFF

IT IS STRANGE at times how a chap comes in contact with a good sale from the least expected quarter, and I can say I have had my share of these. I had a better chance than the man behind the counter, as I went out after them while he waited for them to come along.

If possible I always attended the stock sales in the Central Otago yards. It was a great place to meet the farmers, especially if the prices were good. It was better than a day at the city wool sales—(dog fights I have heard them called, when all the buyers would bid strongly for some line of extra choice bales)—because you met them when there was no hurry to transact other city business before going home. At the Palmerston yards one day an old chap asked me what I would charge him for a 9ct. curb albert, the same as he was wearing. I glanced at it and quoted £4/10/-. "You are far too dear," he said. "This one only cost me £3/10/- in Sydney, but had I known I was going to meet you here I would have brought my watch with me. Call in the first time you are passing and take it away for repair." As I was due for another trip through his valley, I promised to call within the month.

When I did arrive at his lovely homestead, and finding him with more time on his hands than in his pocket, I thought I would like to have another look at his cheap albert and in case he did want another one. As the old gentleman had a grown-up family round him I thought my chances looked good for a sale, and on my request he produced his

albert for comparison with one of my own, a pad of which with muff chains and necklets I was about to open up. "It cost you £3/10/-," I said, as I handed it back to him. "Now feel the weight of this article of mine at £4/10/-, the same pattern but much heavier, for your Aussie article is as hollow as the bung-hole in a barrel." He did not know it was hollow, and was not at all pleased when I compared it also with a 50/- ladies' hollow curb bangle from my stock. This set him thinking, and I must say it took something of the kind to do so, for he was one of the hardest old cases I ever had the pleasure of collecting a good cheque from, and I had to remind him that he was not buying sheep at the yards. Sales that afternoon were very good indeed, as he purchased watches and chains for all his family.

But the funny part of this story from my point of view starts when I met him again in Dunedin a few weeks later. He was on old chap, and being on his way to the wool stores a short way out of the city, he was only too pleased to accept my offer of a lift in the car to his destination. How strange it was that our conversation should take place just outside the door of one of my best friends in the trade, and that he should be standing inside getting an eye-full and wondering what I was up to now. For it was only the next day, when I happened to meet him in the street, that he said: "I say you put old MacPherson in your car yesterday. Did you sell him any watches lately?" Shocking as it may have appeared to him, who is now in a big way in a North Island city, I had to admit I had, and jokingly chipped in with "You chaps haven't got a chance with these Central farmers if I get on the scent of a good sale." He took it in the way I expected from such a good chap, and should he see this I hope it sends his happy thoughts back to Balwacewen Links and the many long balls he used to hit, chip and lose there. Continuing, he said, "The old gentleman had £80 worth of watches and chains from me on appro. and returned the lot." That was not the only business I had with this great old chap, but I was never again able to get him to open his heart like a rabbit trap and make such a hole in my samples. In my last story I talked about never being in a hurry, and I can say I did not hurry here, but I got there all the same, and just in time, as one of his daughters told me when next I called. For those goods were there on appro. all right when I arrived to collect her dad's repair.

It was about this time I ran against the queerest case of

true love I ever met in all my travels. His little sweetheart further down the country bought from me the best pair of sleeve links I had in stock. At that time you got a very heavy article in 9ct. for 35/-. She informed me they were for her boy friend Joe, but as she did not know his third initial she left it to me to get this when calling on him the next day in his village. I was to have the links engraved and returned direct to him, and she would see him when he made his usual week-end call on her. The following day saw me stopping at the old Diggers' Rest Hotel in the village, and in the evening I contacted Joe, and as the sitting-room was occupied I took him to my bedroom, where by lighting an extra candle from a spare room I was able to put more light on the subject. He expressed great joy at the present from his wee lass, and as I returned it to my wallet with the engraving instructions I said, "I suppose you will do the same for her, as Xmas is coming near." "Of course," he said. "What have you got—let me see some brooches." I unfolded two pads of these, each displaying four dozen greenstone and gold. He at once decided on a large greenstone and gold anchor at 40/-, with the words, "That will do fine, wrap it up!" But on second thought he said, "Hold on, what did she pay for the links?" When I told him 35/-, he again surprised me by asking if she had paid cash for them. "Of course she did," I replied. He was only a lad, and no doubt planning to finance that purchase for his first love, but when he said, "Well here is five bob Jimmy; you stick to the links and put them back into stock and we will be quits." Gee whiz! what a bird I thought, as I scratched my head, and thinking he might be good for a ring next trip, I let him get away with it. I was only a lad myself at the time, otherwise I might have given it further thought before letting him have a 40/- brooch for 5/-. However, they got married and lived happily together ever after.

I have often wondered what his story was about the links—maybe they got lost on the way,—but all the same I did lay myself open to any yarn he may care to put over to his girl friend. I have not met his wife since, but when I met him only a year or so past in the city we had a great chat about the Central and its gold, and when he informed me that he was doing very well and had three boys bigger than myself—(and I am no bantam)—I said, "I suppose you have also got the pair of gold sleeve links your wife purchased from me before you were married?" But as he

could not remember anything about them I let the matter drop and congratulated him on his success in his business and also in his home.

They were great days on the roads at that time, and the big livery stables which are non-existant to-day were kept very busy with dozens of travellers coming and going all the year round. I had very little opposition myself, and took my own time on the road, though some of the other travellers might be chasing each other; but what a happy crowd of good fellows they were. I am sorry to say one of the first local lads I met in Naseby, who later on represented one of Dunedin's big drapery firms, was killed in that recent tragic railway accident at Hyde. As a born traveller I do not think his equal existed. His was a sterling character, and with his smile and music Fred Christopher could enter anywhere in his quest after his special line of business. Fred would never handle a line he could not stake his own reputation on, and that is the only way to get customers and hold them, and many there are in Otago to-day who mourn the loss of a gentleman in one of the blackest days of the Central's history.

When I think of one old traveller who started out long before me and was still going strong when I retired from the Central roads, I can call myself "an also started." This old chap lived to a grand old age, and was as popular as was his mate, who ran him a good second for long and happy days on the roads. His main line was lemonade and other cordials, while his pal's crest was XXX. They were well known to their intimates as "Shandy and Gaff," and when either of them called at an hotel there were always the usual free drinks for everybody in sight, in the house or on the road. I have heard it said that their advice cards were looked upon as an extra bit of good cheer by their own friends. Any others who may already be enjoying a cool pint and a yarn on the old form knew that as soon as either of them entered "Fill 'em up again, boys," would be the call. I have never met old Gaff's equal at cracking a good clean joke. You could see them coming before he opened his mouth, for he had a twinkle in his blue eye all his own, with goodwill and fellowship to all men written all over his very handsome old Irish face. I had more than one joke with him over not sampling his goods straight. I always liked to share my patronage, as I used to say, and stick to having a bit of his old pal's cordial with my beer when I had one, and I still

think it makes a much nicer drink. A "shandy gaff" is hard to beat in its place, whether it be under the hot roof of woolshed, down on the river, or over the bar while renewing good fellowship with some old pal from the Central or down South.

I RAMBLE ALONG FROM THE CLUTHA TO CHRISTCHURCH

THE MENTION of Christchurch in a previous chapter brings to mind a very nice £400 sale that came my way simply through being like the good Boy Scout and doing my one good deed for that day. I happened to meet a very old South Otago friend there. I was sorry to hear that her charming young sister was ill, and when she said "I do wish you would come out home to-night, Jimmy, and cheer Molly up. She is right down to it, and I am sure you could brighten her up a little, for you know there are no friends like the old ones down South." Of course I was delighted to agree to this, and on my way to pay the call, to create a wee bit of extra cheer I bought a box of chocolates and a few flowers at a small shop near the tram stop. In making my purchase I noticed a few tea tables in a wee back room—(I was always on the look-out for them)—and after a few chatty words with the proprietor I was surprised to find that he knew Central Otago well, and by the time I came to mention my own line of business we felt as if we had known each other for years. It did not look a likely place to sell my high-class tearoom wares, and to dampen my chances a little more the shopman informed me that he was afraid I was just too late and how sorry he was I had not called sooner, as he was opening up in a big way and had only that week received quotes for the whole outfit from Wellington. But as nothing had been signed he would see what I had. That sounded much better to me, for I knew I had the goods if he

wanted hard wear and long service.

The following morning saw me there again with quotes and samples for a forty-five table tea and dining-room and a guarantee of delivery within ten days if necessary. That was by no means the best of the many sales I made in the Cathedral City, and no doubt in that case I was very well rewarded for the expenditure of a few shillings on a wee bit good cheer. Of course my W. and H. samples spoke for themselves, but I had to be at my best to help them along.

Molly was a very charming colleen with the beauty we hear so much about in the songs of dear old Ireland—"When Irish Eyes are Smiling," etc.,—and many a happy hour we had at the piano in her home down South, and as that was just after no-license was carried in the Clutha, it was not yesterday. One evening Molly's big sister wished to see my samples as she had a gift of money with which to buy herself a present, but as she was so well stocked with jewellery she could not make up her mind what to buy. "Something right out of the common," I said, never thinking I was hitting the nail on the head as I picked up from one of my sample pads a 3¼in. greenstone and gold glove hook—(button-up gloves were all the fashion then)—and at the same time hooking up with it a large greenstone heart with a pearl-set star centre. "There you are," I said, as I placed it on her frock, "I will close the hook on the heart and make the glove hook into a brooch, and you will have something that nobody else in New Zealand has got." "It is just the very thing, Jimmy," she said. "I think it is lovely." It was a very queer idea and a bit of a greenstone splash, but one has got to think of some new idea, when all others have failed to catch a sale and where a few pounds are going begging. My customer was very pleased, and that was the main thing.

I always made a point of putting in a good word for my opposition, and on one occasion in the Gimmerburn an old farmer gave one of our best-known city firms a terrible slating because his clock had not ticked a minute since he had it returned from a 15/- overhaul. "You make it go and he takes the money," he said. But I made the old chap see the firm through other spectacles, as the trouble was his own in not adjusting the clock to the level of his warped mantelpiece. However, I sold him two solid silver hunting levers for his boys, but as we were complete strangers, the idle clock paved the way for this nice sale, for by the time I

had it going—and I did not hurry,—we felt we knew each other much better.

An opposite story which introduces Honest John, as I have heard him called many times by his intimates, shows the staunchness of the good old Otago folk of long ago. It also shows how a smart Alec, by saying too much, can put his own pot on if he is not careful. It happened when I was busy with my good side-line. An old lady on the Taieri, where I had sold over a hundred of these lighting plants, was half inclined to come in line with her neighbours and also purchase one from me, but as I never tried to hurry anyone into buying, I left her with the promise to call within a week or so. This gave my opposition a chance to get in with his great advice to the old lady, and I will repeat the story word for word as her daughter, who looked upon it as a great joke, gave it to me. "He was dressed up to kill and had a motor car, which of course carried no weight with mother, and after he had done his best at pointing out all the bad points in your plant and running it down in general, Mother, who had not so far said a word, suddenly opened out on him. 'Look here, young man,' she said, 'I have known that lad's father long before you were born, and I am sure he was a man who never told a lie in his life. I don't know his son so well, but I am sure he is a chip off the old block, and would not take me down or tell a lie either. Now you know the way you came in here. Good day to you.'" (This is where I lift my hat if it will come off!) On my next call I sold my plant and received the above story from the bonnie wee lass. Later my loyal old friend showed me her very much worn wedding ring and keeper, both supplied by my Dad many years ago, and long before I gave my own mother the stony stare through the clouds of the powder puff while on her knee. The old 18ct. keepers took up a lot of room on the finger, beside the just-as-broad wedding ring of that time, but they were going out of fashion when I started my apprenticeship.

Fancy a young wife to-day wearing an old-fashioned wedding ring and keeper! In those good old days very few of them received diamond engagement rings up to £50 or so, as most of the young fellows put all their cash into the farm or home. This good old lady passed away many years ago, but her bonnie lassie who handed on this joke, as she called it, took up nursing as a profession and finished her training in the Dunedin Public Hospital, obtaining her

N.Z.R.N. medal with my ain guid wife, and in time both these lassies through great old-time devotion to duty and unselfish sacrifice of time and leisure became the owners of their own private hospitals in the city. My wife, who volunteered for the First World War, was not accepted, but was in charge of the first boys to return from Gallipoli. I am sure my late brother Jack did not know what a great turn he was doing me when he gave me that splendid silverware agency, for it introduced me to all the public and private hospital matrons from Christchurch to the Bluff. There is no need for me to throw bouquets at the splendid body of women who manage these institutions. They are in a class of their own, and it is when an agent calls on them, perhaps when they are up to their eyes with business or worry, that they show their great qualities in their way of receiving him, when he might be at the moment a real nuisance, as well as they can handle the operating theatre or sick patient, and it's me who knows it very well from both angles.

In following up some of my old friends I have wandered away from Otago, and I would like to pass on a great compliment paid to my farmer friends there by M.S. & Co., of Christchurch. I had finished up with them and my sideline, and I called in on their very popular late manager, Mr. Morley, for a handshake and to thank his firm for the splendid attention paid to all my orders and commissions. He said he was very sorry to lose me for, besides my sales being a record for their New Zealand travellers, my Otago business was the cleanest ever put on their books from any district, as I had not struck one bad debt or troublesome client for them during the three years I handled their new agency. In thanking him I said I did not think that was out of the ordinary for Otago, where I always found the farmers as honest as the day, as no doubt they are in other districts; but, man, some of them may be hard! Regarding bad debts, I cannot recall a total loss of £20 from this cause during all the years I was on the Otago and Southland roads on my own account. Before the 1925-26 Exhibition, where I had charge of one of the finest exhibits in that very successful Dunedin enterprise, and to get acquainted with my good silverware agency which I was to work from Christchurch to the Bluff, I travelled a good half of the North Island up as far as the Bay of Islands. I liked the North very much, but I did miss the tang in our dry cool air, also our mountains and our scenery. I was not my own boss up

there, so did not carry my rod with me, but anglers who know tell me that the fish in the Northern waters fight nothing like those of the cooler lakes and fast flowing rivers of the South. Hook a 2lb. trout on the end of a 3x cast in Moke Lake, Queenstown, and you will have to be very careful if you are to land it after having all the fight you could wish for. If you are clever enough to deceive one of the big ones on to your fly in the heavy waters of the Hawea or Kawarau Rivers, you can shut your eyes and fancy you have hooked a sword fish in the far North.

I notice in all this rambling there is hardly a smile for my readers, so with the hope of raising one and adding still more to the variations, may I again introduce the old parson chap of the wee brown dog joke in an earlier story. It happened at the Lauder Kirk and just as the service was about to conclude. A couple of the lads with a bit of the devil still left in them took the parson's trap and ran it down the road a hundred yards or so through the gate and returned it to where his quiet old "neddy," with several others, was tethered to the wire fence. They then poked the shafts as far as they would go through the fence and yoked the horse in from the other side. It was quite the usual thing after the service for the lads to yoke up for the old chap, but you can imagine the mirth this joke caused as the folk came out of church and leisurely made for their buggies and traps to find the parson's turnout all ready waiting for him to drive away, but with the horse on one side of the fence and the trap on the other. It did not take long for this yarn to travel all through the Central. It was only the other day that it was told to me again in the city by my old friend Mr. J. Little* from Puketoi Station, and after all these years as a good merry-maker, it was as fresh and green as the day it was coined.

*Mr. Jas. Little passed away since my writing, a great loss to the farming community of Otago.

FOLK WE MEET AND FRIENDS WE MAKE AT QUEENSTOWN

As THIS STORY finds me free from business and with no samples to worry about, I am at my best when I land in a certain spot of which I never weary, no matter how often I may visit it.

In human nature No. 1 always comes first, which in this case is myself, getting a lot of pleasure out of recording all these happy memories of past days. Unlike any other number, No. 1 was very seldom tacked on to me in any game or competition, but I did not mind that so much as seeing it lying on the bottom of my fishing basket after a long day's sport, which, however, was better than the "ducks" I used to score at cricket.

To come to my story. We are returning from a camping trip to the beautiful Eglinton Valley, with Jeannie, our guest from the North Island. Enough has been written about that great valley and its approaches to Milford Sound by abler pens than mine, so I will start where some of them may have left off. Our up-to-date camping outfit is well stored on the Olds car which is aboard the boat from Kingston to Queenstown. The lakeside road was not fully constructed at that time, and it is a toss-up to-day which is the prettier of the two routes to the bonnie wee town halfway up the lake. The small bays backed by mountain peaks make a memorable sight, especially when you pass Halfway Bay Station at the mouth of the Lochie River, and if you are lucky to strike the sunset as it tints the Remarkables on the other side with their snow crevices in all the glorious hues which artists love to portray. Dark and bold Ben Lomond pierces the sky directly in front of you as if to beckon you on to Queenstown Bay, and to say "Come over here and see things."

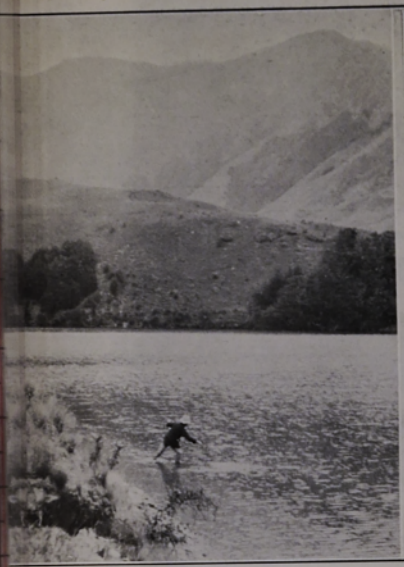
The alternative route to this is by the new road which

skirts the precipices of the Remarkables so closely that you get a pain in the neck in your endeavour to take in all their rugged grandeur you can from such a short range view. On your left you have the lake to set off the ranges and gorges as they unfold a fresh view with the turning of each bluff in the road. All this great sight is capped as you emerge from a wonderful grove of poplars where the road leaves the lake and the great Kawarau River breaks so very suddenly upon your delighted vision as it leaps away from the lake at its only outlet, which is spanned by a £90,000 dam. This dam was erected some years ago to form a bridge and to hold back the lake to give the anxious miners from the city a chance to scoop up the dishes of gold (which they never got on account of the waters from the Nevis and Arrow Rivers and also the Roaring Meg putting the company out in its calculations as to the baring of the riverbed after the flood gates were closed in the dam). It is a pretty walk across the dam, where one of the bonniest homesteads I have ever seen is nestled in the grassy lawns and lovely trees of one of the first old-time holdings, known as Kawarau Falls Station. It got its name from the rapids nearby, which were partly destroyed in building the foundations of the great dam, but the loss of that great sight is compensated for by the fact that in walking across, if you are not too much taken up in admiring this really beautiful sight, you can amuse yourself watching the trout far below and wonder how they keep their still positions in such a rapid sweep of water, as it flows under the great steel gates. The remaining five miles of this great drive takes you along the lovely Frankton Arm past the Park and Gardens into the old-time mining town of Queenstown, now as famous for its scenic charms as any of our tourist attractions. This is only an hour's run from Kingston, so no doubt you see more for your money in the two-hour lake trip, which gives you more time to take in all the glorious sights as they unfold to you from the deck of the s.s. Earnslaw, a very comfortable ferry steamer. There is no road from Queenstown to Paradise, another 30 miles to the head of the lake, and I find it hard to say which half of this 60-miles lake trip I prefer from a scenic point of view.

On the trip referred to we were coming in from the south end of the lake, which we seldom do. This Dunedin-Gore-Kingston route is 30 miles longer, but as it is practically a level run, no time is lost compared with going our

usual way through the Central via Roxburgh, over its hills and through its scenic gorges. There were the usual number of tourists aboard on this occasion, and a wee way up the lake I noticed my wife was chatting to a handsome old lady whom I could easily place as a visitor from other lands, and I was not long in striking up conversation with a jovial old gentleman nearby, who happened to be her husband. Sir H—— was a retired Admiral of H.M. Navy, out here on a health tour and to see what New Zealand had to offer in the way of scenery, sport and good fellowship to the men who made the Empire and hold it where it is to-day. After enjoying the scenery for a while and pointing out landmarks of interest to him, our conversation turned to sport. "You talk about your trout fishing up North," he said. "We have been in New Zealand six weeks now and I have never yet seen a trout." I was surprised at this remark, which I capped with a guarantee that he would have fish for breakfast on Sunday. I knew the next day, being a Saturday, would see me down the Kawarau out on the big rippling water, with my pipe going well, as I would do my best to entice a fine fish from that cool water on to the Admiral's hot plate.

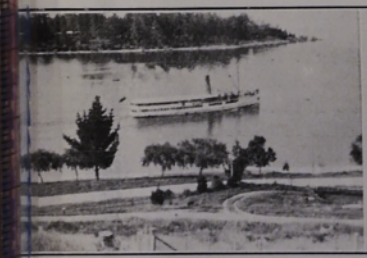
It was only one of our many glorious picnics to the same spot, resulting in the usual fish for breakfast. While coming up the lake Lady —— expressed a wish to visit our camp, as she had never before seen one, so I drove them up for morning tea on Sunday, when they thanked me for the fish I had left for them, and expressed their delight at the camp and the view, as they enjoyed their cup of tea in the MacKenzie Private Camping Ground, which has been greatly improved since the County Council took it over a few years ago and before we built our ain wee hoose on the hillside near by. After a good scout round, the Admiral asked to be shown where I had caught the fish. This led up to us calling for them after lunch and returning to the Kawarau for another picnic. By their delight at the surroundings I am sure they were never taken to a bonnier picnic spot, as across the hundred yards or so of lake-like river, and only a mile or so away, the Remarkables rose rough and rugged with the sweep of a hockey stick to cast their reflections between the great willows on the far side of that lovely sheet of water. I was not long in getting into my waders and putting my rod together, while my good wife saw to the comforts of the lady, by seating themselves in the



LY FISHING ON MOKE LAKE

SNOW RAKING IN HIGH COUNTRY

SITE OF PROPOSED DAM AT STYX (Near Bridge)

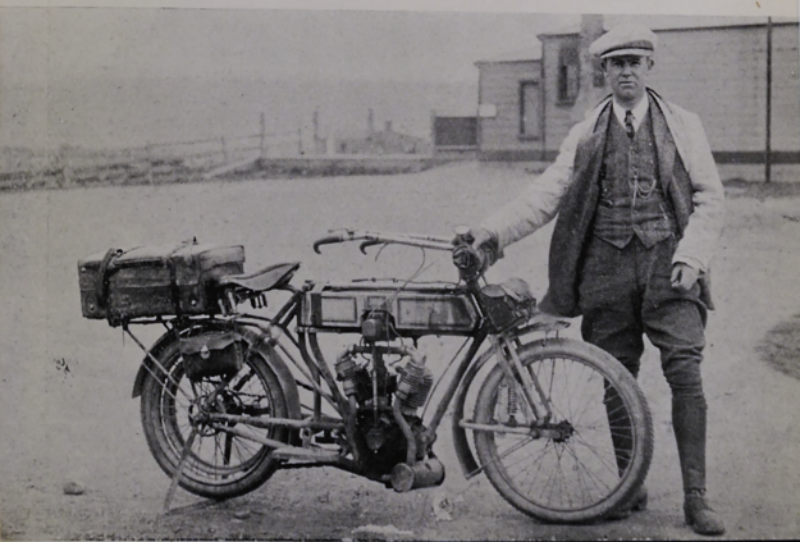


ARNSLAW ON LAKE WAKATIPU

OLD STYX GAOL

KYEBURN STATION

Below—THE AUTHOR WITH HIS B.A.T. MOTOR CYCLE



deck chairs which we always carry on such occasions. The Admiral's quick eye spotted some mushrooms, and as he came up to the car exhibiting a very nice one, he said: "What! Mushrooms! We must go and get some more." So, on tipping all the hamper out, away he went with Jeannie on the hunt. As for me, I was very soon out whipping the glassy water, and hoping for a breeze and a rise, which soon came with good results. I was enjoying myself to the full. I also got a lot of fun in watching the way the Admiral got through the tight fences and over the low gullies on to the top of the big flat terrace overlooking all the river, and from where he was directing and calling to Jeannie, who was hopping about like a spring lamb down in the wee gullies doing his bidding, when he would see a nice mushroom which he thought she was going to miss.

After two hours' trout stalking, I was greatly amused on returning to the car to find the Admiral and Jeannie in their element, each with forks in their hands and standing over a good fire and an over-sized frying pan full of sizzling mushrooms—and sizzling in butter at that,—and they had many more mushrooms than they could fry. When I asked him where he got the frying pan and butter from, he jokingly said, "If you want anything in this world, all you have got to do is to ask nicely for it." It happened that our picnic hamper only contained cakes, biscuits, etc., for a light afternoon tea, besides the usual crockery and cutlery. So off the Admiral had gone to a wee farm house at the entrance to the private property we were on and returned with the frying pan, plenty of bread and butter, pepper and salt. And if anyone liked mushrooms I am sure he did, and as he was some cook, we all had a real good tuck-in before we came to the second course of tea and cakes. It was worth going a long way to see how the old Admiral let himself go for such a great afternoon's fun. If Lady —— appeared to be a little quiet and reserved, she had every reason to be so, as she had lost her only two sons following their dear old dad's calling in the Navy during World War I. To finish a perfect day, that evening she decided to rest, while we for our part took the Admiral for a walk along the wonderful waterfront and to the Gardens to see the very simple though beautiful Captain Scott Memorial, and it was with wonderful expression he read the long inscription thereon. On the way, and as we went chatting with bonnie Jeannie, who was at her best as far as chat went and as full of pep as a sandfly,

the Admiral suddenly laughed out loud and said, "Did you hear what she called me? Captain!" With that he picked her up—(no light weight)—like a kiddie and tossed her over one shoulder, sliding her down the other and on to the grass, as he said: "Now, how do you like that, 'Liza?" I must have tickled him hard when I joined in with "Not 'arf, Enery. No, not 'arf," for he followed on in his joy with "No, not 'arf, not 'arf," in a real old London tone. It must have brought to him very happy memories of his young days in the Navy, for it set him off in great form as he used the old Coster expression. I can quite picture the Admiral making a nice little smoke-room story out of that day when he got home, if not on the trip.

Their only regret was that the Tourist Department had only booked them in for three days at Queenstown—(the South Island let down again!)—when they could have enjoyed a week, and with our car at their disposal we would have seen to that. After Lady ----- arrived back in England she kindly wrote to my wife inviting us to visit her beautiful home there, and stating that in all their travels round the world they had never spent a more enjoyable day anywhere than the one they spent with us frying mushrooms at Queenstown.

It was really good to meet them again in 1937 at their fine old home in England, but that part of the story will keep for another time.

The mention of the good folk from England cannot come about without recording one fine old gentleman from Glasgow way. But to try and retail all the kindnesses shown to us in Scotland by this typical old retired Scottish engineer would at present take too much space, so in the meantime I will simply introduce him as Mr. J. R. stopping for a day while over here with my old pal the late Frank Curtis at his hotel in Queenstown. He had just come up from Lake Te Anau, the Oreti and Mararoa Rivers in Southland, where he reckoned the fly fishing was the best in any land, and that was saying a great deal, as fishing was his hobby, wherever the sport was best. This was his third visit to New Zealand, and he told me he always made straight for Mossburn, and our old pal there, Gordon MacCauley, storekeeper, known to all good sports far and wide; also author of "What I Know About Fishing." What a treat it was to look over his beautiful rods, etc., but he carried no net or gaff, for as he told me, if he cannot beach his

trout with the side of his boot he doesn't mind losing it, and letting it go to fight another day. How many anglers do that? Not me, for one. He enjoyed our few hours at Moke Lake, and when he left Queenstown he promised me that should I ever go home to Scotland he would give me a day on Loch Leven and supply all the rods, etc. What a day that was—the best I ever put in on any water, but it will have to keep for another time, for with the two weeks we spent under his most hospitable roof at Glasgow it would, if told in full, fill many pages. When I set out from my own back yard, as it were, and give myself a longer rope, I will go touring the heather and the hills of bonnie Scotland, about which not all has been told by Rabbie Burns and a' the ither guid writers who seem to make the bristles on the legs of the long, long, long hairy-legged Highland man stand 'oot a' the mare and urge him awa' again trampin' the heather and the hills of his bonnie Highlands.

BACK TO THE GOLD

A FEW MONTHS ago the N.Z. Horological Institute published in its journal a very amusing and interesting claim-jumping story by my old pal and their worthy president, John Murrell. I did not think he would have done such a thing, especially without a miner's license, but maybe as the wee claim was not pegged out he had as much right to it as the next man. As his good old Dad was Mayor of the Central's capital at that time, no doubt he thought he was entitled to dig up a yard or so of the public footpath in front of the Gold Office door and take it away to wash it out with such good results at his backyard tap. What an interesting relic it would be if Jack could reproduce his miner's right in the Journal, but no doubt it fell to pieces in his pocket, or he may have lit his pipe with it while out camping on the mountains. However, he never told us what he did with

that easy money. I may not be far out if I guess that what he had left over from the purchase of a new .22 rifle went up in smoke as his bullets chased the rabbits round the rocks on the Kawarau banks, and to see them kicking up the dust for the last time as he got his bead on to them used to make me think he was really shooting round corners.

The house that Jack built takes us back to our childhood days, but the claim he jumped referred to above is a more modern and true story. It came about when two old miners were yarning in the sun at the door of the Gold Office in Cromwell. One of them was twiddling his stick in the pavement gravel when a speck of gold winked at him. "Be jabbers!" he exclaimed. "Gold in the street!" and to prove his claim they procured a gold dish and scraped it full of wash with their hands, and away they hurried up the street to wash it out at the blacksmith's tap. Jack, who was only a lad at the time, had the eye of an eagle and the quick actions of a fish at a fly. He had noticed this, and when the coast was clear he hurried into his dad's shop opposite for a shovel and a sack, which he filled with as much of the pavement as he could carry away, to work at his leisure with great results at his own tap. You can imagine the surprise on the faces of the old chaps when they hurried back for more of the wash, which had also shown them a good prospect, to find their claim had been jumped and worked out, leaving only a hole in the pavement in which to bury their surprise. It was another case of years of accumulation from the Banks Gold Office sweepings.

Jack's little gold story, which I trust will not be his last to the Journal, brings to my mind another such yarn by my old pal Tommy, whom I had the pleasure of meeting in the Otago Central banks. He was later manager at Gore, Bluff and Invercargill, which city I used to visit in my many Southland trips. There are few cities in New Zealand that have such a wonderful wealth of good clean farming land behind them as has Invercargill. It is the surprise packet to North Island farmers coming South on conducted tours, and from a sporting and scenic point of view the Southland Province has no equal in New Zealand.

Coming to Tommy and his little story. His claim produced a real good patch of gold, much in the same way as Jack's did, but although it was not quite so rich and he had to do no claim-jumping to get it, I cannot say it was quite above board. It happened when he was manager at the

Alexandra Bank, the gold office floor of which was showing bad signs of wear, and as the cracks between the boards were getting wider, a new floor was decided upon. As the carpenter lifted the first few boards, Tommy's quick eye caught the glint from a speck of gold on the ground below. He lost no time in scraping the surface clean and washing out his dishful of floor sweepings and soil in real prospector's fashion at the garden tap, to be rewarded from what we may call his "miner's gift claim" with a return good enough to keep him for a few years in his old favourite cherry-woods, with a few pounds of his pet weed thrown in.

This title is quite in line with the queer names the old miners used to give their claims, of which Tinkers, Vinegar Hill, Rum and Raspberry, Miss and Hit, Try Again and Dry Bread are a fair sample. One of these claims produced 40 ozs. to a bucket of wash. Dry Bread got its name from the fact that a party of miners put inquisitive prospectors off by saying they were only making dry bread. Miss and Hit came about through my old miner pal, Jack W., at Queenstown, with whom I still enjoy a game of crib when up there, starting where another miner knocked off just too soon, as he hit it very well for a while and got good returns from the abandoned claim. Thousands of ounces of gold had been brought to Tommy's office for sale by the miners, who, in their carefree way of handling their gold bags or bottles, usually spilt a grain or so not worth bothering about, to be later swept down the crevices to accumulate under the floor boards. I have even heard it said at times that if some of those old miners sneezed in gold offices they would shake a few grains of gold out of their whiskers.

But a better one than that, and a true one, I believe, because it came from my Dad many years ago, was the story of a miner who, while sitting at his camp fire, lighted his pipe with a one-pound note, as matches then were out of stock. All the same, I think that miner was over-boastful about his good luck and big returns, which no doubt had been greatly exaggerated in his own mind by the strength of his mountain dew.

It was very clever the way some bank managers could tell from what claim a certain sample of gold was washed. Tommy was a real expert at it. I would have no trouble myself in distinguishing between Gorge Creek, Skippers or Hogburn gold, but of course could not name the claim. On one occasion a Chinaman came into the Queenstown Bank

and sold Tommy a bottle full of very rough gold, valued at over £200. He at once knew the claim from which it was taken and, smelling a rat, wired the owner thirty miles over the mountains at Skippers to come down. Miner-like, never in a hurry, he delayed his trip a fortnight, by which time the Chinaman was well out of the Central and seemed to vanish into the air from Timaru, where he was last reported by the police, who were out to pick him up if they could. Mr. You-Kan-Yap had been working on the claim for many months, and it was quite an easy matter for him to pick up a small nugget—(he would only lift the heavy stuff)—from off the long boxes as he passed in his job keeping them running clean and seeing that the tailings did not pile up at the outlet into the tail race. It was a few years after this that a chap called on Tommy at the Bluff, where he had been transferred, and submitted for his examination a sample of gold with the request as to whether he could tell him from where it came. It appears that gold had been missing from a claim a few miles over the Crown Range from Arrow, and although he had not seen any of that gold for a few years, and did not know at the time that he was dealing with the police, he was able to give the detective the name of the claim from which the gold was taken. I missed him for about ten years until one day he called into my showroom and, after a very happy chat, he informed me that he had promised his wife a real good tea-set and, as he would not buy it from anyone else, he had waited until he retired and came to Dunedin to live. I capped his confidence by selling him the heaviest solid silver five-piece tea-set I had in stock, and when I am talking in Walker and Hall's silver sets, that is saying something. I only mention this very nice sale as an example of the true fellowship which always exists between old pals in Otago—it never fades.

I have mounted many pretty nuggets in my time. A small pick and shovel with a nugget attached used to be a great seller, as was also the heavy signet ring with a nugget on top—"knuckle-dusters" they were called. An old pal once gave me a very pretty nugget into which I set a half pearl in a very convenient recess in its surface. I wore it as a tie-pin, and on several occasions when city folk admired it, some of them would swallow my yarn that it was found like that, pearl and all, in its natural state.

But some folks will swallow anything, even without a prescription, and as an illustration may I record the time,

not so very long ago, when I was showing a few Australian friends some of our very wonderful city sights. I had stopped the car on top of the St. Clair hills in order to give them more time to enjoy the most magnificent seascape view from that great vantage point. White Island was looking its very best—(Mt. Egmont in miniature)—after a long spell of fine weather. On pointing it out to a very talkative and interested young lady beside me, I remarked, "It is only three miles off shore—they go out every year to paint it." Her reply was, as she turned her vision towards the rock, "Oh, really! How very wonderful." But my joke did not go down with those in the back seat so well without a gargle and a gulp, and I had to remark that I had not said who did the painting.

I must get back to the gold, the prettiest display of which I ever saw, next to seeing it with the water running over it in the long boxes of the old Ladysmith claim at Roxburgh, was a large enamel wash-hand basin full of it in the bank at St. Bathans. It was the record 3,000-ozs. return from one of the big claims there. As I could not get my hands into it, I remarked to the manager that I would not mind a few tablespoons full of that brown sugar on my porridge in the morning. It was as coarse as sugar, only very bright and flaky in form. The big claim referred to was right in the township; in fact, my old pal, Bill K., informed me that the main lead went right under the main road and was far too deep for profitable working. This enormous man-made hole is the largest I have ever seen on the fields. It reminded me of the great crater at Yallorn in Victoria, from which brown coal is mechanically scooped up to the surface to generate power for the City of Melbourne.

One day while watching Bill from the top of the great sandstone cliffs as he played the great flow of water on to the foot of the claim, I noticed him look up the face and, after setting the nozzle, he walked quietly away. I was soon to know the reason for his action as he stood back a hundred yards or so watching the cliffs above, for in a few minutes down came several tons of the cliff face to spread the limit of its discharge round his nozzle platform. That evening while looking over my samples I asked him how did he know that slip was coming down. He informed me that they always keep their eyes and ears open for any small stones that may come rolling down from above. If they notice the slightest fall they at once move back, for sure enough there

is a great deal more to follow. A slip is always on the move before it is noticeable, and the slightest motion dislodges the tell-tale pebbles in plenty of time to warn the miners below. No doubt it is a good tip from Nature.

On another occasion I was watching the miners from about the same position when the huge elevator pipes split about halfway up the cliff, but as that very spectacular water display was not put on for my benefit the lads lost no time in getting out of it and up the supply line to turn off the water before they got flooded out. The split pipes formed the highest elevator south of the line, being 185 feet high. Readers can imagine the pressure from the other nozzle as it pointed up the elevator pipes at the intake up which it forced, with its own discharge, all the water and stones swept down the gutter from the sluicing nozzle. The suction at the intake was enormous, for as another old pal, Pat H., told me at one time, when he had his foot caught in it while forking big stones clear, he had to hang on to the pipes for dear life as he wriggled out of his big wader, which went up and into the gold boxes at the top like a chip of wood. Had he not got clear the pressure would have torn his foot off or held him down to drown. It looked very queer all that gravel and water going out of sight at the intake, like an underground river, until it gushed with a great rattling of stones into the iron boxing at the receiving end of the gold boxes at the top of the cliff, and in this case to join the Dunstan Creek on its way to join the great Molyneaux River forty miles away at Alexandra.

In sluicing big stones are pitch-forked out of the gutter before they block the intake, but should a "Chinaman"—(as the miners call the extra large sand stones)—come within the force of the nozzle it is blown aside unless it is of exceptional size. Some of these "Chinamen" are very queer in shape and colour, and are taken away as ornamental stones for the garden. The largest one I have ever seen is still reposing at the side door to the garden of the Commercial Hotel at Roxburgh. By its shape I should say it was placed there as an easy chair, and must have taken some lifting to move it from its natural bed to adorn the garden pathway.

One day Bill invited me down below to try my hand at the sluicing, and what pressure there was as the water left the nozzle like a 4-inch bar of solid glass. You could hardly notice it moving for the first foot or two, and when I tried to pass the blade of a knife through it I found I could not

touch it. It was a cold job down there, especially on winter night shifts, and I should think other mining would appear very tame to those hefty chaps who could stand up to anything in the way of weather with which Nature cared to try them. I had to be very careful in letting the miners handle my samples, for at times their hands would be quite wet. I have seen Bill hold his hand down and the water would drop off his finger tips. This is caused occasionally by the constant handling of stones in the water.

Bill is still going strong but, of course, has retired. He still carries a gold-jointed silver Hunting lever I sold him many years ago. He is very loud in its praise as a timepiece. At one time he was a bit slow in moving back from a landslide, which caught and half buried him, breaking a few ribs, and although the watch was on the side which took the shock, it was in no way affected by the crash.

In my very happy memories of St. Bathans, I could introduce ice skating and the good old curling—the roarin' game on the ice, they call it—with its great stones slidin' and brooms sweepin' an' a' that, but as I could not always fit my trips in with the few extra heavy frosts I did not get all the pleasure out of it I would have liked.

Mr. McConnochie and Mr. Pyle, both storekeepers, seemed to me to run the town, and mention of them, I am sure, will cause many a C.T. a very happy thought and smile. Mr. McConnochie it was who sold me my first real good fly rod while having a yarn in his office, which he seemed to love with any of the C.T.'s, and when the cigarettes and cigars were always offered. He was as full of happy nature as an egg is full of meat, and as tall as his opposition, Mr. Pyle, was small. I am sure I never met a more erect and straight-in-the-eye chap than Mr. Pile. He had a way all his own—it spelt confidence and goodwill right from the jump, and from a chat with him a young fellow fresh on the roads with anything at all under his hat could learn a great deal and take some great advice so unconsciously given by the dear old chap. Their passing made a gap in the old mining town as big as did the great Scandinavian sluicing claim in the mountain-side a few hundred yards opposite their stores.

A FEW TIPS FOR THE LADS

I DID NOT envy the wholesale C.T.'s their jobs with their dozen or so of heavy sample crates—they had to move too fast and had very little time at home in between their trips. I took my time, although in the November trip to the Central I had to move along, as I was out after Christmas trade. I never made a call on Monday morning—it was about as hopeless, as I found out years later, calling any morning on the private hospitals in the cities, when the matrons would surely be very busy. The May-June trip was the one I enjoyed, as there were always dances on somewhere, and as these enticed the lads from the wayback stations and farms into the towns, I had the chance of meeting many I might otherwise have missed. Besides, a "go" on the ice or a "crack" at the ducks or hares was always a possibility. It was a very dry cold if one ever did feel it, and there was no mud to upset me unless I got well off the beaten track. As there are unlimited supplies of river gravel all through the Central, there was no excuse for bad roads, and all the main thoroughfares there can compare very favourably with the up-to-date tar-sealed highways of to-day.

It was at Kyeburn Station one day I hit upon the idea of rabbitskin gauntlets. I never liked gloves; so, by sliding a pair of heavy winter buck skins neck first over my handle-grips and controls, and securely tying them just above the latter, I had a perfect protection from any wind that might blow from off the snow-covered Mount Ida or other ranges. Of course, I put the skins on fur inside, leaving the good pelt to turn the weather. When I first returned to the city with these unsightly but warm gauntles tied over my grips the lads used to stop and take notice, and some of them copied the idea. I had no use for balaclava caps or goggles, and did not dress up as we see the lads to-day, tearing away

on a summer jaunt as if they were making for the South Pole. It makes me smile to see all the clobber some of them put on, especially in the summer time.

A very effective wind-break I used to carry was a fair-sized piece of canvas. This I carried over the tank, and when I got started—(no kick starters those days)—I pulled it up as far as my eyes if I wished, and the air pressure kept it there. It also served as a tank and saddle cover should I be obliged to leave the machine in the rain, which was very seldom in the Central. It did come in very handy one morning when leaving Naseby, about 2,000ft. alt., in a black frost. My leather coat was good, but I did want that canvas that trip, for as I went along I could scrape the flaky ice off my front, formed by the fog freezing on me as I went through it. The country was a wonderful sight; rabbit-netting on the fences looked like miles of sheeting—there was only room left in the mesh to poke a cigarette through, and acres of tussocks looked like feathers weighed down by the hoar frost. It was a record cold day for me on the roads, but my big 7 h.p. twin J.A.P. engine kept my legs warm. These tips may not be worth mention, but some of the lads may try them out.

It was at Kyeburn Station one trip that my old friend there, Mr. Sinclair Andrews, gave me a little story about a new caller on the roads with whom he was not too pleased, and to give you the chance to O.K. my opinion that some folk have nothing under their hats but hair, I will pass it on as I received it.

One evening, on answering a knock on the homestead front door, he was met by a traveller with "port sammy" all set for the usual kind invitation to come along inside. He was asked in for the evening meal about to be served, which eventually meant stopping the night under that most hospitable -out-of-the-way roof. In Mr. Andrews' usual first thoughts at the end of a day's toil for the comforts of his own faithful animals, he enquired about the new arrival's horse. "Oh," he said, "I have unyoked and put it in the stable"—(what sauce!)—and to be sure it was well bedded and fed for the night. Mr. Andrews went out to inspect the animal. You can imagine his surprise when he discovered that this go-getter had put his nag in with his own pet mount along with the rest of the station's teams; and, to cap all, it was suffering from strangles—a very catching horse disease and much dreaded by the farmers. It was enough to earn

for him a "Good evening, Naseby is only six miles over the hills." But not so with this dear old gentleman of the land, whose eyebrows were pushed still further to the top of his head when he returned to the comfort of his sitting-room—(which I was very fortunate enough to know so well)—to find this smart Alex. seated in his own easy chair, with his feet up to the fire enjoying a cigarette and reading the paper which he had dropped to attend to him and the comforts of his horse. That was the first and only call of a cheeky chap who never had the brains to look upon that great hospitality other than a call at some old pub. The way he arrived at the door with his bag without being asked to bring it along certainly made me think so.

About that time I was returning home for the Winter Show, which I used to look forward to as the kiddies do the Xmas. On the way I called, as usual, on an old pal of my Dad's, Johnny E., as he was known. His bonnie wee farm was in the Sutton, quite close to the well-known Gladbrook Station. There was no chance of a sale there, but I did like his reception and hand-shake. It was a tonic to be a young fellow on the road. Besides, he was married, as you sometimes hear it said, to his old watch purchased from my Dad 45 years earlier. The case hallmarks were 1870, and the old chap was always pleased to produce it for my inspection. But on this occasion he was not so pleased with himself, for when I asked after his old faithful he said, "Oh, man, it's stoppit, and I will tell you how it happened. There was sna' everywhere and, before taking a fresh cut oot o' the stack with ma big hay knife to feed the stock, I had to rake it off the top, and I raked it all over ma'sel' and into my waistcoat pocket, and the watch got wet, and now it's all rustet up and will go no more." Rusty was right; it was the finish of one of the old timers. I gave him 7/6 for the case—2/6 too much for the old silver in spite of its good condition. On my return home, and for old time's sake, I took the lids apart, and within a very short time I had them filled and buffed free of all sharp edges and marks. By fitting a small silver disc to one—(a sixpenny-piece will do)—and a long handle to the other I had a very nice solid silver caddy and jelly spoon. I prize them for happy associations and from the fact that "J.H." is stamped on each in the making.

My late brother Harry, who managed S.D. and Co. in New Zealand since they re-opened in Wellington, was very pleased to accept one of these old keepsakes. What a win a

shopkeeper can be on to-day if he suggests this good and cheap idea to folk who bring along their useless old silver for sale. Many a time there is a great deal of sentiment attached to Mum's or Dad's old watch, about which the jeweller knows nothing, and if he suggests this idea as an alternative to melting up the old keepsakes, in some cases I am sure the customer would come at it like a fish at a fly, and that's pretty quick, and thank him for his brain wave. After all, it would show the jeweller more profit, and that is not saying much, and by the remarks passed in the home and by visitors about the new-old spoons would supply advertising matter which money cannot buy. Get your customers talking for you is my idea of a good advertisement. In this case, next to seeing the customer well pleased, the thing I like about it is that it costs nothing—(Dunedin, of course,)—besides being a very likely introduction to anither customer or twa.

In writing these stories I find myself hopping all over the country at all times like a grasshopper in the tussocks, and some of them contain memories that may be thirty years apart, although they appear to follow each other as the dust and smoke used to tail after me in my tours through the country. So here I am right up to the last few years relating a slight mishap which happened in my own kitchen at Opoho, and being out of business and on a loose-end, I had to do something about it. Although it does not concern the trade in any way, I do think if some of the lads acted on this tip their mothers would be delighted with their handiness in the home. It happened when my wife was preserving fruit—choice Roxburgh cherries, very likely. She was weighing the sugar out by the cupful from the new pull-down bins which are built into the kitchen dressers of the modern houses of to-day, when it suddenly slammed down on her wrist, resulting in a very painful crash. The bin was about full, and in taking the sugar from the front, which is usual, it shifted the weight to the back, which caused the sudden closing of the heavy bin. The same can happen with the flour bins. To prevent that happening again, I dug up a long discarded hack saw blade from my dump—(I never throw any small thing away)—and soon had the teeth ground down. These can be had for the asking in any machine shop. I then took the temper out of the centre of the blade and broke it in half, and followed on by bending the broken end down to a 2½in. right-angle in the vice. My

safety clip was made. Next move was to saw a 3in. narrow V slot at the back of the bin to receive the angle as it worked up and down with the action of the bin. To hold it in position there is already a tack hole in the end of the steel, but to prevent any side play another can be punched, although the position of the angle in the slot should prevent that. Should the space between the front of the dresser and the back end of the bin be too high when it is full--open,—a long tapered wedge can be tacked along the bin, and in this case a V slot would not be necessary, as the angle would do down behind the thick end of the wedge. On opening the bin with this attachment, it will stay open until the spring is pressed to close it again. One or two of my next-door pals got me to make and fit these gadgets for their wives, and should my instructions appear vague to anybody interested, I will be pleased to send them a sketch. Our live wire Editor, Mr. Eric Bennetts, inspected my bin clips when recently visiting his old home town, putting another big spoke into the fast turning wheels of the N.Z. Horological Society down this way. And, man, I must say he did put over some real good stuff to a fine meeting of very interested members. To an unemployed handy man there should be quite a bit of money to be made by making and selling the clips from house to house. They can be made in ten minutes, and fitted in less time, and would sell in pairs for sugar and flour bins. No salesmanship would be required, and if I was broke I know what I would do about it. So go to it some of you lads and make your mother a pair before she gets her fingers caught, as my wife did in those up-to-date kitchen traps.

FOUR OF THE BEST FROM THE OLD SCHOOL

I AM SURE I am voicing the opinion of the whole of the watchmaking trade in Dunedin when I say how very sorry we all are to see that one of the most likeable old pals in the trade in the person of Mr. Hector McDonald has been very poorly this long time, and is not likely to return again to his bench, and maybe some very ticklish job which would give many a good man a headache; and, by hec! they were the jobs he liked. He is greatly missed as he takes it easy in a private nursing home, and we do trust he will soon be about again and enjoy a chat with his old pals. I must say that to strike up a yarn with Hec. Mac., as he is known to the host of his friends, one never knew when it would stop, for there seemed to be no limit to his store of interesting matter on either his trade or his great hobby, music.

When I last saw him with his B.B. fiddle, as big as himself, he was playing it on the end of the G. and S. Opera Orchestra. There he was, standing up to it and going for his life on some of their very fast catchy music, and enjoying himself to the full, for that is all he was there for. I remarked to my wife as I caught his wink from the front stalls, "Look at Hec. smiling as he tickles his old love over the ribs and screwing her neck at the same time." You would think he was sawing a leg off a moa. But, as he had to be cruel to be kind to his big instrument, we can only congratulate him on his great results.

He was born in Dunedin in 1871, and the first time I met him was when I was sent round to Henry Neill's material warehouse in Rattray Street—maybe for a dozen watchglasses or other material. Hec. had started his apprenticeship at Neill's as a lad of thirteen years of age, and paying a premium to learn the trade, while his brother Bill was putting in his time at the jewellery trade with Mr. Coventry, whose very high standard of workmanship,

especially in stone-setting and chain-making, was very well known. So these two very thorough lads started off very well in laying the foundation stone for their future business, which must have prospered to the full had fate not decided otherwise. Hec. left Neill's after fourteen years at the bench, and with his brother Bill went to London, arriving there in 1898. He had a letter to Pickard's firm from Henry Neill, and Bill had one to Brown and Sons from Frank Hyams. These introductions soon saw the keen lads well set in good jobs, Hec. starting with Pucknett and Coy., of Poland Street, and Bill with Brown and Sons, of Gerrard Street. I must say it was a great treat to act on Hec's introductions myself while in London and call on his old friends, to be received as if I was Hec. himself back again for some more chin wag. Those London business men are grand, and in a class all their own. I met several of them. They were all the same, and as solid as Mr. Churchill himself, and I can only describe them in three words, "Dear Old London."

On returning to Dunedin in 1900 the McDonald brothers started business in Moray Place where the big Savoy Building now stands. They brought out with them everything of the latest required for the repairing of watches and the manufacturing of jewellery, and were with their great experience well set to go ahead like a house on fire. To-day Hec's workroom is a great example of systematic order, where many handy gadgets and ideas of his own may be seen.

I had not been long at the trade when the Duke and Duchess of York made their visit to New Zealand, and to commemorate their Dunedin call the Ladies' Committee, headed by the Mayoress, Mrs. G. L. Denniston, ordered from our firm a dozen 15ct. gold and greenstone afternoon teaspoons for presentation to the Duchess. As these were later on very likely to find a resting place in Buckingham Palace, as were a greenstone and gold inkstand with pen and paper knife to match, supplied by my Dad to Queen Victoria from his N.Z. exhibit in the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, London, in 1880, the workmanship had to be perfect. There was no question as to who was to have the honour, so it was entrusted to the skilful hands of Bill McDonald. What a pretty job it was. The handles were of rounded greenstone of a quality you never see to-day, being topped with a beautiful gold crown and chased to perfection. My part in this

nice order was to see it safely delivered at 8.30 a.m. to the Mayoress, and didn't I feel the important lad as several red-coated sentries, bayonets and all, passed me through the gates and drive into Fernhill Club, the old-time mansion of Johnny Jones, of Otago early days' fame, where the Duke and Duchess were the guests of the Mayoress. I remember it was a very frosty morning, and I did not envy those sentries their all-night watch. Bill had to work all hours on that very short notice order to get it finished in time, and it was a relief to know the case of gold spoons were handed over in such perfect condition, but only two and a half hours before the time set for the presentation. The price for Bill's masterpiece was 50 guineas.

It was not long after this that Hec. got the shock of his life in the loss of his brother and great partner, who was accidentally drowned in the harbour. It appears that after a day's cruise, in throwing out the anchor from his yacht, the chain had somehow caught him round the leg and he went overboard with it. The sad accident was not discovered until it was too late to give any assistance to a great sport and tradesman who would have, as time went on, proved himself a very worthy and useful citizen. The breaking up of this good partnership saw Hec. on his own, established in Stokes' Building, Princes Street, where his business is still carried on by Leslie B. Borrow, who has been with him for 36 years.

Leslie, who is also musical to his fingertips, started his apprenticeship with that dear old daddy o' us a'—Fred. J. Townsend,* now in his 80's. I am glad to say that genial old Fred is still going strong in spite of a nasty setback in health a few years ago. So lang may him lum reek. Although Hec. has performed many labours of love with his fiddles, I must say Leslie Borrow has given his hobby full rope and proved himself a very clever and useful citizen. He has been in musical circles all his life in Dunedin, being a pianist, a cornetist, and vocalist, and is at present conductor of the Otago Mounted Rifles Band and the R.S.A. Choir. Being a student of the Royal College of Music (Kneller Hall), London, he was appointed conductor of the N.Z. Divisional Artillery Band for the occupation of Cologne, Germany, after World War No. I.

As my travelling put me out of touch with old friends in the trade, I think it would be very nice if some of the

*Passed away since written.

tradesmen of to-day would come to light and supply our Journal with matter about some of the old schools in the different cities. I am sure it would be very interesting, and bring back many very happy memories. Of course, I am not borrowing Leslie from the old school for this article, as he comes in later, carrying on in Hec's good old way, and from the same class as such real good tradesmen as old pals Jack Kernohan, and may I say with Bob Caldow, now as daddy o' them a', who are still active in the old trade in the city, not forgetting Bill Strong, of Naseby, and our two surviving grand-dad craftsmen, Bob Strong and Bill Patterson. I trust Leslie takes it as an honour being included with the first good old boys mentioned.

SOMEBODY'S DARLING—STYX FLAT

By looking up the early '60's files of the Otago Daily Times you may read of many a good man who has been reported as missing by his relations. Many other reports point to bodies having been found, some under circumstances which no doubt suggest murder, while others again were just reported floating past the claim or camp. As the notorious Burgess, Sullivan, Levy and Kelly gang were roaming the country at that time many of the unsolved murders can be placed on their black list, which grew as they got away to the West Coast, where a new rush had set in and where, after Sullivan turning Queen's evidence, they received their deserts, the death sentence. One of those unsolved mysteries, and a very sad story it is of "somebody's darling," concerns a young chap who, by the descriptions of the body given by its finder, had been carried away by the gold fever from a much quieter life to try his luck on those very dangerous river banks. He had been rather a handsome lad, and death had not taken from his face all the beauty of health and vigour it once possessed, despite the fact that the body might

have floated many miles down the gorges before coming to rest on a small beach near Horseshoe Bend. The young miner, Bill Rigney, who found the body was too far from habitation to do anything, but to give the unfortunate lad a decent burial in the scrub well above the flood level, and to mark the spot he erected a plain but very impressive wooden memorial upon which he painted the inscription, "Somebody's Darling Lies Buried Here. 1863."

As thirty-odd years rolled on this good Samaritan found himself still settled in the district, but as the memorial and its post and rails had very much fallen in disrepair in its very lonely spot, a public subscription was taken up, with the result that it was replaced by a handsome marble one, with concrete and iron protection from wandering sheep and cattle.

It was in the year 1903 that Bill Rigney's own time came to depart this life for the real Golden Shores, and in accordance with a wish in his will, the inscription on the memorial now also includes "Here lieth the body of William Rigney, the man who buried Somebody's Darling, 1903." So there the good old chap lies beside the remains of his unknown miner of the 1865 tin dish and cradle days. A more gruesome reminder of those roarin' days may be seen in a show case of curios in the Vincent County Council Chambers at Clyde. It takes the form of a human skull, in the crown of which is a hole as if it had been pierced by a pick. It was found at the mouth of Mutton Town Gully, and no doubt points to such scoundrels as the Burgess and Sullivan Gang. As you gaze on it you wonder what stories it could unfold. It certainly would not refer to the Old Man Flood of 1863, when so many miners were drowned as their camps were undermined and slipped into the river, caused by the very sudden twenty-foot rising of the torrents during the night. Many times I have passed the scenes of those tragedies, and it makes one think as he looks across the river to the remains of miners' huts as they dot ye banks and braes all through the gorges. In some cases only the chimney remains, in others a solid stone and pug wall built round a huge overhanging rock. Many a time I have looked across at such a shelter near Gorge Creek crossing. The old miner who occupied it for over forty years could not be shifted from his cosy rock abode and its wee garden. Also close by is the tall stone memorial erected to the many miners who perished in blizzards on the Old Man Range

opposite. This very steep and rugged hairpin bend in the road could in its time boast of a canvas town of twenty stores, several accommodation houses and grog shanties, a blacksmith's shop and a skittle alley. The ruins of the old rock shelter and the memorial is all that now remains of the very busy life on a spot which is to-day a very favourite stopping-place to boil the billy, a little more than halfway on that glorious run to Queenstown. Gorge Creek is only another of the silent reminders of the gold days which are no more, when many an unsolved mystery was only another noted incident in the early history of Otago's gold rush. It is wonderful in a country so devoid of timber as is Central Otago that Nature has provided unlimited supplies of building material, and to-day hundreds of early-day sun-dried brick and rock cottages still stand as good as ever.

It was in 1910 that Linnburn Station was cut up for closer settlement, and my old pal Cecil at Styx Flat was one of the lucky ones in the ballot, when a three-thousand acre block was allotted to him. This was one of the smallest runs, the largest of the eight in the ballot being one of 18,000 acres. One thousand acres of Cecil's run was all flat land, and only a nibble out of the 9,000 acres contained in the flat, through the centre of which the Taieri River twisted and turned like an eel taken from its bed.

Cecil and his brother Bill, who was killed in World War No. I, lost no time in getting away back from Patearoa with all their camping and fencing gear, and as that flat is 500 feet higher than the Maniototo Plain only 10 miles to the north, he could have all his camping out there in the winter for me. But those Central Otago lads were real tough and could stand up to anything, even to the cheerless company of their milk-maid, which was a tin-opener for the first twelve months. With the fencing and yards getting into shape, their next big job was to build a sun-dried brick home for their mother and sister, and this is the way they went about it. The material was the same for all those lucky run-holders. They required 5,000 big bricks for their home, the outside walls being built double, each brick being 7in. x 14in. x 7in., and for the partitions bricks 10in. x 14in. x 7in. were used, and as that was the usual size of the bricks you can imagine what a cosy home they made. As a comparison, a red brick is 8¾in. x 2¾in. x 4in. Some of the lads made their bricks in what they called a pug ring, formed by driving the horses round in a circle as with the old-time

chaffcutter, but Cecil made his on what they called a straight. A strip of ground about 30 yards long by four or five wide was scooped free of top soil, which was dumped on the garden near by. It was then ploughed about ten inches deep, or according to the number of bricks required, and very well watered, which was usually done with a shovel from a tank on a sledge for even distribution, and left to soak all night. A good layer of chopped-up tussocks was then evenly spread over the top. After more watering a six-horse team was driven up and down the strip until the pug was well mixed. More watering and more tussock if required, and a final tramping of the twenty-four hoofs, and the pug was ready for the mould, into which Cecil's big No. 10's tramped it, to be levelled off with a straight-edged stick. It was no wonder those big bricks turned out so solid, as they were placed in well-spaced rows to bake in the Central's hot sun, and just like his dear old mother's wonderful girdle scones they had to be turned at times for even baking. With foundations of the very easily worked schist rock which is so plentiful all over the Central, these sun-dried brick walls, which take some drilling, will last for generations. They are very warm in winter and cool in summer, and are more picturesque, especially if rough cast, than the wooden houses which began to spring up as the railway cut its way through the rugged country.

"Lynbrook," as my pal called his homestead, was thirty miles from the railway; ten more miles on to that would take him to the Maniototo's own open-cast lignite coal mine, where for £1 he could fill up his three-ton waggon for back-loading. But the usual thing for the Styx settlers so far inland was to back-load with a year's supply of good quality coal picked up at Waipiata railway yards when they delivered their wool to the waiting trucks. Many a happy night I spent under Cecil's hospitable roof, but the last big shoot we had there three of us lads slept on canvas in the chaff house, while two much older sports enjoyed the comfort of our beds in the home. The chaff was not bagged as usual, but was shot right through the top of the wall from the cutter, which was level and quite close to the wall outside. I thought it a great labour-saving idea and a great place for a doss-out, so long as everybody behaved themselves and did not start throwing chaff, which was about three feet deep at that time. That was always on the cards in the joy of living in those great days, and when paradise

ducks were very plentiful and mobs of a hundred were quite common. The brothers lived on them for their first year's camping, and no doubt the other run-holders did the same. The average width of that 9,000-acre flat was about three miles, and the following stations used to nibble big slices out of it: Linnburn held all the west side where the lads were settled, Patearoa came in on the north, Rocklands held most of the west and sunny side before it was subdivided, while Beaumont boundary fences just crossed it on the south corner at a place called Canadian Flat, where a good bit of gold has been sluiced. All over the Styx Flat dozens of stone fencing strainers stick up like monuments for all time, and the huge outcrops of this useful rock also supply great sheep shelter from the storms which are not uncommon in that high country. Some of Cecil's posts were 10 feet long and took a six-horse team to drag them to the post holes, and the lads were not fussy if they stood a bit high. When the river is dammed at a most suitable spot provided by Nature for irrigating the Maniototo, Cecil only hopes that pleasure launches or fisherman boats will not tear their bottoms out on any of his big stone posts which may be just dangerously out of sight, especially on the rising ground. The damming of the river is going to cut in half the old-time Dunstan Road which crossed the river near the hotel in its N.E. corner, where the old stone jail, now a calf-house, still stands with the chains hanging from its walls to which prisoners were fastened for the night when on their way from the Dunstan to Dunedin. A few miles across the flat are the remains of the old Blackball Hotel with its lovely poplars and willows. It was a rabbiter's camp when last I passed it on the way up the Flat. It was here where as many as ten waggons and one hundred horses have been known to pull in for a night's rest on their way to the Dunstan. On this stage of the journey they passed Linnburn and Puketoi Stations before going over the Raggedy Range to Ida Valley and the station of the same name.

Another range to tackle and they were at Galloway Station and out into more open country, with the Dunstan only twenty miles or so away. The waggons used to travel in twos and threes to help each other over bad pinches, and it was no uncommon thing for a waggon to get bogged or stuck on a steep pull in those days. Heaps of stone work of the old sly-grog shanties can still be seen all along the road, and I have often regretted not putting my old B.A.T. motor

cycle to the test of taking me over the full length of that historic old road of the sixties. It would have been a great record for the makers to have advertised, and a much better one than one of me tackling the snow in Naseby, which appeared in their English catalogues, as a contrast between motor cycling in June in England and June in New Zealand. I am sure that looking up at the remains of the old Dunstan Road as it comes off the Lammerlaws at the back of the Styx Hotel is anything but inviting to a motor cyclist, especially in the days of belt drive and no gear-box or kick starters, not to mention a few miles further back where it wormed its way 2,000 feet up and between the 6,000 feet Rock and Pillar and Lammerlaw Ranges and on to Rockland Station. From there the foothills of the Maungatuas are crossed and Abbotsford, Lee Flat and Trequare Stations passed on the way down to the Taieri Plain. This last section I have travelled many times for business and pleasure, and part of it is now the main highway to Middlemarch, through the lovely Strath Taieri country and on to Central Otago via Waipiata, which is the railhead for all the settlers on the Styx Flat. What a great lake the flat will make when the Upper Taieri River is dammed and the Maniototo is made into one of the farmers' show places of New Zealand by receiving the water it has been calling out for for so many years.

MORE FUN ON THE FARMS

IT'S MANY years ago since the watchmakers were called upon to repair the old-time gentle-tuned musical boxes and to strengthen the pins on their barrels. Following them came the gramophone with their clumsy works—all spring and no onions as I used to say when repairing them. I remember the time when they first came to Dunedin. What a treat it was to go to a display in the old Garrison Hall in Dowling Street, where several of the new wonderful sound recording

machines were to be heard. For threepence a time, with a gadget something like a doctor's stethescope stuck in your ears, you could listen to the old cylinder record unwinding its scratchy melody or song. That was my first introduction to canned music which, with radio as it is to-day, never will and never can replace the good old-time sing songs as we enjoyed them in our homes of long ago. When I took to the roads I found it quite a common thing to be invited into a sing-song or a friendly game of euchre in some way-back hotel or home. The way some of the old hands used to bang their knuckles on the table when playing an extra good trick-taking card would make you think you were in the sale-room, where the auctioneer was showing his disapproval of the low bids by the way he knocked down the sales with his hammer. Several times while awaiting the tea bell in a Middlemarch Hotel I joined in a friendly game with old Bill and Tom, two of the village's very essential tradesmen who for many years had finished their day after their own closing time with a game of euchre and maybe a wee one at odd times in the same old room, and on the sound of the bell off they went. It was their friendly final to a hard day's work, and it's a pound to a gooseberry that their good wives never had a moment's worry over them being home late for their evening meal and a read of the Otago Daily Times. Should any of the Otago Central's knights of the roads read these lines their memories cannot but fly back to their young days and the pleasure of meeting this pair of jovial old boys—Tom and Bill—who carried on for so long and not so far up the Central line.

About this time the good game of 500 was first played in the city, and I lost no time in printing the score and rules on the back of my big "Jimmy the Jewellery Man is Coming" advice business cards and introducing it into the Central. Anything new in the way of games or tricks would take on very well at that time. More than once I had a lot of fun and could have won a small wager from some of those hefty lads who could put away two chops and as many eggs for breakfast that they could not swallow two dry water biscuits in a minute. They used to laugh and say that it would be easy to manage three or four. But at that time water biscuits, like many other such lines, were about twice the size of the present-day article of about twice the price. The baker's dozen of fourteen cakes a shilling was also the rule. However, try it, some of you chaps, and see what

happens to the last mouthful; but, mind you, no coming at me if you get a pain under your top button.

On one occasion I remember putting in the week-end with my old pal Cecil, who was batching at the time. After tea a walk round with the rifle was the usual pastime for me, to be followed by a glance through my samples and a game of cards, or listening to his very fine records. Morning came, but much earlier for him than for me, for I was awakened by him calling out at my open door, "It's time you were up, you sleeping beauty. How many eggs can you eat with your chops?" "How many chops?" I asked. "Only four, as I have got to kill to-day," he replied. I only mention this to give you an idea of the great appetite the Central's dry air can give a young fellow. In any case, it was time I was up, as I had to be early on the road before the sun greased the surface again for me. On the way into his property the mud had me beat, and I had to wait for it to freeze up again while having tea with another old pal, J.R. It was no joy-ride in the dark over that two miles of heavy frozen road, not to mention two creeks.

To mention another trick which always caused a lot of fun before I opened up my samples in some farm house where I might be stopping was to offer to take off Sandy's waistcoat, turn it inside out and put it on again without taking off his coat or removing it in any way from off his shoulders or arms. Of course it cannot be done, so Sandy would say, but it's surprising how simple it is to perform. The armholes in the waistcoat must not be too small, and all articles must be taken out of the coat pockets, and it was a great joke the way Sandy threw the back-chat at me as he emptied his pockets before I started messing about them. As I do not believe it is a very common trick, to anybody interested I would be pleased to explain.

A cobweb party was also another very good game I introduced at times to start off a social evening with, but as it takes twelve balls of string and as many couples, it would take too much explaining in these notes. In those happy and quiet days it was a great way to get twenty-four young folk well tangled up and introduced to each other as they went running about in each other's way winding their string on a piece of stick to meet their partner for the first dance to follow, winding from the other end. First couple wound up got a prize and, as the twenty-four string ends were numbered and balloted for, nobody knew who was on

the other end of their string until they met in the winding. Many a time we played it at our old home in Opoho which, with its big front rooms and lawn, lent itself so well to the playing of the game.

At the time our M.P. (Mr. T. K. Sidey's) great Daylight Saving Bill was laughed at by many members in the House, and this great in-and-outdoor game had to be played in the early summer evenings. Well I remember winding my string for all it was worth as I followed it on to the lawn, where I about collided with a very nice young thing behind a huge Monkey Puzzle tree. She was very busy unravelling her string from one of its sharp branch tips, where haste was the last word in good advice. "It would be a Monkey Puzzle," and the wire-netting sweet pea frame, our next obstacle, was not much better. Worse luck, as we had to keep winding, we were soon separated following our strings back to the finish in the house.

The good old games of Trades and Charades were also played at times, to be followed with the old-time sing-song.

These memories bring to mind a very happy holiday I spent with my old pal Jimmy P. at his lovely farm a few miles up the river from Balclutha. I had not been on the roads long, and had known Jimmy very well in his High School days, when he used to shine as a track runner. I was a bit slick myself, but not good enough to take on the auld Caledonian Sports on New Year's Day, which used to be a great gathering o' the clans, wi' John Ogg, his pipes an' a', marchin', playin', and dancin' a treat. I was always chitting Jimmy about the good track times I used to put up myself—(tell another),—so when on holiday with him during the harvest, the back-chat was good and merry between us, as when I told him the only record he ever broke was one of Harry Lauder's. He placed the credit for that on me for putting it on his chair—(so he said). Man, he was not at all pleased, for it must have cost him half-a-crown. He called me a Woolly Haggis, but I am sure he meant Hogget, and I also fancied he could hear the final skirl o' the pipes as he picked up the pieces of his "Bonnie Wee Thing" upon which he had sat. I reminded him that a more appropriate one for him to have broken, for that week in any case, would have been "There's na luck aboot the hoose," another one of his fine collection of Scotch records. If there was ever a real good case-hardened hard case, with a heart as big as a cabbage, it was Jimmy. He reckoned he

got a good one on to me when he put me on to stooking the dirtiest corner of his big crop. I had to use gloves and leggings on my arms to try and dodge the thistles, which were very bad in places. But to see my face when the day was over—I was like a Red Indian. I was covered with red rust, another setback in the crop. It stuck to my perspiration like the brown spots on a turkey's egg. However, as I never was a handsome chap in the best of make-up, that evening, after a lot of rusty compliments paid me, saw the crop in stook and me in a good hot bath. After supper was over Jimmy announced that the programme for the following morning was to sweep the chimney, as it had not been done for years. No doubt in taking advantage of my holiday he saw in me a budding young steeplejack, as he admitted that he would get giddy if he stood on that tall stack of bricks. So after breakfast up I went with a long rope, a bunch of gorse tied in the middle, to follow his instructions from below as he knelt in the big open fireplace. As I remembered my rusty face of the harvest field and the fun he poked at me, not to mention his bonnie wee wife and his three hefty bairns which made up that happy home, I thought I could see me getting some of my own back at his expense. As he pulled on his end of the rope, I let the gorse go slowly a wee way down, at the same time calling out to him it was a very tight fit and he would have to pull hard. I kept control with the rope hitched over the bricks, thus the tight fit, and thereby caused the gorse to stick about halfway down, where I held it hard. "It's stuck—pull hard, you chicken," I yelled down to him, and when I felt him pulling all his weight on to his end of the rope I let the hitch go with great results. Up came a cloud of soot, with a sound of great laughter from the family, so I descended to see the results. On the sudden release of the rope Jimmy had gone off his kneecap balance and landed head first into the open fireplace, with his hands in the grate and soot, and what was left came down with the gorse on the back of his neck. What a sight he sure did look—a real tradesman,—and if his reply to my "What did you pull so hard for?" could be put into print to match his face, it would have made up our red-and-black Opoho bowling colours. Talk about laugh! I was still at it as I returned to the chimney top to try it all over again, minus the hitch, and just to make sure, as I said, that he had not got all the soot on the back of his neck. To tickle his carburettor a wee bit more, from the safety of my perch

I called down to him that he was next on the list for a hot bath. However, we were only lads, and what is the use of living if you cannot knock a deal of fun out of life? We grow old soon enough and are a long time dead. Jimmy was not done with yet, for at the week-end he found he had to destroy a dog which he had caught worrying sheep. Being a tender-hearted sort of chap, for the present in any case, he asked me if I would mind putting a bullet in its head while he drove into the township, and also would I bury it deep, anywhere in the trees near the road boundary—"about opposite the old horse will do," he said, as he pointed to his old Carbine taking it easy in his old age. By the time he was dressed and driving slowly past, I had the trench about 18in. deep, and as he came opposite me on the road-line I crouched in it myself, and with only my head and shoulders showing I called out, "Jimmy, is this deep enough." On pulling up and peering through the trees he called out, "What are you doing there?" Don't make such hard work of it. I hope you haven't shot the old horse by mistake." But when I stood up in the shallow trench and replied that I loved hard work, and could sleep beside it, I am sure by the remarks he fired back that he was not yet quite clear from his black-out of a few days previous. So away he went with the usual grating of gears and a few of his pert expressions which usually accompanied his hasty start off in his old Humber car So ended one of the many good holidays spent with my country pals, and I was soon away on the roads again.

A CLOCK FANTASY

I HAVE appeared before with many of my shipmates in these stories, but to get on in life one must speak up for himself. Thus it comes about that, despite the fact that I have many times heard my praises sung, I will blow my own horn and ring my own bell by way of a change. Had I been one of

those foreign fancy cuckoo birds I would have had two pairs of bellows to help me along in the wind.

All my life I have gone thirsty, and never a tool was lifted in my aid until one day a lad they called Jimmy happened along and gave me a run and a drink, and a new lease of life. So thus I have been spared all these years to give you the following biography of my very useful life.

I arrived in Dunedin in 1865 in a special shipment to my new owner, John Hislop, one of the hardy young Scotsmen who in 1857 left their land of the heather and the kilt to try their luck in the first place on the Victorian goldfields before being caught up by the great magnet in 1862 which drew so many thousand miners and others to New Zealand's first great gold rush at Gabriel's Gully, Lawrence. By the time I arrived with a few dozen of my assorted English pals the excitement had settled down a bit and the fever was more evenly distributed all through Central Otago, to be followed by stores and hotels with their dancing saloons wherever those rough roads wormed their way over the mountains and through the almost impregnable river gorges. We were a very fit lot and as hard as brass, as proved by our many years of tireless labours. Although I opened up in such perfect condition, all nice and pretty with my polished face, I was not greatly taken with my new surroundings in John's small shop in Rattray Street, just opposite the present Crown Hotel. Nearby was the village pump, and the road was mud up to the ankles, which was not improved when a creek came tumbling down the hillside, and overflowed at the least encouragement from the weather before finding its own resting place in the bay a few yards away, near the present Bank of New Zealand corner. John had us all looking our best in our various cases, and despite his tender care and an occasional once-over with a feather duster, we were all with the slightest wind very keen to go on strike, but not as you understand it to-day. All the same there was nothing very "striking" about me apart from my innards, which of course folk could not see. I did it very hard to see several of my more fortunate and prettier shipmates being handed over the counter to take up new and warmer positions, while I was left for a year or so. I was then taken away by a Highland laddie who no doubt knew when he saw a bit of plain and solid beauty as all Scotsmen like it. I did look well, my square dial being set off with my pretty hand-painted glass apron, all being enclosed in a plain but handsome mahogany

case. You can imagine my delight when I overheard my new owner Jim state that he was taking me by waggon to his big station in the Central. I made no objection as I saw him hand over only 50/- in exchange for me, and my expected 24 hours per day solid toil, year in year out, which was the guarantee John supplied with me, and I bet he knew my make-up under my hard dial. I was on a fuss to think I was to serve such a couple as young Jim and his bonnie wee wife. I could see he wanted service, and I knew he would get it from me. It was a very rough and long trip, and I was at last delighted to be placed on his big mantelpiece over the kitchen range. From here I had a good view of all the duties performed, and at night the games played in that big room; I was doing time and enjoying the life. I never saw "Barney White Rats," but I heard he had called at the big stone cookhouse down the yards and was given the usual meals and a shake-down after his performing white mice had done their turn to the amusement of the station hands. I also believe the "Shiner" with his straw hat and umbrella had wandered along on his usual cadge, for he and work were complete strangers, and he lived on the generosity of those splendid gentlemen on the land. There was also "Jimmy the Grunter" not so far away at St. Bathans, but he came into the jokes some time later, and as he did not travel far from home he was not so well known and, unlike the Shiner, he could do a day's work at times. It almost made me jump a few hours fast one night when "Spanker" the cowboy came in with the true story that the "Shiner," who would scheme to the limit for a long beer, had called with his usual thirst at one of the down-country hotels. On receiving his glass, he apologised for not having any money. He never did have any. The barman and a few of the locals who were present wetting their whistles were eyeing him pretty hard. "But," said the Shiner, as he raised his glass to the usual "Happy Days and Good Luck," "I have plenty of stamps." "Well, hand them over; they will do," said Charlie. "Certainly," he replied, "but give a fellow time to enjoy his beer." On the disappearance of that long cool pint, and to the amusement of the lads, the Shiner stepped back a yard nearer the door and started marking time with his dusty boots on the floor and counting out his stamps—one, two, three, four, five—"Say when, Charlie," six, seven, eight. With the laughter hitting the kitchen roof, that was all I could catch of it, as I had to attend to my own job of

striking the hour of eight, which seemed to make the staff laugh the louder and wonder if I also had stamps for exchange.

I have heard many good jokes from my high position, but that one just about put me off my beat, a thing I could never let happen. It would be very interesting to know how many sheep and lambs, not to mention other joints, have depended on my good timing, to be taken from the big oven below me cooked as for a King. On the good name John gave me so many years ago I could not let him down, unless of course the cook let me down with my usual weekly good turn with my key, which I did notice they seemed to treasure more than any other of the kitchen gadgets.

I was very glad to see young Willie take me in charge later on, as he was coming on in life and seemed to be very fond of finding out how things worked. I liked the wee lad very much—he always had a smile for me,—but although we so often came face to face he never offered to shake me by the hand. I am sure it was not because I was a "pointer" all my life, but maybe he did not like my hard dial and the way I used to ring out his retiring hour when he had finished his lessons and was enjoying a game of euchre or grab. I remember only once crossing words with him, and by "ticks" he was wild, but as that is another story which has already been told, of moving day and of how I went on my first and only lay-down strike, I will leave it at that. So here I am after all these years, ticking as usual, but in the new station homestead, and though you may not credit it, I have never had a drink in all that time. In fact, I would have excused anyone for turning me round to see if I carried a hump on my back like a camel. But man, I was feeling dry, and in fact beginning to wear a bit in my pins, and wishing any one of my old shipmates would come and relieve me. I knew by this time there were dozens of them scattered all over Otago, and every man Jack of them held up old John's reputation in the same old way. John was nearing his three-score-and-ten, and we all hoped to beat his great record of a good clean life by many years. I was not feeling too fit; my pulse was getting weak and I was grinding my teeth. So you can imagine my joy when a chap called Jimmy came along with his bag of goods. After a cuppa and a chat, he got busy on a very pretty French piece which had been sitting idle in the front room since her arrival at the new homestead. Despite her very fine figures,

beautiful teeth, steel blue hands, fancy dial and gilded legs, she could not stand up to moving-day. She no doubt was very attractive, but being so finely cut required more care than we old English hearts of oak. It was not long before the sweet sound of her bell and gentle voice came floating through the hall to me, and I knew at once she was off on a new life. I began to wonder if I should not slip my springs and do a figure eight on to the floor, or just cross my "hands" and stay put, thereby drawing some attention in my direction. However, I was put at ease by Jimmy coming in the door with a tiny bottle of oil and a few handy tools to take my pulse. His first remarks to the dear old lady of the house were "As dry as a daisy in the desert." This bucked me up quite a lot. I chipped my dial with joy as he took off my hands the responsibility of pointing the time for the present.

Will's dad had also grown old with me, and I very well remember when he gave my history to Jimmy. He stated that as far as he could recollect I had not had a drink in my life, and how I wished I could bet him that he could not say the same! I did enjoy my run and a drink; being tickled by Jimmy's long oiling pin was the treat of my life—(some tickler!)—and it was a relief to see that small bead of dry oil, which I could never shake off my fork, disappear. My pallets were moist once more, and my pins were free in their bearings, which, however, were a bit wide, due to neglect and my own endeavour to be up to time all the time, which also included two and a-half million strikes of my hammer in all these years. As my makers knew the quality of my brass, it was not necessary to jewel me, even in one hole like a good watch, and they sent me on to the world's markets with every confidence. However, to-day the question is, do you get the quality for the price? I do not think so, for where can you buy any one of my reliable old thirty-hour pals, such as the good old Pirate, or Peep O'Day alarms at 7/6 and 10/-, not to mention the small Bees. The latter were not much bigger in the dial than the old Waterbury—the first cheap watch to come on the market at 22/6. I have heard of dozens of these good cheap clocks being thrown away in the country simply because they refused to work without a drink.

I missed my good friends and the bonnie lassies as one by one I saw them make off for new homes of their own. But, although all good things must come to an end, I could

never miss the twinkle in Will's eyes when he would give me his good-night glance on his occasional early a.m. arrival home through the back door and kitchen. I could see he was walking on air, and I trusted that Jimmy was on the scent of some more good business. I bet he was. It was not long now before the dear old couple retired to the city, and it was a very sad parting for me in that lovely homestead in the hills, under the roof of which always reigned such a wonderful spirit of good Christian fellowship and goodwill to all men, upon which I was so fortunate to look all my life.

In spite of all the trials and hardships which sometimes come with the climate so far inland, it was a wonderful example of a real happy home. I had one great consolation, and that was when Will decided to take me with him to his new home on the south borders of the Taieri Plain, and what a bonnie spot it is! So here I am in 1945, after my second shift, giving all the latest in clocks, including those lanky German grandfather chimers with their faces as bold as brass, all they want to arrive on noon with me and the sun.

Travellers are coming and going as in the old homestead days, and very seldom does one pass without a cup of tea and many a time a meal. They are great lads, and their jokes are as good as ever. One day in the kitchen a lamb-buyer just about took the shine out of the Shiner with a true one. A young chap recently appointed to a position down south was a very keen bee student, and he knew a lot about them. So to attract a good attendance at the next ladies' sewing meeting he announced that he would give a talk on bees and honey. On the day the hall was well filled with the farmers' wives and their daughters ready to learn something about their own side-line, and as the keen young chap got along with his address to his very attractive audience, he declared that the young of the bumble bee have no sting, or at least that is what he intended saying, but being carried way by such a great hearing at his first meeting of the sort, he got tangled up, and stated that the young of the stingle bee have no bum.

The smiles from the nice young things present pointed to an error somewhere, as he about swallowed his plate in his attempt to make that bee face the right way.

I must say it was very nice to meet old Jimmy again when he and his wife spent the day with Will. He has retired, so I heard him say, and I had many a good smile at

all the chin-wagging which was so good to hear between the purrings of my fan wheel. I liked the way he chuckled at my smoky weather-beaten dial, but, gee whiz! he can't give me any points there. I was very interested to hear him record the fact of giving one of my old shipmates on the Taieri a run and a drink, which had very likely not been oiled since being sold in 1875 by his eldest brother, A. R. Hislop, later of Wellington, who had pencilled that remark inside the case. I agreed with Jimmy that it would be very interesting to know how many of his Dad's old timers are still doing their job and, as in my case, with his wee trade ticket pasted inside the case. It was his weekly job as a lad to wind several of them for the city banks and public offices, and it was very nice for so many of his old timepiece friends in the country to see him call in and, for the love of it, to see they were on a good beat and being cared for.

So off they go into the front room, where I can hear Will's wee wife calling "Cup of tea on, you boys; come along," where no doubt their tongues have been wagging like my pendulum on the usual women's talk, but the betting is safe that it concerned more the W.D.F.U. and their great work. Being left once more on my own to carry on, I must say I did enjoy all that chat between the two old pals, as they smoked their pipes in the kitchen. It was so very typical of the friendship between the Otago lads. I have seen so much of it in my time that I am convinced that it is one of the big things which make life worth while.

So with all that I do trust the life story of one of John's old Holloway English kitchen clocks has interested you to the end. May you have in your pocket a time-piece as reliable as Will's eighty-year-old keepsake. Yes, you might have, but with a final blow of my own horn, I will bet you a bag of ticks it is no better!

In conclusion, I would like to make further reference to the Professor. Barney Winters—I beg his pardon, Professor Winters, to give him his self-appointed title,—who was known to many as Barney White Rats, was a remarkable old character. His personality and bandy legs, huge nose and small build, and bun hat, added to his one-man vaudeville shows, at the conclusion of which in the woolsheds he handed round the collection box—in other words his stiff bun. He could sing a song, and was a good ventriloquist, which of course added no weight to his outfit, which consisted of a box as big as himself. This contained his

magic lantern and screen, also marionettes and white mice, etc. To get into the shoulder straps of this cargo he had to use a bank or fence. Failing that he simply got on his back and wriggled into them, and it took some doing. One day when the wee lass from Kyeburn Station was riding on her way she came upon a struggling object on the roadside. It happened to be the Professor, who had been resting, and in his attempt to get back into his harness his short bandy legs and arms performed some very queer antics in kicking and wriggling his way back into his straps and on to his feet again. All this commotion did not go too well with the horse, as it was not used to a contortionist show on the roadside, but the lassie's station training served her well and she got past on a tight rein and with a few hops and kicks from her "neddie." His lantern shows in the woolsheds were of various old rhymes, such as "London Bridge Has Broken Down," and "The Ducks and the Geese They All Swim Over." This is where his marionettes of ducks and geese came in, as he caused them to swim across the screen in the high light of his show and the first introduction of "movies" into the Central. His voice-throwing stunt usually saw the old stiff bun handed round. One day at the station he asked permission to stop a little longer, as he had washing to do. Of course this was agreed to, and on taking off his shirt and spreading it on the ground he gave it a sprinkling with water from his pannikin and hung it on the fence to dry. His winter quarters were the Oamaru Old Men's Home, but with the first breath of spring he was off on the roads again with his box of tricks enjoying the life he loved and, unlike the Shiner, earning his passage through the country.

Thank you, old-timer, for your interesting story, and may I close it with a smile from my old miner pal J.W., who related to me the occasion when a few of the lads called in to a small wayside hotel down country. The proprietor was a rough old Irishman from Jack's Emerald Isle. The old chap could not find the glass cloth, but when he started to polish the glasses with his handkerchief one of the lads said, "Hold on, Pat; go easy with your handky." "O, it's alright," said Pat. "I doesn't matter, it's a dirty one onny how."

THE BIOGRAPHY OF MY 1902 B.A.T. MOTOR CYCLE

IN WISHING to record the good performance of a British machine, I will have to forget all about Central Otago's glorious climate, and when I found there was nothing so bracing and pleasant as a quiet tour over its tussocky hills, especially in the early hours of the autumn sunshine, when the crispness of the air is at its best. It was my Central winter trips I enjoyed most, and any mud I encountered could be classed as a puddle compared with the miles of Southland's highways in the winter, especially the Clinton-Gore and Dacre sections, which as far as motor traffic was concerned almost isolated Invercargill from the north.

In forgetting my sales and sport, for a change, to recall only a few of the tests my machine was put to without once leaving me stranded, I naturally send my thanks to J. A. Prestwick, of Nottingham, the makers of the J.A.P. engine, for getting me there every time. I need not remind my readers that "there" took much more getting to at that time than it does to-day. I am sure J. A. Prestwick never intended their machine to stand up to all the buck-jumping and crashing it survived in its five years' touring through our mountainous country, burdened as it was by a heavy sample case, etc. The lads of to-day may also be interested in the make-up of a machine of so long ago, when there were no chain drives or kick starters, and to start you had to push, and be very quick off the mark in your hop into the saddle, and in my case not to mention the high sample case I had to clear in doing so. My B.A.T. was imported at the cost of £72 in 1902 by my old friend, J. L. Passmore, a typical Dunedin business lad, whose name to-day adorns the key-stones of the many difficult bridges to success crossed by all the South Island Motor Associations.

The main features of the machine were its 7 h.p. twin J.A.P. engine with automatic intake valves, which could be replaced within five minutes. The magneto, which was shaft driven, was built into the tank, a perfect idea for re-timing, fording streams, and wet weather journeys. The sight oil feed, very easily regulated, was about the first on the market. On several occasions I broke its glass in upsets, but I always carried a spare, which I cut from a small round bottle. Despite the big tank, I had to carry an extra half-gallon tin strapped to the frame, as at the time petrol could not be obtained at every farm or township. The back wheel, which was too light for our roads, had the belt rim attached to its spokes, causing them great strain on very rough going, but I soon had a heavier one fitted. I considered the spring frame perfect. The upright supporting the saddle rocked on two long levers coming from under the tank, and was supported by four very solid spiral springs, while the bottom end of the support was hinged to two large footboards, which also rocked with any motion from the saddle pillar, thus the springing idea was quite independent of the frame. The front fork also supported an extra light fork with four spiral springs. This fork went round the back of the wheel in a straight line from its axle, and gave it a perfect seesaw motion in hurdling potholes or tussocks.

My solid sample case on the special carrier acted as a back rest, and with the long handlebars and their hooked horn safety grips I could sit well back and straight up in comfort, and not in the cramped jockey position you see to-day. But the long leverage on the handlebars did not add to their strength when the machine had to be lifted out of an upset, or supported in heavy going, which it so often survived, and by the time I traded it in, when purchasing an Arrol-Johnston car from Paisley, Scotland, the handlebars were almost solid through being repaired in four places.

On one occasion, between Palmerston and Hampden, I was so often reminded of "Off agin', on agin', gone agin', Flannigan," on the greasy going that at last one of the bars just about tore right off with the constant strain of holding the machine up from a complete upset.

As luck would have it, I was close to the home of a farmer friend who obliged me with a few yards of wire clothes line. With this and a stout stick and a few farmer's twitches I managed a makeshift repair to see me into old pal Jock Douglas's smithy at Hampden, from where his good job

saw me safety on the way to a brazing plant at Oamaru.

The last time the handlebars let me down I was about to descend the very steep pinch on the top of the big Kilmog Hill, when the back wheel stand fell down and was making a great noise on the metal. Luckily for me on this occasion, try as I would I could not get it to slam up and stay put, as I usually did without stopping, by reaching back and hooking it up with my heel. With the very little extra pressure I put on the handlebars in dismounting, they went right down and about gave me a knock-out on the chin as I went down with them. On lifting them back into place they came free at the crown head—a very awkward break to repair. By hammering a stick into the stub of the crown and down into the support, and applying a few more yards of wire which I hunted up with a file from an old broken-down fence, I was soon on my way down-hill and on to Dunedin, 18 miles away. I travelled at the slowest speed I ever attempted, with enough wire twitches and sticks decorating my handlebars to make a monkey cage. Had the stand not fallen down, I am sure any one of the many unavoidable pot holes would have snapped the crown head and sent me head-over-heels, and I did not usually dilly-dally down the hills. Don't blame the machine, for the lads to-day don't know what a rough road is like. They never have to ride on the cattle tracks at the side in an endeavour to dodge a hundred yards of freshly-laid broken metal.

It was one of these patches round the bad corner on top of Saddle Hill that upset me in the only spill that made red show through the knee of my pants. What a cropper that was as the machine landed on the side of the tank, from which the brass boss protecting the bevel drive on the magneto protruded about an inch. This boss was held in place by three solid bolts which were ripped off, and the shaft drive, a soft 14in. steel rod, was bent into a figure "S." However, by using my heavy King Dick spanner as a hammer, and a post on the roadside as an anvil, I soon had it straight again. There was no shortage of handy bolts and nuts in my kit, which had seen more stranded motorists than myself on the road again, and I soon effected a good repair, as the timing of the spark was a very simple matter on this machine.

On one occasion I returned with a strap of iron reinforcing my cracked fork. It was a blacksmith's job done in Alexandra. There were no garages in those days, but all

the same it was a very ticklish job that would stick such good blacksmiths as my old pal Bill Becker, of Oturehua, and many are my happy memories of such real good fellows all through Otago.

It was at Alexandra one day I received a wire from one of my good Maniototo friends to return for the week-end. It was very nice down there, and if any of my good old pals on the plain can "pick it," I can hear them say, as they smile, "I bet it was!"

Off I went on the forty-mile jaunt in a following gale. I was cutting across the top end of Ida Valley, near Wedderburn, with a mile long cloud of dust tailing me, when up shot a sheet of flame from the carburetter. Talk about a cat on hot bricks! It could give me no points in a split-second action from off my fast-moving machine. I had no idea I could hop it intentionally so fast, although many a time I have managed it much faster when I could not help it, and had to land where I was thrown. Off went the petrol supply, which was very handy, and in landing I swung the machine on to its side with the tank to the wind, and the old buck rabbit was never born that could beat me at scraping dust as I smothered the fire with it. The petrol pipe had snapped at the intake, causing a good flow on to the silencer. With a piece of packing and a copper washer, which I filed and reemed and fitted below the break, which I also filed to fit, I was soon on my way again, rejoicing at the results of another wayside repair. Man, that was a hot one, and I trust one more won't weary my readers.

I was on my way down from Puketoi Station when, with a wallop, I bounced into an irrigating ditch which when dry was very hard to notice on the white roads. As I continued a little slower, I noticed the machine had developed a very springy action. On examination I found I had broken the main crank case bracket. A very careful mile or so saw me pull into old pal Davies' farm, where with a good twitch of fencing wire I was well set for the next twelve miles to the Ranfurly Engineering Works.

Many a motorist has broken his springs on those traps, which the farmers soon piped under the roads as they became owners of cars. I have already mentioned the Kyeburn ditch, which left me with only seven firm spokes on the belt rim side of my wheel; but it saw me there all the same.

My first machine was a 3½ h.p. Triumph, and what a beautiful job she was! British to her bark. But I soon

wished for more power on the long and tricky hills, such as the Capburn at Tiroiti, where a small river and a sharp corner block a run at it. Bridges were very few and the streams very numerous. I managed my first attempt at the Capburn Hill, but not without enough puffing and blowing to send the Central goods train through the tunnel in its bowels. This hill is by no means the longest in Otago, and a dozen or so of its length would not see you halfway over the Crown Range at Arrow, which is the highest road in New Zealand, being 3,677 feet.

My next trip saw me mounted on the B.A.T., and was I glad of the extra power, where a quick pick-up is so necessary. Its steel and leather whittle belt did not slip when driving it through streams, and extra links were so very easily fitted. Snowdrifts were its only barrier, but they were very seldom met with. The only way to get over them was in a sideway herring-bone fashion by lifting the front wheel forward about two feet and pressing it into the snow, and then the same action with the back wheel. It was a slow and heavy job, but nothing like as awkward as I found pulling the machine on its side through a barb wire fence, when one day I mistook the short-cut track down through the paddocks to Moa farmhouse. I could not go back, as part of it was ploughed, which did not bother me down hill, but to try it going up was out of the question. However, Mr. Farmer enjoyed the joke from his yards as he watched me at his fence, and was quite satisfied so long as I had not strained his wires too much, although it did cost me a spot of petrol.

I could continue for pages, but to refer to the blowing-out of three silencers, new pulley wheels, etc., would only add to the variety in the every-day life of my good old machine. I am sure there is not a more reliable engine made than the J.A.P., which is testified in the number of motor cycle manufacturers who build them into their own pet idea of what a perfect machine should be, and it's a great testimonial when so many of them choose it to supply their machines' heart-beats to success.

The B.A.T. was not a heavy machine in comparison with the big American Harleys and Red Indians, which a few years later came on the market, and I classed it as a feather-weight beside a French machine my pal Dick soon regretted buying. It was a four-cylinder shaft-driven tractor, and he could have it for me, as you had to be a champion

weight-lifter to manage it at all in the case of an upset in the soft going. He was pleased to trade it in, and it was a very queer name he had at times for his cumbersome F.N. foreign machine.

Dick and I were great friends, and many a good yarn we had in his back yard at Eden Bank, Gimmerburn, on motors, which were his hobby. However, as the best of friends must part, he eventually became the owner of my five-year-old B.A.T. (Best After Tests) motor cycle.

A few years later the Great War No. 1 shook the world, and causes me in these stories to record a very sad memory, when I refer to my good pal Dick Weir, who paid the supreme sacrifice in France.

MY OLD PAL, "YOUNG FELLOW" FRANK

THESE stories contain memories of some of the many fishing trips to different lakes and rivers of this very bonnie end of New Zealand, but very few of them have been told. As years roll by, and may be as they are told again, the good fish they concern will never grow, for I have never stretched a fishing story—"What never, well hardly ever!"

The 9¾lb. trout I landed from the Waipori Dam—(my best fish)—is still the same weight, or at least it was, and I don't think many heavier ones have been taken from that great water, known as Lake Mahinerangi.

My old pal Frank at Woodside—Young Fellow, we call him—was the boy to stretch them, and as I was only a lad at the time, I can imagine how he enjoyed watching me swallow all his early-day pig-sticking tales, and also those of the great 14lb. trout he used to take from the Deep Stream at Rocklands Station on the old Dunstan Road. My best fish from the same locality was 5lbs. I have seen Frank's old-time bullet-making mould, and also the muzzle-loader with which he used to shoot wild pigs from his back door away back in 1869. He is still going strong in 1945.

There was a great deal of truth in his yarns, but there was one we used to call his day-dream story, and I am sure he did not expect me to swallow it, green and all as I was at the time. I have heard of film stars having rubber jaws, and had the story come from one of them you could have expected some stretching, but from Frank's kindly old face with its George Washington expression—well, you could only laugh at his joke. If my pen does not splutter too much in going so far off its usual course, I will pass it on as he used to.

At the time he was going round the swamp rounding up stock, and as he came to a ditch, to shorten his jump across he was about to step on a big black log—they were lying all over that recently cleared land—when to his surprise the bally thing glided a little closer and under the weeds. "Cæsar's Ghost!" says Young Fellow, "it's an eel." Out came his knife, and within a jiff he had a good sharp point on the end of a long green willow stick he was carrying. He could not miss, it was so fat, so with a whang and a stab of a Haka dancer, he planted his stick in the back of Mr. Eel. What a stirring-up of the mud there was, and to save himself from a cold plunge he let his spear go and watched it sail along like the periscope of a submarine as the eel made for the safety of a lagoon.

It was some years later that his sisters were entertaining some city visitors by having a picnic down by the lagoon, and of course Young Fellow was right on his toes and in his element seeing to the boiling of the billy for the nice young things. The day was very hot, and for their picnic they sat in the shade of a fair-sized willow on the water's edge. It was a very bonnie spot, at the foot of that fine crop of oats, with wild pigeons and tuis in their hundreds in the nearby forest, and what is left of it to-day is known as Gow's Bush. But whether or no Young Fellow had his good fire too close to the willow, he could not say, for it was not long before the shade had shifted rather far for the short time they had been seated there. They could not make it out, as they knew the sun did not move that fast, until their attention was drawn to the willow tree, which was slowly sailing out from the bank and making for the middle of the lagoon.

Young Fellow's hair about pushed his hat off, as he turned to the lassies to make sure that he was seeing right, and dropping his cake in his excitement. As any spirits to be found in the old pioneers' homes were only there for

emergency purposes, readers can cut out the "Put more water with it, Young Fellow," idea. Sure enough, there was his old waddy growing out of the back of his Loch Ness eel, and sailing away to where there were no fires to disturb the cool temperature of its hide-out.

That is the whitest story ever told about the biggest black eel that ever was. If Young Fellow could invent something which he could stretch like his story without breaking, his fortune is made, but as he is just on eighty-nine and still full of oats, his worries re wealth are nil. So "lang may his lum reek," and may he be spared to some day tell a' nither. I am sure his auld Scotch recitations create more mirth these days. His main hobby was painting, and although he never had a lesson he has put some good work on canvas, the "Old Wool Waggon Scene" being one of his best.

Pages of sport could be written about our shooting trips to the confines at the mouth of the Lee Stream on the Taieri River, and although it was one of the roughest localities I have ever tramped, Young Fellow would also at times carry his canvas and oils.

"Could he shoot?" To say he could tie with Arty and George would be saying a great deal, as George, with his Dad's expensive old Greener, let very few ducks go past. Frank has a very interesting diary written by his uncle during the early wars. It refers to the retreat at Corunna, where, as one of the officers of the Black Watch 42nd Foot Highlanders, he took part in the very sad event of burying their hero leader, Sir John Moore, with their swords.

There was very little food in that retreat, and some of the men were without boots, and were dying in the snow. But there is a very fine poem which tells that sad story as it should be, and as lads we used to read of it in "Deeds That Won the Empire." The War Medal presented to Captain J. McDiarmid is dated 1793-1814, and has the Salamanca and Corunna Clasps, and, with the diary, they make very interesting relics, and will no doubt eventually find a resting place in the Early Settlers' Museum.

Frank's dad was a brother to this old-time war hero. He landed in Otago in the second ship in 1848, and died on the Taieri at the grand old age of ninety-six. It seems a long time back, even to my apprenticeship days, when I used to cycle out to the old "Poplar" Homestead at Woodside, and go fishing with Frank. I used to live for those odd

week-end trips; with a good wind an artificial minnow was the best lure, and a garden fly in a dead calm.

It was on one of those trips to Splodger Thomson's, on the Lee Creek, our favourite spot, where I landed my record variety bag. I caught everything the old sluggish stream had to offer. It included trout, perch, and also the only flounder I ever hooked. Of course, there were eels also—they were left for the gulls. But that flounder did make me wonder what I had hooked. To cap all this mixture, I also found a duck's nest with four eggs, but as I reckoned these belonged to Splodger, who lived opposite, I did not disturb them. My best bag from the same locality was six fish, averaging 3lbs. each, all caught on the minnow in very heavy weather. That basket would be hard to beat to-day, even with its murderous bait-casting and trawling.

From Splodger's up to the dead horse—a heap of bones half a mile up-stream—was a great stretch of fishing water, but it was all changed years ago, when the flood-preventing contour channel was constructed, running parallel half a mile nearer to the Maungatua Mountains to drain the many bonnie burns which come off that great barrier between the Taieri and Central Otago.

Many a good old-time gold story could be told about the Waipori Road, which winds round the foothills of the range to the old township, which will shortly be many feet below the surface of the enlarged lake. It was quite close to the Woodside end of this famous old-time road where the notorious bushranger Garrett and his gang had their hide-out, from which they stuck up a dozen miners returning from and going to the Waipori diggings, robbing them of close on £400. For quite a time Frank's mother and one or two other stalwarts had an anxious time, especially when their menfolk would be away bushwhacking.

The big fish I caught in the Waipori Dam was very likely one of the old stagers which had come out of one of the many very deep mining holes on the flat, which was flooded for many miles by the construction of the dam near the gorge.

This great work, the first of its kind in New Zealand, brought about the end of the Waipori goldmining, which no doubt was fizzling out in any case, and in the creation of the lake I can see in the near future a holiday resort which will rival our many other fine lakes. It is under two hours' run from the city, and is a very beautiful drive, especially if

approached through the gorge, where the great power stations may also be seen. As a holiday resort well up in the mountains it has great possibilities, and the Dunedin City's afforestation scheme adds greatly to its beauty and shelter. This forest planting is only another example of how well Dunedin has been served in the past by the wise old heads of its solid Scotch Council. It is close on thirty years since the first trees were planted, some of which are about ready for milling, and although nothing has been done during the war, the city has at its back the great asset of 13,000 acres planted with 7,800,000 trees, all of commercial variety.

With the completion of the present scheme, the round trip to the old Waipori township site will add still further to Dunedin's good list of wonderful scenic outings, of which we are all so justly proud.

To all lovers of Nature, can ye no heed Auld Reekie o' the South calling "Come this way, lad, and see things worth while," and partake of life's great blessing, true friendship, which is as free as the air.

As a final to my good old trade and its watches, of which the daddy of them all was one especially imported for Mr. Larnach, of the famous Castle, for which my Dad also supplied the real English grandfather chimers and other timepieces, I remember as a lad cleaning Mr. Larnach's watch-case for my brother Syd, who was overhauling the movement, and the inscription on the dome could not fail to catch the eye. It was as follows: "Presented to W. J. M. Larnach by his most intimate and valued friend W.J.M.L., to be left on his death to his eldest son," etc. In this present to himself there were 2½ozs. of gold. The dial was black, with white numerals and gold hands, and with its beautifully jewelled movement it was a wonderful watch. Of course, Mr. Larnach was before my time at the bench, but I do remember Dunedin's greatest fire, which gutted Mesrs. Guthrie and Larnach's warehouses in Princes Street South. An old stock sheet points to many such watches sold at that time, one of which I recently rescued in perfect condition from the jeweller's melting pot. How hard up some folk must be in these prosperous times to destroy such a beautiful article for the gold in the case.

If Mr. Larnach's watch was the most expensive supplied by my Dad, there is no doubt about the best clock he erected—it is Dunedin's Town Hall Big Ben, and with its chimes is reputed to be the best tower clock south of the line.

The tower was specially built to carry its weight, about which there are no doubts, for apart from the beautiful movement and its heavy steel supports, the three weights for the going, the chiming, and the striking each weigh 12cwt. The big hour bell weighs 30cwt, and the four other chiming bells weigh 11cwt. each. The chimes operate on all five bells, the big hour bell having an extra small hammer to help them along. The zinc and iron 2sec. pendulum, which weighs 3cwt., is driven and kept in motion by the clock's Denison's double three-legged gravity escapement, which only weighs 2½ozs. The dials are 7ft. 6in. diameter. For those concerned in the musical tintinabulation of the bells the chimes are detailed as follows:—First quarter: C A flat, B flat and E flat. Second quarter: B flat, G F flat, A flat, E flat, B flat, C A flat. Third quarter: E flat, C B flat, A flat, B flat, G E flat, B flat, A flat, A C A flat, A flat. Fourth quarter: C G B flat, E flat, B flat, G flat, E flat, B flat, F flat, A flat, B flat, C A flat, B flat and C A flat. It was manufactured by Messrs. Gilbert and Bland, of Croydon, England, and cost at Home £900. The landed cost in Dunedin was £1,146/10/9, and it was erected by Mr. McArthur, my Dad's foreman, whose special knowledge in turret chiming clocks was unsurpassed. All this happened in 1880, shortly after I myself began to chime and blink, and my Dad stated in the handing-over ceremony—(of the clock, of course)—that there was nothing better made in England, and there should be no important replacements required for at least 200 years. So I cannot hope to chime that great movement out of date, and being a Dunedin job, and despite its great weight so far off the ground, it is one, and may be the only one, of New Zealand's tower clocks which will not be dismantled by the powers-that-be as an earthquake damage precaution. Our worthy City Council will no doubt see to that!

CONCLUSION

With the good introduction left for me to follow up, was it any wonder that my many years on the roads were not other than happy ones. Although I wrote a lot of business, and did a lot of work and kissed the sweet earth more than the average motor cyclist in my young days, a fortune was never round the corner. Of course, I had a spot of sport and caught a lot of fish, I made a lot of friends and, above all, I found a good wife. But my well of happy memories is by no means dry, and may be these few lines will suffice to close my many pages of goodwill to my farmer friends and others, and I do trust that any back chat or good-natured banter thrown at any of them will be accepted with the good spirit with which it is given.

So it's many thanks again to my old pal Bill, who in the first place gave me the writing bug, out of which I have received so much pleasure. Man, I hear him say, and may be other good old friends also as they scan these pages and smile, "Cæsar's ghost! what a whale of a lot he has left out."

Z926.81 No. 1 5 6 9 1 8

HISLOP, J.B.

Pure gold and rough diamonds.

15.6.46	P.P.		
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HISLOP, J.B.

Pure gold and rough diamonds.

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