

depths of the bush. Think of the ages and ages these hills have been here with their forests, hiding strange sights and sounds long ere man ever entered this lovely land! All round in the river you hear the 'chug, chug' of the eels snapping at the mosquitoes now everywhere in evidence. And now a dim light constantly growing steals round you, and over against the ratas on the distant skyline the rising moon is outlined like a silver globe, and round the dead trees in the clearing is heard the chattering of the bats as they dart to and fro in pursuit of insects. Close by a weka sounds his eerie, mournful note, while a morepork, perched on an overhanging bough, screams shrilling. A puff of the light breeze comes laden with an earthy smell from the bush depths where rotting logs lie, the remains of trees that fell perhaps many, many years ago, and are now only a shell covered with creepers and mosses. How it brings to me dim, ancestral memories that no residence in crowded foetid cities can ever wholly stifle."

Again, Mr. Gibson writes of the early days around Mt. Egmont:—

"In those days the chorus of birds in the early mornings in the bush surrounding the clearings was most beautiful. Tuis were everywhere. There were also large numbers of pheasants, and on the occasions of earthquakes you could hear the alarmed cries of the cock birds before the 'quake. Later, I lived near Nelson, and on one occasion rode with a friend through the Rai Valley to a relative of his at Whangamoa. In the valley the kakas were so numerous and made so much noise that speech was impossible. They were everywhere, also parraquets, bell-birds, tuis, pigeons, fantails, tomtits, and the friendly little bush robins. In the lagoon at Whangamoa, the ducks and black swans seemed countless. There were Paradise ducks in abundance. I was the first settler in the Akatarawa Valley, off Upper Hutt. A whole spring and summer (in 1884) I was there alone. It was most beautiful. There was a large rata on a hill close by, and the kakas roosted there every night, leaving soon after dawn for their feeding grounds elsewhere. The song of the birds in the early morning was delightful. Huias were plentiful; they always went about in pairs, and you could hear their calls in every direction. In the tops of the lofty rimus pigeons were nesting, and often you would see them flying around, their breasts flashing in the sunlight. Parraquets, tuis, robins, wekas (or woodhens) and many others whose names were unknown to me were in multitudes (no exaggeration). In one tawa alone I counted thirty pigeons one day busily engaged eating the black damson-like berries. In the creek were often ducks, sometimes several of the blue mountain duck variety, which were very