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"Ha, ha!" laughed Hoppy Crummer. "If the Parson was honest I guess he would say the same. He don't get much Maori cash in his collection plate now. All the Maoris are hot and strong for Monday. The new prophet they call him."

MONDAY WIREMU said perhaps the scoffers would open their eyes wide when he walked on the water. Monday said he would walk on the water just to show all those people. He fixed it for next Sunday at the Rapids. He chose the Rapids because he had such a lot of faith. "Peter the fisherman walked in a mighty big storm," said Monday. "So I walk across the Rapids."

The Rapids were where the tide ripped around a headland on the upper reaches of Tidal Creek. Even a good swimmer might drown there. Monday couldn't swim. It seems that he was brought up by an aunt somewhere away inland.

This news upset the Parson. He said that people couldn't let a young man drown himself, and that it would be a great sin if someone else got drowned trying to save Monday. He said that he would preach against miracles next Sunday.

The boys of Monday's old gang, though, seemed to take the affair differently from what you would have expected. They hardly ever made a joke of Monday now. They didn't like the pakehas slinging off about Maori prophets.

"The pakeha haven't got one damn prophet," they said. "The pakeha keep all the prophet packed away in the Bible and he don't like it when the Maori have the real live prophet that come out in the open and do the proper miracle in front of everyone's eyes, eh?"

Monday took no notice of anyone. He went about quietly and happily. When he met any of the boys at the store he said ordinary things like "How's your uncle?" or "How the ginger-pop to-day?"

ON Sunday morning people began to gather on the beach above the Rapids. By mid-morning there was a big crowd there, so many in fact that it was difficult at first to find Monday Wiremu. Monday stood with a few friends away from the crowd under a clump of cabbage-trees. It gave you a bit of a shock to see him dressed so gaily. It made you think of the seriousness of the occasion. Monday wore his cream tennis trousers with a green blazer and his panama hat. He had a pink carnation in his buttonhole, and he wiped his face with a large coloured silk handkerchief.

The people on the beach didn't take much notice of him. They made a picnic of it. You would have thought that walking on the waves was an everyday event. Everywhere you looked there were squalling kiddies and goory dogs and grey-headed old men with carved pipes and carved walking-sticks. There were fat women in white blouses and black skirts or red skirts or blue skirts, with scarves over their heads. There were wagonettes, and buggies and drays, and horses of all kinds hitched to cabbage-trees. Some families were perched in the empty-shafted wagons or buggies in

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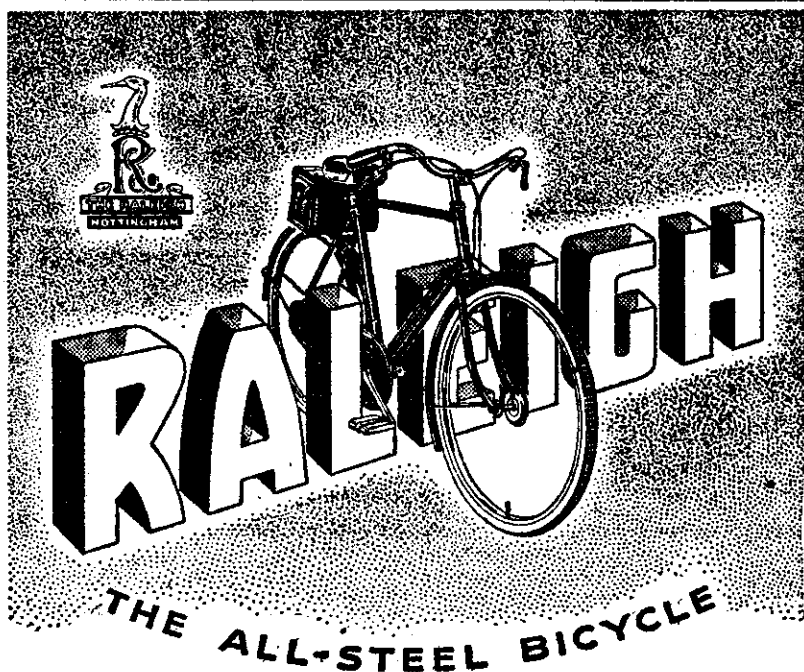


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