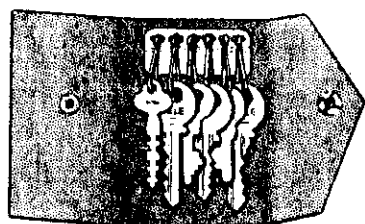


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COCOA?"



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CADBURY'S

so it must
be good

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Through New Zealand (XVI)

THE ESK VALLEY

By "SUNDOWNER"

I WAS overtaken on my way home by a letter that had chased me for 700 miles and caught me within 12 miles of its starting point. It was an invitation to visit the Esk Valley to see "a marvellous piece of rehabilitation," and I am very glad that it reached me while a visit was still practicable. It is almost impossible to imagine to-day what the Esk Valley was like

BURIED VALLEY

after the flood of 1938, and if no photographs had been taken the stories told would not be believed. Even if they were believed they would not convey much of the truth—bring back the alarm, the confusion, the destruction, the 70 years of lost endeavour that swept suddenly down to the sea. But it was what did not go to sea that was the immediate problem and has played a large part in the miracle since—the buried fences, barrages of logs, uprooted trees that were smothered again, and on top of everything, from a yard to two yards of sterile silt. It was a case of erosion hitting a community suddenly, savagely, and apparently beyond hope of recovery; not merely a judgment on our heads and a punishment for our sins, but capital punishment; the end of everything there forever. So it must have seemed nine years ago. But to-day there is a smiling valley again. The grass has come back—not the original grass, not good grass, not perhaps permanent grass, but a covering for the silt and a defence against the second kind of erosion by wind. Lucerne has sent its roots down to the original soil and the original moisture and in favourable situations is yielding three cuts a year. Fruit trees have been replaced and new shelter hedges. Buried willows have come to life, shooting up fantastically at right angles to the fallen trunks so that they are now strutted at their base against both wind and flood. It is all completely deceiving, and with the great poplars added—the biggest, both English and Lombardy, that I have ever seen—it is easy to forget that there ever was a flood, and difficult to believe that it was a flood of devastating dimensions. The present scene, studied after the story of the events as they were recorded at the time in the newspapers, if it does not rob erosion of all its terrors, makes it far less terrible than it is safe for New Zealanders to think it is. I am not one of those who brood on erosion all day and dream of it all night. I think some of its aspects have been made more terrifying than they are, and I was not surprised to find the East Coast more

stable than anyone would guess from the photographs in Dr. Cumberland's important book. I knew that the worst would be there and the best passed by, and that when you pack 50 strong photographs into a book of 200 pages you have a very misleading impression of the 200 miles of country from which the photographs come. But it is not good for us to have our erosion alarms too quickly dispelled, and when I saw what nature, with a little help, had done in the Esk Valley in nine years, I knew that there was a warning there as well as encouragement, and I would sooner be silent about it all now than seem to suggest that erosion is several parts propaganda. I should, however, like to know how much erosion there was in the Esk Valley before the Napier earthquake, and what signs there were after the earthquake that the valley was in danger.

[T is certainly a "marvellous piece of rehabilitation" that the signs of the flood have now to be looked for to be seen and understood. But I am not sure that the most marvellous example of rehabilitation in the Esk Valley is not happening somewhere else, and that those who want to study it need go no further than France House, the inter-denominational Boys' Home situated about a mile up from the Post Office. I

MEN IN THE MAKING

had no idea that such a place existed when I turned up the Valley road, and I imagine that very few of those who pass it on their holiday jaunts to Taupo have any more knowledge than I had when I called in one morning before lunch.

I still don't know enough to be dogmatic, and I am in any case not quali-



"Secret retreats, built by the boys' own hands"

fied to speak confidently about any experiment that is in part at least religious. When I asked the Superintendent to tell me what the institution was, he

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, MAY 2



"Old Father William"—with apologies to Lewis Carroll and Sir John Tenniel

In "Alice in Wonderland" page forty-two Father William was asked by his son, How he kept so remarkably fit for his age "Pray tell me," said he, "how it's done."

"I take Andrews Liver Salt," William replied, "(In tins at the chemists you get it)"

Drink bright sparkling Andrews like me when you rise I'm sure you will never regret it."

Father William knows a good thing. Andrews promotes good health because first, the sparkling effervescence of Andrews helps to refresh the mouth and tongue; next, Andrews soothes the stomach and relieves acidity, one of the chief causes of indigestion; then Andrews acts directly on the liver and checks biliousness; and finally, Andrews gently clears the bowels, correcting constipation.



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