

ONE SHALL BE TAKEN

THE sun was rolling down behind the hills when I trudged for the last time along Karangahape Road. I doubt if you would have recognised the place, but I knew every hole and corner in it, from Grafton Gully over to Ponsonby and the salubrious neighbourhood of Freeman's Bay. Perhaps that was why I didn't hurry as fast as I should. It's strange how attached you can get even to a lousy dump like that and I had met a lot of good cobblers there too. Many of them had gone, as I was going. Some of them were in Egypt already, some were scattered God knew where, but I was leaving others behind and I had a feeling that I would not be seeing them again.

It's difficult leaving your pals behind but you've got to do what you're told. And so you swop fags and shake hands and they wish you luck. And then, after you've all found that there's nothing you really can say, somebody finds a bottle of beer and everybody has a mouthful, all round, and then once again you say, "Well, cheer-oh, fellas, we'll be seein' you," and they say, "Sure, we'll be seein' you," and off you go. And there's an ache in your belly because you know that they won't be see-

A Short Short Story By "ETAOLN"

ing you again, short of miracles happening. And miracles don't turn up with the rations these days.

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AND so here I am stumping along Karangahape Road for the last time, and I don't like it one little bit. It's queer how you take root even in the stoniest places and queer how sore it is when the roots are dragged up. The place is almost beautiful to-night, looking down on the harbour from up here. It is nearly dark and the lower levels are lost already, but the shadows are sort of luminous and little points of fire are winking down by the foreshore where the ships are lying.

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AND the whole place is as silent as the grave. I've never known anything so quiet. Even back home on the farm, miles away from anywhere, you could always hear the cows breathing, or a sheep's cry coming down wind from the top paddock. There were all sorts of noises if you stopped to listen for them, beetles booming along among the gorse bushes, mice squeaking in the stacks or hedgehogs snuffling and grunting among the vegetables.

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HERE there are none of these little sounds of life. Once or twice I heard something like broom-pods crackling faintly in the distance. Just the

breath of a sound that seemed to come from very far away. But there are no broom bushes hereabouts and the pods would not be ripe yet if there were, and the few small trees there are stand gnarled and silent, their hard little grey leaves motionless and unrustling. I feel as if I were standing in an empty room, yet I don't want to leave. I don't want to leave those who must stay behind here when I have gone. Why should I be taken and the others left?

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I KNOW it's no use asking the question. Orders are orders, whether you like them or not. True, they can always be disobeyed, and the risk might be worth running to stay with my pals. Some are back there in the hills under the sunset and I wish I were with them, but it's a bit late to think of that now. Maybe this move is for the best; maybe I'll get back here again some other time.

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FROM where I am now I can look right down into Freeman's Bay and it's time I went down the hill. I can see one or two chaps ahead of me, some of the crowd going off too, apparently. "Come on Dig," yells one of them, "or you'll miss the bus."

So I turn for the last time and look along Karangahape Road. The shadows



have reached the ridge, and I know now that I will never see it again however much it may have become a part of me. But there is no time left for thoughts, for what is to be done had better be done quickly. So, with a last glance back at the ranges and at Mount Ida, now looming dark over the embers of Canea, I turn on my heel and hurry down to the shore where the destroyers are waiting. And in the west the last shreds of sunset die away.

THE professional wrestling season opened in Wellington the other week with a match between Fred Atkins, of Australia, and Pat Meehan, of Canada, which was conservatively described the day after as "one of the wildest and most sensational all-in wrestling contests ever seen in a Wellington ring." Mr. Atkins proved himself a real bad man of the ring, his specialities being such pleasantries as strangle-holds, knee-jolting and punching. At any rate he was warned on this account, which indicates that the referee was of the opinion that Mr. Atkins was, to say the least, a little careless in his choice of holds.

Mr. Meehan, for his part, gave as good as he received and it is on record that he was "more than willing to mix it." He won the match when Mr. Atkins was disqualified for punching his opponent in the face during the seventh round.

After receiving the plaudits and boos of the crowd with a courteous smile and a deep bow Mr. Meehan then repaired to his hotel, had a large supper, and then went to sleep until eleven o'clock the following morning. Shortly after that hour he was found sitting up in bed smoking a cigarette and reading the morning paper, not a scrap the worse for his strenuous experience the night before.

It all goes to show how foolish people are, these strenuous days, not to take up professional wrestling. How much easier

NO "CAULIFLOWERS" FOR PAT MEEHAN

Interview With Visiting Wrestler

to accept the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune when you can cushion them on the better padded parts of a sixteen and a-half stone torso.

Few Ring Scars

Catch him outside the ring, and Pat Meehan is anything but the accepted type of a professional wrestler. Certainly he is big and tremendously muscled, but he bears few ring scars. Innumerable elbow jolts have not dulled or rounded off his classic features; his ears have not the slightest trace of those decorations so quaintly known as cauliflowers.

Pat was born 30 years ago on Cork Island, which, you should know, is one of the greenest parts of old Ireland. When he was a year old, his parents migrated to Canada, settling down eventually at Edmonton, Alberta, where Pat received his education. After leaving high school, he joined the police force, and it was on the advice of a police doctor, who thought he was run down and not getting enough exercise, that he took up amateur wrestling at a local gymnasium.

By 1936, Pat was rated a "sure thing" for a trip to the Berlin Olympic Games. Instead, he took six months' leave of absence from the police force, and turned professional wrestler. The leave of absence was just in case he didn't make good as a wrestler.

Wisely remembering that local boy seldom makes good box-office he went south to the United States to turn professional, and stayed there for over a year before venturing back to Canada. His first match was against one Rudy Skorda at Seattle, Washington. "I won strangely enough," he says, "but I reckon I got the worst of the deal. I felt afterwards like I'd lost two matches."

From Seattle he went further south again to California, where he wrestled a good deal in Hollywood. Quite a number of the film stars are keen wrestling fans, he says, and among the famous people whom he has glimpsed in ringside seats are John Barrymore and his then wife Elaine Barrymore, Peter Lorre, and George O'Brien. Nat Pendleton, who was a professional wrestler himself once, goes along as a matter of course.

The last few years, as wrestling fans here know, Pat has been spending a good deal of his time in Australia, this being his second visit to New Zealand.

Meeting With "Man Mountain"

A list of the famous wrestlers with whom he has exchanged elbow jolts would read like a Who's Who in Wrestling. Gus Sonnenberg he has met three times, winning one match, losing another and wrestling a draw in the third, which

besides being nice and equitable, is a good showing against a man of Sonnenberg's calibre. Other wrestlers he has met who have not visited New Zealand are Rudy Dusek (one of the turbulent Dusek brothers) and "Man Mountain" Dean. He wrestled Mr. Dean in San Francisco six months after turning professional and ended up with two broken ribs. The "Man Mountain," who in fighting trim weighs every ounce of 350 pounds, or 25 stone, if you care to think of it that way, dropped Pat on the mat and jumped on him from a height of several feet.

Only a week after that, "Man Mountain" employed the same "hold" on another wrestler by the name of Bill Longson, whose back was broken. Needless to say, "Man Mountain" was forthwith prohibited from using that hold again.

Toughness Deplored

For all round toughness, however, Pat considers there are few wrestlers to touch "King Kong" Cox, the amiable Nebraskan farmer, who visited New Zealand some seasons ago. The longer "King Kong" goes, the harder and faster he gets, and he's tough and rough all the way.

Increasing toughness is a tendency in wrestling which Pat deprecates. Even if a wrestler prefers clean, scientific fighting, there are few opponents who are content to leave it at that. Himself, he is going to wrestle for a few more years then get out. "Some of them keep on until all they are capable of doing is wrestling," he says. "That's not good enough for me."