

packing supplies in to miners, stock droving, mining—even a stint as farmer and ferryman. From 1868, when Douglas accompanied Julius Haast on a journey south down the coast, twenty years were to pass before the ranges claimed him completely. All this time, however, he was increasing his knowledge of Westland—the bush, the birds, the mountains and rivers; learning to identify minerals and geological formations, and to use survey instruments to make a record of the country he traversed.

To understand the difficulties and the accomplishments of exploration made by Douglas [writes Mr Pascoe] it is important to realise what kind of country he faced in its primeval state for nearly forty years. . . South Westland was the land of rain-forest and flooded rivers, of sudden and ferocious gorges, of unexpected and pleasant grass flats, of tumbled blue ice and untidy upheaved rock moraines, and of rugged, nearly harbourless coasts. Above all these, there rose the proud sentinels: great mountains whose summits had never been climbed. The swift rivers were unbridged, and many of the coastal headlands were untraversable even at a low and calm tide. . . Its graces were the blossoms of the rata, the fronds of ferns and the song of birds as yet unsavaged by animals or man. . .

The work of Douglas has literally taken a volume to describe, part in the words of its editor and the rest in the writings of Douglas himself. A catalogue of exploratory trips would mean nothing here; it is enough to say that this emigrant Scot travelled up nearly every Westland river, traversed many glaciers and snowfields high up on the divide that still remain remote and little visited. Rivers like the Waiaototo, Arawata, Karangarua, Cook, Haast and Cascade will always be associated with his name.

But it is to the authentic voice we must go to see Douglas the man, the wherefore of his work, and the Westland he loved. The quotations that follow—from the diaries of 1891 that cover exploration of the Waiaototo—like the previous extracts from Douglas's diaries, preserve the characteristic inconsistencies of spelling and punctuation. "For historical reasons," says Mr Pascoe in a footnote, "it is fairer to



print the writing uncorrected and his minor offences do not make meaning obscure."

*Tuesday 3 Feby*

. . . Fools think that knowledge can only be got from books & men, & call me a Fool for wasting my life in mountain Solitudes, but if in so doing I have found nothing new in Thought or worth giving to the World, I have at least gathered glimmerings of Truth as to how nature works, glimmerings which if they bear no fruit in this Life, may in the next where darkness will be light.

*Monday 23 Feby*

Sketched in the Pickle Haub [Pickel-haube] Glacier & the flat. . . The name Pickle Haube is a puzzel. Who or what is it? is Pickle &c the name of some celebrated German Proffessor or was he a Mongol General, or is it the name of a New Sauce, invented by

TWO sketches by Douglas: Above, Shelf Glacier (now mapped as the Tornado Glacier); right, Balfour Gorge



some Philanthropest to make Rabbit Stew more palatable than it is? I must enquire & get a bottle.

*Wednesday 25 Feby*

Started with Camp, as the hills were clear. Sketched up and down the river, took bearings &c, just got up to the foot of the Flat when it came on a Deluge of rain. I couldn't find a safe ford, having no time to look about me, so camped on the East side close to the Fan of a large Creek. . .

The night looks in for a storm, but I am in a splendid Camping place. Hens & Rabbits Galore, Wood good & all safe unless the hills slip away which isn't likely. Writing this a la Maorie with nothing on but a blanket, my only shift of clothes is drying at a roaring fire, & the rain is coming down in Torrents.

*Thursday 26 Feby*

. . . One chap once much admired a Tree in a sketch of mine. The said Tree I thought I intended for a Snowy Mountain Peak. I was requested to draw a Settlers Shanty once, but had sense enough to decline. In the first place I couldn't have drawn him on the Verandah to look like a human being, & in the second place even if I had been able, he never could have understood why I couldn't draw a life size figure on a four inch piece of paper.

I am not romancing. There is a man down here who considers himself educated, rather above the Common herd in fact who on looking over a map burst out laughing. On asking him the reason he said "why look here, the Lagoon near my house is over a hundred yards long, & the Surveyor has put it down a wee bit of a thing not half an inch." This staggered me, I thought he might be joking, but no he was in earnest, his brain that the Donkey was so proud of was that of an Animal. He could only take in a peice of an Idea at a time, & far more people are so gifted than most men would imagine. However I was glad to hear his peice of Idea; at one time I thought I had fathomed the

depth of human stupidity when I meet a man who started *Up* the Landsbro to get to the Sea, but this Special Settler showed me a lower depth still. . .

*Tuesday 3 March*

. . . I have an interesting family [of wekas] round the Camp at present, a father mother & three cheeky youngsters, & really how wonderfull they are in their ways. I can tell as well what they are saying as if I had the Magic ring of King Solomon. The other day there was an unopened Jam Pot lying outside the Tent. She came along turned it over, looked wise, pecked round the rim but could make nothing out of it. He came up & shoved her to one side, with a "clear out old Woman what do you know about opening Jam Pots"? He propped the Jar of Ambrosia on its side and struck an attitude, while the Wife and family gazed in admiration as the Old Man raised his shoulders above his head, then came down with a bang on the Tin. Julius Caesar! What a discomfiture, his beak glanced off & buried itself up to the eyes in the Mud. The Youngsters sniggered, the Old Woman trying to put on a hypocritical look of sympathy rushed forward & said "Are you hurt, dear, do let me straighten your proboscis & wash the mud out of your eyes & then try again I know you can open Jam Pot." "Try it yourself he yelled, you know I don't care for Jam" & he sneaked away to repair & wash his beak. Since then he avoids that Tin but she taps it & looks steadily at him, remarks "how good some people are at opening Jam Pots," while the Young fiends make his life a burden, by their muffled sniggering.

Brief and isolated quotations can, of course, only hint at the man, and the variety, depth and liveliness of his observations.

"He was," says Mr Pascoe, "a pioneer of his time in his search for knowledge as he was in his search for new country. Restlessness and curiosity, courage and the tenacity to sustain it: these were some of his qualities."



GREAT MEN of Westland—Dick Seddon and Douglas at Whataroo, January, 1906  
N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 10, 1957.