

An Appreciation

Writing at the time of the Right Rev. Dr. Moran's death, a well-known journalist, now a prominent Parliamentarian, stated apropos of Father Moreau and strenuous times in Otago:—"The fact that the Protestant clergy actually rose above any narrow feeling in the hour of the Catholic people's grief, reminds me of a not less solemn leave-taking in the Edinburgh of the South though, on that occasion it was a farewell the people spoke to a living man—I refer to the departure from Dunedin of dear old Father Moreau (if I do not spell his name correctly, I claim the indulgence of those who knew it better than myself). Everyone in the city expressed and felt the deepest sorrow when that old man left them to take up the work of a missionary among the Natives of the Wanganui River region, and the scene at that farewell was one that will never fade from the memory of those who witnessed it. Father Moreau—peace to his ashes—was a well-known figure on the Otago goldfields in the early days, and I have often heard the diggers tell how much they loved the old man who, staff in hand and with his swag upon his back, tramped over mountains and swam rivers that he might reach the men who had gone into the then mountain fastnesses in their pursuit of the precious metal. Many a sturdy Protestant listened with reverence to that old priest when, setting up his altar in a digger's tent for want of a better housing, he addressed loving words to those who had little time to listen to religious teachers. They would always assemble, though, to hear the simple story, told in broken English, of man's redemption. Has that race of missionaries ended, I wonder? Or is it that the opportunities for that sort of thing no longer occur?

What wonderful changes there have been since the pioneers of civilisation made their way from the first rush to Gabriel's Gully up through the interior of Otago to the Dunstan and on to Fox's—now and for many years called the Arrow—along the river to the 12-Mile; then at Arthur's Point and Big Beach, and away up to Maori Point and Skippers on the one hand, and to Moke Creek and Moonlight on the other! I can remember when the journey up the Arrow and Shotover Rivers was a perilous thing indeed, and in fancy I can still see the pack-horses creeping along the bridle tracks, past dizzy precipices, and sliding down or clambering up steeply that it seemed sheer madness to attempt. But a few years ago all stores, timber, and other material for the mines had to be packed from the Arrow and Queenstown to Macetown and Skippers; but there was plenty of gold getting, and there was an air of prosperity that did one good to note. In the winter months it was a marvellous sight to see laden pack-horses, with shoes cocked and roughed, literally clawing their way along the narrow mountain tracks. Nowadays, there are roads for wheeled traffic to most of the old fields, and I had the honor of being one of the party who made the first journey to Macetown along the road made for vehicular traffic from the Arrow. Then there was made the dray road from Miller's Flat to Skipper's Point, and to-day I read in the *Post* of a woman having driven a team to Skippers and back! The correspondent who supplies the information to the Wellington paper says:—"I am confident in saying the drive to Skippers and back has never till now been performed by a lady. A visitor to Queenstown (Miss P. Maunder) from the North Island drove a pair of horses there and back the other day. The distance is twenty miles or more. It would be almost impossible to conceive a more difficult or dangerous road to drive. After crossing the Saddle (some 4000 feet high) the road descends rapidly. It is excavated out of the face of a cliff, and often not thirty feet without a sharp turn. Hundreds of feet below the river rushes. Another great danger lies in meeting teams, as the road is not wide enough, except in certain places, to pass. However, four or five were met on this occasion, and much surprise was evinced to see a lady handling the ribbons so well and gracefully." To those who knew what the Zig-Zag was like, even in favorable weather, this account will read like a romance.

In the course of a sermon at St. Joseph's Cathedral on the occasion of the celebration of the jubilee of Otago (1898), the Very Rev. J. O'Neill, of Milton, spoke (in part) thus:—"Fifty-eight years ago the first Christian missionary, Bishop Pompallier, appeared at Otago Heads. In the 'Sancta Maria' he went around the coasts ministering to those engaged in the whaling trade, and preaching the Gospel to the Native race. Thenceforward from time to time till the province was formed, Fathers Petitjean and Seon visited the scattered Catholic flock in Otago. Subsequently Fathers Moreau and Belliard came to reside in Otago. Fathers Ecuyer and Martin followed. Some listening to him (the preacher) saw those noble, apostolic men travelling

with their swags over trackless wastes. Catholicity in Otago received an immense increase from the Victorian miners, who came hither in the early sixties. In a few years the Holy See, in response to a petition, established a bishopric in the province, and in a happy day Bishop Moran came upon the scene. Gifted with loving enthusiasm, great organising powers, zeal, energy, and courage, his works may fittingly be summed up in the words of Cardinal Moran: "It would be difficult to find in Christendom a more rapid and a more solid growth than has characterised this important diocese during the (then) past twenty-one years."

(To be continued.)

ARTHUR CONINGHAM AGAIN

A 'RIDICULOUS AND EXTRAVAGANT CLAIM'

We take the following report from the *New Zealand Times* of August 21:—

'A more preposterous claim it has never been my lot to hear of, let alone adjudicate upon,' said his Worship in delivering his reserved decision in a case in which Arthur Coningham, described as a miner and agent, had sued Mrs. Ellen Clark for the sum of £136. This amount was made up as follows:—For special services in specially securing the special quartz claim situated in the Armchair Creek, Marlborough, known as the Tasman's Choice claim, closely watching claim, attending Blenheim for purpose of giving instructions to solicitor, also attending Warden's Court at Blenheim on three different occasions; posting application in claim and retaining it there pending the hearing, from February 27 to May 2, sixty-five days at £1 per day, £65; to pegging off claim, £5; to travelling expenses between Armchair Creek and Blenheim four times and having to remain in Blenheim twelve days, £16; remuneration for introducing and securing, £50.

The parties, remarked his Worship, were jointly interested in another claim, the good qualities of which they abandoned after the defendant had spent a considerable sum in exploiting it. That sum, or a very fair proportion of it, had found its way into the hands of the plaintiff. On the latter's advice, they had determined to transfer their attention to another claim not far away, the defendant, as in the former case, finding the necessary funds. The plaintiff seemed to have spent his time between the 'armchair' on the creek, Blenheim, and Wellington, and now sought from the defendant a slight douceur in the shape of one hundred and thirty-six pounds, no shillings, and no pence, for his arduous labors. He (Dr. McArthur) was not quite sure but that the claim, if any, should not have been made in the Warden's Court, but was prepared to give the defendant the benefit of the doubt and consider the case.

Plaintiff appeared to have been instrumental in getting the defendant to spend some of her money on the 'Armchair' in preference to continuing to pay out on the former venture. He telephoned the solicitor in Blenheim, and saw him in company with defendant, attended the court at Blenheim, pegged out the claim and sat in the 'armchair' when he was not in Blenheim or Wellington. In doing this he claimed to have spent sixty-five days for which he claimed the pittance of 20s per day, in all a mere £65. This, by the way, did not include the arduous toil of pegging out the claim, a few hours' work, for which he was modest enough to ask a meagre £5. His excursions from Blenheim to the 'armchair' and the rest cure for twelve days in Blenheim he had valued at £16. Astonished at his own moderation in these demands, he had proceeded into round figures for 'introducing and securing,' which he estimated at £50, thus making the total of his claim the aforesaid £136.

It would have been tedious to enter into the plaintiff's side of the story, proceeded Dr. McArthur, but as an indication he would mention that he had denied having received the sum of £23, although his receipt was produced and acknowledged by him to have been wholly in his own handwriting. The Blenheim solicitor had said that he understood from the defendant that the plaintiff was her agent in the matter, and on that ground—and that one only—was his Worship prepared to allow him something for the little he had done. He considered he would be amply repaid if he fixed the amount at £10. Considering the ridiculous and extravagant nature of the claim, no costs would be allowed.

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