

whether battles or butchery had given their name to Upper Slaughter and Lower Slaughter. So I travelled in that haphazard way, secure in the knowledge that bed and board were waiting for me somewhere.

"You can't do that in New Zealand," I was told.

"Can't I?"

Well, I did, but it was very different travelling.



I HAVE just covered 1500 miles in the South Island, but alas, of that distance, only 60 miles was bitumen. The deep grooves made by coach and lorry could not be spanned by a little car, and it was between Blenheim and Christchurch that I first encountered the corduroy roads. In England it had been not "roses all the way," but bitumen all the way, and Young Bly had never had her tyres on gravel.

But for fifty miles around Kaikoura, we jittered over hard

Here's the writer of to-day's Passing Pageant—Nelle Scanlan. She's just come back from a tour of the South Island with Young Bly. Who's Young Bly? Well—let Miss Scanlan tell you. . . .

THERE is base deception about potholes. It is not until you are upon them that you realise that the muddy pool is not solid earth, and in you go with a splash. Here I learnt the Corkscrew Drive, swinging and swaying in quick turns, like cavalry officers in a musical ride. We forded streams with a rush to avoid trouble, having been coached in the art by the boy at the garage. They are full of wisdom, these lads.

Several times we had to press hard against the cliff in some eagle's aerie that had been turned into a road, and

of good work on the roads just now. I counted 999 hair-pin bends on one road, and they had just cut off nine of them, for which I'm grateful. But I wish they would buy more bulldozers and fewer graders. I wouldn't have minded those extra nine bends, if only the surface had been less like a river-bed.



I'M not really complaining. I know this is a young country. If anyone doesn't know that fact, he must be deaf. And I realise it is a large country, and it

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ridges—ridges so even, so perfect in alignment, that I felt sure they had been stamped out by some new and modern road-making machine, a first-cousin of the Bulldozer.



THEN I made the acquaintance of the Road Grader. "Caution! Grader at work!" became a nightmare warning, for I knew that ahead of me I should find that strip of loose gravel, a foot deep, in the middle of the road, or a bit to one side, and if one wheel was not skidding along in it, while the other bounced the ridges, poor Bly was getting gravel-rash on the stomach.

When at last I came to a stretch of bitumen, I wanted to get out and kiss it.



It was hot and dusty on the Canterbury side, as I drove her on to a long truck at Springfield, and shipped her through the Otira Gorge, which, with unnatural candour, the garage man informed me was "a bit rough." Having learnt what they considered a good road, I heeded his warning. I was just learning how to ride the ridges, when we plunged through the Alps into the West Coast, and came out into rain, hail, thunder, lightning, gales and floods.

I had to start learning all over again, after two huge engines, one electric and one steam, had juggled the truck with Young Bly perched on it, into the proper siding.

wait till the gale abated, or we would have been dashed to pieces on the rocks hundreds of feet below. And on one stretch of road bordering the sea, the spume blown in by the thundering surf was two feet deep, and Bly was spattered with yellow foam as she ploughed her way through, just escaping the wash of the waves by a hair's breadth.



THERE is one thing I will say, there is nothing monotonous about motoring in New Zealand. It is not like England, where the smooth ribbon of road goes on and on, having a mesmeric effect, like drawing a chalk-line in front of a hen.

You may still meet people who dread the Paekakariki hill, a mere 300 feet high, I am told. But down South we thought nothing of taking a couple of 2000-foot ranges in our stride between breakfast and lunch, and some of them seemed like goat-tracks, making Paekakariki appear but a pleasant undulation.



ONCE I dared to mention that the road was bad, and the man who was filling my tyres, paused in his task to glare at me.

"Bad! The roads are excellent now. The grader has just been over them."

That's what I meant, but I hadn't the courage to say so. I know they are doing a lot

takes money to make good roads, and a much larger population than we have at present to justify the expense of my beloved bitumen over every mile of it. I kept telling myself that variety is the spice of life, and I was having quantities of it. My chief complaint is that the scenery is magnificent, but the driver can't see it. There is little chance of looking sideways or skywards when you are mountaineering on wheels, and the grader is about.



THAT one bad moment was in the Buller Gorge, when the car suddenly lurched, stayed tilted an instant, and then, with a ripping of metal like the end of the world, she sank back to earth. I had visions of finding most of her in'ards on the ground, and grovelling on all-fours in the mud, I looked at this unfamiliar worm's-eye view, but I could see no jagged ends; no dangling entrails. Then I discovered a two-foot bar of iron sticking up through the front mudguard. I pulled it out and looked inquiringly, but I had never seen its like before. I decided to try the car, and see if she would go, and gently, in low gear, I crawled along. She went. I took courage, and moved faster, and nothing untoward happened. At the nearest garage I produced my trophy.



"YOUR front tyre picked it up in a groove, and pushed it upwards through the mud-guard," the learned garage youth informed me. "It's off



a bigger car than yours," he added.

"Could it," I asked, "could it possibly be off a grader?"

"A grader? Why?"

"I just hoped it might . . . for spite," I admitted.

Once more I filled up with petrol, and as the bowser pinged off each gallon, I asked: "Is the road very bad ahead?"

"Bad!" he repeated. "It's in splendid order, the grader has just been over it."

I guessed as much, but I did not argue. I would hate to wake a hopeless discontent in such heroic souls.

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