



newspaper editors, in returned soldiers, and in doctors. And all liberalism and liberty fell by storm in one salient incident, the regrettable silencing of Jehovah's Witnesses. For here was a body which had done no more than exercise the traditional Protestant privilege of heaping curses on "the Scarlet Woman"—curses which had never hitherto affected that lady's health or reputation; which had done no more than exercise somewhat rashly a gift of prophecy and interpretation; which had refused, quite canonically, an offering of incense to Imperial Caesar deified; and which now found itself manacled and muzzled when one of its more provocative exponents had fallen a victim to religious violence. And liberalism and liberty seem to pass away utterly in the ensuing silence of the lay and clerical world. The two old ladies of Wairoa, who lay murdered for a fortnight without attract-

ing any neighbourly attentions, were not stricken down in any atmosphere of more absolute indifference.

And looking back over all the strange, strained episodes in this telescoped perspective, one admits with some reluctance that New Zealand, being what it is, could scarcely have been better governed in these latter years than it actually has been governed. And one is also forced, with some hesitation, to discover in its principal governing influence the indubitable lineaments of a statesman. For who else could have held together a nation of which a considerable part faces the world on Kipling, while the rest tries to face it on the Marxian dialectic? And who else could have combined an unsurpassed war effort with so large a measure of progressive legislation? More perhaps from necessity than from choice, more perhaps from circumstance than from principle, he has directed New Zealand wisely and in its best interests. And while we, in the historical foreground, may see unpalatable features of current policies, posterity with its discerning eye for major landmarks will judge differently and more favourably. Posterity, too, will see a steady trend towards well-adjusted, unfanatical solutions of the basic social problems, while we, in the historical foreground, see only too many crippling compromises and arrests.

And now these new Arabian genii have removed it utterly from my view, the country that I liked so well and criticized with such asperity. The whirr of the mystical modern engines continues; I must attune myself to novel and perhaps less-pleasing prospects.

THE WRYBILL PLOVER

By "CAFFE" with wood engraving by MERVYN TAYLOR

IN BOOKS and articles on the birds of New Zealand, several of our native species are usually singled out for especial mention as being unique in one way or another. The Kiwi, the Moa, our many Penguins, the Kea (the mountain parrot with an acquired habit of eating flesh), and the Huia (in which male and

female have different shaped bills), all come in for attention. Usually, too, there is some mention of the Wrybill Plover, the only bird in the world with its bill turned to one side.

Few New-Zealanders know the Wrybill intimately, and probably most would not recognize the bird if they saw it, for the