

packing for the Sunday night fruit train. We left the orchard. Roxburgh, we agreed, was a paradise—and not only for small boys.

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The hotel at which we stayed in Roxburgh was called the Commercial. Possibly it once had a more romantic name, because, although it might not have given service in the times of the gold rushes, it must have been built before the end of the coaching days; the entrance to its yard is under a portal built high enough for the old-time coaches to pass beneath. In the town several of the buildings, most of them built of blocks of stone quarried from the neighbourhood, have similar portals.

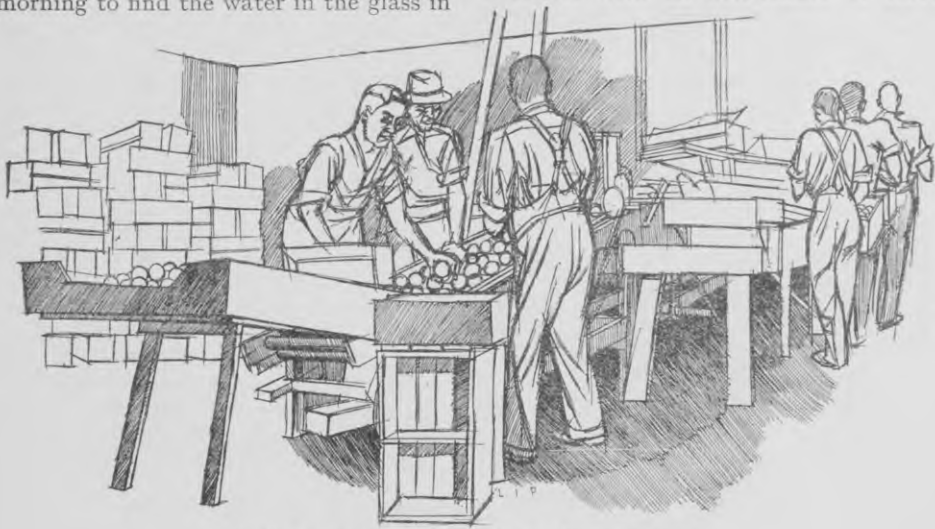
Many are the stories told of the coaches, the drivers, and their passengers. Stories of drivers with such names as Cabbage Tree Ned. Of the coach horses stopping one night from habit outside a changing station with the driver unconscious with cold, his hair and beard frozen stiff—he continued his journey next morning. Of the common practice of a coach and four zigzagging downhill between rocks and boulders, the driver with his foot hard on the brake, the passengers helping to keep the coach in control by straining on a long rope trailing behind. Of a passenger who woke late one freezing morning to find the water in the glass in

which he had left his artificial teeth for the night had frozen solid; the coach was waiting to leave, there was no time for a thaw, the passenger had to rush out to his seat with his teeth still frozen in the glass. And, more unpleasant, stories of bolting horses, capsize, and accidents.

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In May, 1861, Gabriel Read, near what is now the town of Lawrence, first found gold in large quantities. To commemorate the discovery a pick and shovel has been erected on the site of Read's first claim. A few yards away a mountain stream runs fresh (and, these days, clean) over rocks and boulders. A narrow, dusty road flickers through broom and gorse in bloom, the ground to the sides is boggy; Scotch thistles and yellow-centred daisies brightly colour the green rushes. High hills rise behind. The sound of a sheep-dog yapping comes on the wind. Where once were thousands of men and frenzied activity is now deserted and desolate.

Originally level ground, a little farther on from the site of the first claim, has been scooped by man into a deep valley, the two sides of which are estimated to be 1,000 ft. high. To the left of the road leading to this gulch were once a hotel, a post-office, many offices and buildings, and a school with an attendance of three



In the packing-room of an Otago Central orchard.